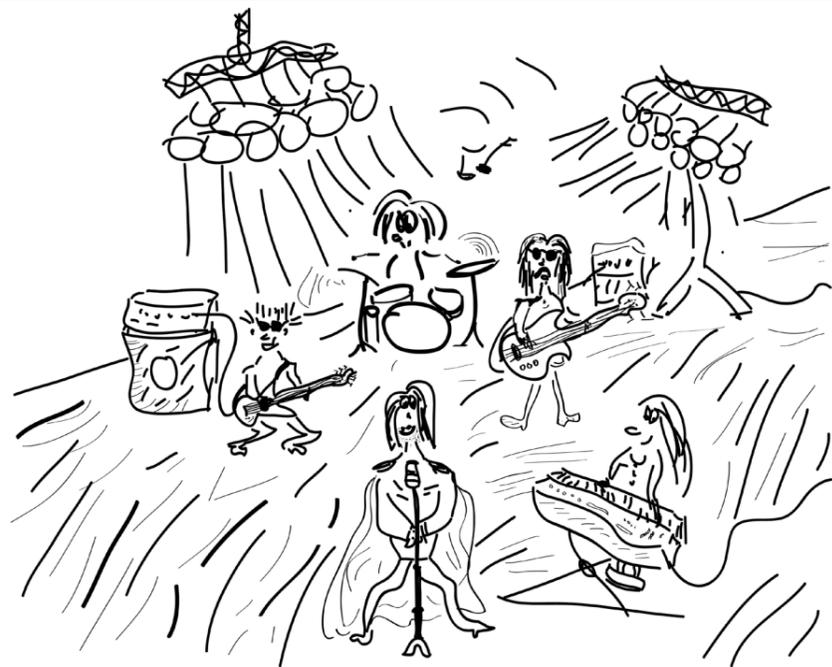


Dear Making Music,  
 My last band was doing great musical-ly, but we never got along. We finally broke up about six months ago when the conflicts got to be too much. I'm ready to start a new group, but I'm wondering if you have any tips for making sure we don't go through this heartache again.  
 Band Weary



**WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY:**

In my view, the best way to deal with intra-band conflict is to avoid it erupting in the first place by having written band agreements and co-writer

agreements that define the band members' expectations early on in the relationship. Then there's less likelihood of dashing one another's expectations later. That may sound like overkill for nonprofessional musicians, but not all nonprofessional musicians stay that way. This certainly applies to co-writers, professional and nonprofessional. As in marriages, a lot of band disagreements are over money, even if they start out just having fun.

Rachel Stilwell, Attorney  
 Los Angeles, California

The band should share responsibilities, delegating tasks and figuring out where each member's strengths lie. I also believe that sharing the band's "music publishing" equally will go a long way to bring band harmony in the long run. The thought is that everyone is there putting in sweat equity together. Also, appoint someone to be in charge of handling rehearsals, kind of like the MD of the band, to guide everyone through what needs to get done, all the while, receiving input from the band. Finally, another simple thing to do is to have frequent band meetings with all the members to find out if there are any questions or concerns before things get misunderstood or out of hand. It's a great way to know if everyone is on the same page and the ship is sailing on course.

Eric Knight, recording artist and founder of artist management company Persistent Management  
 Los Angeles, California

# SETTING UP A BAND

## IT'S ALL ABOUT COMMUNICATION

Are you thinking about starting a new band, or already trying to manage one? Being in a band is like being married to three or four people at the same time. It's important to choose wisely and then your communication skills will need to at least equal your talent.

Finding possible bandmates is probably the easiest part. Ask around at your local music store and check their bulletin boards. Check classified listings in local music publications. Look at various Internet forums and websites like BandMix.com or Craig's List. Finding the right bandmates is more difficult. Before inviting potential members to a practice or jam session make sure you are on the same page by defining your intentions.

**What is your goal for the band?**

**What type of music will you play?**

**How often would you like to practice?**

**How many gigs a week/month would you like to eventually have?**

Once you've nailed down these specifics it's time to invite them to practice with you.

Aside from evaluating talent and ability to play the music you want to play, consider their personalities. Do you honestly think you can get along with each of these people? If you can't imagine becoming friends with someone, that person is probably not your best choice. Remember, you will be spending a lot of time together.

Once you've selected the musicians, before you've actually booked any gigs or made any firm commitments, it's time to lay down some rules and define the band's decision making process.

**How will you select the songs to play?**

**What will your practice schedule be?**

**Who will be in charge of accepting and scheduling gigs?**

**How will band expenses be handled?**

**How will any money from paid gigs be handled?**

If you are able to answer all of these questions to the satisfaction of each member, you just may stand a chance of succeeding! Remember as you move forward to keep the lines of communication open so everyone stays on the same page. One way to do this is to set up routine meetings outside of your practice schedule to talk about the band. This is an opportunity to solve any small issues that may arise before they become big ones.

Need advice on band or music performance issues? We'll put the question to the experts. Write to: [Advice@MakingMusicMag.com](mailto:Advice@MakingMusicMag.com) and you may see it answered in print or online.