

## Can You Showcase When It Counts?

by Amy Wolter

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Canadian artist, Michala Todd

Occasionally I get to see it...the finale...the end result...the 'frosted cake' if you will. But not very often. Most times I work for days with an artist on their set for an upcoming event or showcase; but typically I'm not able to be there for the 'big event' because it's in another city or I'm working with someone else.

When I am able to see a performance soon after our sessions, it can be a little frustrating...mostly because the artist hasn't had enough rehearsal time to get comfortable with what we worked on.

I can see progress with every artist, but there's always still work to be done and time needed to really get comfortable with all the changes I make in our sessions.

Well, I have to tell you; recently one artist blew my mind. Seventeen-year-old Canadian, **Michala Todd**. She was doing pretty well in rehearsals (we only had a day and a half to work), but I wasn't sure she had everything down. There were still things I would have liked to work on and perfect, but I thought she would be able to deliver a pretty good showcase.

What I **wasn't** prepared for was to be blown away! It was as if someone flipped her 'ON' switch and Michala sailed through that 40 minute set with unbelievable confidence and authority. She told me she doesn't get nervous in front of an audience, and that was evident! Even when she spoke to the audience, she sounded mature beyond her years and comfortable with the platform.

Her producers and I were exchanging 'OMG!' looks and I was beaming with pride. I hadn't seen **this** girl in rehearsals! (Typically when someone says "I'll bring it when there's an audience," I don't believe them because there's not much difference between the two performances.)



Well, Michala remembered everything we worked on, took it seriously, and gave a great pop performance when it really counted – in front of some

heavy-hitter industry types. One label head told her producer before the show that he would only be able to stay for 'a couple of songs,' but then stayed for the entire set! Sounds like they'll be taking a meeting. Now, I'm not saying she doesn't still have things to work on, because she does. Those of you already learning this stuff know that it's a **process** and not an overnight 'fix.' For **most** of you, it will take a *series* of gigs and rehearsals after our sessions to really integrate these principles, and gain the confidence it takes to deliver a performance like that.

Michala happens to be a fast learner, and her laid-back personality and comfort level with the stage was what put her several steps ahead of others who are still struggling with self-confidence issues. She had also worked last year with Kevin Pauls, our Live Music Producer in Toronto, so she was well prepared coming into the sessions!

Some of you are maybe in the early stages of your performing career. You'll probably want to start by watching and absorbing Tom's **All Roads Lead to the Stage DVDs**, or come to our next **Bootcamp** and get a huge leg-up on your live show.

As record producer **Just Blaze** says, "If you don't have a tight stage show, you might as well give it up."