



# the beat goes on

**The soundtrack to a solid  
summer in New York City?  
Live music, and lots of it.**

**Teicher**  
at The Bowery  
Ballroom  
before a gig  
last month

Festival season is upon us, free outdoor shows are cropping up like dandelions, and trusty old venues are overflowing with gigs. To get you stoked for the hot-weather concert circuit (and to help you shake off the last remnants of this winter's sonic SAD—moment of silence for Glasslands, et al), we asked five local musicians what they love about playing to hometown crowds. Here's what it's like to rock out in a town that never stops.

*By Tess Duncan Photographed by Kathy Lo*

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**VALERIE TEICHER** of *Tei Shi*, Chinatown

"My first show in New York was actually my first show ever. At the time, I was working as a booker for a little venue in the Lower East Side, so during CMJ, I booked myself and a bunch of my friends to play a show there. It was pretty terrible. It was my first time playing my music live. It was a shitty spot, but filled with supportive friends—my parents were there! I'll always remember that, though the show itself is a weird blur.

The best part of being a musician here is that I don't have to explain myself or what I do or why I am a musician or that I'm not a bum, because NY is full of people doing what I'm doing. You can kind of find every little world within this city. It has bits and pieces of every kind of town but is also unlike any one place at all. I like that about it...there is *everything* here."

**WHOM VALERIE'S EXCITED TO SEE** "I would really like to see Shamir live," she says. (Pro tip: He'll be at Music Hall of Williamsburg, June 18!)





◀ **Awkwafina** at SOB's, the site of her first-ever show

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## AWKWAFINA, Greenpoint

"My first ever gig as Awkwafina was at SOB's, or Sounds of Brazil, a seriously O.G. hip-hop spot in SoHo that my friends' parents used to go to in the '80s. It's hosted everyone from Snoop Dogg to Iggy Azalea. Because it was my first, I was having epic meltdowns in various areas of the club—the green room, the VIP section, left of stage, at the bar, in the women's bathroom, in the men's bathroom. I kept having these terrifying images in my head that I would get on stage, soil myself, vomit, pass out, say something horribly offensive, or forget my lyrics. I performed 'My V@g' and 'NYC Bitches' without any mistakes, but to a seriously confused audience. They were like, 'WTF did I just watch?!'"

This is corny, but performing is liberating. There's something about having so little control over everything while pretending to have so much control that's absolutely terrifying and exhilarating at the same time."

**OMG MOMENT** "Once I didn't pretest my leggings for being see-through...a.k.a., I should've charged more for tickets..."

## KIM SCHIFINO of Matt & Kim, Bed-Stuy

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"Years ago, we played a Todd P show that was supposed to be at a spot called Above the Auto Parts Store. That day, Todd discovered the space had been turned into a sewing machine-style sweatshop. He scrambled to find a new venue. We didn't think the organizers would find a new spot, let alone that

anyone would realize the gig had been moved—how would word spread? Todd found a construction site in Bushwick, brought in porta-potties, and rigged together a stage—a giant industrial glass-cutting table—and the place was packed. That's the magic of NYC: That *that* could happen."

**SEE THEM LIVE** June 4 at Buffalo Rocks Canalside, Buffalo, New York; free; more info at mattandkimmusic.com

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## SOPHIE AUSTER, Tribeca

"I've played all over New York but I've had residencies at Rockwood Music Hall in the Lower East Side many times—it's become a second home. The staff is lovely and they have a great sound system. I also had an awesome show at (Le) Poisson Rouge not so long ago. The audience was really with me from start to finish, and I danced my ass off. I remember sweat and fun. And Baby's All Right in Brooklyn is doing a good job. They host a variety of showcases and events. I have fun whenever I'm there, whether I'm performing or just hanging out."

I love the community in New York. I like how musicians band together and support one another. There's so much talent—and competition—in this city. You have to work really hard to make a mark while holding onto what makes you unique."

**SEE HER LIVE** June 9 at Joe's Pub at The Public Theater; tickets \$20 at publictheater.org

## VALERIE JUNE, Brooklyn

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"Memphis, my hometown, keeps a gentler pace than New York. I call it Tennessee Time."

But I love being

a musician in New York because, just by living here, I'm starting to meet an array of brilliant musicians from all over the world. That's the sweetness of NYC. (The hardest part? Having to take the subway with loads of gear!) My favorite venue to play here is this quiet Bed-Stuy bar called Bar Lunático. It's intimate, with a southern flavor. I also loved my recent gig at Carnegie Hall! I'll remember it forever because it's the first time my entire family has been to New York. Casablanca Cocktail Lounge in Bed-Stuy is an awesome venue, too; it hosts private, stripped-down shows with musicians who normally perform with larger productions. It's a gem."

**SEE HER LIVE** July 16 at Robert F. Wagner, Jr. Park in Battery Park City; more details TBA at bpcpark.org

◀ **Auster** outside of Joe's Pub, where you can catch her album release show this month