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ROCKIN MOMS FEATURED INTERVIEW with Mama Doni aka Doni Zasloff Thomas



Doni Zasloff Thomas photo credit Jill Wachter

The Back Story...

When did you first become interested in music?

I have always loved music! When I was 2 years old I would wake up in the middle of the night and make my parents blast Jim Croce's Bad Bad Leroy Brown so I could dance around my living room. Wherever I went, whatever I did, I was always singing...music has always been part of me!

Was there anyone who inspired or influenced you to pursue a career as a musician/performer?

I was influenced by the music I grew up with, from James Taylor, Led Zeppelin, James Brown, The Rolling Stones, classic rock, and of course I dig Jewish music!

Can you tell us about your experience forming the Mama Doni Band?

It has been such an amazing journey! 3 years ago I became trained as music together teacher and began teaching at my daughter's preschool – and I wanted to find music that shared Jewish culture in a hip and fun way, so I decided to try to write my own music...next thing I knew I was producing an album, then off to Amsterdam to the International Jewish Music Festival Competition where we won the Simcha Award to inspiring Joy through music! That was 2 years ago and we played over 200 venues since, toured the country, and are coming out with our 4th album, *Shabbat Shaboom!* What an adventure!

Wow, you were honored in Holland for *Inspiring Joy Through Music!* Tell us how that felt?

The IJMF was like a Jewish American Idol competition with more than 100 bands from all over the world competing. We were brand new band at the time and so nervous! What an honor it was to be part of this amazing event, and then to win an award was really so cool. It really was incredible to meet musicians from all over the world doing hip Jewish music in all different styles.

What project or CD are you most proud of?

I am really proud of all of my CDs, my first album "I Love Herring (& Other Fish Shticks for Kids), " I Love Purim", "Chanukah Fever" and my latest project I really am excited about, "Shabbat Shaboom", which is releasing in Feb 2011. The newest album is really an evolution for us and I really am thrilled to share it with the world – it is a soulful musical journey all about challah, candles, family...Shabbat Shaboom!

What performances have you enjoyed the most?

I really love every performance. When I am dancing and feeling connected to the audience there is nothing like it. I also love seeing kids and parents feel free to rock out and dance like crazy, getting excited about Jewish culture. I meet so many amazing people on my tours, and these connections are what make it all worth it.

What do you love about this career?

I think that since I "became " Mama Doni I finally figured out what I supposed to do -- I found my real passion, like all of the different parts of my life came together, the teacher, the musician, the singer, the mother, the entertainer.



Mama Doni Band photo credit Ron Holtz

ON BEING A ROCKIN' MOM...

How many children to you have and what are their ages?

I have two kids, 6.5 and 4.5

How has motherhood enriched your music and affected your career?

Everything came together for me when I became a mom! Because my music is for kids and families, I write my music for my own kids – in fact they are my toughest critics! I always make sure that they listen to my new tunes and tell me what they think!

Any challenges (i.e. practice time, babysitting, budget) you'd like to share?

Balance is ALWAYS a challenge...between carpool, soccer, dance classes, new albums, band practice, traveling for shows, making lunches, making dinner... it's tough! BUT, everyday I just try to make sure I do the best I can, and give whoever needs me the most the most love I can.

Do your children come to see you perform? Or on TV? Do they like your Videos? They love the videos because they are IN the videos!!!

How have you made time to balance both careers?

It's always crazy, but not a dull moment! I really try to stay in the moment and be grateful for being able to live my dream and have these beautiful children and husband. It is really worth it, and I feel so lucky. I also accept that sometimes my house will be messy, dishes in the sink, laundry backed up... and that's really ok sometimes!

Any advice or tips for other Rockin' Moms?

Well, we all know that working and being a mom isn't easy, but if you love what you are doing, we're really the lucky ones, right? I think it's just really remembering that we are living our dreams! Even doing what you love is hard and exhausting, right? Well, it's worth it, mamas!

Where do you see yourself a year from now?

I hope to be singing on stage, snuggling with my kids, going on dates with my husband, recording new albums, new music videos, we are even putting out a Cookbook! I hope to be still rockin'!

Thank you Doni for taking the time to share your story with Rockin' Moms!

–Tiffany Petrossi-Founder, Rockin' Moms

For more about Doni visit her [Rockin' Moms Profile](#)>

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