



Interview: Vocalist Kelley Jean of Tight Talks Musical Roots and More

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Kelley Jean of Tight

As the newest member of rock band Tight, singer/songwriter Kelley Jean also faces the greatest challenge: replacing the group's original lead vocalist, Monica Mayhem.

Tight is a four-piece managed by Bree Olson and consisting of guitarist Layla Labelle, bassist Tuesday Cross, drummer Alicia Andrews and, initially, Monica Mayhem as frontwoman. The women also have backgrounds in adult entertainment, adding yet another twist — and challenge — to launching a band.

Earlier this year, an engaging and entertaining “documentary” titled *Tight* was released, which followed the group as they set out on the road, trying to break into the music industry through a series of poorly booked, under-funded gigs.

Shoddy venues, cheap hotels, bad food, personality clashes — that's rock and roll. The movie was recently screened at the Vegas Cine Fest, where the group also debuted their new lead singer.

Shortly before her trip to Las Vegas, we caught up with Kelley Jean to discuss her involvement with Tight.

GUITAR WORLD: You grew up in Michigan and are still based there. When did you become interested in music?

I was always interested in music. From the time I was born, my dad played in rock bands around Mt. Clemens, which is a suburb outside of Detroit, and he still does. So I was around it my entire life. I'd spend the weekends at my

dad's and there would be band practices. I was always a ham, I was a huge showoff, and when I was 5, my aunt bought me the *Annie* soundtrack album. I heard Andrea McCordle, and I was a 5-year-old who had found my calling! All I wanted growing up was to be a singer. I wanted to be Annie. I did theater my entire life.

How did you get your music career off the ground?

It's starting to really move forward with Tight. When I did the dance music projects, I seemed to have more fans in Europe than in the U.S. Detroit is a great place for music, but I found I didn't have the same fans here. I performed a lot of shows and I have a fan base, but the majority of people who like my music are in Sweden and Germany. I hope that with Tight, more people will dig what we're doing.

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"I love these strings. They feel great, and still sound really good after a bunch of shows." - Gus G



You're mostly connected to the dance and electronica genres, whereas Tight is a rock band. Was this a new avenue for you or have you also worked in that genre?

Because I grew up listening to rock music, I always thought that if I was going to be in a band, it would be a rock band. I didn't pursue it, because when you start with a bar band, you work really hard to get gigs, and when you get them, you only work on the weekends and you're making squat. It's hard to make a living playing in a bar band. You push hard to become popular. I own two companies [Good Life Limo and Motor City Dolls], so my weekends were filled and I couldn't do the bar band thing. I hope that Tight will perform live and do a tour, and that people will be receptive to it and enjoy it.

You've also done television work.

I do an online television show called DetroitDungeon.com. We go to events and cover as much as we can. I do interviews for them. I also just did a show called *The Skinny*. The majority of television things I have done have been online; that's the new avenue for programming. The guy that I do Detroit Dungeon with doesn't even own a television — he has a computer and that's all he watches.

How did you find out about the gig with Tight?

I was interested in joining an existing band that needed a singer. Out of the blue, I Googled "female rock bands" and Tight came up. I started reading about them and thought it would have been the perfect project for me, and the coolest thing to be involved with. It's hard for someone who has worked in adult, and who has the bleached blonde hair, the huge boobs and the tattoos, to be taken seriously. Everybody laughs about it. I saw this band that are porn stars trying to become serious musicians.

I wrote to Jason, the producer, and told him that if they ever needed a singer, I would be perfect. He responded that the documentary had been picked up, it was going to be distributed, and the lead singer, Monica Mayhem, was now in Australia and wanted nothing to do with the project. They sent me a CD of the background tracks. I went into the studio, recorded the vocals and put my own twist on them, including changing some of the lyrics. Those tracks are on my YouTube page. There's a playlist called Tight where you can hear the clips.

Are there any plans for a CD?

They're releasing a CD with Monica's vocals, called *Tight: The Music From The Movie*. They're also releasing a CD with the tracks I recorded, which will be called *Life Of The Party*. I recorded the music from the soundtrack. I know they're going to sound completely different because Monica and I have different vocal styles, and I changed some words and put my own spin on it. You can hear her singing live in the documentary, but our styles are very different. I'm really curious to see what happens with this. I hope the response will be good and that the band will be able to tour.

— Alison Richter

Alison Richter interviews artists, producers, engineers and other music industry professionals for print and online publications. Read more of her interviews right here.

Photo: Courtesy of Kelley Jean

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