

Computers

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Charlie Chan aims to set up a Web site to give the public access to new bands

Picture: NICK CUMBI

Geek finds musical niche online

By FORESHEW
Media

IAN Charlie Chan admits she's a geek. She's crammed up in her Sydney home with technology, in her element chatting to a line or dreaming up ways to promote her music using a com-

puter. She says to me 'you are such a geek'. Chan said. "I'll be sitting there at some CGI (computer-generated imaging) scripting and I'll think, what is my computer doing? They're

probably at the movies or eating a nice meal."

Stumbling into music and technology at the age of 15 while dusting organs and pianos at her local Brash's store in Melbourne, Chan's fascination with the two has inspired her.

"For somebody like me, it has meant that I can produce the music at home," Chan said.

"I can then put it out on CD, give it to the audience and there is nothing in the middle to prevent me having that free expression."

Chan, 32, believes the Web is the ultimate niche for artists like her.

She says: "When I started re-designing my Web site, I wrote a business plan because I was keen to see how I could make this Internet thing work. How could I sell CDs and give the customer access to me?"

Since the release of her third CD she has sold almost 5000 copies over the Internet. Some 60 per cent of her sales are in the US.

Chan launched her own Internet record label, Martian Music, earlier this year and her Web site — www.charliechan.com.au — has grown from 20 visits a week to 20,000 in three years.

"I try to use every performance I

do as a live screened event. I think it is interesting for people who can't get there," she says.

"It is also interesting for people who don't know my music very well and don't know whether they want to come and see a show."

Chan is a multi-instrumentalist. From piano to double bass, guitar and percussion, she has composed scores for films, plays and dance and designs her own CD-ROMS.

Chan's long-term goal for Martian Music is to set up a Web site that will give access to bands who cannot otherwise afford to experiment with technology.