

## **BAND TIPS: RADIO** by Jenny Huston



### **Do you accept Demos?**

You are welcome to send demos to whomever you so wish. However, they are unlikely to ever get played unless they are broadcast quality. Even then a 'demo' will most likely be played on a late night, specialist music programme.

A Demo is just that. A demonstration of what you can do. The idea was that a Record label heard raw talent and wanted to sign you and pay to record it properly with a producer and have it mixed and mastered professionally. It is not a finished product and not usually suitable for National radio. The main failing of 'demos' is that they are not mixed for radio. National radio has processors and usually needs a 'bigger' sounding mix to allow for compression and prevent a song from sounding flat. That is why virtually all bands send radio edits or radio mixes to radio (especially the big international acts). They are different to the single or album track that you buy - Usually shorter so the song starts immediately.

Have you checked the shows playlist (if they have one). Does your music fit in?

Do not ask if you can send a CD, just send it. Most DJ's will not respond to an email asking 'can I send you a CD' or 'let me know if you want a CD and we will send you one'. YOU want them to have it, so take the chance and send it! They are highly unlikely to solicit your material as they already have more than they can listen too and to some people soliciting material implies obligation.

Do NOT send numerous MP3 attachments or WAV files. Many people have limited storage space on their email and will have to delete your email. Send a download link.

### **What address do I send CDs too?**

If you are emailing a DJ from 2fm then you send post to them at RTE 2fm. The same applies for Radio Kerry. The address is available on the website, Internet and the phone book. Look for it yourself. Do you really want the first time a DJ hears your name or has direct contact with you to be a silly/seriously lazy question? It is not worth the risk. They may only remember you for that, rather than hearing your music with fresh unbiased ears.

### **Defensive follow-on question 'But maybe they prefer to have CDs sent to their house?'**

Do you really think a national radio presenter is going to tell a complete stranger where they live? Security and the police advise against it.

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### **What should I include in my press pack?**

We don't need or want 'press packs'. They are a left over from the 80's. We want a well-labeled CD. That means the names of the Band and the songs on the cd and the sleeve. Include your website, facebook/bandcamp/myspace address and have a sticker with any relevant information on it: Where you are from, when you are playing, who you have supported/toured with and dates when the CD or download will be available etc. Give the presenter something to say about you and/or a reason for them to listen to it.

Do try and make the CD sleeve as professional as possible. If you have spent time or money on the music then give it a well-designed sleeve (people do judge a book by its cover). Do not send photographs or DVDs or spend money on expensive folders or envelopes or send pages of paper. They get recycled immediately. Radio cannot do anything with a printed photograph! You should be glad to know that we don't care if you are beautiful or totally plain. We only care what the music sounds like.

### **Can you give us some feedback/advice on our demo/singe/EP?**

It is important to point out that it is NOT the job of a DJ to give feedback on music (if they do so it is out of the kindness of their heart). Airplay is very obvious feedback. It IS the job of A&R men and record labels to give feedback IF they have solicited your material. Do not ask for feedback unless you are prepared for disappointment. The volume of music sent to National radio presenters is staggering. There would not be enough hours in the day to listen to everything and to give feedback.

Advice: There are numerous industry bodies set up to do this – contact them. First Music Contact 'is a free information and advice resource for the popular music sector in Ireland. Funded by the Arts Council, FMC delivers a programme of useful activities for bands and musicians throughout their careers.'

<http://www.firstmusiccontact.com/> also IMRO, IASCA, RAAP etc.

### **Interviews and Sessions**

Interviews can be a very hard sell. They can be dull and they are time consuming. It involves scheduling, preparation and editing for the presenter/producers. If you are looking to be interviewed make sure you have answered these questions BEFORE you approach radio. Why do you want to be interviewed? Do you have anything to say other than 'we have a new single coming out? Are you good talkers? Can you be more entertaining and engaging than your single itself? Honestly?

Begging to be interviewed is usually a waste of time unless it is a show that makes a point of regular interviews and is ALREADY playing your music. In most cases playing the song is far better PR for a band than an interview. Interviews can be very boring so many shows will not air them unless they are from someone very well known or extremely famous. A friendly intro to your song in a session is the best bet. '

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Hi were ----- and this is our new single that is coming out next week that we recorded in/with -----, we hope you like it...' or something to that effect.

Do approach your local station. Local radio and community radio usually have dedicated Irish shows and are often more than delighted to have bands in for chats and acoustic sessions. Go for it!

### **Text and email campaigns**

Don't get your friends to bombard a DJ or a station with requests for your new single or EP that you have just sent out. It does not imply demand, it implies unprofessional. It often causes the opposite of the desired result.

### **Thank you is free**

Manners go a long way. Don't email DJs calling them 'bud' 'dude' 'lady' or 'hon'. Be polite. Using your common sense and being aware of people's show times and jobs will help you in your path to airplay (i.e. don't ask a DJ who is on air Monday through Thursday if they could play your single on Saturday night). You want them to spend 4 minutes listening to your track so take 30 seconds and find out when their show is on. Show some respect and be appreciative of people's time and support.

I hope that these answers to FAQ will help you to save some time, money and mistakes and get your music to the right ears! Good luck with it all

Very best wishes,  
Jenny Huston

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