

BAND TIPS: MEDIA by Jim Carroll



Do NOT send any attachments (MP3s, photos, big stupid press releases) unless the journalist requests them first.

Make sure there is always a CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER on all communications. Papers and magazines work to very tight deadlines and an email address will just not do if The Ticket or Day & Night decide at 2.30pm that they want to put you on the cover. You snooze, you lose.

Always make sure there is a CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER on your suite of websites too. Get one of those cheap pay-as-you-go mobile phones if none of you want to give up your own number. Hey, don't knock it, those phones worked wonders for the Barksdale crew on The Wire.

Get some proper PHOTOS done. By "proper", we mean photos where all the band members are looking at the camera and not making rabbit ears behind the drummer's head.

Do not hassle journalists. It's not a good idea. Most of 'em get a zillion emails every day and if you start hassling them, you will up on their black lists. If the journalist doesn't write about you, just keep telling yourself that it's their loss.

Please don't be annoyed if journalists don't write about you. There are only a small number of journalists in Ireland who even bother to listen to new bands and new music these days. The rest of us only listen to what the major labels tell us to listen to. You may find that you're better off with bloggers - most of the Irish bloggers rave about all Irish music regardless of whether it's good or bad (please note that this is a joke, OK? Bloggers are gReAt).

Don't be stupid. Don't pitch a heavy metal band to someone who writes about trance. Know your audience. And please don't ever address an envelope to someone who works for one publication with the name of another publication. No amount of chocolate bars in the envelope will make up for that SNAFU.

Which brings us to... Press packs. YOU DO NOT NEED A PRESS PACK! Did you hear that OK at the back in Clonmel? YOU DO NOT NEED A PRESS PACK! Sending your CD to a journalist in a plain envelope with a basic press release will do. No need for fancy envelopes, printed photos, badges, bars of chocolate (which usually melt in the post anyway), lollipops or other bits and pieces. Send us the music (yes, we still listen to stuff on CD) and that should suffice. I always think that elaborate press packs are compensating for lousy music anyway.

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Journalists like CDs and links to MP3 downloads. Some journalists like vinyl but, to be honest, you're better off keeping the vinyl to sell to your fans to make some money rather than giving to some hack. Charge them for it.

All journalists, without exception, despise streams with a passion which may surprise you. Journalists are capable of passion, you know. We hate streams because it means we're chained to our fecking computers and can't listen to your album while we're having a bath like we really want to do. If you must, link to a stream, but don't be surprised if hacks moan and whinge and grumble like kids deprived of Peppa Pig or Balamory for an hour about this.

<http://www.irishtimes.com/blogs/ontherecord>