

## **PROMOTING YOUR RELEASE ON THE IRISH MARKET**

**Releasing** - Do nothing (re promo, launch) until you have the physical copies in your hand. If it is not a physical release, the same thing applies – wait till you have the digital version of the release fully mixed and mastered and in your possession. When you have everything you need you can start to plan the release. For an album I think planning the release 6 months from when you have everything is great advice.

**What to do first** - I always try to book some gigs around a rough idea of a release date first. For an album it looks better (for radio and press) if they see you working it. So as many dates as you can...

**Tour** - It is worth considering a radio tour instead of a gig tour. Most regional stations across Ireland have all Irish radio shows that want or do live sessions. Contact them. Months ahead. Get as many as you can. If you can tour, get paid, and get an audience even better or do both. Book a tour (paying or otherwise) and try book a radio session close by.

**Pick Your Date** - Once you have some dates of gigs and/or radio slots booked, choose your release date around then. It is nice to have a gig in your hometown on the actual release date. So now you have a bunch of dates (6 months away for an album). On your bio and blurb that you will be sending to radio and press specify a few dates.

Feb 15<sup>th</sup> Official Release of Single

Feb 16<sup>th</sup> Cork launch of Single

Feb 20<sup>th</sup> In store in your local record shop

Feb 21<sup>st</sup> Live session on KCRL fm with Roddie Cleere

This approach shows everyone that you are serious, professional, hard working and organised.

**Bandcamp** - Promote the Bandcamp release date. You can sell digital copies and physical copies on Bandcamp. And you can do pre-release sales. Bandcamp sales contribute to the Irish Charts. YES!! Amazing. And true.

**Refining your contact list** - Think of someone who plays music in your style or close enough to your genre. Not someone huge. Someone just at a level a little bit higher than you (in terms of radio plays and press ). Follow them on social media. Get updates when they post. Keep a note of whoever they post about. If they get a review, add that site to your Contact List ("I read your review of xyz...and I think you might like this"). If they get played, add who played them to your Contact List. If they have a gig, try playing the same venue (or supporting them). For your next release, choose someone else with a slightly higher profile

than your current improved profile. And so one.

Over time this contact list will change. If you limit the list to your genre and your style I would be surprised if it was more than 50. After a while you get to know who plays you and who never will. Save the money. Don't bother posting the CD to them.

**Blogs** - Try to get some early reviews from people you think will give a good/great review. (Before it goes to radio. And before it goes to press). And quote them on your press pack when sending to bigger places. Blogs with whom you build a relationship over time will be your source for very early reviews. Google music blogs in your style of music. Look for blog lists on relevant sites. *Any review can be a great review. People obviously want big reviews in big magazines or national papers but for me, it doesn't really matter.*

With your first release, send it to loads of blogs. How many? 100s. As many as you can think of. As many as you can possibly do in a week of constantly emailing and posting. And when you feel you couldn't possibly contact another blog, send some more. You only have to go through this torture once. - - The blog contact list should be huge for your first release. Highlight the ones who review it favourably. Delete the others. What you want to build is a list of blogs that will definitely review your next release. I only send it them now. You may not need to send the CD. You could send an email (with a Bandcamp download code) but in the email say you can send a CD if they want. Small bloggers still like getting a CD in the post.

You still haven't delivered the release to press or radio yet. But when you have your release date, tour or radio tour, and some early reviews from blogs do up your bio and blurb and add this info to it.

**PR Companies** - If you have the money, you should consider a PR company. You are paying them to save you time, hoping to get something you couldn't get yourself. I got sessions on national radio and reviews on national papers through PR companies. I'm not sure this would have happened on my own. Having said that I have got TV appearances without them – one through Breaking Tunes and the other through email. You can do a whole lot yourself.

For your first release do it yourself. See how much you get out of it. See how hard it is. See how much work is involved. If things work out well, continue doing it yourself. If you have the money for your third release, you could consider it. And then you have something to compare it to. Was it worth what you got out of it? If you get played in a few stations that haven't played you before they can be added to your contact list and more than likely will play you again if you are doing your own PR. – You can get played on radio stations (local, regional and national) without a PR company. But you will find it harder to get a national newspaper

review without PR. If you do hire a PR company, still do a lot of work yourself (with your contact list).

**Follow up contact** - Some blogs really dislike being contacted afterwards. Unless I have a relationship with a radio person or blogger or reviewer, I don't do follow up emails. So how do you build a relationship then? Make sure you are connected on social media (Twitter and Facebook) with DJs who play you and sites that review you. Tag them if they play you. Thank them if they play you. And connect with people who don't play you too. At least give them the chance to see that other people are playing you. And that you got a great review from that Swedish guy. – If someone plays you and you thank them and they acknowledge it that is the first step in building a relationship. Maybe thank them privately next time. – For the next release (if they reply to your message) you could let them know privately it is on the way. Or if they play you, you thank them, they like your thank you, you could send a private message about appearing live on their show. – If someone or some station never plays me or some press or site never reviews my releases I don't ask them why or don't question their decision. – Local radio and press have one of the most supportive group of people in the industry. Nearly every regional station has a dedicated Irish music show and the person running that show puts in hours and hours of work listening to and supporting new Irish music. They have to be admired and respected and praised.

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Once your music starts to reach a higher level of professionalism you gain a higher level of respect from important radio Music Directors, Media & DJ's. Find out who every presenter is on every radio station and send your music to them. Find out all the Irish Music shows ("Totally Irish") and reach out to their presenters and producers directly. If presenters, DJ's and producers like you and your music and want to champion you, they will pitch your music directly to their Music Director for you.

You have to find the people, sites and blogs that work for you, your image and your sound. Make it your business to build personal relationships with a lot of bloggers and magazine editors who may support you and your new releases. I have had a lot of local Newspaper support which has stemmed from me personally getting to know the editor in chief. It's very much about who you know and who you've created working and professional relationships with in the Irish Media. Of course it's also about having excellent material which makes them want to champion you and your music. It's all about having the right material and connecting with the right people within the industry.

*Material summarised from limited circulation anonymous articles .*