The Basics of Promoting Your Recordings to Folk Radio

By Art Menius

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including whether you should use a promoter

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Nobody knows the trouble I've seen as a DJ (see back cover). Long before I became a radio promoter, I have seen seemingly every kind of mistake people make in servicing radio. As a promoter, I have gained insights into what even the most gifted artists, record companies, engineers, and producers often don't know about promoting to folk radio. Most gaffes come not just from self-promoted projects, but even sometimes clueless labels and promoters not used to working the folk charts often don't get it right. Folk radio forms its own specialty with its own mores which folk radio promoters understand.

With this edition, I continue to attempt to distill what I have learned both sending and receiving CDs and files over the years. This is a guide to solid practices to avoid shooting yourself in the foot or wasting time and money. I base my suggestions and my radio promotion practice on the simple philosophy of treating DJs exactly the way I like best as a DJ. I intend this document to be a guide both for those already resolved to promote their recordings and folk trying to decide which option to choose. I created the first section for the latter group.

A glossary appears as the final two pages of this not exactly hefty tome. It contains not just definitions for radio and promotion terms but a good deal of information not appearing otherwise. If I use a term, you don't know, check it in the glossary. Before the glossary I also include **four appendices**: 1) digital delivery setup, 2) one sheet / track sheet example, 3) about videos, and 4) timeline.

What you need to know whether working with a promoter or on your own.

In any aspect of human activity, **you can only control the process, not the results**. Radio promoters each have proven processes that have worked for them many times. We can assure that a recording gets listens from many programmers, that it gets the chance, but airplay comes down to personal taste and their formats. Lots of good recordings effectively promoted don't climb far up the charts. Any promoter can provide examples of projects we really liked that didn't catch fire.

No amount of promotion can "fix" a weak recording or even a poor CD design. DJs receive far more material than we can hear, much less play on air. No need exists to play a song they don't like. A strong recording is the first and most important step and far and away the most important role for the artists.

However early that you think you should start promotion with or without a professional, you'll do better starting earlier. If you do it yourself, start even earlier. The very best practice is either develop your plan or to contract with a promoter before you even start recording and certainly no later than the rough mixes. When involved, radio promoters provide essential input into album cover design, when to release, how many units, which songs to release as singles, and other matters.

Radio promoters and publicists are two very different professions involving and entirely different skills sets and relationships, too many for one person. Publicists are more expensive than radio promoters, since it is harder to get significant print or web exposure than on the radio. A DJ can play 15 songs in an hour; a newspaper at most one music article a day. Unless contracted otherwise, we also aren't your Spotify playlist

promoter (a separate profession), recording label, retail salesperson, videographer, manager, or booking agent.

Charts define format or genre in the realm of radio promotion. Promoters work specific charts. Here we'll be talking about the Folk Alliance International (FAI) and the NACC Folk Charts, the two I work. Promoters sometimes bleed over into other genre, but rarely match the results achieved with their focus charts. That said, volume makes it difficult to maintain enough relationships with programmers and different ways of promotion to work multiple genre effectively. Specialization is a hallmark of all top promoters among the various roots music radio formats.

FAI FOLK CHART FOR AUGUST 2021

Compiled from FOLKDJ-L playlists
Based on 14725 plays from 492 playlists from 123 Folk DJs

FAI FOLK CHART TOP ALBUMS OF THE MONTH

Rank	Album	Artist	Plays
1	Downhill From Everywhere	Jackson Browne	109
2	A Better Day A-Coming	Robin and Linda Williams	98
3	Song to a Refugee	Diana Jones	92
4	Sober Again	Jackson Grimm	84
5	Come Around	Rob Lutes	80
6	Other Voices, Other Rooms	Nanci Griffith	77
7	Why Wait!	Kate Taylor	75
8	The Canvas Before Us	Joy Zimmerman	62
9	Cold Rain and Snow	Jared Rabin	57
10	Borrowed Time	Joe Troop	54
10	Until Now	Carrie Newcomer	54
12	Sun and Moon	Trevor Tchir	52
13	Watchhouse	Watchhouse	51

Genre Charts · Top Adds · Station Contacts · Going for Adds · My Account · Logout

Top 30 Folk Charts
WEEK ENDING NOVEMBER 3

Download Individual Charts
Download Top 30 (XML) · Download Top 30 (CSV)

TW	LW	Artist	Recording	Label
1	1	RAYE ZARAGOZA	Woman In Color	Self-Released
2	2	MOLLY TUTTLE	...But I'd Rather Be With You	Compass
3	5	KURT VILE	Speed, Sound, Lonely KV [EP]	Matador/Beggars
4	3	KATHLEEN EDWARDS	Total Freedom	Dualtone/eOne
5	23	STURGILL SIMPSON	Cuttin' Grass Vol. 1	High Top Mountain
6	11	RESISTANCE REVIVAL CHORUS	This Joy	Righteous Babe
7	7	AVETT BROTHERS, THE	The Third Gleam	Loma Vista
8	6	WAR AND TREATY, THE	Hearts Town	Rounder
9	16	LEYLA MCCALLA	Vari-Colored Songs: A Tribute To Langston Hughes	Smithsonian Folkways
10	14	DIRK POWELL	When I Wait For You	Compass
11	10	DRIVE-BY TRUCKERS	The New OK	ATO
12	N/A	MIPSO	Mipso	Rounder/Concord
13	9	CHRIS SMITHER	More From The Levee	Signature Sounds

Numerous other charts affect promotion: AirPlay Direct (APD) downloads; Music Meeting Directory, also measuring DJ downloads, and various related airplay charts: EarShot! (Canada), Roots Music Report, Americana Music Association, *Bluegrass Today*, and *Bluegrass Unlimited*.

The specialization reflects the essential role of non-commercial radio in playing the music iHeart, NPR, and Clear Channel stations don't. With so many genre deserving space on the broadcast spectrum, roots radio runs on specialty shows and stations dedicated to one or two genre. Thus we have formats and charts for bluegrass, folk, Americana, blues, AAA, Non-Comm, and world.

Old-time direct to DJ promotion still exists in folk, bluegrass, and blues more than working with music directors. DJs make most of the programming choices as if AOR inventor Lee Abrams were never born. It is heavily personal relationship driven work where lots of folks still expect CDs and direct email.

AAA (Adult Album Alternative), Americana, and Non-Comm (AAA on college and community stations) all play by commercial radio rules. This is Mars compared to folk's Venus. In these three the relationships are with music directors or, worst case, a music committee, vetting what can be added to the station playlist from which hosts select songs. Songs move week by week from In Review to Under Consideration to Added to the Playlist, Specialty Show Play, or just Available in Library. The digital music arrives via playMPE which costs $600 to send the same song twice. Getting airplay in Americana almost assuredly requires using a competent, well-known promoter who works those charts.

Definition of format or genre has become increasing sociological rather than musicological, further complicating matters. Bluegrass, for example, has become increasingly music that bluegrass fans like rather than fitting a hard definition based in instruments, vocal arrangements, or lyrics. Concomitantly, the tribe or tribes with which an artist is identified establish the format as much or more than the music.

Weighted charts grant greater impact to the outlets with the greatest reach - satellite and syndicated programming and the least to low power and Internet stations. The FAI Folk Chart is not weighted, meaning that each play counts the same whether 100 watts or 100,000. The NACC charts are weighted on five tiers from 1 for community and internet only radio up to 5 for such as Bob McWilliams on Kansas Public Radio or Mary Sue Twohy on SiriusXM. Both folk charts offer transparency—every submission can be seen—unmatched in the others.

The world of folk radio is far larger than represented on the FAI Folk Chart and NACC Folk Chart. 150 reporters are registered to FAI and 170 to NACC. I am one of ten DJs that report to both charts, so that leaves 310 unduplicated reporters to the two major charts. Unfortunately, less than half the registered reporters report in any single week. On top of that, my database contains 1050 folk hosts, stations, and syndicated shows ("strips" in jargon), so much folk and roots radio play goes unreported.

Self-promotion compared to using a radio promoter

People can scrape together a passable folk radio, especially the chart reporters, list using publicly available information, including the FAI reporters and, if you are a paid promotional subscriber, those for NACC. If you have been in the business awhile and attend FAI conferences and regionals, you have met a good deal of programmers already and assiduously protected their contact info.

Nor are the mechanics difficult. I explain them in this booklet.

Yet radio promoters have many advantages over DIY the same as with any specialized professional. For radio promoters this is our day job, a serious profession. Most of us work six or seven days a week immersed in folk radio. We spread the costs of services we use for hosting downloads, tracking info, and streaming across multiple releases during a year and pass those savings on to our clients. We can provide access to services that ship your CDs including postal rates less than you can get; sometimes for printing too. We have churned out one sheets and track cards for years. We are used to doing this work and have proven processes that work.

Long lasting relationships with dozens of DJs and programming outlets form the largest advantage radio promoters enjoy. We know whether they prefer downloads or CDs, interviews or not, how much communication they like to receive, and the history of their spins. DJs expect to hear from us, and we may send several dozen albums and singles a year. I do at least one a week save for December. Thus our snail and email lists are constantly being updated.

Independent radio promoters, therefore, have the very best proprietary lists of program hosts, snail mail and email, often in formats that allow querying across variables. We have propriety databases of plays that allow for targeting hosts based on their playing history. We do a better job than in house label promoters to such a degree that an artist on a label sometimes hires one of us with her own money to do folk radio.

We are gatekeepers in the post recording industry era. Once upon a time, recording labels did the vetting, often marking the first hurdle that once cleared led to agents, managers, and gigs. The democratization of the recording process and collapse of retail sales has produced a wild, wild world where anyone can release music. That a promoter believes in your release (our choices do reflect on us and our ability to keep a gate) and that you are willing to invest in it convey a positive message.

Radio promoters work in one of the few areas in our industry that generate publicly available comparative numbers. On the FAI and NACC charts programmers, people expert in listening to music for its appeal to audiences, openly show what they have selected. It's like a showcase committee that operates 24/7/52. Otherwise, we are looking at social, email, and web activity numbers and how many shows the artist plays each year.

If anything, digital only releases increase the need for a professional.

Reasons to self-promote

You have the time, money, knowledge, and willingness to get it done. This is the best, albeit, most challenging reason. Kristin Grainger & True North ran a very successful album campaign last year, but they earned every spin with tons of hard work and then even more work.

You plan a **limited campaign** to a targeted group from as small as just DJs you know or no larger than the 150 FAI Folk Chart reporting registrants.

You have **high name recognition** among folk programmers *and* access to recent email and snail mail lists.

You have **a truly up to date postal mail and email lists** that are comprehensive for your target audience

Save money. This is the most common and worst reason. Successfully promoting your own record is a lot of work. Much more for you than I due to the reasons above. If you have a day job or a busy performance calendar, you should seriously consider whether you have the time and capacity to become a record promoter.

Or, sadly, if you don't succeed in hiring a radio promoter, reconsidering whether to release the recording becomes advisable. Just because art is good doesn't mean it has an audience.

Adjustments and hybrid approaches using some professional assistance

Some radio promoters may be willing to work with you to provide some professional help while working within a limited budget. You can explore options. Big drivers are the cost of mailing CDs in postage and work time and the time involved in tracking airplay and thanking DJs.

Adjustments to full promotion that reduce the fees and total costs are:

- Mailing fewer CDs
- Doing the one sheet printing and CD mailing yourself
- Shortening the promotional period for the which the promoters is engaged.

Alternatives to full promotion:

- Hiring a professional to do the printing and mailing only.
- Engaging a professional to make a custom CD mailing list to fit your project, then handling the promotion yourself.
- A digital only album promotion with CDs available on request
- Hiring a promoter for a digital single promotion only
- Consulting with a professional to get started on the right foot.

Before You Begin

- Create a timeline for promotion to radio and press and the commercial release
- Develop a budget for all aspects of the project
- Crowdfund or otherwise raise the needed money
- Collect what you will need for promotion
  - WAVs and MP3-320s of the final masters encoded with metadata, including ISRC, and available for download and streaming. At a minimum you need a streaming service, such as Soundcloud, AirPlay Direct, and an effective download platform.
  - CD graphics as image files and liner notes, booklet, and other assets as PDFs
  - Lyrics as a PDF or Word docx
  - Text and layout for one-sheet and track sheet or card.
  - Postal mailing list and email list
  - Mailing supplies

Common Blunders Killing Airplay

1. Poor CD design without easy to read track numbers or durations; no **title or artist name on the spine**. DJs need these. Design mistakes can even raise mailing costs.
2. No one sheet or track card/sheet. Or one-sheets with all hype and nothing about the songs.
3. Essential metadata (the artist and song names, number and, most often, the ISRC) missing.
4. Starting promotion after release to the public
5. Emailing DJs without download links and repurposing commercial download sites.
6. Clogging inboxes by emailing files instead of links.
7. Underpromoting.

Things to Improve Your Chances

1. Put digital versions of everything that comes with the CD in the DJ download plus more.
2. Don't require extra hoops for DJs to download your album such as passwords or writing you for the download link and make the CD packages easy to open without damaging contents.
3. Respect volunteer radio hosts' limited time.
4. Promote in a variety places and media: direct email, folkDJ listserve and Facebook page, Music Meeting Directory, Airplay Direct, Soundcloud.
5. No jewel cases and no digital files lower than MP3-320
6. Thank programmers the most and the best.
7. Invest sufficient funds to do the job right.

Timelines

The ability of a release getting strong airplay is largely determined before release. Nothing defeats your purpose worse than starting too late in the radio promotion process (it is even worse for publicity to reviewers and feature writers). Use the handy rule of thumb: If you have the rough mixes, you have waited as long as is reasonable. If you want to do promo right, have the manufactured CDs in hand at least three months before release. Otherwise, if you are almost ready for the CDs to be manufactured, you have waited far too long and will have to either hustle or delay. If you start when you have the songs written and arranged, you are on top of things and are preparing for success.

Then you have to manage the project making sure everything is coordinated. Without a label or manager, the artist becomes responsible for coordinating activities among the team. A timeline is the most basic tool for organizing and tracking the progress of your promotion.

Even compressing the timeline and moving at the fastest speed, promotional work would start no later six weeks before the radio add date, e.g. when you want DJs to start playing the song. If you plan to use a promoter, you ought to engage them worst case no less than two months before.

An example of best practice timeline appears as Appendix 4.

How to Do It: Get More Plays by Making Things Easy for Programmers

Reality check, you need airplay more than DJ's need more music to play. The supply exceeds the demand. That means radio programmers' needs come first. Hosts receive a steady stream of CDs and downloads, 8 during a light week for me; three dozen in a heavy week. One time I had more than 120 waiting for me in two big bins at the post office. Counting digital, some weeks I have received more than 700 songs!

A successful artist or promoter keeps this in mind in every aspect—design, timing, medium, packaging. Every detail in the process either enhances or detracts from a project's airplay. A modern digipak with no shrink wrap has a better chance than a shrink wrapped jewel case. Design optimized for DJs are more likely to be heard.

As promoters and artists, we do have something the programmers need. DJs like be feel on the inside, not fans, getting news and the best music first, getting special access, receiving interviews and liners. Most of all, we have to deliver quality consistently. High enough that DJs just have to share. **You can't control whether a programmers likes what you do, but can assure that you do it well.** DJs are the people who were sharing new music as soon as they got their first turntable. They want to expose people to the new sounds they like best. Promoters cut through the clutter by delivering that consistently and the way programmers need it.

Lots of those submissions are a waste of money because they don't fit the show. That factor is another thing radio promoters track across multiple projects and years. Of the CDs I receive as a DJ, only 25% clearly have at least one song for my show; 50% clearly don't fit just on content such as a love song for my political song show; and 25% are maybes usually due to lack of lyrics or track descriptions. That means I have to take extra time to screen them, which usually means they never get played. Think before you send.

Most folk and roots hosts are volunteers. On community and college radio all of them are volunteers trying to find time to put a show together. Whoever makes it easiest for a host to program their recording, especially if the artist isn't a big name, the more likely they will give it a chance. Removing barriers seems obvious, but you wouldn't imagine what I've seen. Even the best labels fumble some of these mostly common sense matters when promoting to folk.

Here are some key concepts:

Get your music to the DJs in multiple ways. One post to folkDJ post won't get it done.

- Direct email to hosts, which is another place where professional promoters have a big logistical and data advantage, is essential. Nothing produces greater results. Social media doesn't replace direct email. Each host should be sent the message at least seven times through multiple media.
- Airplay Direct (APD) has some issues such as no WAVs or one sheet downloads and lots of non-reporter and non-North American downloads, but it is where many DJs discover new music. Use its DPK feature

for an additional direct email push to all the DJs on your list. Use it twice for each recording two or three weeks apart. This is a paid service that costs $50 per year for an individual artist contracting directly with APD. Promoters often pay for a label account for their clients and spread the costs over several dozen releases. Be sure to enter your ISRC's!

- Subscribe to the FOLKDJ listserve (folkradio.org), post your notice and links (not "write me for a link") there, and build your DIY mailing list for snail and email there. Posts that give no way to obtain the music for download—and these are very common—are annoying at best. Give the DJs the links. Don't make them write for it.
- Same for the FolkDJ Facebook group and your own socials, except no download links in public spaces.
- Having a private, advance DJ streaming is important. Streams can be kept private for just the media and offered to them in advance of the downloads and promo CDs to whet interest.
- The NACC charts, for subscribers paying $600 per annum with the FAI discount, offers handy tools: NACC's own Going For Adds (GFA) listing for each Tuesday and, even more important, the Music Meeting Directory provides download links for what promoters submitted for that Tuesday and sends out weekly charts of responses thereto.
- And, of course, mailing CDs. The costliest but still most effective means even though it seems like radio is the only reason to make them anymore. In 2020, John McCutcheon with Kari Estrin promoting achieved **the first digital-only album to reach #1** on the FAI Folk Chart.

◊ Expensive - with cost of CDs at even the lowest color printing and postage rates you are looking at total investment $2.50 to $4 for each unit you send to media within the USA. $8 and up outside the USA. Radio promoters or their associates often have access to discounted mailing rates and sometimes even understand the postal system better than the post office counter person. Some of the latter, for example, erroneously think you have to mail CDs at the nearly $3 media mail rate, created to save money when mailing media packages weighing more than a pound. A single CD in a soft pack can mail 1st class at $1.40 to 1.60.

◊ Lists of radio require constant updates from multiple sources. Radio promoters do this for a living. Most lists one can buy are woefully out of date; you can't buy a list worth using. Thanks to such, I still get CDs addressed to me as Music Director at a station in another state where I was just a DJ 7 years ago. Only professional promoters have current lists. You can build your own list of radio programmers from posts on FolkDJ, Googling, downloads from APD, lists of chart reporters, but that is a lot of work.

Some promoters in bluegrass make a CD sleeve into the 1-sheet and mail in cardboard for 91 cents. This has numerous downsides.

For CDs:

- Make the package easy to open. Many folk DJs are older than 60. Professional mailers may waste a lot of plastic and paper, but they use at least half the packaging tape that civilians do. You probably don't need a bubble mailer unless you have an obsolete jewel case or are sending multiple units. Otherwise, you can mail one CD in a regular kraft envelope like this on the left.
- Avoid the sort of non-paper mailer depicted to the right. They are wicked hard to open.
- Don't have shrink wrap put on the DJ copies of CDs unless your are inexplicably using atavistic jewel cases. Shrink wrap is just an obstacle for the host to get to your music.
- **No jewel cases!** Repeat. No jewel cases. Too bulky adding at least $1 to each one you mail. Too easy to break. Take up too much storage space. No good can be said about jewel cases by a reasonable person.
- CD must be entered into GraceNote via iTunes. Free and easy, but essential. Why? Do you want a screen on a CD player or a dashboard display for radio or CD to read "Unknown Artist"? Some DJs will not play music that isn't in Gracenote since it can't be logged automatically.
- The CD packaging itself needs to be not just DJ-friendly but optimized for DJ use. DJs are the primary audience for CDs these day. Plan accordingly. Easy to read, song durations, simple to take CD in and out.

About clean language

Provide warnings and, when possible, radio edits for any track that a reasonable person could consider not appropriate for airplay. “The 7 words you can’t say” was a comedy routine by George Carlin, not FCC regulations which are much fuzzier, based on context and community. For example, “He was pissed off,” is legal since it doesn’t directly refer to the bodily function. Nonetheless, many DJs would be uncomfortable playing it and pissed off at you for not warning them. If no issues, state prominently “All tracks have clean language.”

We have different classes of material. It doesn't have to be words either. Graphically describing something patently offensive using "nice" words is not acceptable either.
Three legal classes:
1) obscene material: not protected by first amendment, appealing to the prurient interest, lacking redeeming value, and describing sexual content in a patently offensive way. Obscene material is forbidden at all times.
2) profane material: "so grossly offensive to members of the public who actually hear it as to amount to a nuisance."
3) indecent material: "language or material that, in context, depicts or describes, in terms patently offensive as measured by contemporary community standards for the broadcast medium, sexual or excretory organs or activities."
Indecent and profane material may not be played between 6 am and 10 pm
The fourth category is informal: words that people may be uncomfortable playing on the radio . DJs should be warned about these too.

- Always have a spine with the name of the artist and release. Remember, DJs may be looking for your CD among thousands. Look at the adjacent photo of what a DJ faces often under severe time pressure. Track listing on the CD and one-sheet must include ordinal number of track, name of track, and duration. DJs need that. Imagine someone needing a 3:25 long song in 60 seconds from a CD wall like the one to the right.
- CDs must be easy to shelve efficiently. Unusual packages may gain initial attention, but then get lost. I didn’t play a Windborne release I really liked as often as I planned because I kept misplacing it. Scott Cook has succeeded with his unusual approach since the 200 page book is sized to fit on a CD shelf.
- Make the text on the CD package easy to read, especially against colored backgrounds. Designers sometimes forget that practical function and always forget that in 2021 to design for radio.

For Digital Delivery:

- Set up your own download site with all CD assets and more if available. Don’t force users to download both WAV and mp3 or two make a second download for the assets.
- Allow media downloads with the fewest clicks possible. No more than 3 clicks.
- Don’t secure with DJ copies with passwords. If you have a digital release, it is already on bootleg download sites all over the Net, harvested indiscriminately by lots of bots. Thieves don’t buy stuff anyway. That’s why they steal.
- Never ask the DJ to write for a download link. One more reason not to listen to your music. It makes no sense to email a DJ without including a link. Recorded music is no longer a commodity.
- Use Bitly to create easy to remember URLs (Bitly addresses are case sensitive, btw).
- Make digital downloads available simultaneously with DJs receiving promo CDs.

Include:

- The audio files as WAV and MP3 320.
- All other digital assets:

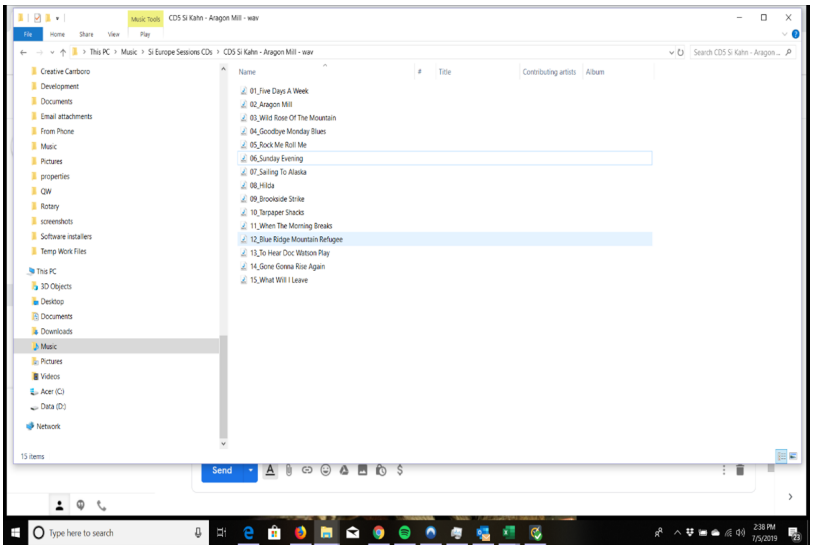
  cover and all other album art as image files
  PDF of liner notes
  PDF of the one sheet,

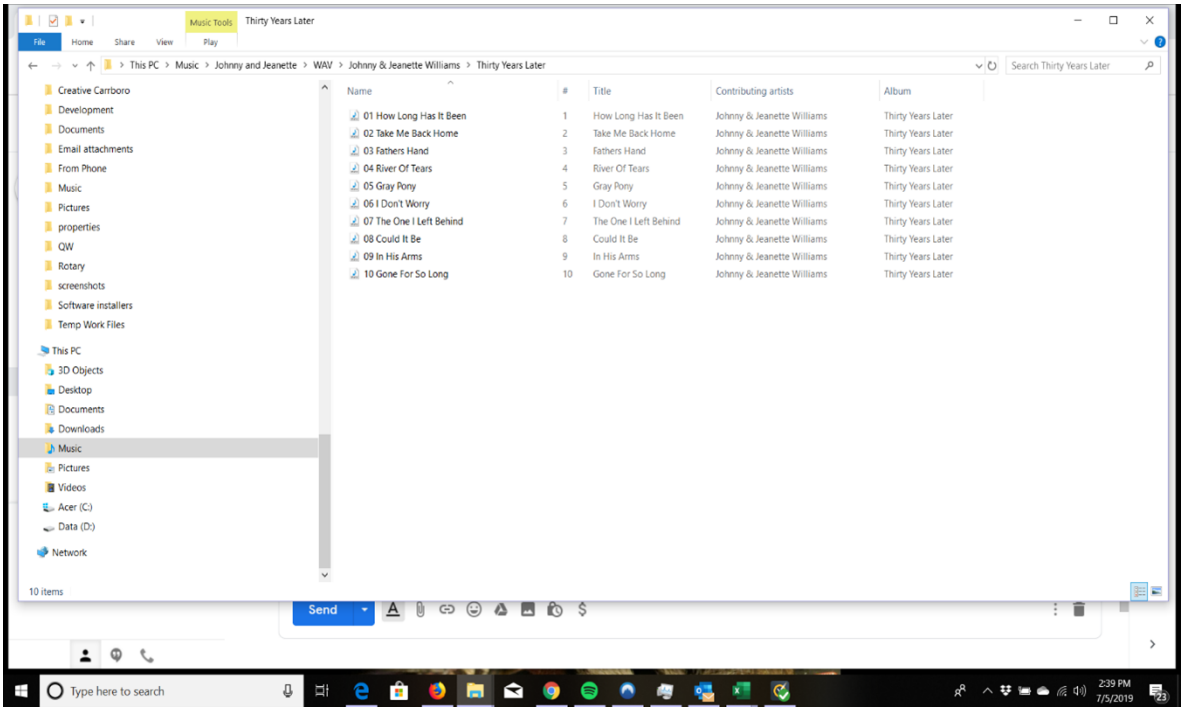
PDF of track card or sheet,
PDF of any booklet or the like
any press releases as Word or PDF.
PDF of lyrics

- Send CDs to those who prefer them and digital downloads to those happy to use them, obviously. This, of course, requires that knowledge. Although this is changing rapidly due to COVID, 50% of DJs are download friendly, but just that reduces your costs by half!

Digital files must be fully encoded with artist, song title, album title, and the **ISRC** code. These should be embedded by the mastering engineer. There are free apps to add embedding as mp3tag. They work great with mp3, but WAVs are far more problematic, particularly ISRC. Request in your contract that the mastering engineer embed these along with other metadata. You could expect DJs to take the time to enter this information for you, but that is unrealistic as most don't have the time or inclination to do so. Why would a DJ want to enter all that info in order to have one more album to play among the 11,000 tracks she already has as digital files?

- Don't use the long, arcane file names often assigned at the mastering studio. Make copies and replace with title of song. Numbers and letters give no idea of the song or artist. Extra words in the file name
- In Windows Explorer, you music files should look like the one to the below and not like the one on the right. On the latter, if these files leave their home folder, you will have no way to identify them except the names of the files, which may mean nothing.





Preparing One Sheets and Track Cards or Sheets

These are your primary means for communicating with and enticing DJs to play a recording. They should help a producer select and talk intelligently about songs and albums. These are short pieces designed to sell the music to programmers and provide information, not comprehensive statements about artistic process or two pages of hype and bio. One sheets came to exist to convince retailers to buy from wholesale distributors. That format doesn't fit the needs of radio hosts.

- Include a one-sheet and either track card or track sheet along with the lyrics in physical and digital formats.
- Track cards are something DJs can keep with a CD, but they require work in layout and concise prose. The alternative, track sheets go on the back side of the one-sheet. They are easier to do and much better for digital hosts.
- Whether sheet or card, they tell the DJ (or reviewer) in a couple of sentences what the song is about, tempo, and style. The format is: Track number; Title, (duration), sometimes tempo and style, one or two sentences about the song and why included on album. Supply what you want the DJ to say.
- If you are releasing the album yourself, invent a name for your recording company and use it. The optics are better, and optics matter.
- The one sheet should include:
- Prominent Add Date
- Cover art
- Recording label. Even if you invent your own label, the optics are better with one, particularly for the NACC Folk Chart.
- Any problematic words flagged
- Contact info
- A track listing with number and time, songwriter info if space permits
- Text: information about the album, especially the why and how recorded, what it means to the artist with an engaging quotation, maybe highlight a few tracks, and a one paragraph bio.

Appendix 1 provides an example of my preferred method combining on the front and back of one 8.5 x 11 page, a one-sheet and a track sheet (rather than card).

Guy Forsyth & Jeska Bailey

CONSPIRATORS

Release Date - July 5, 2019
Small & Nimble Records 99311

Multi-time award winner and internationally recognized Austin based musician Guy Forsyth has finally met his match. He has conspired to pair his vocals and guitar work with the femininity and incredible vocal dexterity of Jeska Bailey.This duo debut conveys emotion laid bare with harmonies that were first clandestine in nature but Guy knew they were destined to be heard and incorporated into this album. The "Conspirators" showcases roots music in its simplest form with stirring emotion, while showcasing their guitar and voices predominatley with the occassional foot stomp and fiddle. With this intriguing release Forsyth & Bailey incorporate originals alongside covers they have passionately adopted and made their own.

Album highlights:

- ***The Things That Matter:*** The opening track, is a very powerful musical offering with Forsyth playing his signature National Resophonic Tri-Cone and lyrics that grabs the listener's attention expertly joined by Bailey during the chorus where she gently joins in on harmonies
- ***Nobody Gonna Bail Me Out:*** Is another original which highlights Guy's mastery of the country blues DNA
- ***Daddy's Listening:*** A Bailey/Forsyth original gives voice to a divorced single mother coping with an ex-husband's surveillance
- ***Mercy Now:*** Connects families failing struggles to an entire nation enduring the same originally written by the talented Mary Gauthier.
- ***Pockets:*** Deals with the death of a partner
- ***Barefoot Waltz:*** This bitter sweet waltz features Austin's own Warren Hood on Fiddle

Throughout this musical journey the listener is continuously challenged with obstacles people face in every day life but the engaging duo offer hope and insight. Driven by the sounds of our past and the beauty of simple roots music. "Conspirators" is an album that will please generations to come bridging the gap between young and old, traditional folk to the new indie-folk world.

The duo found themselves in the recording studio touching up and perfecting tracks that had been laid down over a year earlier while doing promotional work. "Conspirators" quickly found legs of its own as people heard the captivating songs and harmonies. The decision to preserve the simple form of the album and keep it mainly guitar and vocals was made to perpetuate the raw folk feeling one gets when listening to it. It lent itself to the album tittle – "Conspirators", those that conspire. Guy Forsyth is no newcomer to the stage and is currently holding the Austin Music Awards titles for 2019/2020 Best Harmonica and Best Blues title. The remarkable voice of Jeska Bailey, who married Guy early in 2018, enthusiasticlly looks forward to this debut album as she is introduced into the Folk world.

Radio Promo/Interviews: Kari Estrin Mgt/Consulting PO Box 60232 Nashville, TN 37206
www.kariestrin.com 615.262.0883 kari@kariestrin.com
www.guyforsyth.com

Guy Forsyth & Jeska Bailey CONSPIRATORS www.guyforsyth.com

1.**The Things That Matter** (4:07) *Solo guitar with voices and foot stomps. Played on a National Tri-cone resonator guitar with slide.* Written with Brian David Keane at his home in Nashville after receiving bad news about Stephen Bruton in 15 minutes. Wammo, band member of Asylum Street Spankers, helped craft the third verse. It's a minimalist form, no bridge, just simple prayers.

2.**Pockets** (3:26) *Solo guitar with voices and foot stomps. Played on a Collings guitar.* Written for Earl and Cathy Farmer, as part of Soulwriter University. Letting go is hard. We live for a moment in between the pull of gravity and spirit, taut as a bowstring till both succeed.

3.**Daddy's Listening** (4:49) *Solo guitar with vocals and foot stomp. Played on a National Tri-cone resonator guitar with slide.* Blues roots and cyberbullying. Written with Jeska Bailey after finding out her conversations with her daughter had been being recorded. Written as therapy, art as revenge, truth to power.

4.**Mercy Now** (5:24) *Solo guitar with voices.* Mary Gauthier penned this masterpiece for her 2005 album. It was named one of the 40 saddest county songs by Rolling Stone. Jeska sends this out to her Father Ron Sheppard. We could all use some mercy now.

5.**Barefoot Waltz** (4:41) *Guitar, Fiddle and voices.* Guy had this song in his pocket for a long time, since just after he moved to Austin. Written for a crush who never slowed down long enough to hear it, he never wanted to record it til he met Jeska. Love means more the second time around. Blind love is the province of youth, now we must love bravely. Warren Hood is true Austin music and his fiddle playing here is all the proof you will ever need.

6.**Nobody Gonna Bail Me Out** (3:31) *Solo guitar with voices and foot stomps.* Played on a National Reso-rocket resonator guitar. George Rarey (Best Guitar Player in Texas) came up with the riff and I made up the words. Everyone in the world at some point comes to the realization that they are alone, what happens then is character.

Above is an example of a traditional one-sheet on the left with, on the right, the obverse of a traditional track card. Small enough to fit into a CD sleeve

Following Up on a Release: Track and Thank

1) How to track airplay:

- FolkDJ playlists or archives where you can search by name.
- Spinitron.com/search - a system for logging airplay to comply with needs of SoundExchange under the DMCA - always free searching of all airplay registered with it over the most recent 24 hours. You can also go back months in the individual show pages. Most data comes from college, tribal, and community stations. Spinitron is a wonderful tool for discovering new
- NACC Folk Chart - those who subscribe with the $50/month half-price deal via FAI can get weekly spreadsheet downloads of all folk airplay and adds reported over one-week periods by station. The reports, however, only include the top ten from each reporting station.
- Individual station and host playlists online.
- Google searches for artist and title
- Direct communications with DJs.

2) Thanking hosts for airplay is the best practice for follow up and the way to build and maintain relationships. She who thanks best gets the most airplay. The appreciation reinforces and builds upon itself over time and lets hosts upon themselves over time.

- As you track send thank you messages to DJs who play your music. Keep them brief until you get to know them. Some DJs want to be emailed; some to get phone calls; and some want to be left alone. Knowing this is another advantage that promoters have.
- Offer liners (station IDs) and interviews as an additional way to both interact and promote.
- Remember that this process is all about building durable relationships with hosts for the future.

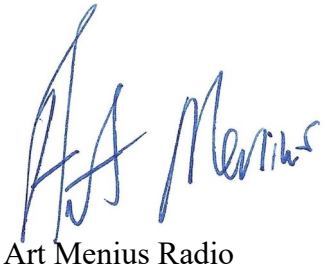
3) Follow up with programmers who haven't played your music using quiet, patient persistence.

- Keep pushing your message without appearing pushy by getting personal or impatient. You'll get much better results simply resending your announcement message as if he had not seen it than asking the DJ whether they have received it.
- Don't put DJs on the spot by pushing for a clear yes - no answer. Effective promoters at the most just put the thought out there that a certain song might fit the DJ's show, but doesn't ask for a response.
- Programmers know what fits their show a lot better than you do. You can convince a DJ to listen, but playing your song on air is their choice.
- DJs may not get to your music for weeks, especially during the pandemic. Accept that as fact about which you can do nothing. Asking if the programmer has heard the record yet does not expedite listening; it just makes you sound impatient.

I appreciate you reading this far. That's my overview of how to do it and whether you should hire a promoter. I trust you found it helpful.

The information continues with four appendices followed by an extensive glossary.

Thanks for reading,



Art Menius Radio

art@artmenius.com

919-675-2787

https://artmeniusradio.com

Appendix 1: Setting Yourself Up for Digital Delivery

Your Download Site

Must include MP3-320 (never use anything less), WAV, and digital files of all assets. Do not try to repurpose commercial download sites by imposing passwords

Dropbox, Box, and **MediaFire**, which I use, offer the most flexibility, easy to use for uploader and downloader, and fairly inexpensive. I prefer MediaFire because file sharing is all it does rather than replacing your hard drive and facilitating online collaborative work. That leaves MediaFire simpler, more straightforward on either end. Dropbox, of course, offers many more functions than file sharing. **Google Drive** offers similar functionality, but with more bells, whistles, and options, it is not as intuitive the other two for the downloader. One has to click through to find the download link if the user knows which menu to use.

DISCO, used by Music Meeting Directory (see below), is the fastest, slickest, and simplest. It only, however, uses WAV and gives downloads quarter mile long filenames which Windows Explorer truncates into something unintelligible.

Don't use Airplay Direct (see just below) as your primary download site. It is password protected, requires several more keystrokes to download, and doesn't deliver assets completely or in native format.

Download cards have a utility at real world events, but otherwise adapting a retail sales platform to deliver music to radio programmers is a fairly common, but bad, practice. It requires extra effort for DJs, always a mistake, including a code. And it doesn't make DJs feel special. It makes a difference having access to a space closed to the public in the real world and the digital world.

Digital Service Providers (DSPs) for Radio Downloads

Airplay Direct (APD) is the best known and most often used service of this class in roots radio. For bluegrass and blues APD is absolutely essential and additional investment may well work. APD is not, however, all the promotion one needs to do in those genre and more than one post on FolkDJ isn't a campaign. For folk it is useful and should be used every time, but lacking it isn't a dealbreaker for the reasons cited above.

Music Meeting Directory uses DISCO to service NACC Charts reporters of all their formats. Currently it is free for promoters and labels who subscribe to the NACC Folk Chart ($50 per month. Another cost promoters can spread over many releases.)

playMPE allows a good deal of customization and avoids most spam and promotions filters. For a charge of around $600, one can blast a song to pretty much all Americana, AAA, and NonComm. An album is, I believe, costs three times more. Used little if any for folk radio

Streaming Services

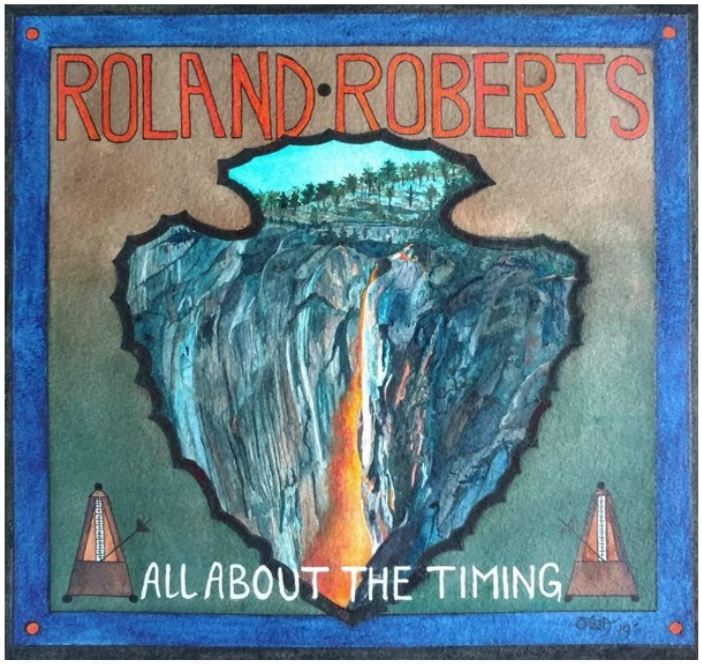
I use **Soundcloud** to deliver private streams to radio. I find it efficient and attractive with unlimited uploads and a bit of branding possible on the page. Most important to me, one click takes a programmer to the private stream.

By contrast, **APD**'s streaming requires the host to log in. By the time she is listening, the DJ has clicked thrice rather than once.

Similarly, with **Spotify**, the user has to log in or listen with ads. Again, it doesn't make the programmer feel validated.

Appendix 2—My One Sheet / Track Sheet Combination

Combines, on the front and back of one 8.5 x 11 sheet, one-sheet and a track sheet (rather than card).



On a cold, snowy January day in the north country, singer/songwriter Roland Roberts walked into Old Crow Recording in Whitehorse, Yukon to begin recording his debut album with producer Bob Hamilton. Bringing with him only a bag of new songs and an acoustic guitar, the Palmer, Alaska resident knew little about what the outcome would be. What happened next was pure gold. Every so often, an album will come along that is almost impossible to put a genre label on. Roland Roberts' debut album *All About the Timing* definitely falls into this category. Rooted in a classic country sound, yet bearing heavy tones of American folk, Delta blues, and even a touch of bluegrass paired with thought provoking lyrics and commanding vocals,

Roland takes the listener through vivid landscapes that include stories of personal growth through love, loss, and heartbreak with songs like "Beautiful Soul" and "Don't Tell Me Goodbye." He also explores the self-realization that these experiences bring and expertly weaves them into song, such as the title track, "All About the Timing" and "Being Me." Roland offsets these songs with a mix of upbeat stories that seem like simple strokes of paint on a canvas but are masterpieces that you can't help but listen to again. "Picture on the Wall" is a fun number about growing up and all that comes with it, while "Sittin' in Nebraska" is a catchy ditty about getting stranded by Mother Nature. To listen to *All About the Timing* is to take a journey through the mind of a man that has the innate ability to see the human condition for what it is and transfer it seamlessly into folk, Americana, and country music.

Memphis-born, Alabama-raised, Colorado-grown, and now a staple in the flourishing Alaskan music scene, Roland Roberts blends an array of genres into a captivating yet delicate musical experience. His storytelling and stage presence have entertained audiences across North America. After recording his debut album in Whitehorse, Yukon, and rooting down in Hatcher Pass, Alaska, Roberts soon made acquaintances with bassist Alvin Fernandez and drummer Matthew Wallace. They formed The Roland Roberts Trio, then added multi-instrumentalist Matt Faubion to form The Roland Roberts Band.

US Radio Add Date: January 12, 2021

All About the Timing

by

Roland Roberts

Happy Life Records

Produced by Bob Hamilton at Old Crow Recording, Whitehorse, YK

www.rolandrobertsband.com

7 86032 63821 2

"Rarely served up songs of this worldly nature on a debut record, Roland is a poet with depth & sincerity unmeasured"
says Gordie Tentrees

All songs by Roland Roberts,
© 2020 Roland Roberts Music (ASCAP).
All songs FCC compliant.

1.	Beautiful Soul	2:56
2.	Picture on the Wall	3:18
3.	Wake Up	2:53
4.	Sittin' in Nebraska	2:28
5.	Don't Tell Me Goodbye	5:22
6.	Rambling Joe	2:14
7.	All About the Timing	2:53
8.	Being Me	3:05
9.	Lonely Blues	4:11
10.	Keep Moving On	2:38

Roland Roberts (guitar, keyboards, vocals); Rob Bergman (bass); Lonnie Powell & Patrick Hamilton (drums); Sarah Hamilton (fiddle, harmonies); George McConkey (Harmonica); Bob Hamilton (electric and archtop guitar, mandolin, Weissenborn, dobro, steel guitar)

Radio Promotion: Art Menius Radio
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All About the Timing: The Songs

All songs by Roland Roberts, © 2020 Roland Roberts Music (ASCAP).
All songs FCC compliant.

1) "Beautiful Soul" (2:56) is about a lovely young lady I met on the road a few summers ago and the time we got to spend together. I put it on the album because it's one of my favorite stories to tell.

2) "Picture On The Wall" (3:18) concerns growing up, getting busy, and losing touch with friends, but also pokes fun at how it's not really anyone's fault. I began writing this one after seeing a picture of my grandfather, Roland Sr., in his mid-thirties and realizing how much we looked alike. I put it on the album to remind all the wonderful friends I've made over the years that they're all still important to me.

3) "Wake Up" (2:53) is about the opiate epidemic. I wrote this one after losing a very dear friend to an overdose in 2014. I felt the need to write this song as a call to action after taking a closer look at what was going on and how many people were dying from opiate abuse every day.

4) "Sittin' In Nebraska" (2:28) recounts the time I got stranded in a blizzard on I-80 outside of Lincoln, Nebraska while trying to make it back to Denver in time for a Tyler Childers concert. He had just released his second album, and I knew he was about to blow up and may not play in a smaller venue like this ever again. So I was in quite a hurry. I wrote it over the course of the two days I was stuck there. I missed the show and still haven't seen him play. I did meet some great people and get a good song out of it though.

5) "Don't Tell Me Goodbye" (5:22) relates another tale of "what might have been," a song I wrote for a girl I met on NYE in New York and the times we spent together as we crossed paths several times over the years. I wrote it on a napkin in a bar in the Portland Airport after being dropped off by my friends after a weekend at The Gorge.

6) "Rambling Joe" (2:14) was a guy I knew as a young man who one day out of nowhere decided to buy an early 90's VW van, sell everything that wouldn't fit in it, and hit the road. A true vanlifer before van life was cool.

7) "All About the Timing" (2:53) offers a funny nod to how we all spend so much time making plans and trying to ensure things go accordingly that we sometimes lose sight of the of the journey we're on and the little encounters that make this life great. My own little way of telling folks to slow down and enjoy the ride!

8) "Being Me" (3:05) addresses being yourself and how difficult that can be. I wrote this one after someone told me I was too old to be running around playing music in bars and roadhouses. Even though I wrote it years ago, I put it on the album because I felt that truly being yourself is probably difficult for a lot of people.

9) "Lonely Blues" (4:11) pretty much sums up this one, it's a blues song about being lonely. I wrote this one in my living room on my old Wurlitzer acoustic piano over a glass of bourbon when I was feeling, well… lonely.

10) "Keep Movin' On" (2:38) is a breakup song I wrote on the road in northern Alberta a few summers ago. She called to remind me that she was still mad at me but also wanted to make sure my trip was going well. Just my way and saying thanks and goodbye.

Appendix 3: Using Videos

A video adds potential reach of any part of the project. I consider one nearly essential to, if not synonymous with, a single release. Videos provide an additional tool, along with reviews, to use in promotion. Consider that YouTube is the most important place for music discovery today more than radio and more than even Spotify, Pandora, or Soundcloud. That is how the video should be prioritized especially for time, effort, and creativity. In addition, the video premier gets you coverage on a major website that reaches far beyond your own resources.

During 2020 Jesse Palidofsky released a produced video to accompany his updating of "America the Beautiful" with Claire Lynch and Lea Gillmore. The video surpassed 64,000 views. The song reached #2 on the FAI Folk Chart.

Si Kahn recorded himself sitting in front of his PC camera singing "Yo! Semite!," organically it has earned 31,000 views with the lightly promoted song landing at #15 on the same chart.

The better the video, potentially the bigger the outlet. It doesn't have to be fancy or expensive, just a creative piece of art that complements or augments the music version. The internet is stuffed with videos of full band performing. The more it is just a video of a band playing, the less its marketability to outlets that reach new fans. It can even be as little as a creative approach to presenting the musicians playing, however. Bruce Molsky and David Holt made an amazing one by using drone shots of them playing high up on a mountain. While not a concert video, the artist should be featured in it, most usually playing and singing but also acting. Having some kind of narrative through path produces a better product.

Use the natural and manmade assets of your location. You can find interesting locations wherever you live. Your local theatre community contains skilled actors, often at the same career level as you. Somebody you know has a drone that can carry a camera.

Once you have the video completed and on YouTube - unlisted until going public for the debut - begin pitching it to the major roots music websites that still do video or song premiers. Create a priority list and work down it until you reach the best outlet that will debut your video. That is easy to say, but much easier for professionals, in this specific case the publicist if you have one, with established relationships to do.

Examples of simple, creative, relatively inexpensive videos:

https://youtu.be/FaqZdpqDWbw which features the band playing but in an unusual location with creative camera work

https://youtu.be/AYJA42hcPpY again the duo playing but with elements of the song happening behind and around them

https://youtu.be/czMNCRouEBM mixes a little new footage, stills, and "found footage."

Appendix 4: Timeline Example

A Good Practices Timeline

Six months before intended radio add date

Material chosen, demos cut to recruit team
If desired, engage a radio promoter, a publicist, as well as other team members if affordable
If not hiring professionals, make plan for promotion yourself

Four months Out

Project fully funded.
Rough mixes ready
CD package graphics reviewed for optimal radio friendliness.
Final masters completed
Design completed
CD manufacturing begins

Three months in advance

Graphics finalized
CDs manufactured
One sheet completed
Promo CDs mailed to reviewers and feature editors so that print is synchronized to release.

8 weeks before

If desired, first video finished and placed on YouTube unlisted. Video shopped for a premier with artist supplying a quote about both song and video.

Six weeks before

CDs arrive from wince they will be shipped out
All graphic and PDF files ready to use in downloads and one sheets.
Rough text for one sheet and 2 to 3 sentences about each song for track card or sheet composed

Four weeks before

Drop advance single if desired
One sheets and track cards or sheets printed
All assets and audio files ready for download and streaming
CD distribution list finished

Three weeks before

CDs in the mail to radio
Private stream shared with radio

Two weeks before add date

Put in NACC's Going for Adds listings
Album available for download and streaming by radio on Tuesday promoted by direct email and folkDJ listserv.

1 week before radio add date

Downloads put in Music Meeting Directory Going for Adds system before Thursday if NACC subscriber.
Album available on AirPlay Direct (APD). APD release by sending the DPK it generates to all your DJ emails
Direct email to programmers with download, streaming, and APD links.

Radio Add Date (aka radio release date) always a Tuesday

Direct email to DJs

FolkDJ post
FolkDJ Facebook page post
Video or album premier on popular website
Included in Music Meeting Directory Going For Adds download service sent to all NACC reporters

Radio Add Week

Tracking and thanking for airplay begins and continues until end of promotion
Album pushed each week on direct email until end of campaign
Engagement with DJs ongoing
Positive quotes and reviews used liberally on going

Three weeks after

Second APD DPK blast and FolkDJ post
Folk DJ listserv post
Second video release if desired

Six to ten weeks after

Active tracking and promotion winds down

Glossary

Album: A collection of seven or more tracks regardless of release format

Assets or Media Assets: In short, the digital version of everything you would get with the physical product, including those only sent to media: all album artwork as hi-res image files, PDFs of liner notes, lyrics, and booklet, bios, one sheets, track cards (or sheets).

CD: Compact disc. A form of physical media that can include one to roughly two dozen songs. The audio data is stamped into freshly made discs.

CD-R: A limited run, limited packaging CD produced primarily for servicing radio as a single, an advance release, or for a project with no commercial CD version. CD-R data is recorded on a blank disc manufactured for that purpose.

College Radio: Since these stations usually receive institutional support, they offer the most experimental and diverse locally produced radio at any power from internet only to 25KW. While some have stable professional management or long-established adult hosts, maintaining steady relationships or even current information proves a formidable challenge with student run stations where hosts can change with the semesters.

Community Radio: The broadest form of non-commercial (NCE) radio, community radio can resemble college in the breadth of its radio produced by local hosts or public radio with syndicated programming from Public Radio Exchange (PRX) and Pacifica Audioport (Pacifica's "Democracy Now" is the bedrock of many community stations' fundraising). Community radio ranges from powerhouse stations like KBCS in Seattle that resemble NPR stations in staffing and public affairs to 5KW full power community stations with the minimum 5 full-time employees required for CPB (Corporation for Public Broadcasting) funding to low power stations limited to 100 watts. The latter can range from fifty or more unpaid hosts and occasionally a paid employee, to just one-person operating an automated station in a rural community.

EP: A recording project consisting usually of three to six tracks regardless of format.

Gracenote: Apple's database for identifying music on a compact disc in a CD player, Gracenote provides the information about artist, song, and album on your audio display. One can enter information into Gracenote easily just using iTunes.

Internet Radio: Consists of both the streams from over-the-air (OTA) terrestrial stations (those that broadcast over the airwaves) and of internet-only stations. Those span the gamut from commercial operations that mimic satellite radio with multiple channels and genre, to those that operate one stream just as if it were a conventional station, to one-person, one-show-a-week outlets that may be part of an aggregator. All stations playing recorded music on the Internet are subject to regulations and fees from the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA), which created Sound Exchange as the 4th PRO to collect and distribute these royalties to people who perform on recordings.

International Standard Recording Code (ISRC): A unique and permanent identifier for a specific recording, independent of the format on which it appears (CD, audio file, vinyl, etc.). ISRCs are widely used in digital commerce by download sites and PROs. An ISRC can also be permanently encoded into a product as its digital fingerprint. Encoded ISRCs provide the means to automatically identify recordings for royalty payments.

Metadata: For properly encoded music files, the metadata provides the essential information identifying it: Artist, Track #, Title, Album, Album Artist, Recording Label, IRSC, even Songwriting & Publishing, if you want to. The first five fields are the essential ones used by Spinitron at

more than 200 stations to autogenerate playlists and reports required by the DMCA.

One-Sheets: Originally conceived to convince wholesalers and retailers to order LPs, one-sheets now mostly provide background information to programmers to decide whether to give the recording a chance. They also help DJs to sound knowledgeable and to select songs. They include on the obverse release and add dates, basic information and credits, back story about the album, and some bio information. If you use a track sheet rather than a track card, for convenience, it would appear on the reverse of the one-sheet.

Public Radio in the USA: Not synonymous with all or even most non-commercial or listener supported radio, "public radio" specifically refers to the largest and best funded non -commercial radio stations which are affiliates of National Public Radio (NPR). Before public radio standardization began 30 years ago, these were bulwark stations for presenting folk music to large, affluent audiences. While some locally produced shows remain on public radio, folk programming there has become dominated by a handful of nationally and regionally distributed programs such as "American Routes," "Mountain Stage," "Blues Caravan," and "Folk Alley."

Publicist: Someone whose business is promoting artists to media including reviews, articles in print and web outlets, and TV appearances. A different (and more expensive) specialty and set of relationships than radio promotion, although these efforts should support and reinforce each other. Since they work with publications, the publicist's work starts several weeks earlier than radio.

Radio Add Date: This is the Tuesday when you want radio to start playing your new music. Radio should have the downloads and CDs before this date. Sometimes this is the same as the public release date, but normally it's ten days to three weeks before. Often the two dates are conflated.

Radio Promoter: Someone in the business of pushing recordings to radio programmers. Skills include maintaining relationships and communication with hundreds of hosts; keeping data about radio stations as up to date as possible; making music available to radio by streaming and download; preparing assets; selecting to whom to send CDs; and tracking airplay and thanking hosts. Radio promoters usually have resources, volume discounts, and relationships beyond those of an individual artist.

Release Date: The release date, now always a Friday, is a holdover from the days of actual retail music sales. It was the day when recordings went on sale. Nowadays, it is supposed to be the day the album goes on sale and streaming to the public.

Satellite Radio in the USA: Is for all intents and purposes, SiriusXM. Because of the national reach of its folk and bluegrass programming, they carry a great impact on weighted charts and national exposure.

Single: The release of an individual song by video, streaming, download, CD, or a mixture thereof.

Track Card or Sheet: Documents formatted as the names suggest, with track number, time, tempo or style, FCC compliance information, and one or two sentences about each selection. Track sheets most often go on the reverse of one-sheets, while cards are inserted into the CD sleeve.

Folk Music Radio Promotion

Artist Management & Career Advice

Promotional Printing and Mailing

ART MENIUS RADIO **919-675-2787**

Every campaign & mailing list customized for you from database of more than 1000 programmers - 48 releases on FAI charts 2020

One stop shop - promotion to folk radio, printing & mailing

A 12-Step Program for Recording Promotion

1. Admit you are helpless concerning the results of a promotion understanding that all you can control is how you do it. Most good records aren't hits.
2. Appreciate every programmer who listens at all to your music giving it a chance to get on the air.
3. Make a searching and fearless inventory of the mistakes made in past promotions and plan so as not to repeat them.
4. Make amends to each DJ to whom you sent a 15 MB mp3-192 as an email attachment with the file totally unencoded with a file name like fnl.mstr,64.8.1.2021.mp3 or failed to put durations and track numbers on the back of the CD.
5. Plan the recording promotion from the very beginning.
6. Make sure the design of the CD is optimized for radio
7. Build authentic relationships with hosts one by one. Never forget that this is a personal relationship driven, retail business.
8. Be persistent but never appear pushy or put a DJ on the spot.
9. Make things as easy as possible for the radio programmers to obtain, screen, and play your music.
10. Keep careful records of who plays the records
11. Realize that promotions need to be focused on specific genre not a scattershot effort and that the different formats operate in different way.
12. Thank the most and the soonest.

The Trouble I've Seen or Some of It, At Least (Include Some of My Gaffes)

- Illegible CD cover, liner notes, or one sheet
- One sheet sent as a PowerPoint presentation
- Broken jewel case—most are—holding a broken CD, no CD, or a blank CD
- Digital assets in a format only Apple can use
- A one sheet that moves close to porn territory
- Digital files that lack any metadata or identifying info in the file name.
- Heavy metal CD sent to an old-time string band show
- Packages so difficult to open that you tear the one sheet or the CD sleeve or just give up trying.
- CD spine with no info on it defeating its purpose
- F-bomb in lyrics with no warning or a warning without supplying an edit you can play.
- Different song titles on the CD, package, or one sheet; titles in wrong order; wrong durations
- Lack of clarity as to artist name and song title
- CDs mailed to DJs who have been gone for years
- A sleeveless CD only in a plain cardboard mailer
- Being made to register for a platform in order to download a promo recording.
- Artist arguing with DJ who hasn't played her music.

About the Author

Art Menius has operated Art Menius Radio (https://artmeniusradio.com) since January 2015, building it into one the top three folk music promotion outfits in less than five years. Menius has promoted multiple #1 albums and songs on the Folk Alliance International (FAI) Folk Chart and the #1 releases on the NACC Folk Chart. He was the first employee of both the International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) (1985-1990) and FAI (1991-1996) and the first president of the latter in 1990. He spent 11 years (1997-2007) as Associate Festival Director for MerleFest, later serving as Director of famed institutions Appalshop in Whitesburg, KY and The ArtsCenter in Carrboro, NC. Menius is the only person to have served on the boards of FAI, IBMA, and the Americana Music Association. He received IBMA's Distinguished Achievement Award (2007) and was inducted into the Blue Ridge Music Hall of Fame (2008).