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Pedro Pereira at Cool Beanz

The gig to promote his debut CD is scheduled for 8 p.m. Oct. 26. More on page 4.

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The next ISS workshop is Nov. 5

The Art of Self-Promotion How I Got on XM Radio

BY PEDRO PEREIRA

Since the release of my CD in August, I have undergone a role reversal from my usual stance as a reporter and editor. At least for the purpose of promoting the CD, I have had to think and act like a publicist or public relations manager in trying to figure out how to get the attention of someone like me.

Being typically on the receiving end, I know how hard it can be for people pitching a story to get my attention. So the experience with promoting my debut CD, "Last Man on the Planet," has been quite instructive.

Aside from completing and releasing the CD, the most exciting thing that has happened as I write this was the selection of the title track for airplay by XM Radio. I mailed a copy of the CD to Billy Zero, program director at XM Radio's XMU Channel 43, and was contacted two weeks later by XMU's Josiah Lambert.

Through Myspace, Lambert informed me a track from the CD would be played on his show, "The Radar Report," on Sept. 13. The show was reprised on Sept. 14 and 15.

When I started telling people the news, a typical question was about how I was able to get the attention of the people at XM Radio. ISS Director Sonny Speed even suggested I write about the experience, which is why I am telling you about all this.

Getting the CD to XM Radio's staff was really no sweat. XM openly solicits music submissions, and takes pride in giving unsigned artists a venue to get their music in the market.

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CD News

The Sideways Plan Best-of Compilation

Marking the 10th anniversary of the first edition of their first CD, "Upsidedownland," the Sideways, the band fronted by ISS member Bill Goldsmith, have compiled a 20-track "best-of" compilation called "Strong Suit." The set, which includes alternate takes and bonus tracks, was scheduled for a September release.

The tracks are taken from 60-plus tunes recorded for "Upsidedownland" and its three successors, "Gravity's Last Stand," "Midwinter Mission" and "Superheated Sunshine." ISS Writer's Choice winners "This Rave's A Bore," "The Woodland Marauder," "Superheated Sunshine" and "You Know What I Hate About Award Shows" are joined by other favorites including "Days & Weeks," "Anyone Can Snap," "Broken Play" and "Forerunner Of The Spring."

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Self-Promotion: How I Got on XM Radio

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After a Google search, I found the address to submit new music to XM Radio. It was something I decided to do on a suggestion from Mike Pappalardo, an extremely talented musician and good friend who played bass on three songs on my CD – “Before I Wake,” “Raining” and “Saudade.”

My Google search led me to this web site:

<http://www.xmradio.com/onxm/channelpage.xmc?ch=43>. When you scroll all the way to the bottom, you will see a link to submit music. Click on the link and you will see the address to mail your CD:

Billy Zero
Program Director, XMU
XM Satellite Radio
1500 Eckington Place NE
Washington, DC 20002

As you can see, getting airplay wasn't all that hard. It took a doing a Google search and mailing a CD.

All submissions have to be in CD format and they are non-returnable. You have to download a form that you must fill out and mail in with the CD. The form asks for basic information and a UPC code. Interestingly, I decided not to get a barcode when I sent my masters and artwork for replication figuring I wouldn't really need one. But when I signed up with CD Baby, I bought one from the online distributor. CD Baby encourages you to get one and makes it easy to get it by charging only \$20 for it.

The XM submission form also asks that you suggest two songs they should listen to. This, as you might imagine is a tough choice, but it's important to pick the tracks wisely. The title track, which ultimately was the song Lambert played, was an obvious choice for me because it's a catchy tune that usually gets a good audience response when I play it. The second track was a tougher call, but I decided to suggest “Raining,” which seems to be one of the favorite tracks among people who have the CD.

When I read the Myspace message from Lambert, at first I was suspicious, thinking someone was playing a joke. But as I read it and navigated the Web links he sent me, I knew it was legitimate. One of the links was, <http://www.xmuradarreport.com>, where I found a schedule for the Sept. 13 show with my name, song title and links to my Myspace site.

As you can see, getting airplay wasn't all that hard. It took doing a Google search and mailing a CD.

According to Sonny Speed, though, it's not as simple as that. Sonny believes you need to start by writing a good song and that packaging also helps. He had seen my CD artwork and the letterhead with the press release I mailed in with the CD. All looks very professional, and the release includes some information on my background.

When I decided to record the CD, I determined that though I would work within a budget, I wouldn't skimp on production or packaging. I was fortunate to work with a producer who charges very reasonable rates and musicians who played for free or charged only a nominal fee for their contributions. The artwork was done by an acquaintance at no charge, but I would have paid to get a professional-looking and aesthetically pleasing package regardless. It's worth it, even if it looks unlikely that I will ever recover my costs through sales.

Lambert said during the Sept. 13 edition of “The Radio Report” that he gets hundreds of CDs each week, and he listens to everything he receives to decide what material to air. My song was among tracks from 13 “notable” artists he picked that week.

The XM Radio exposure may well have been the height of my fame, you know, the 15 minutes that Andy Warhol talked about. I have been trying to leverage the exposure to get attention from reviewers and get more radio play. It's a hell of a challenge because the people whose attention I am trying to get are bombarded with material from people like me day in and day out. I know, since I am usually on their side of this scenario.

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Writer's Choice

New Millennium Lullaby by Bob Campbell

BY WALTER SARGENT

"New Millennium Lullaby" is a tune sung (literally) from a father to his son about a father's hopes and fears for the future. Members remarked, "Bob, you're a genius. You've invented a genre -- the lullaby-protest song," "This song touched my soul." Beautifully conceived and executed, Lullaby won by a comfortable margin.

Runner-up was "Old John" by Steve Robinson. In preparation for the upcoming International Blues Challenge in Memphis, Steve decided to apply his formidable songwriting chops to the roots -- authentic "old-timey" delta blues. "Old John" sounded like he'd been writing blues pretty much his whole life. Members wrote, "seamless," "finely crafted" and great narrative."

From the ISS Department of Internal Promotions, the following spontaneous awards are hereby awarded:

Most Hooks In A Single Song Award: "Most Things Don't Happen" by Bill Goldsmith

Best Stadium Rock Classic: "It's 'Cause I Love You" by Vince Gangi

Best Inspirational Ballad (three-way tie):

"Save Us From Ourselves" by Pedro Pereira

"A Stone's Throw Away" by Frank Gambino

"Home in the Sky" by Vincent Crici

20th Century Explorers Club Award: (title withheld) by Susan Davis-Stemp

Disheveled Genius Award: "Lava" by Randy Black

Musical Mooning Classic: "Bitchwalk" by Andrew 'Dice' Kirshner

Most Original Pop Concept Award: "Reunion" by Guy Pezzullo

Johnny-on-the-Spot Songwriter Cup: "Turn the Corner" by Lois Morton (written in 15 minutes, but didn't sound like it)

Monster Musical Vocabulary Award (tie): "Love, What Is It?" by Suzanne Ernst and (title withheld) by Susan Davis-Stemp

September had a wealth of great storytelling, important messages, great hooks and many stunning musical moments. Special thanks to everyone presented and everyone who wrote a personal comment with their vote.

The Sideways Prepare Best-of Compilation

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The songs were written and performed by Bill Goldsmith, Amy Leonard, James Lefante, and Richard Lehmann. ISS member Vincent Crici re-mastered the tracks and ISS webmaster Walter Sargent designed the cover, both in their usual elegant and tasteful fashion.

Bill and Amy are also finishing up the next band album, "Watchword," while Bill and Vinnie Crici are working on a couple of album projects of their own. There might also be a volume 2 Best-of called "Hand-Drawn X-Rays," as well as a release of the soundtrack of the film "On The Brink Of Jesus," plus cover-without-an-album "The Last Clownhouse" and something by Stundlepumps.

Who Played What

Here's a list of songwriters and songs from last month's ISS workshop:

Bill Goldsmith

Most Things Don't

Happen

Vince Gangi

It's 'Cause I Love You

Guy Pezzullo

Reunion

Steve Robinson

Old John

Pedro Pereira

Save Us from Ourselves

Susan Davis

Title Withheld

Frank Gambino

A Stone's Throw Away

Andrew Kirshner

Bitchwalk

Lois Morton

Turn the Corner

Suzanne Ernst

Love, What Is It?

Randy Black

Lava

Bob Campbell

New Millennium Lullaby

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Sonny Meadows

Mike Svezia

Steve Robinson

Frank Gambino

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See us at

www.islandsongwriters.org

Pereira, Kwartler, Tedeschi to Play Cool Beanz Oct. 26

ISS Newsletter editor Pedro Pereira will be playing a gig Friday, Oct. 26 at Cool Beanz in St. James to promote his CD, "Last Man on the Planet."

The CD's producer, Doug Kwartler, also will be playing a set to promote his recently released double CD, "All Sides." Also on the bill is ISS member Tony Tedeschi, who will perform songs from his upcoming CD, also being produced by Kwartler.

The show is scheduled to start at 8 p.m. Cool Beanz is located at 556 North Country Road (25A) in St. James.

The Art of Self-Promotion

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But even though I didn't release "Last Man on the Planet" with any lofty commercial goals in mind, since for me the accomplishment of getting it done is its own reward, it would be silly to not put some effort behind getting exposure for my music. Anyone else who releases a CD should definitely make an effort to bring attention to the music. Just be prepared for the amount of work that it actually entails.

ISS Open Mics

Don't forget: The next open mic at **Borders Cafe**, Route 25, Syosset, is Oct 5.

Hosted by Vincent Crici, this gig is monthly, on the first Friday of the month. Sign up at 7:30 p.m.

Monthly Workshop

Test out your songs in front of a crowd by playing them for fellow musicians who will provide constructive feedback with the goal of helping you improve as a songwriter.

The ISS workshop takes place the first Monday of every month, except if it falls on a holiday, at Five Towns College, off Burrs Lane in Dix Hills. Run by ISS Director Sonny Speed, the workshop starts at 7:30 p.m.

Bring a guitar if you wish to perform your song live, or you may bring a

recording on CD or tape. A piano is available for those who write their songs at the keys.

Be sure to bring 25 copies of your lyric sheets so the other workshop attendees can follow along while listening to your song. It is much easier to provide constructive criticism when people can read the lyrics.

The ISS workshop is at the center of the organization's mission to help songwriters perfect their craft. Many performers on Long Island got their start at ISS.

General Information

For general information about ISS or how to join the organization, contact ISS Director Sonny Speed at mcspeed@optonline.net or 631- 462-3300.

To submit items for publication in the newsletter, contact Pedro Pereira at pedropereira@verizon.net.

Visit our web site at www.islandsongwriters.org.