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Get your Garage Band out of the Garage in into a Gig: Part I: Press Kit and Demo

By Dennis Damp Jr

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Damp Jr

So you have your garage band and want to know the next step to start performing for an audience. Maybe you are the parent or friend of a band member and feel the band is ready to play some shows. You may just be sick of all the noise coming from the basement where your son or daughters band practices. Well, its not easy to get out of the starting blocks, but with a little hard work, your band can get moving. When your band finally has some songs together and are playing well, now it's time to take the next step. Get the band out of the garage and in to a gig. Of course your band won't make much money at first, but with a well rehearsed act and some leg work your project can get off the ground running. In the following article I will explain a few tips your band or band manager may need to get your band some gigs or shows.

The band's first step is to put together a quality press kit. A press kit for a start up band is usually comprised of a cover page, artist bio or introduction of the band, band pictures, song list, equipment list, contact and booking information, and a demo tape or CD. Once your band becomes more established start introducing newspaper clippings, band reviews, and business cards to the package. Computers make this a fairly simple task these days. Any word processor should get the job done for a start up band press package. Most or all of your press packet design can be done in house and save a lot of money. If you plan on sending quite a few press packages to clubs or venues visit your local copy store and have some color copies made. Make sure your envelope stands out so that a band booker will want to open your press package. Try using a colored envelope or stickers of some sort on the envelope so that a band booker will notice your press kit.

One of the most difficult things for a start up band with little or no money to achieve is recording their demo CD or tape. This does not have to be an expensive venture. When your starting out try renting a 4 track tape recorder or maybe an 8 track recorder with a CD burner. Most music stores will rent this type of equipment at a reasonable cost. Record 3 or 4 of your best songs or cover tunes. This should give you sufficient quality for most local venues when your starting out. Once your act is more established you may want to purchase a portable multi track recorder or book some studio time. It may

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be just as cost effective to purchase a multi track digital recorder and learn the ropes yourself rather than recording at a local studio. Most studios charge an hourly rate, so look around.

Once you have a quality demo CD and press kit its time to start promoting your band. See part II of our article Get your band out of the garage and into a gig at <http://www.mediawebsource.com/press.htm> For more information on press kit and demo tips, band resources, and band promotion visit the Media Web Source website at <http://www.mediawebsource.com>. This site is a valuable resource for start up and established bands everywhere.

Article written by: Dennis Damp Jr from: Media Web Source <http://www.mediawebsource.com> Find band and songwriter resources, press kit and demo tips, music industry books, recording studios, CD

and DVD Duplication, and band website design.

Band Promotion – Book Your Garage Band Some Shows or Gigs

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So you have you press kit and demo CD and want to know what to do next to get your band a gig. Why not try an open mic night at a local club. Most clubs advertise these open mic nights in your local music papers or entertainment magazines. Open mic nights will give your band experience on stage, and the club will most likely have a built in audience to perform for. Most of the time all you have to do is show up with your instruments. The PA system and drums are usually supplied. Call ahead just to make sure this is the case. Many of these events are hosted by local established bands and produce great networking opportunities. Make contacts with the bands playing the open mic night, and leave a press kit for the club owner. Maybe the hosting band likes your music and needs an opening act in the future. Sometimes people in the audience may be interested in your band, so have some business cards ready with all your contact information.

The reality of starting out as a band is that your most likely not going to get paid at first. Your not in it at first for the money anyway right, your there because you want to get your music heard. Offer to be an opening act for a band you know or met at an open mic night. Email some bands in your area and see if they accept opening acts. Offer to open for free to get some much needed exposure. Many established bands love opening acts because they don't have to pay them much, and they won't have to play as long so this makes their job easier.

Promote your band any time you get an opportunity. Hand out business cards at open mic nights, and send fliers to clubs that you will be performing at in the future. Call or email clubs or venues that handle your genre of music. Once you get some shows, contact your local music newspapers with your band's name, venue name, phone number, show time, and any other information you feel necessary. Many entertainment newspapers offer this service free of charge. Solicit your press kit to local venues. Start visiting local clubs in person with your band mates and talk with the booker or entertainment director.

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Leave a copy of your press kit and get them to listen to your demo while your there if possible. Call a day or two after your visit, and be persistent. You may have to call a few times, because it can be difficult to get a hold of the band booker. Most work late hours at their venue.

Now that your have emailed or called your local newspapers with any show dates to be published in their entertainment section. Contact any music newspapers or magazines in your area to see if they would write an article on your band or visit one of your shows. If your successful in getting an article or review of your band, make sure to have the article writer include your website address and booking information in the piece. There are many opportunities to promote your band, so don't miss a chance to have your contact information added to a newspaper article or review of your band.

Send your demo CD and press kit to any local battle of the bands competitions or song writing contests. Battle of the bands locate up and coming talent for their shows. They need acts so this can be a great opportunity for your band. Battle of the bands gives the opportunity to network with local promoters, other established bands, and to be heard by an audience searching for new talent. Many times these events are promoted through radio, newspaper ads, and internet marketing. The winner of the battle of the bands typically receives some nice perks like studio time, equipment, or free

advertising. I know a band in my area who won a competition and actually got a chance to play live on the radio. Next thing you know they were playing some of the best venues in the area. Check out these events whenever possible.

Approach town fairs, county festivals, or city concert venues to get gigs and exposure for your band. Most of these types of shows are performed for free by bands, but there is an opportunity to play for a built in audience. Do some research on the internet and see what local agencies or websites book bands for these types of events.

Now that your band promotion is off to a great start it's time to get your band on the internet, and possibly look for a band manager, booking agent, or sound technician. See part III of our article Get your band out of the garage and into a gig at www.mediawebsource.com/press.htm . For more information on press kit and demo tips, band resources, and band promotion visit the Media Web Source website at <http://www.mediawebsource.com>. This site is a valuable resource for start up and established bands everywhere.

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