

## It's All Good: There Is No Such Thing As Bad Press!

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It's one of the oldest riddles in the history of music: If a band rocks hard in the forest and there's no one there to hear it...did it ever really happen? It's a fact: you may be the most talented musician in the galaxy, but if no one knows about you, you'll probably never advance past playing to your one and only fan in the mirror in your mom's garage.

Writing, recording and performing terrific music is half the battle, but the other half may be even tougher than the challenge of creating a #1 hit...the task of publicizing it. Without publicity, your great opus might very well sit, gathering dust on your closet floor with the other 999 copies you had printed, cased and shrink-wrapped. Getting your name/your band's name out there is quintessentially the most crucial step to: gigs, management, fans, radio, label exposure and rock 'n' roll stardom.

But what if your new found press is not-so-positive? Should you turn away a chance to pimp your band to the masses if the article is entitled, "Worst Bands In The History Of Sound" or "CDs You Wouldn't Listen To If They Washed Up Next To You On A Desert Island"? Is all press "good press"? Is it always a positive move for your band if the average music lover reads your name in print; even if the article's content is not exactly what you'd frame for your dad on his birthday? In a word, "Hell Yeah!";...Well, that was two words.

The following are a few tips that may help you to utilize both the positive and the negative press that may come your way:

1.) Never Turn Down Press---If people are talking about you, you're doing something right. Don't throw away free exposure by becoming your own publicist and deciding who can say what about you. Britney Spears can afford to hire a PR genius to nix an upcoming article on "Overweight Pop Stars Looking For A Comeback After Two Kids." You, however, should tell your vocalist to pooch out her gut, grab her babies and smile for the camera. The only thing more important in the music business than who you know is who knows you. So, remember, "bad press" is good and "good press" is outstanding. 2.) Make Sure They Print Your Name---The single most important key to success in entertainment is the recognition of your name. A magazine may print, "The John Smith Band sounds like a toilet flushing." Weeks later, most people will only remember that they have heard the band name. This is the beauty of press. Plus, even if rabid music listeners now associate your band with potties, they will probably check you out just to see if you're really that terrible. How many songs/bands do you think are horrific yet, when they come on the radio, you listen anyway? Name recognition is essential to the success of your band. Whether they're praising or dissing,

everybody needs to be talking about you.

3.) Turn Bad Press Into Good---There's no way around it...bad press happens. Even the hottest band in the world has just as many hate sites as fan sites. But what reads to you as bad press doesn't always have to translate as bad press in your press package and mailers and on your web site. There are two easy ways, to turn bad press into good. First, edit it. It's your press after all and not every word can be bad. Simply omit the parts that make you want to run screaming and leave the rest to make up at least a decent review. Second, interpret the negative as positive. No matter what's in the article, act like you think it's a great thing. Turn criticism into irony, insults into humor, and bad ratings into humility. Make it seem as if the reviewer was on your side and don't let on that it upset you at all. Again, in the long run, it will only matter that you got the publicity nod in the first place.

4.) Complaining Only Makes Bad Press Worse---Bad press will come and go, but your making an issue out of it will surely last longer than the review itself. Press is only as current as its latest issue and soon enough, what feels like the ruin of your band will be replaced by the ruin of someone else's. But, repeat mentions of it on your websites, My Space pages, etc. will keep the negativity alive as long as you refuse to let it go. I realize that your art is precious to you and that you're easily hurt by bad press but continuing to ruminate on it, only serves to keep the wound open way past the original issue date. The energy you put into bad press should be focused onto getting newer, better press for the band. You will remember the bad press long after everyone else has forgotten about it so let it go and move onto more positive things.

No one every said that the music business was going to be all sugar and spice and everything nice, so it should come as no surprise that you'll probably garner as much bad press as good. Foster the positive publicity as much as you can and chalk up the negativity to a small pothole on your road to success. It's true that it doesn't matter what they say as long as they're talking about you so be thankful for the free PR, take the high road, and let the bad reviews roll by your band and into oblivion where they belong. It's unrealistic to think that you can get everyone to like your music, so make it your goal to get everyone to remember your name.

## About the Author

Sheena Metal is a radio host, producer, promoter, music supervisor, consultant, columnist, journalist and musician. Her syndicated radio program, Music Highway Radio, airs on over 700 affiliates to more than 126 million listeners. Her musicians' assistance program, Music Highway, boasts over 10,000 members. She currently promotes numerous live shows weekly in the Los Angeles Area, where she resides. For more info:

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