

notations



THE EXPOSURE ECONOMY: *Helpful Tips for Successful Publicity*



WITH THE EXPANDING ONLINE distribution of music, we are entering a new world where the accepted methods of value exchange between composers and their collaborators (not to mention their audiences) are constantly changing. In essence, financial compensation is increasingly accessed indirectly. For example, a composer whose music is illegally downloaded eventually gets noticed by a live concert producer or a music supervisor who commissions them to write new music for an upcoming project. In the digital age, unpaid creative contributions to cyberspace put us all in the position of forgoing reward for existing work to generate interesting new work prospects. We're ultimately casting musical ideas out into the world for others to experience in hopes of accessing new

and previously unknown opportunities.

The new system that's arising, while perhaps not that different yet from how many of us earn our living now, does require a different approach to how composers put forward their public presence. Favourable exposure can easily turn potential interest into a new commission or some other form of financial reward. Proper publicity can allow for a composer's genuine interests, experiments and ideas to shine through and yield meaningful opportunities.

That's why *Ontario Notations* has invited a trio of Toronto's successful music publicists to lend you their insights. Here are their helpful hints to consider as part of securing your place in the new exposure economy.



PHOTO: TARA McMULLEN

LIZ PARKER (LIZPR)

I've worked with various composers, from the media-shy and unprepared, to the most media savvy and "with it." Below are a few of my tips for you as you strive for more coverage of your work.

Tip 1: Accept that people are intimidated by new music, and it needs to be made as approachable as possible. I'll be honest: in marketing meetings, the concern is, "how are we going to sell this?" This reaction is largely due to the fact that composers and new music have a reputation for being unapproachable. Do everything you can to counter this perception.

Tip 2: Have a functional website from where publicists and marketers can extract information. Explain the concept behind your composition; its genesis; a brief description of the work; and if possible, add a sound clip. Make sure your bio is downloadable into MS Word format, and that your photos are high-resolution, taken by a professional photographer with an art director/stylist present. Don't treat your website like an online corkboard; think through how your website will be used by the industry; by those people who *want* to understand you and sell tickets to concerts of your music.

Tip 3: Accept that social media is here to stay. Learn to use Facebook and Twitter, if you haven't already. Social media is the online equivalent to being at a party – you capture the attention of many people at once. Social media is now mainstream. Most organizations have Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Tip 4: Understand marketing deadlines! Deadlines are always earlier than you think. Take for example the needs of a house program editor. Many house programs have two deadlines. The first is for the issues themselves: Sept. – Dec.; Jan. – April; and May – August. Each issue features an "outer" section – the glossy, "outside pages" that feature articles about the season in general, or about any concerts within the time frame of the issue. The second deadline is for the "inner" – the section in the middle of the program, on regular paper. Those pages feature current concert information and change more frequently, depending on the presenter's concert rotation. So, the "outer" of the Sept. – Dec. issue goes to print mid-August; if your concert is in December, that's why you're being asked for materials as early as June. When the editor is told you haven't completed the work yet, you lose a potential article. Next, the editor is working on the "inner". You'll be asked closer to your concert date for your repertoire list, some notes about your composition and the like. Again, if your concert is in December, you may be approached in late September. And remember: if your photo is not up to par, it won't be used. If it's fantastic, it might make the cover.

My Last Tip: The more proactive you are about your Electronic Press Kit, the better your odds of being promoted properly. Don't know what an EPK is? Please visit www.lizpr.com and drop me a line.

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