

# PRESS KIT / EPK GUIDE

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# PRESS KIT / EPK GUIDE

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## WHAT IS A PRESS KIT?

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A press kit is a promotional tool used by musicians, bands and ensembles to get performance bookings, press coverage (reviews/interviews), airplay, recording and other opportunities. It can be sent to venues, record companies, reviewers, booking agents, private clients, radio stations, publishers, or any party interested in offering an opportunity or promoting/covering your music performance or recording. The press kit is designed to provide one location, whether physical or digital, where all your promotional materials are available.

Press kits used to be physical packages containing a one page description of the musician or group, a short group bio and/or ensemble members' bios, a CD recording, headshots and publicity photos, a list of recent and upcoming engagements, press/reviews and a business card.

Now that we are well into the digital age, many say that physical press kits have almost completely gone out of vogue. EPK or the Electronic Press Kit has taken its place. However, don't be caught by surprise. Occasionally, and possibly in the classical performance world, a venue or presenter will ask for a physical press kit, so you might want to have one on hand.

While the use of EPKs and EPK hosting sites are well established with jazz, commercial musicians and singer/songwriters; classical musicians are more likely to create a digital press kit on their website or use EPK hosting sites that don't cater to bands and commercial artists; and possibly still find use for a traditional press kit.

Be sure to find out what the recipient typically expects with regard to promotional materials.

## WHAT IS AN ELECTRONIC PRESS KIT?

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An electronic press kit or EPK is the digital equivalent of the press kit. You can create one on your own website and/or use one of many popular web-based services (*see WHERE TO POST/HOST YOUR EPK*).

These sites provide templates and widgets to allow members to upload music, photos, bios, and other marketing content. Some will host your material for free and you can provide a link to interested parties. For a monthly or annual fee, you can send it to interested parties by email; or interested parties can request one sent by email from the host site. You can create your own EPK(s) on your website. Remember an EPK includes all content as downloadable media, not just streaming or resident on the site; the purpose of which is to provide the recipient with everything they need to include your information on their website, in a program, review or article.

In order to get the most out of your EPK, it's a good idea to look at those of other artists / bands / ensembles, similar to you/yours who have had some success and see what their content is like. If you check out a fair number of EPKs, you will find style and content that resonates with your purpose and might work for you.

Once you are satisfied with your EPK, you will revisit it often, update it, remove content that's not working or stale; and incorporate new strategies you pick up along the way.

Like all of your promotional materials, creating your EPK is a process that may take some time and should be as dynamic as your career. In other words, it's not static... not: "there I did it and it's done." It will be evolving and changing, just like your career.

## TO WHOM ARE YOU PITCHING?

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Remember the purpose for which you are preparing your press kit. Are you trying to promote a new CD release or project? Are you trying to get gigs at venues or reaching out to publications for reviews? Do you want clients to hire you to play background music for events, private and corporate parties? Are you seeking client schools for your arts-in-ed presentation? Whether you are doing one, or all of the above, you are going to need materials that speak to the specific market you are trying to reach. You may want to prepare separate kits to pitch your original music to clubs, festivals, concert and other performance venues; while also pitching to clients seeking to hire the same group to play covers; and still another for your outreach presentation... you get the picture. If you are using your website as your main portal for all of your music promotion (recommended), you can direct your various potential audiences to the appropriate press kit with "click here" options on your home page that link to your client-specific materials on your web or EPK site.

## WHAT TO INCLUDE

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Typically all the content you upload will be promotional in nature, and will include:

- Bio
- Music clips
- High resolution photos or images for print / low resolution photos for web
- Recent and upcoming engagements / gig calendar
- Promotional videos
- Discography
- Links
- Press coverage and interviews, etc.
- "RIYL" or "Recommended If You Like" list
- Stage plot (for bands)
- Contact information

Just because everything's gone digital doesn't mean that the professional standards for content have changed. Of course, the formats have changed... fewer use for physical folders and 8X10 photo prints, and the ability to imbed downloadable media including sound clips and video; and send it all via email to prospective clients, presenters, promoters and press. But the same level of professional quality for all your content should be your main focus. Don't slam together a sub-par press kit thinking you will make it more professional in the future. A bad first impression might be very difficult to improve once it's out there for public consumption.

## YOUR BIO

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The purpose of this press kit (and all your materials for that matter) is to engage the listener and create positive interest in you and your music. Your bio (generally written in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person), sometimes

referred to as a “backgrounder,” should let people know what kind of music they can expect to hear and what makes it/you unique. Remember, the details of your career are just a vehicle for telling the story of who you are **as an artist**. Stay away from a boring chronology and lengthy narratives that don’t further the agenda of creating interest and compelling the reader to want to hear your music, hire you, and/or see you perform.

One major purpose of including your bio(s) is to interest industry professionals and allow them to access information for reprint. With this in mind, you might want to include at least 2 versions of your bio. One short and attention grabbing for programs, introductions and PR pitches; and a longer one with more information to provide reviewers with a choice of information and copy to enhance reviews and press coverage.

Whether it’s your short or long bio, you will want to create a narrative that both gives the reader an interesting and captivating glimpse of your influences, uniqueness and other aspects that comprise your artistry; and most of all, makes them want to experience what you have to offer.

The viewer is probably only going to give 2-6 minutes, if that much, to reviewing your EPK. The goal is to deliver information that will help them remember what it is about you/your ensemble that makes them want to positively respond.

## YOUR MUSIC

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Recordings should not only be good performances that represent you well for the opportunities you seek, but should be of the highest sonic quality. There are many possible approaches to the format of the music you include. If you are trying to engage different constituencies, audiences, clients; presenting different kinds of musical performance, projects and ensembles; you will need to create different “reels” that are designed to appropriately address each one with the right mix of recordings of different lengths. For event work, for instance, include the appropriate cover tunes with no more than 40 second clips (fade in fade out) with recognizable portions such as catch phrase, identifiable theme, chorus etc. and some of the most interesting and dynamic performances/recorded segments.

For original solo or ensemble projects you may want longer segments of representative and varied material and possibly one or two complete tracks... all, of course, downloadable.

Remember, less is sometimes more. For most constituencies, the less exposure, the fewer opportunities to find fault or flaw; or just something they don’t like. It’s a delicate balancing act to provide just enough material to be positively engaging, but not enough to find something to criticize. Include information for those who wish to receive a full promotional CD, if available and appropriate to the opportunity.

## YOUR PHOTOS / IMAGES

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Photos should represent you as an artist and should be high quality professional shots, CD covers and other visuals that help to tell the “story” of who you are as an artist. This is not a place to skimp by posting snapshots simply because that’s all you have. Choose a photographer who routinely photographs musicians of your genre and type, whose portfolio contains shots representative of the way you would like to look. Review photos of musicians, bands or ensembles similar to you/yours that you like and provide them for the photographer. Plan and arrange a photo session, scoping out

locations, clothing choices and overall results you are shooting for in advance; as well as being flexible and open to opportunities to take advantage of unique serendipitous one-of-a-kind shots.

Along with headshots, band shots and promotional photos with choices that include portrait (vertical) and landscape (horizontal) orientations, you should also include CD cover and liner art.

There are four typical formats for downloadable images: 72dpi both black and white (properly adjusted to emulate b&w film photography) and color for the web; and 300dpi b&w and color images for print media such as programs, reviews, press etc. Make sure you have printed and reviewed your 300dpi shots designed for use in print media. Remember that an image that looks stellar with the help of backlighting on your computer monitor, iPad or mobile device, will not necessarily appear as dynamic with the reflective light of a print. With their ultimate purpose in mind, these shots need to be properly adjusted before posting for download.

## YOUR GIGS / PERFORMANCE ENGAGEMENTS

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Promoters and presenters are interested in audience building. They want to promote and engage artists who have active performance careers and a following. In order to support this, it is customary to include a list of recent and upcoming engagements. This is especially important for press coverage and for those who want to see a live performance before they agree to book you. This being the case, you will want to keep this list current at all times. The use of services such as *ArtistData* (available on some EPK sites) will allow you to update dynamic information such as this in one place and have all your social media platforms updated at once.

## YOUR PROMOTIONAL VIDEOS

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Especially important for online coverage, news outlets that love to enhance their web articles, as well as venues that might want to give perspective audience members a taste of a live performance; providing downloadable video will enable anyone covering or promoting your music to have immediate access to representative media. As with all your materials, make sure your video is properly edited to showcase you/your band for maximum positive impact.

## YOUR DISCOGRAPHY

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Most EPK sites will prompt you to include a discography which is a simple list of your publicly available recordings, and you would naturally include this on your website and possibly on your one-sheet (see *YOUR ONE-SHEET*). Here, however, we are focusing on the downloadable text and media that comprise your press kit or EPK. Since the discography is self-explanatory and isn't necessarily something a prospective recipient would need to access off-line, although it's an obvious inclusion, we needn't elaborate further on this element.

## YOUR PRESS

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If you've had press coverage, reviews, interviews, any and all mention of your work, you are going to want to include it to support your image as a full-fledged professional artist worth hearing. 3<sup>rd</sup> party endorsements are by far more powerful than anything you can say about yourself and your work.

In a physical press kit, you will want to find the best nuggets of any review and string them together... possibly with a strong introductory tagline. Be sure to include the publication, name radio or TV station, program, host or reviewer if applicable.

On your EPK, resist the temptation to be lazy and simply provide links to the coverage or media. Especially with regard to reviews... follow the wisdom above and create a teaser and then link to the full review.

## YOUR "RECOMMENDED IF YOU LIKE"

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This is a common inclusion on EPK sites where you name artists or bands whose fans would be interested in your music. This is especially important for venues seeking acts that fit their typical audience and those looking for opening acts.

If you are hosting your EPK on your website, it's best to creatively weave influences and music with which you align yourself into your bio.

## YOUR STAGE PLOT

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For bands playing in festivals and venues that host multiple acts and have a stage and sound crew, stage plot is essential for them to access your setup needs in advance. Most EPK sites include a template for this. Even if you use a simple or typical setup and are bringing most of your own amps, drum kit etc.; it lets the sound engineer know how many mics and inputs will be needed and can save everyone involved a lot of headaches on the day of. It can also let a venue know whether or not you are the right fit for their space. If you have multiple sized configurations, it is best to provide your most complex setup since most EPK sites only allow one. You can keep multiple stage plots on hand, so that once you've been hired you can supply the appropriate one in advance of your performance date.

## YOUR LINKS

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Your website, if you have one, should be the main hub for all your professional musical activity. According to one industry professional "...the job of an EPK is not to bombard me with information, but to interest me enough to visit the website."

If you are using your website to host your EPK, you of course will be including all of the above content in downloadable form; possibly with tabs or "click here" links on your home page to the downloadable press kit which includes your pdfs, jpgs and mp3s of your text, images and music. You can also include

“click here to download” right next to the photos and embedded media. If you are using an EPK site, provide a “click here” link or links to the appropriate EPK on the home page of your website.

On your EPK site, include links to your social media, YouTube, website, management (if you have any), ecommerce (CDBaby, iTunes etc.), and to venues where tickets can be purchased etc.

*ArtistData* is an additional service some EPK sites such as *SonicBids* include to help you keep up with all your social media. *ArtistData* updates all your social media when you update your content on your EPK saving you the trouble of having to manage all of that. This is particularly useful for your performance calendar, however, your kit should be updated frequently and every time you are launching a new recording, tour or any other venture.

## YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

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Most importantly, interested parties need to contact you easily, and sometimes quickly. Your contact information, including email and phone, should be easy to find, checked frequently and responded to in a timely manner. In this business, sometimes the artist/band/ensemble that responds first is the one who gets the gig.

## YOUR ONE-SHEET

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A one-sheet condenses aspects of a press kit into one page and is often used to promote an album release. It is a composite of your bio or pitch, CD art and track list, photos, contact info, upcoming performances and press quotes, if available. When press kits were exclusively physical, a cover sheet with copy similar to what you would expect on a one-sheet was typical. Now, many artists / bands use a one-sheet to advertise a new CD release or as a quick way to introduce a project. It includes everything you might include in your press kit without the sound.

A one-sheet is a press release for your music as it exists at a particular time. You should update your one-sheet as often as necessary, and tailor each one-sheet to address a particular audience. You could create, and have on file, a one-sheet for each type of recipient of your press kit, for instance: venue booking agents, private clients, music retailers, magazine editors, music directors and DJs at radio stations, etc.

Your one-sheet must capture attention. When it comes to text, shoot for compelling and to the point. Omit any unnecessary and extraneous information and make sure all the customary and usual inclusions are in place. For a concise, all inclusive pitch, consider including a downloadable one-sheet for your latest release on your website or EPK.

For an easy to understand look at creating a one-sheet check out the following video from CDBaby’s DIY website and review the example on the next page: <http://diymusician.cdbaby.com/2011/07/how-to-make-an-effective-bandartist-one-sheet/>



# Hello Morning

Website: [hellomorningband.com](http://hellomorningband.com)

Facebook: [facebook.com/hellomorningband](https://facebook.com/hellomorningband)

Twitter: [www.twitter.com/hellomorningpdx](http://www.twitter.com/hellomorningpdx)

email: [hellomorningband@gmail.com](mailto:hellomorningband@gmail.com)



[Album artwork]

## Hello Morning | A Fiction

Following the successful reception of Hello Morning's debut EP, the band spent the year playing shows around the Northwest with international touring bands such as Two Door Cinema Club and Wang Chung, as well as local favorites like Clumber, Crosstide, and Mnemonic.

When Hello Morning decided it was time to start recording their second album, they found the songs they'd written shared some emotional states and narrative threads - love, trust, commitment, and communication between friends and lovers, both real and imagined. These songs culminated in "A Fiction," a diverse collection of modern rock explorations, the recording of which was entirely funded by Hello Morning's loyal fan base. The band launched a fan-funding campaign, spread the word, and their fans heeded the call, exceeding the goal with time to spare. With plenty of funding, the band headed back to Secret Society Recording Studio.

Musically, Hello Morning both polished and expanded their approach, retaining their majestic, uplifting sound on "The Fear," a postmodern mid-tempo anthem with a deep pocket and "A Good Year," a minor key whirlwind which calls to mind Death Cab and Interpol. "All I Knew," one of the last songs to be written, sprang to life one magical night and stands as the album's emotional highlight, going from a widescreen velvety throb to a psychedelic freak out, in the course of seven electric minutes.

In scope, palette, and composition, "A Fiction" is a more daring and successful leap for a band that already kickstarted their career with a promising debut.

**Release Date: March 8th, 2011**

### Track Listing

1. The Fear
2. A Good Year
3. Letters
4. Simple As You Said
6. Lucky One
6. All I Knew
7. The Rain
8. Channels (One Thing)

### PR Contact

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## WHERE TO POST / HOST YOUR EPK

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For many classical musicians and quite a few solo artists, their EPK will be hosted on their website. If you are lucky enough to have management, they will most likely be hosting your EPK. If you are a jazz or commercial band or solo artist, you can use one of the popular web-based EPK sites such as [SonicBids](#), [ReverbNation](#), [BandCamp](#), [artistecard](#), among others. [SoundCloud](#) is a useful free site that you can use to host your music samples. However, SoundCloud itself is not an EPK hosting site and should not be relied upon on its own for your marketing strategy.

Most musicians, especially students, are trying to do as much as possible with regard to promoting their music with little or no budget. You can utilize free widgets from EPK sites to build your own EPK on your website. Here's a link describing how to do this: <http://oneworkingmusician.com/need-an-electronic-press-kit-make-your-own>. Remember, a really slick presentation with mediocre contents is worthless. Far better, is an easy to navigate, modest presentation with high quality, customary and usual inclusions.

A digital press kit is an important element of your website, so create a "Press Kit" section and include it as part of your main menu navigation.

## IF YOU ARE STILL USING A PHYSICAL PRESS KIT

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Your physical press kit will include most of the elements described previously in this guide. This is where a one-sheet will come in really handy. In addition you will be including your music samples on CD properly labeled with your band name, contact name, phone number and email in case it becomes separated from the rest of the package. All this presented in a nicely designed folder, band logo or CD artwork on the cover and your business card = press kit.

Don't forget to write a killer cover letter explaining why you are sending this.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

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Whether you are using a physical press kit or an EPK on your website or on an EPK service, don't expect the press kit alone to get you results. Make sure to follow-up with each and every recipient. In addition, it's a good idea to contact the parties on your list in advance of sending it out. Many recipients will simply ignore unsolicited materials. All it takes is a phone call or email asking if it's OK to send a press kit and, with a simple 'yes,' ... voilà... your press kit becomes solicited material! Then your cover letter might say, "Enclosed find the *Your Band Name Here* press kit that we discussed on the phone / or in my previous email on Monday. Thank you so much for agreeing to review our materials. I will contact you next week to discuss the possibility of -----."

Good luck with all your music ventures and remember ...

*For additional guidance, please contact The Center for Student Success – Careers and make an appointment to meet with an advisor / counselor. As an integral part of your student success network, we are here to help you reach your career goals!*