



LIZA MULHOLLAND

FINE 'N' ROSY

“ *Fine 'n' Rosy, it is all in the title and whilst there are moments when the listener is invited to take in the sadness of a life, it does nothing to detract from the brilliance in the way such things are handled and over-come; a terrific joy to listen to and one that radiates sheer class.* ”

LIVERPOOL SOUND AND VISION, OCTOBER 2016

We're privileged to be able to work with a huge number of dedicated and talented musicians. We proudly offer and provide what we like to call the "complete service" to our clients. This includes disc pressing, album promotion, online and physical distribution, packaging and media design, advert placement and more. Contained within this case study is a look at the many services we provide.

Liza Mulholland, an independent musician based north of Inverness and with extensive experience in the folk music scene, came to us early in 2016 when she was planning her new album. She wanted a physical CD to sell at her gigs but also hoped to achieve wide radio airplay and garner strong reviews of her new album. We discussed various packaging, design and promotion options and put together the following package of support which we started implementing throughout 2016.



CD Pressing

For her debut solo album, Liza chose a **six-panel digipak** with the disc sitting in the centre, and an **eight-page booklet** held in a slot on the left-hand side. Digipaks have all-but eclipsed jewel cases as the industry standard in recent years, many choosing them for their card-based format.

Choosing the right packaging can be daunting, but it is a crucial step for any project. We are always happy to discuss options over the phone. Alternatively, our packaging portfolios on our website provide an extensive look at the various options we offer.

Design

Liza elected to have her album packaging designed by Birnam CD. A member of our design team worked closely with Liza to create the stunning artwork you can see at the top of this page. Liza was given our **design brief** (which anyone can access through our website) which details what sort of information is generally included on album packaging. With the information Liza provided after looking over our design brief, our designer created the artwork and sent proofs back and forth to Liza until the project was completed, keeping Liza informed and involved every step of the way.

What is MCPS?

MCPS stands for the Mechanical Copyright Protection Society. The society represents the mechanical rights of its members (composers, songwriters, publishers). When one of its members' works is recorded and reproduced as a physical product such as a CD or vinyl, MCPS will collect the due royalties and pass these payments on to the member(s). The society administers a range of licences depending on the type of release. If you plan to release a CD album, for example, you must apply to MCPS for the appropriate licence.

Promotional Package (100)

Liza selected one of our promotional packages, ensuring that her album would be well-publicised before and after its release. She picked our 100 package, the highest tier available at the time. For this package, we sent out 100 copies of Liza's album, each accompanied by a stylish and professional promotional flyer, to key contacts across the UK music scene. The contacts were carefully selected by a member of our team to suit the style of Liza's music.

Here's a look at everything included in our standard promotional packages:

1 Promotional Flyer

Our promotional flyers feature a design on the front based of our client's album artwork. The inner pages contain key information about the album and the artist (i.e. release date, recommended retail price, upcoming live dates) as well as a full press release. The four-page, full-colour flyer provides an eye-catching alternative to a standard press release document. We also provide a number of these flyers to our client for use in their own promotional efforts.

2 Posters

We provide a selection of full-colour posters with every promotional package. These posters can be put together using our standard layout (pictured), put together using the same design as the front of the promotional flyer, or created with a fresh design to suit our client's needs. All posters are available as A4, A3, or a mixture of both.

3 CD Display Units

Every package comes with a number of card CD display units. These are great for setting up on merchandise stands at concerts, or donating to shops to store and sell the CDs. The header and middle sections of the units are designed by a member of our team to align with the style of the album packaging.

Dedicated Web Page

We set up a dedicated web page on our website for all of our promotional clients. This web page includes all of the information from the promotional flyer, as well as high-res, downloadable press shots for use in the media.

Social Media Support

Birnam CD maintains an active presence on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Google+. We offer support to all of our promotional clients by using these channels to promote concerts, releases and any other information our clients might want us to share. Keep us in the loop and we will help spread the word!



Social Media Graphics

As well as our standard promotional packages, we offer a host of optional extras that can be tagged onto any package, allowing you to build your own, personalised promotional package. Liza chose to take-up our social media graphics service. For this service, a member of our team designed a series of graphics for use across Liza's social media platforms.

- 1 A cover photo for Liza's Facebook page
- 2 An event banner for Liza's album launch event on Facebook
- 3 A banner for Liza's Twitter page
- 4 A graphic sized for sharing on all social media platforms

Downloads, Streaming and Online Sales

Liza selected our downloads, streaming and online sales packages, in addition to the other services we provided. With these packages, we made her album available for download and for streaming through major online platforms, and we currently sell her CDs through our own online shop, as well as our five-star-rated seller accounts on Amazon.co.uk and Amazon.com.

When making an album available for download and streaming;

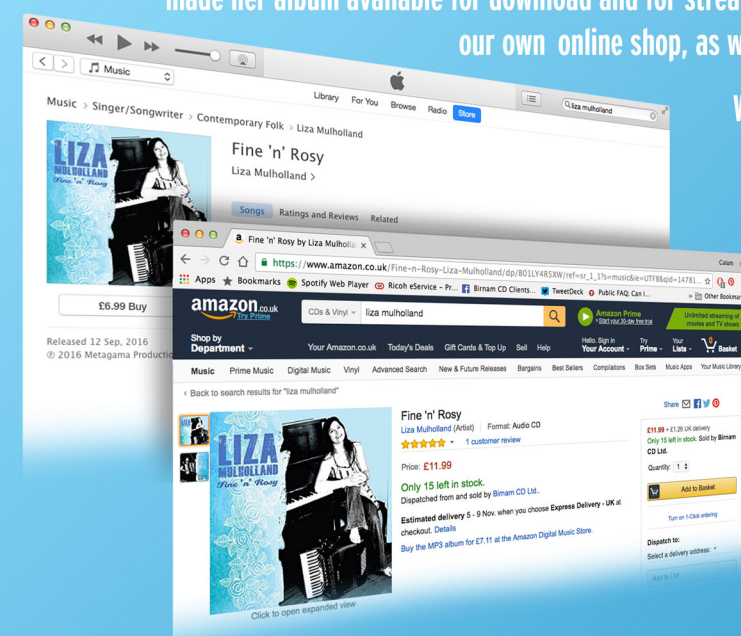
- We convert the tracks from the final master into WAV files
- We create a digital booklet from the artwork to go on the iTunes listing
- If required, we allocate ISRCs and a barcode number
- If required, we can set-up a pre-release single to be made available ahead of the album's release, as we did for Liza.

What are ISRCs?

The International Standard Recording Code (ISRC) system is the international system for the identification of recorded music and music videos. Each ISRC is a unique identifier that can be permanently encoded into a recording or music video. Encoded ISRCs are used to monitor and track royalty payments.

Online Track Registration

Liza took up what is, surprisingly, one of our lesser-known services; online track registration. With this service, we registered Liza's track information with the online database that programmes such as iTunes and Windows Media Player use to identify songs and albums. By registering her information with this database, we ensured that the correct track and album titles will be displayed whenever her album is put into a computer. Contrary to what many seem to think, this information cannot be ripped directly from the disc; it must be uploaded to the database.



Reviews

Liza's album was picked up by many publications for review. We have compiled a few quotes from two of these reviews below.



"Although Liza is a veteran of the Scottish music scene this is the first time she's gone it alone, although the presence of such guests as Marc Clement, Roddy McGregor and Rua Macmillan means that she is not without support."

"There is a fascinating selection of material on Fine 'N' Rosy."

FolkWords

"With her wistful, almost fragile voice and a fine ear for a melody, Liza Mulholland pours raw emotion into the songs on her debut solo album, 'Fine 'n Rosy', which ensures that from the moment this album opens with the utterly infectious hooks of 'Took My Breath Away' you're held in its grasp."

"Fine 'N' Rosy is not only something rather special, it's something you really should experience."

Airplay

Liza received extensive airplay from many different outlets. The stations featured below represent a small selection of those to play Liza's music, but between just these five stations, Liza received airplay across Scotland, Ireland, England, Wales, the US, Canada and Australia.



"2016's Top Albums"

As well as receiving many reviews and extensive (and far-reaching) airplay, Liza's album was picked up by programmes on the following stations and named among their Best Albums of 2016.



Where Will My CDs Be Sent?

This is a common question, but unfortunately we cannot disclose the full list of where clients' promo CDs will be sent. A lot of time and effort went into compiling our database of promotional contacts, and making this database available to our clients would diminish its worth. If there is a specific radio station, magazine or other contact that you would like your music sent to, then we ask that you make us aware and we will be sure to send copies to that contact. As for the other copies, a member of our team will listen to your album and then carefully select contacts from our database to suit the album's music.

And, finally, some lovely closing words from Liza...



Some lovely feedback from Liza

When I decided in early 2016 to record and self-release a solo album, it did not take me long to settle on the choice of manufacturer. Although I was aware of Birnam CD and knew of many musician friends who had gone to them for CD pressing, I still did some research into prices and services to ensure the best deal for my project. It was this investigation that clinched it for me.

What I hadn't realised previously about Birnam CD was that they also offer the artiste a complete range of services, covering everything that needs done both before and after the actual manufacture; from sleeve design and a wide range of packaging options, applying for MCPS and Intellectual Property licences, information on ISRC Codes and PPL, uploading to digital download and streaming platforms, arranging everything in relation to selling the physical CDs from their online shop and Amazon, right through to marketing requirements, including the creation of posters, flyers, counter-top display stands, and graphics for social media profiles and headers.

In addition to all this, they offer a promotion service involving sending out copies of the CD with an information flyer to their industry contacts, such as radio producers, music reviewers, relevant newspapers, magazines and online sites. Having independently released in 2014, our band Dorec-a-belle's album, I was acutely aware just how much time and work all of the album-making process takes, and in particular the latter business of scouring for details of the 'right' people to send the CD to. The idea that someone else might do this for me seemed too good to be true! In addition, a CD arriving in a producer's hands from a trusted source clearly gets more attention than yet another package from an individual and unknown musician.

In the event it has all been a very smooth process, with information always on hand when I needed it, beautiful sleeve and booklet design from Mike (Birnam's senior designer), quick turnaround on all aspects and always conducted in a professional but friendly manner. Even when I decided, mid-project, to release one of the songs as a digital download for the charity, Inverness Women's Aid, in advance of the album, the guys at Birnam weren't fazed; they got the song up on iTunes, Amazon, Google and Spotify, and designed, printed and delivered 2000 flyers within a couple of days.

Although technology and the internet have revolutionised the music business, making it much easier for musicians to release their own music, it still involves a lot of work. To be aided throughout the process, and relieved of much of the stress and hassle, has been a huge benefit and one that I would highly recommend. Self-releasing a solo album can feel a wee bit lonesome, with the burden of the whole project on your own shoulders; with Birnam CD at my side I felt like they were taking care of everything for me. Even better than that, I'm now getting nice reviews coming in and plays on radio stations I previously didn't even know existed!

Liza Mulholland, Independent Musician and a very happy customer!