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UMN.com gives platform to unsigned music artists

Many independent bands have surprisingly found all the benefits of a label from one popular Web site

By **Natasha Chilingirian**
Pulse Reporter

About a year and a half ago, Los Angeles-based metal/rock band Hyaline found a helpful tool in its music career construction: The Internet. Ever since then, the group has been part of an online music community, submitted songs for television and movie soundtracks and snagged numerous touring and performing opportunities.

Like Hyaline, many independent and indie artists have discovered the Unsigned Music Network (UMN.com), a Web site that provides career-enhancing services previously unavailable for musicians not signed with a label. Among other opportunities, UMN.com gives exposure and attracts a fan base for participating artists.

"UMN has created an online community or network for all of the bands that participate," Hyaline drummer Dan Fowler said in an e-mail interview. "Because of UMN, Hyaline has met and interacted with bands all over the United States. As a result we've been able to tour around and perform with UMN bands in different cities and get the chance to perform to brand new audiences in a packed club."

Founded in 2001, UMN.com started as an Internet radio station that played songs from about 100 selected bands, mostly in the rock genre. When current UMN.com president Steve Sheiner began working for the company five months ago, he decided to allow any band to showcase their music on the Web site. Today, about 300 bands are members of UMN.com, with styles ranging from a cappella to gangsta rap to reggae. Musicians pay a monthly fee to post songs and music videos on the site to stream or download, maintain



UMN.com was founded by the Los Angeles-based band Hyaline and offers indie artists a place to market their music. Musicians retain all rights to their songs and image, which is a plus for them. Courtesy

their own Web sites and manage an e-mail fan list. The company also markets musicians, helps to license their music for release to television and movies and provides assistance with booking shows.

"We are providing support outside of just the Web site," Sheiner said.

While signed artists share copyrights and revenue with their labels, UMN.com musicians own all copyrights to their music and keep their total profits. Total control of image and sound is another advantage bands have as members of UMN.com.

Sheiner said although he is still getting the word out about the company, many musicians have seen jumps in their careers as a result from participating in UMN.com.

"Some labels have contacted bands," he said. "(UMN.com) builds a fan base for musicians, gets interest from the industry and creates an opportunity for people to hear their music."

Some participating musicians say the sense of community and the opportunity to meet other bands are the top services provided by UMN.com.

"It has allowed us to connect with other musicians around the United States that we have now become very

close with and help support," Hyaline bass player Aaron Broughton said in an e-mail interview. "That's what it's all about, connecting, making new friends, creating new fans, and getting your music to more people."



Drummer Barrett Yeretsian, who plays in Los Angeles-based rock band Beat and Path, said in an e-mail interview that UMN.com "created an Internet buzz" by playing his group's song "Goodbye Beautiful Day" on their radio program.

"UMN is definitely a great service for unsigned bands," he said. "It gave us the exposure that is taking us to the next level."

Sheiner said being signed to a label is not the ultimate goal for artists these days because there are other ways to make money while making music. With the growing use of the Internet, independent artists can easily build their careers through online music services.

"The goal of a musician is to make a living playing music," he said. "There are now opportunities for independent artists to be successful."

Contact the Pulse reporter at natashachilingirian@dailyemerald.com.

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