

>> People

Selling albums for all

by **CHRIS BARRY****Name:** Hamza Kubba**Age:** 26**Occupation:** Burgeoning online music mogul

Bio: This enterprising Iraqi-born Plateau stud first arrived in Montreal by way of the United Arab Emirates at age 16 to study at McGill. Having laboured in the field of Web site development “for the past eight years or so,” last fall, Hamza and his Brooklyn-based business partner Andreas Blachere decided it was time to make their mark on the Montreal music scene by launching Capsule Records, an online music distributor currently signing up local bands for the purpose of getting their music out to the world “without their having to go through 2,000 middlemen just to do it. All musicians want to have their music heard and make enough money to live off it so they can continue making more music, so this is what we’re trying to do. Once we get a little more momentum going, well, I hope we’ll be something like MySpace—except with a bit of actual quality control.”

What makes Capsule Records so wonderful: “Well, for starters, we just sell complete albums and every album is only \$5, and soon people will be able to download all the cover art for that price. We’re against that whole Napster/iTunes concept of people only downloading single tracks. An album is a complete piece of art. Artists spend an awful lot of time thinking about sequence, et cetera, and we don’t want that to get lost in the distribution process.”



Why would any artist want to sell their entire album for a percentage of a \$5 gross when they can go to the much better known iTunes and get more money for their musical droppings:

"Because we're more than a simple online distribution outlet, we're helping artists promote their music, we're organizing shows, setting up tours for them. Actually, we're doing a show this weekend, on the 16th, at the Main Hall."

Must one surrender their first-born in order to be a part of the Capsule family: "I don't see how making an artist sign an exclusive contract with us is going to help them. If an artist wants to leave us, then they're free to do so at any time. Hey, it keeps us honest and motivated to be better than the other guys in this business."

If Capsule fails, is there much chance he'll return to Iraq and join a Shiite militia: "War in general is wrong. Just a patch put on a problem that often makes things worse. As for joining a militia, um, no plans so far, violence only begets violence. People are dying now, and they're going to be angry at the U.S. for years. I'm not saying everyone living there is going to want to become a terrorist, but the situation now certainly doesn't lend itself to a happy, peaceful environment. I'm a Shiite, although not exactly a practising Muslim."

How to submit your shitty band for consideration: Go to www.capsulerecords.com

Where you might find him boozin': Else's, Bifteck.

Last book read: Introducing Neuro-Linguistic Programming by J. O'Connor and J. Seymour.

Musical preferences: Nightmares on Wax, Bonobo, Röyksopp.

Words of wisdom: "A good business is about helping as many people as much as possible."

Comments: Dimwit@openface.ca

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