

HOW TO PITCH TO “INSIDE THE MUSIC”

The Show

Inside the Music is a weekly one-hour program that explores the context and broader meaning of music. It presents compelling ideas about music...the how, the why and, most important, the “so what?”

We invite pitches from freelancers across the country, as well as CBC employees. And we welcome pitches on stories from all genres of music.

The Values

Above all, we want the show to be **Entertaining**, to provide **Depth**, to present **Original** ideas, to create a sense of **Discovery** and to be **Canadian**.

Entertaining: Always engaging, interesting use of sound; It is designed to delight and engage the listener.

Depth: A high level of rigour in the ideas presented; delivering insight and context to music is key.

Original: The originality of the ideas pitched will weigh heavily in the selection process; surprise, making original connections, providing new context.

Discovery: Curious, inquisitive, presenting new voices, musicians, or new approaches to thinking about music.

Canadian: Canadian-related topics, ideas and perspectives are strongly encouraged, although we are not limited to strictly Canadian related stories.

The Importance of Having a Story/Idea

What is the story you want to tell about music? What is the idea you want to explore?

Each show must contain a strong story or focus about a musical subject. It could be a genre of music, a performer or an era. We would like to get beyond a survey of a style of music and instead are looking for an idea and story that allows us to know more “inside” the music.

When pitching, please remember that your show about a topic/theme must be driven by an idea. A topic isn’t enough. We also want *ideas* about various topics.

For example: in the first episode of *Inside the Music*, Andre Alexis explored the idea of nature as a source of inspiration for Canadian composers. It wasn’t simply

a disc show containing nature-related music and clips; it contained an argument, an arc, and a focus about why landscapes formed an inspiration for composers.

Each show must be presented through the filter/lens of music. An idea, or ideas, about music must be in the foreground of each show. For example, we wouldn't commission a show about 60s social politics that simply uses music in the background; but we *might* be interested in a show about the impact of protest music in the 60s.

The Formats

We are open to receiving pitches for one-off shows and short series up to a maximum of 6 episodes. A limited series must be defined in terms of a story told in a specific number of episodes; pitches for a multi-part series must include detailed descriptions of each episode. *Inside the Music* is not the destination for a trial of a program concept that may become a 52-week series.

We want a wide range of treatments and voices.

Formats may include but are not limited to:

1. Narrator/discs with clips
2. Content rich documentaries.
3. Narrator/discs
4. Extended interview
5. You tell us!

Production

The expectation is that most pitches would come with a plan of how and when production would be done, as well as a proposed budget. While the group assessing proposals (see below) is there to provide support through the process of getting a pitch to air, it is expected that the person submitting the pitch would take responsibility for all production elements (gathering, editing, mixing etc).

Additional Criteria

We want to deliver smart, insightful programming. We also want to make it clear that, although we're asking for depth and rigour, the tone doesn't necessarily have to be somber and serious. The show must be original and entertaining. Strong points of view are also encouraged.

It might be a natural inclination to go back in time with your pitches; but we don't want the show to be drenched in nostalgia; contemporary, current ideas are also strongly encouraged.

Who presents your content on-air is important. Not everyone who pitches an idea is best qualified to present it on-air. Think about this as part of your pitch. We reserve the right to make the final decision about who works on a series and who presents it on-air, but if you pitch a series that's accepted, you will be involved in its production.

Inside the Music should have an impact, create buzz; it should become destination programming for the Radio Two audience. The programs will also air on Radio One and on Sirius 137.

Questions

The following questions may help you sharpen your idea before you put it into proposal form.

1. WHAT'S THE MOST POWERFUL / EXCITING / COMPELLING ASPECT OF YOUR IDEA?

When you tell others about it, what excites them the most?

This is often a good way to start your pitch.

2. HOW WILL YOUR PROGRAM "TREAT" ITS STORIES, GUESTS AND IDEAS?

In other words, how would you describe your program's attitude toward its content? For example will it be more light-hearted or more serious; cheekier or more respectful; more entertaining or more informative; probing or reflective, etc. Is there anything new or different about how your program will sound?

3. WHAT CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT THE PRESENTER OF THIS PROGRAM?

Do you have someone in mind? What should they sound like? How do they relate to the content on the show?

What's their role on the show? Do they have a strong point of view?

4. WHAT WILL WE HEAR?

Give us some specifics, help us imagine what we're going to hear coming out of the radio. More than just a list of content, music or interview possibilities, tell us how your program's tone and attitude will be reflected

in how you approach the content on it. Not just what you're going to do, but how you're going to do it.

5. WHY DOES IT BELONG ON CBC RADIO?

Is there anything that makes your show perfect for CBC rather than another broadcaster? Does it take CBC Radio somewhere new? Does it fit our values as a public broadcaster: high quality, distinctive programming that's intelligent, insightful and entertaining? Why should it air now?

7. WHAT ARE THE KEY CHALLENGES YOU THINK YOU WILL FACE?

Imagine all the things you'd come up against while in production. How would you address these challenges?

The Checklist

Once you've worked through the idea, here's a quick checklist of other things you should include in your proposal:

- ❑ **Who You Are :** Not just name, rank and serial number (though that helps). Tell us what it is about you (your background, your passions, your whims) that have led you to your idea. And, while you're at it, let us know why you're the person to do it.
- ❑ **How to Contact You :** Phone, e-mail, home phone, cell phone etc., etc.
- ❑ **Capsule Description:** A few lines that sum up the pitch.
- ❑ **Who is Who:** If you've got people you want to work with, tell us who's on the team. Who's producing? Who's presenting? Assume we don't know these people. Give us an idea why they're the people for those roles. Tell us what role you see yourself playing.
- ❑ **Support :** What kind of support do you need? Mentoring? Coaching on performance? Learning how to do complicated audio mixes? Don't be embarrassed, we're here to help and the more we know upfront the better.

- **Timing:** Is your proposal somehow time-sensitive? Are there times when you can work on this, times when you cannot?

Reviewing Proposals

This is an open and on-going proposal call. Proposals will be reviewed on a quarterly basis and decisions on moving forward will be made by a small five person Program Development Group specific to this program. The group will offer support and oversee each series approved, but the expectation is that the programs or series will be self-produced.

For this year the PD group is chaired by Ann MacKeigan, with Greig Dymond, Mark O'Neill, Sandy Thacker and Stewart Young. All proposals should be sent in electronic form to radioproposals@cbc.ca.

For more information

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