

This may be way too long...lol..I'll let you edit and fix any errors you see that I might have missed. im not great with all the commas and punctuation..lol

Thanks again David. I look forward to seeing the final product.

HALSHACK INDIE ROCKCAST

WWW.HALSHACK.COM

How did this podcast begin?

First I would like to take a second to say thank you to David Willard and Forsyth Women and Forsyth Family Magazines for spreading the love for my podcast and promotional label.

My name is Hal Jester and I am a High Point, NC native (currently residing in Lexington) and I am the creator, personality, and producer behind the Halshack Indie Rockcast. To learn of this podcast roots is to learn of my roots in the business. It all started back in 1998 when I was a fledgling local promoter here in the Triad region of NC and I had started a local music promoting business with a couple homegrown guys from the Thomasville/High Point area (Christopher Keith and Stan Thompson). We put on a few shows in the state and quickly built momentum but I had my first baby on the way so life had other plans. I continued on to help behind the scenes with a "little" but mighty band (On Second Thought) from Denver, CO and my good buddy and lead singer Damon Guerrasio who later went on to form the inexplicably great Savage Henry around the year 2005. With the use of the web, I was able to bolster my credibility by promoting this excellent alt-rock group, from high in the Rockies, on Road Runner Records SIGN ME TOO website. It helped earn me a solid reputation among my peers at the label.

I quickly caught the attention of the "affiliate scouts" (these were the people that had the labels ear in suggesting bands) particularly Andrew Liles, Lisa Nash, and Mark Francis who took me under their wing and helped propel me forward with words of encouragement and support for my plight as well as invaluable advice. But all good things have to end at somepoint and Road Runner was bought out by Warner Bros. Music in 2012 and in turn ended my venture at the label. In the meantime, I took a few solid acts with me and looked for new heights.

Shortly after Road Runners demise, I befriended an awesome internet radio DJ from Seattle, WA and now my good dear buddy Matthew Meadows who offered me a guest spot on his popular indie show "Rango Unmuzzled" (which was part of the Reputation Radio Network, an internet radio station based in the UK) to help promote some of my bands that I had found over my years. I got to do some guest spots, it was alot of fun and an amazing experience. I am very thankful to my cohort Matthew and the station head, John Summers, as I will forever owe them my gratitude for giving me a platform to be introduced to the world!

Once I acquired enough bands, John Summers (former Virgin Records A&R) and the owner of Reputation Radio offered me my own show which allowed me to become entangled with some really cool people Pete Ringmaster (Ringmaster Review --UK) and Tom McNeil (Bombshell Radio ---Canada).

BOTH OF WHICH I AM STILL WORKING WITH TODAY!!

Soooo, I needed a name, I went through a few variations from (Howlin' Hal) to (The Band Stop) to (Hal's bands) then I reluctantly decided on the (Band Shack) but I wasn't crazy about it..lol. I was doing some brainstorming with my good buddy Matthew (aka Rango the Dog) and he blurted out and I quote verbatim..lol

Matthew Meadows said "Call it Halshack and hashtag the \$#!^ out of that"...lol but it had to have more than Halshack so I thought "podcast" ughh too boring and then a braingasm hit me...lol "Rockcast", yeah that's different, and the HALSHACK INDIE ROCKCAST was born.....first episode went "live" on Oct 16, 2014.

Tell me about the podcast in your own words

I am passionate about this project. I make no money from what we do and certainly take no money from the bands. It is my goal to catch the attention of radio stations and networks, satellite radio, also the major record labels to possibly open doors and make contacts for all parties involved and especially to promote the BANDS and get them noticed. I am absolutely passionate about indie music and discovering hidden talent. I strive to find bands and artists (which are relatively unknown but have proven themselves successful in building their image and fanbase) that can compete with today's industry standards. I look for and aspire to finding the next BIG hit song or chart topping band. For instance, one of my acts has a song on Spotify that has hit 10 million plays , track name is "101" from the former group Walla (now called HOONCH...they took 4th in the Battleshack) So that's just one example to show people this podcast means business and we are firmly planted in our roots, here to cultivate and grow the seeds of the potential future of the music industry. I started this podcast for a plethora of different reasons but one main reason is I'm sick and tired of the nonsense the RIAA (Recording Industry Association of America) is shoving down our ears on major FM radio and I hear these same complaints daily from avid music fans from all walks of life. We all want something better, something more substantial from our music listening experience and that's what I aspire for is to offer the listener something fresh, something new, something MORE!!

What does it bring to the community?

This podcast offers a chance for the indie musician to be heard. Most of today's FM radio stations are corporate owned and it's almost impossible to "break out" on commercial radio if you dont have the \$\$\$\$ to grease the pockets of the elite. I've been around long enough, in this business, to learn how it works (somewhat) and the current environment on commercial radio does not cater to the struggling indie musician no matter how "good" they are. My show gives these "good", "great", "fantastic",

"excellent" artists and musicians a platform to help launch their careers. I have a dedicated staff made up of ex-music label scouts from Road Runner Records, musicians, bloggers, writers, and even a professional music reviewer from the UK known as Pete Ringmaster with his great program and articles "The RingMaster Review". We offer these services to some of our artists who have been deemed worthy of the extra praise. We showcase them on the website home page and the review page titled (CREWS VIEWS). Those articles and reviews are shared on my social pages and in turn my team of great social gurus gets busy sharing the love around the world. We would like to offer more articles and reviews in the future as the show and the promotional label grow. I'm hoping to add more staff of awesome volunteers. (Hopefully one day I can pay them, that would be really cool) My staff are very passionate about our plight and believe in me and my show. (Thank you folks again for your support) They feel we could go all the way to the TOP. We have the support for the show and the music. The whole concept is fresh, innovative, and just what the music industry doctors ordered.

How is it unique?

I'm the one-stop shop for ace level indie bands and solo indie artists that can compete with or rival today's stars that have their own potential hit songs and some of them have several hit songs at that. People ask me all the time "wow Hal, where did you find all these great bands and why have we never heard of them before?" One reason is, I dig around the net, I go to concerts, I look all over the world and in our local home state scouring for the rare gems. The big labels today don't take submissions anymore (not saying that all the labels don't but most have curtailed submissions) they have their connections and talent firms and they aren't searching around the globe and doing their homework. It's all about who "knows" who and what can you "do for me" attitude that has plagued this business for decades.

So apart from offering some of the best (unknown) unsigned indie bands and artists, my show and my website are chock full of reasons why we are "unique". This is the only place you will find all these same acts under one roof. I offer a platform that no other radio show or podcast offers. I blend rock, pop, and alternative with a smattering of reggae, ska, punk, americana, funk and modern blues. The songs are then arranged by style into several blocks of 2 songs each then a "talk" break then 2 songs and so forth...you get the idea. Anyway these songs are grouped into segments that are very popular among my listener base. I don't necessarily use the same order of the blocks each show but the idea is to have at least one of these blocks for most of the episodes. The block segment names are Alt Vault, Pop Stop, Rock Block, Funk Trunk, Blues Grooves (Americana) and my very special creation "MYSTERY SPOTLIGHT" (no one knows who the spotlight is, not even the band, so it's all a BIG guessing game). Sometimes I have a "British Invasion" segment as well. I have a hotbed of activity in the UK and a growing fanbase so I like to spread a little love "across the pond..lol" for our fellow kinsmen.

Now I also award special recognition within these segments to certain tracks that deserve the extra attention and praise. I call those the "Shacktrack of the Month" (special track that just has that unique edge to be showcased) and "Homegrown Artist of the Month" (where I highlight a local skilled artist from our corner of the woods, North and South Carolina). Also we have the "Breakout Artist of the

Month" (special act that has that modern fresh x-factor sound that could get noticed by radio stations and record label heads) and my latest addition "Shack Muse of the Month" (a gifted writer and musician that really knows how to sell their story)

What is the long term vision for this podcast?

Well, as I mentioned earlier, I would love to make some high profile connections in the music industry or baby steps even at first, I mentioned earlier about radio, if radio wants to syndicate my show, Im all ears. Ill bring all the music and the production, just give me a place to be heard (pay me would be a bonus..lol) but the long term real "vision" would be to shed some light on my acts and make them known to the world by bartering record deals and FM radio airplay worldwide. I would love nothing more than to turn on the radio and get the satisfaction that I put that fledgeling band on the radio for the world to hear and adore. There's so much great music out there to be heard. I mean seriously good, for example, I've got a new Dutch pop artist coming for Ep. 12 (the GUY is freakin' awesome, he has a whole 175 likes on facebook) WTH?? I swear he could have millions of fans and a record deal to boot but no one knows who he is. That's what makes me so angry at this business and advertising in general. Unless you got a boatload of money or investors then you will starve to death before someone pays you attention. Well that's all about to change. We aim to work with only the best acts that have that potential (x-factor) hit songs and stage presence. So I am shooting for the stars and have been making some noise and turning heads for the short time we have been "live". I've noticed some BIG names in my twitter followers that I hope will want to talk "turkey" one day about a job with their label as an A&R (Im working closer to that goal now with some BIG NEWS that you will read further down) and I can feed them endless bands and artists. I have so many thoughts about where this show could go in the future. Syndication on large radio networks or satellite radio, maybe some large advertising accounts with an income stream so we can PAY the bands and the staff, maybe our own record label if we land the right investors. I've always envisioned Halshack could be a revolutionary new record label where the artists get to keep most of their earnings and they get to keep their rights to their music as well as having input in their creations. I'm all in favor of making sure the musicians are happy so they can thrive within their environment and continue to deliver solid music choices for years to come. We have the show, we have the music and the bands, all we need now is a platform to impress millions instead of hundreds, maybe thousands.

What are some memorable moments from the podcast so far?

Episode 2 was explosive when it came out, Twitter really helped alot to boost it out there, my daughter played clarinet in the Central Davidson High School band here in Lexington. I featured some of their music on a few early episodes of the show, their band is amazing and has amassed awards all across the region and that same band received 7 straight SUPERIOR ratings from the state competition (NEVER

BEEN DONE BEFORE THIS CLASS all 7 years from 6th to 12th grade...IMPRESSIVE!!!!) So needless to say I am a proud Daddy and I just had to include the top brass in the area on a few episodes of my show.

Episode 5 was my first and only attempt at making a full interactive video radio show which can be found at my Fandalism and FIYA profile pages as well as YouTube. This was a very hard, took me a couple months working on it here and there, sometimes grinding for hours in the middle of the night..lol. Anyway thats the only time I will attempt that again..lol. Enjoy it!!

Episode 6, I was privy to meeting with a great acoustic band from the UK, Narrow Plains, who won a major contest to come to America and work with famed producer John Davenport who lives in Sanford, NC. John has worked with some of the biggest names in the business and the band was very grateful that they got to share in this experience. I was honored to have my first ever interview with a band from London and it was just so awesome to hang with Narrow Plains at the Blind Tiger in Greensboro, NC where they got to play a show with another good local act THE FAMILY. I played an excerpt of that interview on Episode 6 and played some tunes from both these bands. The full interview can be found at my Fandalism page. Also we introduced a new Rock band from Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada (STEALING EDEN), amazing act that came to us with 40,000 cd sales on their own with no label backing!! Fantastic band and ready for worldwide stardom. Stealing Eden earned 2nd place in the Battleshack and Narrow Plains mustered up an 8th place finish so well done to both bands. Completely unrelated, it turns out BRAD PITT is a huge fan of Narrow Plains...lol

Episode 7 brought the listener an absolutely excellent eccentric quartet from the little tiny island nation of Malta in the middle of the Mediterranean. (AIRPORT IMPRESSIONS). Funny thing is this bands management team (SR Wells Management) is from Henderson, NC. So its a small world afterall..lol. They are looking at a USA tour in the near future and this band ended up making such great impressions that they snagged 3rd place in the Battleshack 2017!

For Episode 8, I put the spotlight on an emerging trio from Cali. Magic Giant is their name and infectious bluegrass/pop songs are their game. Now, I get some special cred here. This band has been recently named a Top 10 band to watch by Rolling Stone magazine and well, yours truly here, found this band and was promoting them for a year before Rolling Stone got wind of their whimsical tunes. I had one of my ex-record label scouts/reviewers (Mark Francis) give them a whirl and he loved them so much he gave them a "bang-up" review and highlighted some of the same facets that Rolling Stone did in their review but we just beat them to the punch by a year or so...lol. We at the Halshack know GOOD music and we know what we like and we like MAGIC GIANT. That review can be found at my review page Crew's Views which can be found at my website. (www.Halshack.com)

Episode 10 "Battleshack". We offered a summer long contest in 2017 for people to hit the website and vote, vote, vote for their fave halshack bands and artists and that results show was a BIG success. We got to see an unbiased, unfiltered look at our best acts from our extensive base of fans and listeners from all over the world. Out of about 35 competing acts, we wound up with a well rounded top 10 that I actually agree with the finals (for the most part..lol) I would like to mention a local "homegrown" artist made the cut at #10. Kylie Odetta from Simpsonville, SC (she's got that Selena Gomez, Lily Allen, Colbie Caillat influence)

I also kicked out a "bonus" Ep 10.5 "Shackcredibles" to pay some homage to the bands that got votes but just not enough. So a nice honorable mentions show for them and I'll tell you this, there are songs in this show just as good as the stuff in the Top 10. Goes to show you that my acts have teeth, they have staying power, you can find at least one hit song or more from every one of my artists. (They got to have at least one or I'm skipping them..I try to look for bands and artists that have multiple potential hits but that doesnt always work out)

Ep 11 ...OOHH...BIG NEWS...Did you folks know that FRANKIE MUNIZ (star of Fox TV Malcom in the Middle) is a musician? WHAT??? Yeah, turns out he's a really good drummer, slinging sticks for a professional indie alt-rock band (KINGSFOIL). Their band, plus the new band (ASTRO LASSO) they formed with Frankie as their manager, are in my show for this episode. I was granted permission by the band to do a centerpiece on Frankie for the show and the website and highlight their 2 excellent acts. Also did you know Frankie was on Dancing with the Stars recently (Season 25) , made it to the end finale but lost out to another team. Also Frankie was a race car driver before he got into music. What an interesting well rounded fellow and I'm honored that Frankie would allow me this rare opportunity for a fledgeling podcast.

Ep 12..well the biggest news of all is coming..I'm working on a project involving a MAJOR STAR (?????) and re-release or a reboot of a classic 80's MEGA HIT and its been authorized and endorsed by the original artist to come out under a brand new band. I'm under strict orders from the "STAR" to not release any information yet until its time to go "live" so I got to abide or lose this gig, so mums the word. I have been authorized to tease you with tidbits..lol. This song and band have been authorized to be on my show "only" as an exclusive podcast airing before it's released to national FM radio across the country (sometime later in the year). But guess who's getting it first, Booyah baby!! I am very honored and proud that these important BIG WIGS with a BIG STAR and a big new investor backed band with a new label deal in the works would allow me this opportunity to "breakout" this band to the world. We may even be getting a one or two "The VOICE" contestants on this show as well. Little ole' Halshack is not so little anymore and it goes to show that if you have passion and a quality product, even a "no name" like me buried away in a small town in North Carolina can impress the music elites. We are hosting the new band's first interview and article review here at my website to go along with the podcast airing. Its all slated for release for the end of April unless we get delayed.

How can you keep this podcast fresh and something the area needs to listen to?

I try to always implement a new segment or new award each episode or bring in new acts to promote and play. I try to never play the same songs twice. I have enough good tunes and bands that it's rarely necessary to repeat a track unless I just feel it needs to be showcased on another episode. I feel with each show we pass a new milestone. New, even better bands than before, new ideas, fresh music that people can relate to. I seek and search out every single one of my acts and form relationships with each one of these bands and artists. That makes me authentic, I'm not just some guy spinning bands that I have no permission to promote or be working with. Thats one of the things that sets me apart from the

pack. Most podcasts, if not all, don't have the luxury to be picky or choosy and play whatever they get sent. I get "sent" a lot of, let's just say not so desirable music and it makes me feel bad when people work hard to produce their music and it's just not good enough, I don't want to let people down and make them feel I'm being mean so I just don't respond. If you're lucky and it's a really worthy band or artist then you will get a quick response from me. I have been sent some "good bands" so they are forever part of my team now. I have found that only about 1 to 5% of all indie musicians out there have a shot at making it. It's because the radio and the labels have set the bar really HIGH and you gotta bring it now if you're going to get noticed. I don't play junk and I won't sacrifice my reputation to promote anything that's not at least potentially label worthy. I have built my name on those stipulations and I believe now, I'm just beginning to see the fruits of my labor. With the recent acquisition of acts like Magic Giant, Stealing Eden, Airport Impressions, Narrow Plains, Kingsfoil and many many more plus the new "HIT BAND" and "MEGA-STAR" exclusive coming in the near future, it's allowing us to really grow and cultivate a name that is quickly becoming the "Home" for new music and launching pad to help indie musicians to possibly solidify mainstream stardom.

As far as the local area, I will continue to search for local acts that deserve the attention by promoting them socially and on my show with my special segment "HOMEGROWN ARTIST OF THE MONTH" and hope that I can help create a rich vibrant atmosphere across the Carolinas to showcase the best talent that we have to offer the world. I would love to put more focus on local acts but sadly some of the best acts in the world are not here in our home state. True, the Carolinas are rich in music history and heritage but not so much with chart topping bands and artists. I will say my girl (KYLIE ODETTA) she's gonna be the one to watch from our area right now, she's got "all the right stuff" to MAKE IT BIG and you find a few of her songs posted on my various media pages!! I'll throw out an honorable mention to SPACESHIP DAYS as well. Good band from Raleigh that has made some waves with a former American Idol series 11 finalist (Adam Lee Decker) as their front man. Their track "Heartbeat" is pretty solid!! (you can find it on my Podomatic page) Just brought in another new band from Raleigh, for Episode 11, so please give it a play and find out about this new upcoming talented band from the Triangle.

What kind of support have you gotten from the community?

We have mass support from the indie music scene and I have an awesome team of folks from around the world who want to see the show succeed, but of course it's hard to get people to listen to indie music. It's hard to tear people away from their FM radio stations and Pandora to listen to what they feel may be inferior music because of all the stereotypes that surround indie bands. Well, we're here to break the mold and show people bands and artists that could become household names if given the chance. I always say "just because a band doesn't have a million fans doesn't mean they can't have a million fans". Your favorite band or artist had to start small somewhere, they just didn't blow up overnight. So with that said, Twitter and Facebook have been invaluable at helping to spread the love. Without these 2 formats the Halshack would not be possible. My Twitter followers grew from 100 when I first started to

over 4,300 today. I have about 1,000 facebook friends and likes for my Show page. I would like to thank all these cool, awesome, nice ladies and gents for helping to grow our community at the Halshack on Facebook. We belong to almost 100 lists on Twitter now when we had none. And we have a great network of Twitter peeps that retweet the show and our artists but its just a drop in the barrel really. There's only so many impressions we can make in a day to the same fans over and over. We need real exposure and we will see substantial growth in my show and for the bands if we are given a chance to expand into a larger market.

Now as far as growth online and social media, its been going well. First off my website has everything on it. You will find everything HALSHACK..just go there. Links galore and the most current show will always be posted at the website. After that there is a ton more places my show can be heard and found from advertising partners to radio stations in other countries and even on other continents. I have followers in at least 85 countries...NO JOKE!! With each episode, I keep gaining a new mediums to be heard on. The show started on Fandalism were I reached over 100k plays (shows 1-7 are still archived there) then I moved to PODOMATIC (over 40 songs and shows posted at Podomatic and Itunes and Player FM) That way the show is on a platform more beneficial for podcasting, you can stream it straight from the website, you play it their app or the best part it can be downloaded and you can take it with you in the car, working out, cleaning house or however you like your tunes.

The show has since found its way on to other podcasting sites and apps like PLAYERFM, BLURBY, BUZZSPROUT. We can now be found on ITUNES and SPOTIFY (which is rare cause Spotify is super picky about what podcasts they take..awesome we made the grade!!) As well as social media, Facebook and Twitter, we can also be found aired on 2 radio stations (Bombshell Radio in Canada via TUNEIN and Stitcher and Whooshkaa) and Discovered Unsigned Radio out of the UK. The show has been featured on Trendwave and on Rock Music Weekly. I have been branded and badged music and band "EXPERT" by KLEAR and KLOUT.com. I also have a couple advertising partners FIYA Music and the Indie Bible. These great sites and publications as well as my good buddies and partners at the radio stations are really helping alot to spread my message and I am very thankful for their support.

As far as support from the "local" community, well that's almost non-existent, I do have support from my local friends and family that help spread the show on social media and my local NC acts that I have worked with do a real good job about sharing but so far the support has mainly come from the internet and an amazing team of music supporters, managers, producers and bands from around the world (a real grassroots effort) to share, share, share, all the time on social media. So with that said, how about it local radio stations and TV crews here in the Piedmont? Little did you know one of the biggest "little" success stories in music is happening right here in your backyard to a local born and bred native North Carolinian from High Point. We could sure use some support and exposure to gain some much needed attention from the local community. Radio stations and TV stations here in North Carolina, and the Piedmont especially, please feel free to contact me about some possible media coverage. I'm all ears and look forward to hearing from you in the future.

I have talked with Jared at 107.5 WKZL but that was over 3 years ago when I was a "nobody" ...lol. Times have changed now and they may need to take another look at what we're doing. (If anybody reading this article knows some radio/music people then..hint..hint..lol) I'm also friends on Facebook

with 2 local DJ's (Divakar Shukla) at 106.5 WEND Charlotte, NC and (Matt "the musicman" Harris) at Rock 93 in Columbia, SC.

Thank you so much David for the interview and the chance to gain some new fans and local recognition. I really appreciate you finding and enjoying the Halshack Indie Rockcast!

you can find links to anything and everything Halshack related at my website

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