

## A passion for radio...

Here at On-a-Hi 24/7 Productions we receive many emails and enquiries from people of all walks of life who have a passion for radio. It's really no coincidence that radio touches so many people's lives in one way or another. Presenters, programmers and producers work tirelessly to ensure you have a personal connection with what you hear on your radio whether it's at work, at home, in the car or wherever you may be. It takes real understanding of people and a passion for the job to keep this up day after day.

Each issue of "On A Hi!" will feature an article on one of our clients and what they are doing to realise their passion for radio. Jess Bessack from Philadelphia is about to graduate from the University of Scranton in the United States where she has earned a B.A. in Communications.

Around the time that I was obsessive about mix tapes, a passion for something greater emerged. My family would travel to the beach, and I would assemble a perfect mix tape for the sticky eight-hour drive. The week before departure, my parents would find me recording songs onto cassette until the wee hours of the night, tweaking audio levels and creating flawless transitions. A few years later, I realized that there was a forum for this same passion, except the audience consisted of thousands of people—DJing on the radio!

With that realization, I swiftly changed my course of study from medicine to communication, trained at the campus radio station and snatched up as many weekly spots as possible. Regardless of the time slot, I was thrilled to have an entire music library at my fingertips and opportunity to produce riveting "mix tapes" for everyone out in radio land. I still pause when entering a radio station's music library—so much music in one place gives me goose bumps.

The summer following my switch to communication, I took an internship at my favorite local station, award-winning 88.5 WXPN-FM in Philadelphia. As a noncommercial triple-A format station, they enjoy greater programming freedom than the cookie cutter, commercial giants. At XPN, I was thrown into the producing mix and helped the morning host, Michaela Majoun, prepare her show.

Hungry for more, I changed my study abroad plans (I had intended to travel to Spain) and applied for an internship in London, hoping to land something in radio. In January 2003, Arcadia University found the perfect fit for me at Virgin Radio. I moved into a flat across from Kensington Gardens



Jess in music library heaven!

and began working at the Virgin headquarters in Soho. Initially, I worked in sales and research, but soon migrated to other departments including the digital broadcast show, Liquid London.

I loved working at Virgin and remember one of my first days. I passed a guy getting a cup of tea and realized I had just seen his face emblazoned on the side of a bus— it was Geoff of the Pete and Geoff show!

While in London, I researched radio programming with a special emphasis on the BBC and modern commercial radio policies. James Curran (Virgin Radio's Head of Music) and Chris Mears (former producer of The Edge and Virgin Radio's Head of Specialty Programming) helped tremendously with my research. Although there was a huge difference between commercial radio at Virgin and noncommercial radio at WXPN, British and

American radio are very similar, except that Britain seems to be leading the way musically!

Upon my return from London, I spent a second summer at WXPN, went back to school and began searching for radio jobs. I've just started my last term and am looking into jobs in the States at NPR (our National Public Radio, the equivalent of the BBC) and the new satellite broadcasters. I haven't ruled out a return to London, though, and I'm keeping my eyes peeled!

*Do you have an interesting insight on the radio industry? Maybe you've just started at your local hospital radio station or perhaps you've been lucky enough to break into the industry professionally. We would love to hear from you and feature your story in a future newsletter. Just send us some brief details and we'll be in touch!*

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## Welcome



James Allard

Welcome to On-a-Hi 24/7 Productions' first newsletter! We've launched the "On-A-Hi!" newsletter to keep you informed of developments within the organisation and to let you have as much information as possible about how we can help you with your career in radio.

"On-A-Hi!" includes features that will be of great interest to anybody looking to either launch or further their broadcasting career and we look forward to being of service to you.

On-a-Hi 24/7 Productions' core aim is to provide new radio talent with a wealth of services, opportunities, advice and information to help them achieve their ambition.

Whether you're a budding presenter with no on-air experience, some hospital radio experience or are ready to approach your local radio station with a demo, we're here to help take you to the next level.

Launched during 2003, our Demo Production Service has proved to be a very popular and effective tool for aspiring presenters.

On-a-Hi 24/7 Productions is now pleased to offer a range of invaluable services and opportunities to help you.

Several of our clients have reported back to us on the success of their demos and how the feedback they have received from Programme Controllers has been positive and encouraging. Indeed, so impressed were we at On-a-Hi 24/7 Productions with the talent of one of our clients, we offered her the opportunity of joining our team! Mel Rodrigues is now a valued member of the company, working on a number of exciting projects including the launch of our new Show Production service.

After several months of planning, we are also pleased to announce the launch of our new web site at [www.onahi247.com](http://www.onahi247.com). Here you will find full details of all of our current and imminent services as well as useful advice and links to many radio industry sites.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "James Allard". The signature is written in a cursive style and is placed on a light-colored, slightly textured background.

## Visit us online... it's all change

April 2004 saw us launch our all new online home. Have you visited [www.onahi247.com](http://www.onahi247.com) recently? An explosion of services offered by On-a-Hi 24/7 has resulted in us totally relaunching our web site.

**Do you want to work in radio?**

On-a-Hi 24/7 Productions has one core aim; to help you realise your radio potential and achieve your career ambitions. Our new web site is a reflection of this goal and provides you with the information you need about our numerous services. Demo Critique, Show Prep ideas,

Presenting Talent Online and our Show Production service are just a few of the new services we have launched to help you launch or further your career. Read more about these services on page 3 or simply visit us online.

Even if you've decided not to pursue a professional career in radio but would like to become a better amateur presenter at your local Hospital or Community Radio station, or on a Student or Restricted Service Licence (RSL) station, you'll still find lots of useful information on our site.



## Success for Mel...

Since On-a-Hi 24/7 Productions was launched towards the end of 2003, we've been overwhelmed by the number of enquiries received on a daily basis. The passion for radio is truly stronger than ever and we feel sure that we have already spoken to many of tomorrow's star presenters.

Mel Rodrigues contacted us last November to enquire about our Demo Production Service. We sent her the information pack and received her material for production within a few days. A good radio voice, understanding of her target audience, excellent show content and the ability to develop essential one-to-one communication with the listener, Mel's demo certainly impressed us. We wasted no time in inviting her to join On-a-Hi 24/7!

### What made you want to get involved with radio?

I've always enjoyed listening to the radio more than most people. I'm one of those mildly obsessed types who knows the names of DJ's and can't stop flicking the dial when I'm in the car. Apart from making hours of pretend shows in my bedroom when I was nine, I first got the chance to have a proper go when I was at university. I really enjoyed doing a show called "Chick chat", which involved hot discussion of anything from hangover cures to Hinduism! After doing work experience at a few local stations, I decided radio was definitely for me and applied for a broadcast journalism postgraduate course.

While I was convinced I wanted to be a radio journalist, the course introduced me to TV journalism too, which has been really useful now I'm in the job market. Since graduating last year I've freelanced in the newsrooms of local radio stations, worked for a travel news service, and have also done research work in regional BBC television, and also for the TV production company Endemol, who are just about to launch the next series of Big Brother.

The biggest thing I've learnt is that many radio skills are interchangeable and can open doors for you. I.e. knowing how to use a radio mixing desk makes TV galleries not so scary! I've also realised how useful it is to explore different avenues before you find your niche - which is where On-a-Hi comes in. I'm really excited that the service has enabled me to broaden my repertoire to radio presenting and show production.

### How did you hear about On-a-Hi 24/7 Productions?

I came across an advert in a ukRadio.com newsletter, and decided to find out more. I'd been thinking about recording my own demo for a while and the On-a-Hi Demo Production Service sounded like the best way to make it happen. I certainly liked the idea of someone taking all the hassle out of it for me!

### Why did you choose On-a-Hi 24/7 to produce your demo?

I didn't have much free time outside of my job, and On-a-Hi were offering a quick and easy way to get it done. They took care of all the jobs that make demo making tricky. There was no need to try and find a free studio, fiddle with lots of technical equipment, or spend time and money running off numerous copies of my demo. All I had to do was concentrate on my links, which from my experience is the most important thing. Programme Controllers tend to be more interested in hearing a good radio voice and well thought out links than hearing your ability to drive a desk.

If they like your style, they'll usually be prepared to give you all the technical training you need. The demo service enabled me to focus on my links, without being against the clock in a hired studio.

One of the best things about the service was the input I had in making sure my demo was

personalised and would really stand out. I chose how I wanted my CD booklet to look and liked the fact that my CV and any other wording I wanted to include could all be part of the booklet. My Demo CD package looked and sounded totally professional, On-a-Hi 24/7 produced it in high quality audio onto CD. All these features considered, the package worked out as brilliant value for money and better than anything I could have produced on my own.

### How did you end up working for On-a-Hi 24/7 Productions?

About a month after I received my Demo CDs, James called me to ask if I was happy with them and if I'd sent any out. At the time I was doing some work for BBC Birmingham and really hadn't had time to send out any. We talked about my career for a while and James asked if I would be interested in doing some work for On-a-Hi 24/7! The work was freelance doing as few or as many hours as I wanted, working mainly within the new Show Production department. For a while I'd been thinking of trying to broaden my radio skills beyond the newsroom, so I jumped at the chance!

### So what exactly do you do for On-a-Hi 24/7?

I've been heavily involved with setting up the new Show Production department, which is currently undergoing successful trials with a station in Barbados. Once the trials have finished, I'll be presenting my own weekly show on the station via On-a-Hi 24/7's affiliate web site. This site allows for the transfer of high-quality audio between the station and the presenter / producer of the show and vice versa. It's a very exciting project that will eventually open up a whole new world of opportunities for radio presenters in the UK. I feel really lucky and excited to be involved at these early stages. The best thing about it is that I can do it in my own time, so am able to gain radio experience while working a full time job.

I'm also doing some Demo Production work for clients and have been involved with setting up the new Intro Service and web site.

### What advice would you give to anyone who is considering a career in radio?

It's a really exciting time to get involved in radio. With stations now trying out new digital formats and opportunities being opened up abroad, I think it's the right time to get your foot in the door, and there's nothing lost by having a go! If like me, you're feeling a little unsure about whether your demo will be up to scratch, or whether you have enough relevant experience, On-a-Hi offers services that can help you assess these areas. Since having my demo produced, I've also used the demo critique service, which has helped me identify the areas I can improve on for next time.

Above all, determination and enthusiasm are essential. Even the best of today's radio presenters suffered the odd knock-back earlier in their career. If radio is what you really want to do, we'll only be too pleased to help you make it happen. Even if you just need a little advice, On-a-Hi 24/7 is only a phone call or email away.

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## Our new web site...

Visit us online at [www.onahi247.com](http://www.onahi247.com) to find out all about our services, specifically designed to help you make the most of your radio career, professional or amateur.

The **Services** section includes our three most popular professional services that can give you the edge over your competition when applying for presenting work.

Our **Demo Critique Service** provides you with a detailed breakdown of your demo's strengths and weaknesses and also gives advice on how you can improve and develop your presenting style. Your critique will be written by a respected and experienced presenter or programme controller working in the industry.

Our **Demo Production Service** provides you with a high quality Demo CD, professionally packaged with a CD booklet including your CV, pictures and full contact details. Your demo represents you. Not only your skills as a radio presenter but the sort of person you are. A professional demo package says a lot more about you than a rather ordinary looking tape or mini-disc with your details scribbled on the front.

Our **Intro Service** demonstrates just how seriously you take your career. We can present your demo package to the radio stations you wish to apply to in a professional and effective manner. Our

aim is to open a dialogue between you and the Programme Controller and ultimately help to find you a job. We duplicate, distribute and chase up a response to your demo and relay all feedback directly to you.

Used in combination, these services prove a powerful combination in launching your career as a professional radio presenter.

We also offer you the opportunity of having your very own web page where potential employers can read about you, listen to a short demo and check out your CV. Our **Presenting Talent Online Service** is very competitively priced and gives you an invaluable online presence.

We recently launched our **Show Production Service**, which has been undergoing trials with one of our affiliate stations in Barbados. James visited the station in January (not a bad business trip - he admits!) and

we've been sending them fully edited and produced shows via our unique affiliate web site. They download the shows, import them into their playout system and Bajan radio listeners are regularly well entertained with UK style radio. Soon, we plan to spread the service to many other English-speaking countries and will be in need of more freelance presenters and producers to join our team. Could this be your first radio gig? If you like the sound of presenting on an overseas station without having to leave the comfort of your own home, read the **Presenting & Production Opportunities** page in the Services section of our new web site.

The rest of the web site is designed to be a useful resource centre. **Show Prep** ideas, **Radio Jobs Online**, **Links** to other industry sites and our **FAQ** sections are all there to help you with your radio career. We plan to expand the site over the coming months to include more services and resources and welcome your suggestions. Please email [james@onahi247.com](mailto:james@onahi247.com) or telephone 01299 825 014 during office hours.

So what are you waiting for? Log on now! [www.onahi247.com](http://www.onahi247.com)



James visits Mix 96.9fm in sunny Barbados



## Do you want to get involved?

On-a-Hi 24/7 Productions is currently building a pool of freelance presenters and producers for upcoming work in the Show Production department.

Ideally we are looking for presenters who are not only computer literate but also have some production experience as most of the work will be mixed and edited digitally. However, we don't want to lose out on a good presenter because of a technicality, so don't let that put you off!

You can learn more about our Show Production department by visiting [www.onahi247.com/show\\_production.htm](http://www.onahi247.com/show_production.htm) and more

information regarding the presenting and production work involved can be found at

[www.onahi247.com/pres&prod\\_ops.htm](http://www.onahi247.com/pres&prod_ops.htm).

Alternatively, please call us on 01299 825 014 for more information.

If you would like to apply to become one of our freelance presenters or producers, please send a demo along with a copy of your CV to the address on the back of this newsletter. If you don't have a current demo... do what Mel did!

