

LUNA CITY MINT

Proposal : Band Medallions

Between general economic conditions and the changes in the music industry, musicians need to be creative not only musically but financially as well. Many have found merchandise sales, at performances and on-line, to be a significant source of income. Medallion art can be a contributor to that source.

By itself, a medallion with the name or logo of a musician or group may have some value to fans, making it a potential enticement to spend money. This value can be enhanced in a number of ways. Most obviously, the item can be tied to an event the fan particularly wishes to remember, by including a date, or the name of an album, tour, or festival in the design of the piece. Limited editions and theme sets can also be employed to create appeal. Perhaps a more powerful use of the medallion, however, is as part of a package.

A medallion is both visual and tactile in its impact, making it ideal for lending visceral interest to a product which otherwise would lack it. One possible example is the music download. Many artists are now selling songs or albums on-line, using services which employ one-time-use codes to control access. Cards bearing these codes create an opportunity for selling downloads 'face to face', with less of an investment in inventory than selling CDs. These cards can be treated as a medium for advertising and artistic expression, just as the conventional album cover is. By pairing the card with a medallion, it becomes possible to create a second-tier product with a collectible quality, allowing the same music to be sold for a higher price. Offering multiple different medallions, in combination with one or several card designs, may even induce some fans to repeat purchases of the same title.

In this kind of promotion, where the main selling point is the aesthetic and collectible appeal, packaging is vitally important. Simply handing someone a medallion along with a standard code-card will not be anything like as effective in generating the higher-priced sales as a more sophisticated approach. Packages used for numismatic coins and medals include jewelery-style presentation cases, slabs of clear plastic, and square cardboard holders with round cellophane windows, but two possibilities immediately stand out. One is a bi-fold, in which the medallion is held by a circular punch-out (like those in the familiar Whitman folders) made in a heavy cardboard backing, exposing the reverse for display. The front leaf is then available for album art, and marking the code inside. This type of package could be particularly suitable for theme sets, such as for festivals or retrospectives. The other employs a flexible plastic 'flip' holder with two pockets, one of which is used to hold the medallion, the other a card with artwork on one side and the download code on the other. This could be assembled a few pieces at a time, adapting it to smaller production volumes. Other packaging could be developed in cooperation with the customer.

Clearly, whether this approach makes sense depends partly on the degree to which the price differential between the medallion package and the plain card exceeds the cost of the package, and partly on the carrying cost of inventory associated with the package. Even with a differential of five dollars, and a unit cost of fifty cents, the artist may still find it uneconomical if five thousand medallions have to be procured in advance. The Luna City Mint uses production techniques optimized for smaller volumes, and can strike very small batches with very short turn-around times, at reasonable per-piece costs. As a result, we make it possible to begin a medallion promotion with a modest initial investment, and follow-on production as demand develops ; for customers in the local area, we could even fill orders on a 'restock' basis, replacing the number of pieces sold at a particular engagement.

We hope that the examples following can provide inspiration for your own projects. Let us know what we can do for you!

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Example : Fort Worth Weekly Music Awards Festival

To show a particularly favourable case for a medallic promotion, we will take as an example the annual performance festival held in conjunction with the Fort Worth Weekly Music Awards.

This is a single event which brings together a number of musical acts, making it an ideal opportunity for the sort of festival-wide promotion which would encourage patrons who might not otherwise purchase merchandise of a particular act to ‘complete the set’, and also for limited-edition, one-time-only promotions. With that in mind, we have developed the design concept illustrated, shown at twice actual size for a nominal 25 millimeter (one-inch) medallion.

While plain typography is shown here, it should be understood that more complex logo graphics could be used. A single common reverse design serves to tie the issue together as well as to connect it to the event. The distinctive obverse design incorporates the name of the act and the album or single being promoted, as well as an indication of the size of the issue. (Note that 1/500 in this case simply means “one out of five hundred pieces” — individual numbering of the medallions, while possible, would be a considerable added expense.) There is also an opportunity for the venues involved to promote their connection to the festival with medallions using the same common reverse.

This type of promotion would, of course, require considerable advance preparation, with coordination between the festival organizers, the venues, the musical acts, the printers responsible for the packaging, and the Mint, but the rewards could also be considerable.



Example : Kickstarter Rewards

Many musicians are finding social funding platforms such as *Kickstarter* to be a viable way of raising money for their projects. This approach encourages offering potential backers a variety of different reward options and levels, and medallions could easily be employed as a differentiator. For example, an album download might be offered to backers at the \$5 level, and a download plus a medallion at \$10 ; a CD at \$20, and a CD with medallion at \$25. It would also be possible to strike pieces in multiple metals for different reward levels. The Luna City Mint can provide the exact number of pieces needed to fulfill backer rewards, and incorporate that number into the design. As suggested by the illustrations, the name and release date of the album might be given on the obverse of the medallion, while the reverse could be made specific to the artist but not the occasion, allowing the die to be reused. This not only saves on die fabrication charges, but allows establishing a unified theme over the course of multiple fund drives, or in connection with ‘stretch goal’ rewards involving additional medallion designs, perhaps associated with previous albums.

