

Foxy Freedom lay down the gauntlet to Radio Forth..



An arctic fox cub, listening carefully to Canadian Radio, asks his mother "What is this Edinburgh band, Foxy Freedom?"

Edinburgh band, Foxy Freedom, have been quietly carving a niche for themselves, and we were glad to hear from them to find out more about their evolution over the last few years.

Why do you think that the music of Foxy Freedom has been noticed the way it has, when there are so many other bands on and off the internet? Can you give any tips to other local bands?

We had a plan.

The plan was to record a few songs without telling anyone what we were doing; no pressure, no names, just keep it totally anonymous, put the songs on Myspace and Facebook, and see what happens. The name Foxy Freedom is also used as the author of the songs, just to make things simple. If we had used real names with the songs, it might have caused more problems than it is worth. We write the songs ourselves and using the name Foxy Freedom is the best way to show that the songs are our songs, not cover versions of someone else's songs, or given to us as leftover scraps.

With this plan we thought we would have time to work on the music, to make a few improvements, before too many people noticed. Two or three people might accidentally find the songs, and leave a comment. That was the idea. We thought we might eventually persuade a radio station to play something, if people started saying they liked the music, and we had had time to record more songs.

Did the plan work?

Not a chance.

We started setting up the websites with the name Foxy Freedom in 2008, just to claim the name Foxy Freedom before anyone else thought of it. We added the first songs to Myspace at the end of the year but we didn't start using Myspace until the end of January 2009. Most of the time was spent working on the music. We didn't expect many people to find the website or even notice it so we didn't look at it very much.

When did things start to happen?

From the end of January people started visiting the site and the number of fans just exploded. We had one thousand, two thousand, and then three thousand fans in a matter of weeks. Then one day, we hadn't looked at the website for while, we found an email which said something like – I have taken one of your songs from Myspace for an internet radio show as long as that is OK with you.

By the time we saw this email, the show had already been recorded and our song Dance Tonight Forget Tomorrow was in it! The recorded show is still available online.

Did the radio show make any difference to anything?

Not much on its own but it did lead to the next step. It probably increased the number of people who heard our songs and visited our website. After we had been on Myspace four or five months we had over ten thousand fans.

The first thing we did when we found we had been on the radio show was check our record sales report and we found that we had already sold a few songs before we had even been on the radio show. That was a big surprise. It was totally unexpected that anyone had even found the songs so quickly.

The nicest thing about it was that the first song we sold was also the first Foxy Freedom song we recorded. The song was called Freedom Here I Come and was written in about twenty minutes as a bit of joke around the name of the band. The song was really only recorded as an experiment to see if we could record anything which sounded like music. That was in early in 2008. The song was put on the internet just for historical interest.

When did you record the song Dance Tonight Forget Tomorrow which was used in the first broadcast?

That was one of the first group of songs, which we recorded in October 2008. You can already hear the improvement in the music. We try to record something better each time. Each song is a little challenge to do something we have not done before, or to make some little improvement. At the moment we are trying different ways of enhancing the stereo sound without breaking a song up into individual instruments.

What else did the first broadcast lead to?

The most important change was that American radio stations started asking to play our songs. There are probably some that didn't ask and that we don't know about. They just downloaded an MP3 and played it. That's OK with us if they do that. It just means that we can't tell anyone about them because we don't know who they are.

The American stations are very competitive, and when they want to play something they get it as quickly as they can. It is very easy to download an MP3 so that's what they did.

Some of the American radio stations started emailing us saying things like – we like your British accent, can you send us anything else, we'll play anything you record. It was at this time that we were put on the Live365 playlist in America with the song Someone's Going To Be Lonely which was recorded in 2009. We are still on the playlist index online.

What about here in Britain?

Over here the radio stations didn't like our British accent so much.

The radio stations here were slower because they wanted us to send CDs and we wanted them to use MP3s like the Americans.

We don't usually ask radio stations to play our songs but when the American stations started playing them we thought we should tell two local stations here in Scotland that other stations are playing our songs and they are not. We emailed someone at Forth Radio and someone at Kingdom FM and they ignored us completely.

Maybe they didn't believe us.

So what we did was we left a message on our Myspace page telling visitors to nominate us to be included on the Kingdom FM website. Fans did nominate us. Kingdom FM could not ignore that, so they checked out our site and found we had over ten thousand fans and they put us on their website. This was the summer of 2009. That is why the Kingdom FM site now says that we have over ten thousand fans. That was how many fans we had at the time. Kingdom FM have supported us ever since and we are grateful to them for their support. That's how everything started in the first six months we were on the internet.

We have not contacted Forth Radio since then and they have still not played any of our songs. After they read this they might want to play the next song we record. Our plan now is to concentrate on the local area and local radio stations for a few months and give them a chance to play our new songs before anyone else does.

So what tips can you give to other bands?

Don't make plans.

How did you choose the name Foxy Freedom? Does it mean

anything?

We wanted a name with more than one meaning. It can be used in different ways which is useful. People can think of one or two meanings for themselves.

There are a few extra layers of meaning too. The word "freedom" is a key word in Scotland, in the history and the literature, from the Declaration of Arbroath onwards, so it is a good word to have in the name of a Scottish band.

We have discovered all kinds of little word plays we can use with the name. It was a good choice. Even the first song we recorded was called Freedom Here I Come.

Has the name Foxy Freedom caused any problems for you? Have you ever thought of changing the name?

It depends what you calls problems. When we first thought of it, we were surprised that no band had used the name or registered the domain name before we registered it. It is such a great name. We know how popular the name is, because people write to us and say that they like it!

We check the internet regularly to see if any band is using our name or if anyone is trying to sell items with our name on them. If anyone wants to sell items with our name on they should tell us and make a deal. This is where the problems might come in, but we should also mention something positive:- We found that a fan has already named a painting/drawing after us and published it on the internet. We like that!

The biggest scare we had was from Harvard, the university in America. A few months ago, a Harvard professor published a legal and political philosophy paper, and he called it – Foxy Freedom. Apparently they had been using similar terms in philosophy but nothing exact, so this professor probably saw our name on the internet and decided to get a bit of extra

publicity for himself. It was good for him, but for us it was panic. Our name had been given a philosophical label and we thought we would have to change the name immediately. We were worried that the meaning of Foxy Freedom had been changed to something we could not agree with. We read some of the article and found it was more or less what we had thought Foxy Freedom as a band was about. It was just luck that this professor had thought along similar lines. So we were given an official philosophy, adding another layer of meaning to the name Foxy Freedom!

Is it true that you are thinking about getting a new girl in the band?

We have been thinking about it for years.

We would love to take someone off the street, hold a few auditions, get some newspaper photographers around to photograph the final choice, and say "We'll make this come true for you." But it is not very realistic. The chances of finding someone with the right abilities and the right personality to fit in are almost zero. It would probably be an Xfactor fiasco.

(Sorry Simon Cowell, we didn't mean that.) We did really.

We would not want anyone who thinks they are the next big thing, because they would be better off on their own. Who are we to hold them back? We would just want an average person who thinks they might just be good enough.

If you have taken so long it sounds like you have given up on the idea?

It is just that it is not practical to do it that way. The best way to find someone is probably through people we already know, and through Myspace. If anyone is interested they could put a recording on Myspace which we could listen to. Just sing something onto the computer with a microphone and put it on

Myspace. There are also online tkaraokes hat anyone can sing along with and record.

There is some pressure to change the band slightly because the amount of admin is growing all the time. We need someone to spend more time on organisation, but still play instruments from time to time. It is not a question of someone leaving or not leaving the band. It is just a question of sharing out the different tasks. It is very useful to have someone doing the admin who can step into the band when needed.

Our plans now are to decide if and how we want to change the final line up of the band, get a photographer to take new photos and then concentrate on the local area for a few months with some new songs. We are experimenting with enhancing the stereo at the moment which should sound great on the radio. There are also plans for some non-musical things, which we will have to tell you about nearer the time.

More plans. That is probably a mistake.

Have you done any non musical things before ?

We planned to, but do we need to say that the plans didn't work out.

Our original idea was to start the band in a big way with a lot of publicity. Part of the plan was to contact the producers of the TV series 'Who do you think you are?' That is the TV series which follows someone as they discover the history of their own family. We were going to get one of the band onto the show to talk about their family and also get another member of the family involved too.

Did you contact the producers?

We did. They liked the idea because there was a lot of interesting background information available. The problem was that they had already allocated all the episodes for the next

season. So, in the end, the episode was not made at that time, but when we have more free time, it could happen. It is still something we are thinking about doing later.

Did you change your original plan for the band because the TV series was fully booked?

Not really because of that, but it gave us a chance to think about how we might start and we soon realised that if we started with a lot of publicity, other bands and people might say that we just cheated and we were really not any good. They could have been right, so the final decision was – let's just keep quiet and see if anyone likes the music. People would either like the music or they wouldn't. We decided not to try to get any publicity or push the music in any way. We never asked for any publicity and we never paid a penny for publicity or for radio plays. It was always other people who made the first move to offer some support or publicity or to play our music. It was just other people noticing our music and their kindness which worked in our favour.

We think that other bands appreciate the way we have tried to do everything fairly, because a few musicians have asked if they can make a guest appearance on our recordings, and bands have already told us that they are recording cover versions of our songs.

Steve (Foxy Freedom admin and musician) was speaking on behalf of the band. You can listen to their music [here](#)