Idol goes Underground with online contest

March 27 2006

As the fifth season of American Idol wraps up on television, Web site American Idol Underground is just beginning its Big Push contest, where unknown artists compete and get judged by online listeners.

"Our premise is everyone gets heard," said Justin Beckett, chief executive officer and founder of Fluid Audio Networks and creator of American Idol Underground.

Fluid Audio Networks, a California-based software company, teamed up with FremantleMedia, co-producer and licensor of American Idol, to create American Idol Underground earlier this year.

Beckett said that while the TV show is focused on finding one winner, Idol Underground centers on forging a community for artists and fans.

"The focus is more about getting new music heard, as opposed to 'let's make this one person a star,'" Beckett said.

As such, emerging artists can go to the Idol Underground site, choose their genre and upload their music, making it immediately available.

Listeners then listen to radio stations on the site, rating music as they hear it. Listeners are also able to e-mail artists or join their friends list.

"Artists are given the ability to interact with listeners," Beckett said.

Idol Underground currently has more than 75,000 artists registered and

houses more than 150,000 songs, Beckett said. He added that the site has received about 1 million unique impressions since opening.

Idol Underground offers various prizes and contests periodically. The most significant one will be the Big Push, a six-month contest that runs through August.

In the Big Push, the top artists as rated by listeners move on through the competition, culminating in one final grand-prize winner. That winner will receive a deal with a public-relations firm to help generate media exposure, as well as musical equipment, cash and other prizes, Beckett said.

Though winners will be chosen by user ratings, they will be aided by celebrity reviewers, including R&B legend Isaac Hayes and former American Idol finalist Kimberly Caldwell. Celebrity reviewers will pen reviews of the top-rated artists to appear on the Underground Web site.

Other celebrity reviewers include Verdine White of Earth Wind & Fire, jazz pianist David Benoit and country musician Collin Raye.

"The celebrity reviewers are people we contacted who, on a genre-specific basis, we assumed would have an interest in doing this," Beckett said.

Beckett said that the competition is intended for emerging artists, and as such, Idol Underground reserves the right to disqualify artists they feel are too well known to enter.

"The Big Push is for artists who have proven their skill and all they need is exposure," Beckett said.

Big Push entrants who register on the Idol Underground site by the end

of April will be eligible for the contest, Beckett said. The first round of competition ends May 31.

In addition to the Big Push, competitions of various categories and time periods take place frequently for Idol Underground artists, with various smaller prizes.

"The objective of the contests is to get new music heard and reward artists on a periodic basis," Beckett said.

Compared to the American Idol TV show, which showcases only a handful of singers, Idol Underground is "a place for everyone else, who wants to explore how real their talent is," Beckett said.

Copyright 2006 by United Press International

Citation: Idol goes Underground with online contest (2006, March 27) retrieved 25 April 2024 from https://phys.org/news/2006-03-idol-underground-online-contest.html

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.