



THE BIG BOOK OF BRILLIANT PR IDEAS

**100 Case Studies for
Inspiring High-Impact
Public Relations Campaigns**



Edited by Frank Zeccola

This book is dedicated to the hundreds of brilliant communications professionals I have talked to over the past five years, and to all those now reading this who wish to learn their secrets.
—Frank Zeccola, writer and editor of *The Big Book of Brilliant PR Ideas*

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piece of history. We tried to come up with messages that worked with everyone by keeping our focus on the pioneers of hip-hop, and keeping our finger on the historic aspects.”

Additionally: “We think of hip-hop as contemporary, but it’s been around for 30 years,” Machado says. “And not just in the music industry. Hip-hop culture is reflected in the apparel industry, in art, dance and so many industries, and now there’s even a whole class of entrepreneurs based around it. We look at it as not just the music but in the context of all of its influence.”

3. Go above and beyond to offer reporters reasons to attend your events. “Think about how to make your event newsworthy and interesting to the media,” Hilbig stresses. Machado continues: “You have to think about what will make a reporter leave their desk. Do you pitch a story that you can call in? If so, why should they leave their offices and go to the event. In this event, it all came down to the combination we offered: It was almost a reunion in the sense that we had all of these artists there. We also had so many historical objects like turntables and we had a great visual in the backdrop.”

PR Positions Classical Music as a Hip Family Activity—and Launches a New Album into the Stratosphere of Top National Media Coverage

August 15, 2006

When it comes to reaching and engaging hot mainstream consumer demographics like kids ages 13 to 18, or young adults ages 18 to 34, classical music doesn’t generally top the list of must-haves for your PR and marketing plans. Rock music, maybe. Rap music, better. Skateboarding videogames with loud, blaring, punk rock—definitely.

But what about a quiet activity like listening to classical music? You might think that selling the mainstream media on a new classical group is pointless. You won’t grab any teenage attention spans with those soft, stuffy classical tunes, you say.

Classical musicians might hope to make a splash in the classical trade press, or even score a hit in the cultural pages of the local upscale pub for older readers, at best. But landing a classical act on the “Tonight Show with Jay Leno”? Or “Entertainment Tonight”?

Impossible, you say? Not so for The 5 Browns.

The challenge: Garner widespread national media attention—for a classical CD. In early 2005, Utah-based classical group The 5 Browns were all set to debut their self-titled album, consisting of classical favorites like “Flight of the Bumble Bee” and “The Sorcerer’s Apprentice.” Sure, The 5 Browns have talent. They are, after all, the only family in history to send five kids to Julliard. And the new album was good—really good. The CD features several spectacular arrangements for five pianos, played simultaneously by the recent Julliard grads, who are all siblings between the ages of 19 and 26.

But even the greatest classical album of all time is a tough sell for today’s market. Los Angeles-based

entertainment PR powerhouse **Rogers & Cowan** was brought in to promote the album. And they were up for the monumental musical challenge.

“The biggest challenge was presenting these kids to the mainstream media,” says Rogers & Cowan executive vice president **Sandy Friedman**. “The competition is so great. These kids are competing against pop artists and rap artists to get on shows like ‘The Tonight Show’ and ‘Good Morning America.’ You don’t see much classical music on these shows.”

Certainly, breaking into late-night talk shows and the mainstream entertainment press would take an innovative strategy. But how do you get these audiences to listen to classical music?

The strategy: Position classical music as a “family activity” to build crossover appeal.

Friedman and the team at Rogers & Cowan determined that the typical classical music fan is an affluent male over 35. So it makes sense to market The 5 Browns to this demographic, right? Wrong.

Instead, Friedman encouraged The 5 Browns to step outside the typical classical music demographic and sing a different tune—to families with children.

“There have been classical acts that have gone mainstream in the past,” Friedman says. “But this was different. This was a family.”

More great strategy: Craft strong messages that leverage pop culture references to highlight family appeal. Exciting families with children is not the easiest feat in this age of TV dinners and year-round soccer practice. Luckily, The 5 Browns are a cute, photogenic family with a tremendous amount of talent.

But it would take strong, clear, direct messaging to rise above the clutter and reach busy families in the midst of their busy schedules. Friedman and the team went to work, brainstorming to come up with memorable, easily digestible but penetrating sound bites that would break through with the mainstream media and get families to listen.

The messages: The first message is nothing short of brilliant: “The 5 Browns are the Tiger Woods of Classical Music.” This message positioned the classical group as young, hip kids showing other young, hip kids that classical music is cool. No longer is classical music for old, snobby men smoking pipes in the halls of some exclusive social club. Just as Tiger Woods made golf cool, The 5 Browns are living proof that classical music is cool too.

The second message is simple enough: “Five Siblings Who Play Classical Piano Simultaneously.” This message not only clearly and concisely explains the group; it also segues into a series of “firsts” that explain why the group is so new and fresh: They are the first family to send five kids to Julliard. And they are the first group to play classical music with five pianos at the same time

This message hammers home the point that The 5 Browns are truly something new and amazing—and they deserve mainstream media attention.

Friedman adds: “Here you have the perfect storm,” he says. “You’ve got these kids from Utah that