



“With Putumayo, you always have to think outside of the box because our albums don’t focus on one artist; they are compilations of different artists.”

Crissa Requate actually may have been inspired to have a music career after reading *Music Alive!*

Yes, she was introduced to our magazine back when she was in elementary school. As a child, Crissa took piano, guitar, and voice lessons. She went on to the Berklee College of Music in Boston where she majored in music business, hoping to work in publicity some day. She then made the move to New York City to try to break into the business. Eventually, she landed a job at Putumayo World Music in sales—not exactly what she was aiming for. But when Putumayo was looking for an in-house publicist, Crissa jumped at the opportunity to nab her dream job. Crissa has now been the publicity manager at Putumayo for almost three years. She happily shared the story of her cool career with the magazine she knew from way back when.

Crissa Requate

Publicity Manager, Putumayo World Music

What are your main responsibilities?

My job involves calling music journalists to make sure that they receive our albums for review, and convincing them that they want to review our albums and tell their audiences about them. When we have a tour, I make sure it is placed in local newspapers’ calendars and I find music editors who want to attend a concert, interview the artists, and write reviews or features.

How do you convince people to cover the music?

Music journalists are bombarded with tons of albums from labels and artists that want coverage, so I have to present our music in a way that makes it sound more special than everyone else’s. With Putumayo, you always have to think outside of the box because our albums don’t focus on one artist; they are compilations of different artists. So when I’m presenting an album, I have to present a package. For our *New Orleans Brass* release that explores contemporary artists like Kermit Ruffins and John Boutté, I told newspapers how exciting the album is because it’s like having Mardi Gras in your living room.

What skills are necessary to be a good publicist?

You have to have good social skills. You can’t be afraid to call people you’ve never spoken to before. You have to be convincing and know all about what you’re talking about by doing research. You also need good networking skills—when you meet people, you never know how they might help

you. So it’s always a good idea to make friends wherever you go. Oh yes, and you need perseverance.

How do you educate yourself about other countries and cultures?

Each of our albums has a detailed booklet and liner notes that include information on every artist, as well as information about the music’s country of origin. I brush up on different cultures and countries through those and through the research we do when finding content for our albums.

Do you ever help to develop an album?

Putumayo works in a special way: we all have a say in the titles. Once a title is proposed, we’re called into listening sessions where the president of Putumayo, Dan Storper, will play songs for us. We then vote for the songs we like the best.

What do you like most about your job?

I like that each month we have a different album, so I’m always exploring different music and pitching something different. And I like that I’m helping to get the word out about our music to people who may not have heard about us before. I’m so happy and honored to work for Putumayo and to be immersed in so much music.

Is there anything you don’t like?

I don’t like the rejection [laughs]—when editors don’t review our albums and I have to keep pushing and trying to convince them. It’s hard, but I don’t give up. **MA!**

—VERONICA DOMINGUEZ-GARCIA



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