

# Mp3 Five Times August - The Independent (lp)



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Featuring music from MTV's Laguna Beach Real World, The CW's One Tree Hill, Oxygen Channel's Bad Girls Club, and Lifetime's Monarch Cove. 14 MP3 Songs POP: Today's Top 40, ROCK: Acoustic Details:

The music industry is rapidly changing these days, and its my firm belief that an unsigned artist can make it on their own without the money and image of the corporate music market. Though I didnt always believe this, after meeting with several major labels in 2006, I realized not even they know what to do anymore. They want you to be different and unique, but also sound like whats hot at the moment. Instead of developing an artist they believe in, they want a sure bet act with a pre-packaged fan-base, ready to sell records. I understand this strategy from a business point of view, but, while they stick to this formula, their get rich quick antidote seems to be erasing any true admiration for many artists on the charts today. granted, this is just my own opinion and Im not speaking for anyone other than myself. My only question is what would happen to many of these novelty acts if you were to strip them of their marketing team and million-dollar producer, and simply said go for it? How much would they really accomplish? For someone like me, this is not an option, but a must. What must I accomplish without those things? How successful can I make my music? This is the spirit behind Five Times Augusts latest album The Independent l.p. A one-man project based out of Dallas Texas, Five Times August is really another moniker for 23 year-old Brad Skistimas. Realizing from the get go that his last name wasnt any easy-to-remember title, Skistimas decided to promote his music with the alias based off his birthday, August 5th. In 2005 Five Times August released the album Fry Street. It was recorded in a house in Denton, TX, and named after the street where Brad was living at the time. Fast forward two years later, and the album is now being re-packaged, re-titled, and re-released for national distribution across the country. The difference between this album and other CDs in the rack beside it? No record label of any kind has anything to do with it. Since Fry

Street was originally released, eight songs from the album have been featured on television shows like MTV's Laguna Beach, the CW's One Tree Hill, and Oxygen Channel's Bad Girls Club. These placements helped catapult Five Times August's Fry Street sales to over 100,000 in online digital stores like iTunes, and over 11,000 physical copies of the CD from FTAs online store. Skistimas refers to the placements as luck, but his hard work and drive to promote the music is responsible for his success. Originating in 2001, Brad started Five Times August right when the digital music age began to sprout. Through the years he has watched it grow and has grown with it, creating an online reputation of being one of the first true entirely independent artists. We're not talking just the music here. Skistimas creates and designs his own merchandise, CD artwork, and website, while maintaining one of Myspace's top music profiles ([myspace.com/fivetimesaugust](http://myspace.com/fivetimesaugust).) He writes back to all of his fan e-mails and actually does most of this from the road. In 2007 he will have toured eight months out of the year, visiting 39 states. His only companion in this project is dedicated manager Kelly Vandergriff, who books the tours and handles publicity and finances for Five Times August. Between the two, Skistimas and Vandergriff handle what would be an entire staff of label jobs. The do it yourself approach is the new way to do things says Skistimas. I'm in total control of my music, my image, and the message I'm putting out. To me, a major label deal is irrelevant. I think the only thing a major label could offer me [that I can't get] is massive amounts of radio play, but even that is ruled by payola. Luckily more and more people are tuning into their iPods now since radio play lists are so redundant. With the momentum Five Times August has picked up in popularity, Skistimas realizes someday soon he will have to expand his team to more than just two people. However, he also realizes the value of a fan. Never ignoring an e-mail, or dodging spectators after a show, Brad makes his best to be accessible to all his listeners. I don't think many musicians or bands these days realize how lucky they are to actually have a career in music, considering so many people are easily ripping CDs to their computer and sending the files to countless friends. On the other hand, once a new listener finds out that I'm not just another major label act, they realize they're apart of something they can connect with and support on a more personal level. I think that comes to a mutual understanding that I'm lucky they're listening, but they're lucky to have the music, too. Without their support artists like me wouldn't survive. But with success comes the undeniable offer. Fortunately for Skistimas he not only looks at music as an art, but realizes the importance of the business aspect as well. With high sales, building fan-base, and a promising future, Brad continues to pursue his career with patience and

prudence. Ive had offers that many other unsigned acts would probably snag in a minute. Skistimas admits. But, Im doing so well on my own. Sure, I may not be publicized as much as I would be on a major, but my profit isnt split six ways from Sunday before I see any of it. Im actually doing better financially than many new major label acts. Its not to say Ill never sign, the right offer just hasnt knocked on my door yet. Making it isnt limos and parties to me, its paying the mortgage on my house with money Ive made entirely out of my music. Its amazing and gratifying, and Im very lucky to be leading the way for this new way to do things.

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