



## Gigging Advice

Love it or hate it, gigging & touring are essential if you want to tighten up your act, build a fan base and get noticed. Before you set out on the live circuit, you should ensure that you are not using a name currently in use and protect the name you choose by registering it with a recognised company. The same applies to your music, if you are an artist or band using 'original' material, make sure it has been copyrighted before sending demo's or performing live.

### PRE BOOKING ADVICE

Just a few hints and reminders for anyone aiming to get their own gigs by telephone or cold calling.

1. Do some research, call or visit when it's quiet and the booker has time to chat.
2. Check out the venue - does it have a stage? lighting? or decent sized area to play in? - is it adequate for the size of your act/band?
3. Keep a list of who you contacted, the date, their reaction and any call back date.
4. Record a clear 'live' demo for sending to prospective bookers. Studio recordings are ok but venues really want to know how you sound 'live' - if you can't reproduce it onstage don't send it!!
5. If the venue is a regular booker of entertainment try and arrange a 'floor spot' with a friendly resident act or band to showcase your ability or invite bookers and agents to gigs at regular venues.
6. Once a booking has been agreed, provide the venue with reliable contact details. If you don't have a contract then, confirm the date, set up, start & finish time, breaks and cost in writing including your publicity and keep copies, (in case of disputes/double bookings etc).
7. Include any other relevant information, like if food, drinks or accommodation are part of the fee.
8. If you are getting a door deal, what's the door charge, how many other acts are sharing the monies, how is it split between venue & performer/s, who provides the float? What are the cancellation procedures.
9. Make sure you find out in advance what equipment (if any) the venue has available and if a sound engineer is provided. In most venues, you will be required to provide all P.A. equipment, backline (amps etc) and instruments but some venues supply P.A., Sound Engineer and occasionally a drum kit.
10. Sound Checks! Ask if you get one, duration & time. (If using your own P.A. & Engineer negotiate a convenient time for you and the venue).
11. Publicity! Supply your own flyers, posters etc., to ensure your gig is publicised. Find out what (if any) promotion or publicity the venue/promoter is organising (if any).
12. Contact the local newspaper, drum media and radio stations to request addition to their gig, events or what's on guide.

## PRE GIG ADVICE

Simple tips to help you avoid those awful 'oh no' moments, especially if your band members are bad timekeepers, lousy with directions or have short term memories! Of course if you have never been late, missed, double booked, forgotten or mislaid anything you can skip this section!!

1. Ensure all band members know the Gig Date, Venue Address, set Up time well in advance and remind them again the day prior to the event.
2. List and mark all your equipment including leads, spares, plug boards, accessories etc., and check everything prior to leaving for the venue and of course at the end of the gig.
3. Set up and check your equipment regularly to ensure there are no embarrassing failures on the night.
4. Always carry spare speaker, amp, power leads, power supply, fuses, an extra long extension plug board, strings, plectrum and spare microphone - working bands need all of these sooner or later so be prepared.
5. Solo acts, DJ's and Karaoke Entertainers when using their own P.A. should get a second amp and carry a back up disc of their songs for emergencies where possible.

## TRAVEL INFO

Getting ALL the band from A to B can be a real pain in the u know what..... Someone invariably ends up photocopying the maps, sending out the flyers and organising the publicity Trundling down to the local jam can be just as complicated if you suddenly discover the trains are on strike & you've already consumed your quota of the old amber stuff ;-) Be prepared and check out the time tables and routes for all your gigs.

## AT THE GIG & BEYOND!

You've arrived, set up and performed a blinding gig to a lively and appreciative crowd (probably!!!), so all that remains is packing up equipment and collecting your fee!! If you have made an equipment checklist and marked everything then it will be easy to make sure you leave with what you arrived with!

Never leave your instruments or equipment unguarded & get it insured!

Someone has to collect the money and sign paperwork if required, so make sure you have your contract or confirmation letter with you at the gig to avoid disputes.

If there is a dispute and you are under paid or the venue refuses to pay there are some steps you can take to retrieve your money and/or prevent the venue repeating this with other artists/bands etc

### Legitimate reasons for Reduced or Non-Payment from a venue or booker:-

1. Act/Band failed to keep the terms of a contract. i.e., Non working or faulty equipment. (Full terms of contracts should be read carefully before accepting the booking or complaining about the venue/agent/promoter).
2. Non appearance for whatever reason
3. Misleading information - If the venue is expecting a band and you turn out to be a duo, don't expect to get the same money!

If the venue double books you and you're pipped at the post by another performer, the venue is still obliged to pay you some recompense. If you have a contract or letter you may insist that the other act leaves and you complete the gig. Alternatively, depending on the contract or terms of the letter you can request payment in full, payment for time, travel and advertising expenses and/or an alternative booking. Which course you follow often depends on how well you get on with the venue, wether it was an isolated incident, genuine mistake or how far you have travelled.

The above also applies for cancellations. Most contracts state the venue/artist may cancel without cost before 14 days of the booking, 50% payment required if the cancellation is within 14 days and 100% of the booking fee if you are cancelled within 7 days of the booking. This is just a rough guide and we advise you to check your contracts for full details.

Unless stated clearly in a contract or letter, the following are not good enough reasons for Reduced or Non-Payment from a venue or booker:-

1. A string broke (believe it or not a booker tried this excuse!)
2. The act/band failed to play a certain style of music (unless expressed in the contract this is required).
3. The venue was empty or you are accused of not providing a following - whilst it is in your interest to publicise your gigs to fans, friends and public it is the venue/promoters responsibility to ensure the event is well advertised!
4. They dislike the act/band and you are requested to stop playing before the end of the night. Although you are required to be honest about the type of act/band and music you play it is the bookers responsibility to ensure you are suitable for their venue prior to booking. Once an agreement has been made and you have performed for part of the evening they are required to pay you in full.

Do not be put off by a contracts terms and conditions, as venues, agents and performers alike tend to work things out between them. For example, a club or pub booking a rock band would not expect them to wear tux and tails! The same follows for any problems that may arise, you should always endeavour to reach a compromise or alternative agreement, especially if you want to perform at the venue again. In the first instance contact the agent or manager who issued the contract who will try to negotiate on your behalf.

### **BE A RESPONSIBLE PERFORMER**

Many newcomers are unaware of their responsibilities towards the venue and fellow performers, so here's a few pointers.

1. Be honest about the size of act, style/genre of music you play and type of act you perform.
2. Ensure your equipment is in good working order.
3. Inform the venue/promoter if you are unable to do the gig as soon as possible to allow them to find an alternative act, if possible offer them contacts of similar or suitable bands/acts you can recommend.
4. You are not always required to provide your own publicity material but it is in your own interests to do so.
5. Many venues are now equipped with noise limiters, respect the neighbourhood laws and keep the levels down where required.
6. Help your fellow musicians and report venues/agents/promoters/bookers who repeatedly double book, cancel acts with short notice or fail to pay.
7. Report any venues with dangerous electrical supplies to your local Health and Safety Department. Always use plug boards with cut offs in case of power surges and if you do intend to perform at a venue with dodgy electrics please remember its not just your equipment that could get fried - it could also be you!
8. If you are using another musician's equipment and cause damage it's up to YOU to pay for it or replace the equipment.
9. When playing a support gig or performing with other musicians don't be disruptive during their spot - keep your competitiveness ONSTAGE!
10. If you mistakenly pack someone else's leads or find equipment left at a venue inform them immediately. Remember - it could have been yours!

That's all folks - Happy Gigging!!!