



Independent Promoters

The Artist–Promoter Relationship



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FAC Kitemark Criteria

1. Good Communication Throughout

- > **Clear, relevant and timely communication** including explicit timelines for event announcements and assets required to support promotion.
- > **No unworkable, last minute schedule changes** without reasonable extenuating circumstances, which are clearly explained. Promoters must ensure that the artist can best retain their audience.
- > **Promoters must consult with artists regarding issues such as schedule changes, sponsorship or conflicts of interest.**
- > **Promoter must ask artists if they have access requirements relating to an impairment or health condition.** There is support available from Attitude is Everything's Next Stage initiative on how to meet these requirements.

2. Fair Remuneration (proportional to the scale of the event)

- > **Promoters will not engage in any form of pay to play.** There should be no hidden or unexpected costs for artists (e.g. no extra charges for sound engineers or standard equipment).
- > **No unreasonable pressure to be placed on artists to sell tickets.**
- > **Payment should be made in an agreed and timely manner.** AIP proposes that payments should not be made any later than one month following a performance.
- > **No extraneous cuts or commissions for merchandise sales from promoters.** Artists should not be subject to punitive fees from venues for selling merchandise, which are not directly relevant to the costs for doing so.

FAC Kitemark Criteria

3. Hospitality

- > A warm welcome; tiny gestures, such as offering a cup of tea go a very long way.
- > Recognise that artists may have had long journeys. **Ensure that there are facilities which are appropriate for all** (e.g. an accessible, comfortable, safe space for women, LGBTQ, disabled and neurodiverse people).
- > Where there are deductions from artists' fees for riders, **make sure that artists are aware that this is the case.** (The FAC encourages a move away from riders with luxury items, particularly alcohol, and towards providing basics as a standard e.g. water, kettle, tea, coffee, towels).
- > **Extend equal courtesy to support acts as to headliners,** including sticking to schedules. Artists: courtesy applies to fellow artists and staff.

4. A Safe Space with Zero Tolerance for Harassment or Unfair Treatment of Any Kind

- > Promoters to agree to the Musicians' Union anti-harassment code of conduct.
- > Are staff trained and aware of issues?
- > Is there a point of contact for raising concerns?
- > Make artists feel safe and encourage them to speak up when necessary.

The FAC has created The Artist Guide to: Booking Gigs for artists to ensure that they are aware of their responsibilities. The Guide is attached here and it details how artists can be good partners.

As a result of the publication of the FAC Kitemark for independent promoters, all new AIP members will agree to the principles outlined within this document. AIP will publish the document and will signpost to the FAC.



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The Artist Guide to: Booking Gigs

The Artist Guide to: Booking Gigs

Starting Out How do I find gigs?

1. Start small and local

If you are starting out, research open mic nights in your area. Open mic events normally consist of sets of two to three songs in a friendly environment. It is where many artists take their first steps, or where more experienced artists try out new material. If the promoter likes what they see and hear, you may be offered a featured slot as a result, which may lead to more opportunities.

2. Find out where artists similar to you play

Another way to find shows is to simply research where artists similar to you are playing and contact those venues. You may want to get in touch with those artists and ask them for advice and recommendations.

3. Support slots

Reach out to artists you admire and pitch to open the show for them. Support slots can be competitive and hard to come by, but it is always worth asking.

The Artist Guide to: Booking Gigs

Communication Contacting Independent Promoters

When contacting promoters make sure your email is concise and includes relevant details such as links to your music, website and socials. Be polite and honest and do your research. Specify why you are contacting about that particular show (e.g. it is part of a tour or are you promoting a release).

If you're booking a gig outside of your home town, it is a good idea to include whether you have an existing connection to the place (e.g. have you performed in that town, have you had regional press coverage, do your streaming stats support you playing in that town, do you have a friends or an audience there?).

It is important to be realistic about how many tickets you might be able to sell (the right promoter will want to book you even if you don't have a large local following yet).

If you have no local following yet but are very keen on building a fanbase in that town, you could consider arranging a gig swap with a local band, supporting one another in your respective towns.

The Artist Guide to: Booking Gigs

Communication When you're confirming a show

1. Be confident and honest

Make sure to discuss payment and marketing for the event prior to agreeing to play. Be frank about how much your travel expenses are going to be. Be honest about what you can do to promote the event, what you expect from the promoter and what you can offer in return. If you have access needs, let them know and be clear about what you require to make the show work and be enjoyable for you. Ask what the promoter needs from you in order to do their job (e.g. press photo, bio).

2. Provide info in a timely manner

Make sure your communication is clear and that you get all relevant information to the promoter promptly. Provide a tech-spec (with a channel list if possible) and hospitality rider (when necessary). Clarify what equipment you're bringing and what equipment you expect the venue to supply.

The Artist Guide to: Booking Gigs

Communication

Questions you may wish to ask

Some questions you may find useful to ask are:

- > **Is there accommodation provided (ask for it if you need it)?**
- > **Are there other acts booked to play, if so how many?**
- > **What are access times, sound check and stage times?**
- > **Is the venue or promoter supplying a sound engineer?**
- > **Are there any other costs you should be aware of?**

It may also be useful for you to ask about:

- > **Venue specifications (e.g. health and safety information, accessibility, car parking)**
- > **Contact details for the promoter or venue representative**

For festival performances, you may want to ask:

- > **Is there an artist area backstage?**
- > **Are there dressing rooms available to you?**
- > **Is there somewhere secure to leave your equipment?**

The Artist Guide to: Booking Gigs

Communication Marketing your event

Marketing a show should be a shared responsibility. You should do your bit and add the event to your website, gig listings and promote on your social media.

You should ask the promoter what their marketing budget is for the event, what their marketing plan consists of and what materials they need from you.

You could also ask for a minimum amount of social media support (e.g. both parties agree to post a minimum of X posts on instagram to market the event).

Don't be afraid to check in and ask how ticket sales are going, and how you can cooperate to promote the event.

The Artist Guide to: Booking Gigs

Support Act vs. Headline Act Responsibilities and expectations

Support Act

Opening for other artists is a great way to build your audience, grow your network and develop your performance skills. It is important to note that responsibilities and expectations will be different to when you are performing as a headline act.

Things to keep in mind as a support:

- > You are a guest at someone else's show, performing to their audience. Respect this.
- > You may have less time to soundcheck and may not have access to the same backstage area as the headliner.
- > You may not have a bespoke hospitality rider as a support act (promoters should still be polite and accommodating).
- > Support acts are too often not be paid well and are rarely paid in advance, however you should have all your expenses covered and agree a fee that you are comfortable with.
- > You should not be held responsible for poor ticket sales but you should always do your best to promote a show.

The Artist Guide to: Booking Gigs

Support Act vs. Headline Act Responsibilities and expectations

Headline Act

As a headliner, you will have more of a responsibility to sell tickets and promote the show. Your remuneration should reflect that.

Be sure to have a conversation prior to confirming the show, so that all parties are clear on what their roles responsibilities are.

Be realistic about advance payments, fees and riders . Be aware that your hospitality rider ultimately comes out of your profit share.

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Getting Paid for Your Show

Remuneration

We do not condone any form of pay to play (it comes in many guises). Know your worth as an artist. Remuneration for a performance should be fair and transparent. Even if you are playing your first ever gigs, you should not be expected to be out of pocket. It is always fair to ask for your costs to be covered. When any form of entry fee is charged, it is fair for the artist to receive an agreed percentage of takings (unless you have agreed a fixed fee). Be sure that you are clear on how and when you will get paid for the show and clarify whether you are required to send an invoice.

Merchandise

You should be able to sell merchandise at your show and retain 100% of the takings, unless the promoter or venue is supplying someone to sell for you, and this is agreed prior to the show.

NB: It is not uncommon for venues to take a commission of merchandise sales. While the FAC do not condone this, you may come across venues who charge a percentage. We would be grateful if you would notify us of cases where you are charged.

The Artist Guide to: Booking Gigs

What is a Hospitality Rider?

There are many misconceptions around hospitality riders. You should think of your rider as a list of things you need in order to do your job. Ultimately, the costs of the hospitality rider will be covered with show profits, so it is your money that you are spending. Be smart and be reasonable.

Here are some things to bare in mind:

- > Don't forget to ask for practical things (e.g. a lamp, a mirror)
- > Keep your health in mind and speak up if you need to ("we don't drink alcohol, no alcohol backstage please")
- > Clarify whether your deal includes a meal or a cash buy-out
- > Be sure to add any accessibility needs you may have

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Playing the Show

This should go without saying, but be on time and be polite to everyone. If you are running late, contact the promoter or your point of contact and let them know.

Honour your sound check and stage times. Particularly when there are other artists on the bill, make sure you don't overrun.

If you are sharing the bill with other artists, be courteous and pay your fellow musicians respect.

Be polite and thank the promoters and staff at the end of the night.