

LECTURE NOTES FROM 'GET PLUGGED IN' A 3 DAY COURSE ON THE LIVE MUSIC INDUSTRY FOR MUSIC TANK AT WESTMINSTER UNIVERSITY

Note: my apologies for any typos. There's forty-one pages of text here. Also, to those who remember my talking about something that's not mentioned below; it's not realistic for me to record everything I say, listen back to it, then transcribe those parts for inclusion below

SECTOR OVERVIEW

STAKEHOLDERS

- Venues (a 250 cap venue in Glasgow and Wembley Stadium - 80,000 - face very different problems)
- Managers (the UK's Music Manager's Forum is the world's largest representative body of Artist Management)
- Publishers (who benefit when an artist's profile increases in the live arena, through performance royalties, and the ability to charge / charge more for sync licenses)
- Merchandise companies
- Backline hirers, van hire companies, rehearsal spaces
- Promoters
- Agents
- Ticketing companies
- Festivals
- Utilities companies (when you buy a ticket online, or stream a song, or listen to your MP3 player, you use electricity and or an internet connection)
- Artists
- Audiences
- Who else? Labels, recording and mastering studios, manufacturing plants, equipment manufacturers... everyone, in fact, in the music industry, since any income from any source helps facilitate all other artist activities, and an artist's rising profile potentially boosts income across all facets of its business

SPRINGBOARD

- This comment piece was written for the ILMC's (International Live Music Conference) magazine 'IQ'. I was asked to write 450 words on a subject of my choosing. After three re-writes to make it appear less confrontational, I submitted it for publication and was told that before it could be published it would have to be 'approved' by some of the live industry's most senior figures, because IQ considered it to be very controversial. It was published in December 2007. Its intention was to force the industry to see the whole picture, to look at the grass-roots level and understand the problems we face in a country which is one of the world's most culturally influential and financially successful in terms of its music exports, yet refuses to support itself from the ground up, while propping up the 'high arts' such as opera and ballet. More than FIVE years later, very little has changed.

"The UK live music scene is more buoyant than I can ever remember it." If I hear one more person utter those words in the press, I'm going to bounce an SM58 microphone off their heads. The live music scene might be buoyant at the O2, Wembley and Glastonbury but from where I'm standing (a 275 capacity venue in London) it's rotten to the core, has been for years and will continue to be for the foreseeable future because no-one gives enough of a shit to do anything about it. It's like looking at Chelsea and Manchester United and proclaiming that football is in good shape? You think? You've looked at the Scottish Third Division lately? Let's get some home-truths out of the way first, for those of you still living in some kind of delusional world where Britain rules the (air)waves. We have some of the world's finest bands yet we house them in some of the world's worst venues with the surliest sound engineers, rudest bar staff, most disinterested venue managers and intimidating doormen. We treat artists and audiences as if we don't want them in our buildings and this we do in the name of entertainment. We should be ashamed of ourselves.

Our small venue circuit is globally derided. Small venues are crumbling. Investment from public or private sources is almost non-existent. There are, of course, many clubs on these isles which fly in the face of this sort of pessimism; homes for good music run by those who care and nurture, and employ excellent staff and train them well, respected and loved by audiences who attend and artists who perform. But they are the exception. This isn't some golden age of live music. There are too many bands, too many shows, too many pubs throwing up tinny PAs in the back room. We can't cope. The audience is being split, the promoters are being asked to front tours for bands who shouldn't actually be touring if they stopped to think for a minute because the financial model at this level makes no sense. Agents ask for more than a band is worth. Promoters struggle to make any money, or break even, or just limit their losses and so the next show they do becomes harder to pull off. Clubs are finding it more difficult to sell tickets for many of their shows. The music industry either has next to no understanding of how difficult it is for small venues, or it does, and couldn't care less.

Mobile phone operators, brewers and fashion brands wrap their logos around anything wearing skinny jeans and battered Converse. Vodafone; supporting live music! T-Mobile: supporting live music! Crap. Support, by definition, comes from below. It's a foundation upon which an entity can be nurtured and developed. You can't put Editors on at Proud Galleries and call it a 'guerilla gig'. You can't invent a new live music award show and claim you're supporting live music. What you could do is take a small percentage of the profits from your ludicrous roaming call charges, and plough it into the small venue infrastructure, funding sound desks, mics, XLR cables, multi-cores, parcans, monitoring systems and the like. And what would you get for it? Your logo on flyers and posters? Some branding on the walls or staff t-shirts? Nope. Nothing. Nothing at all. No branding. No marketing opportunity. No audience to exploit. You'd just get a warm glow of satisfaction from knowing that you actually supported live music (though I confess I don't envy you the task of explaining it to your shareholders).

So live music is the new cash cow and now we see the major labels scrambling around, thrashing and flailing to reposition themselves as 'music companies' after belatedly realising that they need a new cow to milk. And god knows they'll milk this one until its teats are cracked and bleeding and venues are closing down around their ears, and they're wondering where they can showcase another aural barrage of creatively bankrupt, derivative indie-rock-by-numbers. Let notice be served: live music in the UK is - in many respects - completely and utterly fucked.

Andy Inglis, December 2007

CLIMATE

ANALYSIS

- The closing of The Luminaire - a 275 capacity live music venue which I co-founded and co-owned - led to a personal exploration of why it had happened, and specifically an analysis of how the world had changed from 2005-2011, the lifespan of the club. An overview of findings follows:

2005

- Flatscreen TV costs £3,000
- Highspeed broadband had very low UK penetration (around 13%), concentrated in biggest cities
- iTunes (which launched in 2003) starts downloadable video service, with just five TV shows
- BBC iPlayer launches on Christmas Day. They'd hoped to attract 500,000 users in 6 months. They got 3.5 million in the three weeks (over the years the other terrestrial broadcasters have rolled out similar services)
- YouTube launched

2006

- iTunes now starts to offer films for download. 75 from Disney
- Facebook launches in the UK
- Twitter launches, slowly

2007

- iTunes now has 500 films
- Facebook has 1.3 million UK users by March
- Twitter takes off at South by Southwest showcase / festival in Austin, Texas (March)
- iPhone arrives in June, heralding the arrival of useable mobile online experience

2008

- Lovefilm is bought by Amazon and becomes the biggest film download/DVD-by-post service in the UK
- In April, BBC iPlayer accounted for around 5% of all UK internet traffic

2009

- Skype-to-Skype (which was set up in 2003 and started to gather momentum in 2005) accounts for 13% of all international calls
- Spotify launches in the UK in 2009

2010

- Apple launches the iPad, other tablets follow
- By May, BBC iPlayer the site is getting 123 million monthly play requests
- iTunes now has 12,000 films for download
- Spotify now has 650 million users
- YouTube announces it's getting 2 billion views daily

2011 > 2012

- Over 90% of the UK population has high speed broadband
- The same flatscreen TV is now just £299
- Spotify has 10,000,000 tracks, increasing by 10,000 per day, 10,000,000 users, 1 million of whom pay for the service
- Facebook has almost 800 million users worldwide, and almost half of the UK's population
- We are sending 300 million Tweets per day and YouTube has more than 1 trillion views; 140 views for every human
- We can now, at our leisure, and for free, find almost any film and almost any piece of music for free online, and take it

The point:

We're all dicking around online when we could be at a gig (or the less flippanant point: the number of things we could do at home increased massively with the roll-out of high speed broadband and the introduction of new online communication / social media tools)

Add to this the gradual dovetailing of the following two factors:

- A slow collapse of recorded sales leading to everyone pouring into the live industry to see how they could make money,
- Arguably the worst financial crisis since the 1930s, if not in history

Leading to:

- People staying home with far more (online) options and when they do go out they might choose from any number of...
- free gigs as pubs/small venues try to attract an audience, and before people go out they may drink at home because...
- a bottle of beer in a pub is now £3.50+ and the same bottle in a supermarket is as low as £0.60, leading to...
- lower takings for pubs and an increase in the number of free gigs as pubs/small venues try to attract an audience and...
- round and round it goes

A QUICK GLANCE AT SOME FIGURES (ALL BUSINESS-TO-CONSUMER) FROM PRS FOR MUSIC'S 'ADDING UP THE MUSIC INDUSTRY' DOCUMENT

2010 BPI retail value of recorded music = £1,343m
2011 BPI retail value of recorded music = £1,112m = 3% drop

2010 PRS estimated value of live music = £1,418m
2011 PRS estimated value of live music = £1,624m = 15% increase

In both years the value of live income was higher than the value of recorded income. An although live income actually increased, this may have been down to more of the 'global' artists touring, and surely not down to grassroots venues suddenly seeing an increase in their audiences and takings. Remember that the top 5% of live artists make 80% of all live income.

While I thoroughly commend the PRS' work on putting together this excellent document (free on their website), one paragraph in particular worries me:

"The implementation of the Live Music Act in October 2012 will contribute to a healthy future for live music at all levels. Events with a capacity of 200 or less no longer need to obtain permission from their local authority, which should see more pubs willing to host musical performances in the coming months. Extending the range of venues available to performers can only be a good thing for the long-term future of live music. Growth at the top end of the market cannot be expected to continue if new acts aren't presented with adequate opportunities to hone their craft"

More of my issues with this later, when we discuss the Live Music Act

CRISIS? WHAT CRISIS?

In 2010 the 100 Club announced their closure and, two month later, we announced The Luminaire's. There was lots of soul-searching in the press, leading to 'UK venues in crisis' stories, though often those venues which were noted as having closed, either hadn't, or had reopened. London has opened many more venues (or rooms putting on bands) that its closed in the the past six years. Further, the centre of gravity has moved from Central London to the East (much as it did from Manhattan to Brooklyn when Manhattan landlords put the rents up) and East is where the industry wants the bands to play, to emerge from, and in some cases the standard of venues isn't so important to the industry, which is just as well, since the standard of small venues in London is generally pretty poor in terms of production levels, certainly in comparison to their mainland European counterparts. It's important to note that, unlike small UK venues, many small mainland European venues are able to apply for funding for improvements to PA and infrastructure. There's also often a culture of volunteering in other countries, so staff costs are reduced. The Roskilde festival in Denmark hires 30,000 volunteers each year.

When the Astoria announced it was closing due to Crossrail, there wasn't much of a noise made about it from the industry (they could use Koko, Shepherd's Bush Empire, Electric Ballroom) and when Spitz and Luminaire closed down, the industry again had other venues to use in their place, indeed there are many more at this level. So while some artists and audience members (and indeed some industry) may 'miss' a venue, ultimately its demise becomes an irrelevance, particularly as new gig-goers appear, and find their own 'homes'; those venues that they will miss if they close down. London is in some ways an anomaly though, in that there are many more rooms to pick up the slack. That's not always the case in smaller towns and cities the world over. Even if the O2 closed, the industry would just have to use football stadiums instead. The bands would still play, the audience would still come and, in time, the O2 would fade to the back of our memories, as those kids who go to their first show tonight ask "What was the O2"? It is the conveyor belt of death, my friends, and we're all on it

ARTISTS AND AUDIENCES

Collectively the two most important stakeholders. Without them there is no music industry. Individually though, they are utterly irrelevant: the artists at the lower levels, and the audience members at any level. Before an artist is big enough to sell significant numbers of tickets (and therefore generate significant alcohol sales in venues), they don't matter much. Below that level there are any number of god-knows-how-many artists who can bring 20 or 30 of their mates along to a pub and keep beer flowing through the taps. Once an artist gets to play (let's say for the sake of argument) Scala, which is 850 capacity, they have currency. Agents, promoters and venues want to work with them for they are going places, and making people money. When it comes to the audience, they never matter individually. If you've got a problem with X venue because you think their beer prices are too high, or their security staff or bar staff are rude, then it's unlikely the venue will change to suit you, for you are part of a captive audience. If your favourite artist is playing at a venue you don't like you have two choices: you can either go see your favourite band and try and forget about those things you dislike about the room, or you can wait until the artist plays in your living room. Only one of those outcomes is likely. And so long as the UK (and London in particular) remains such an important market for overseas bands, the venues have no reason to change. The bands and the audiences will keep coming

MARKETING AND PROMOTION

WITH CARINA JIRSCH OF SCHONEBERG CONCERTS, FORMERLY MEAN FIDDLER
AND MARK MUGGERIDGE OF EVIL GENIUS MEDIA

PROMOTERS

- Live Nation are the world's biggest. They own or manage some festivals you may have heard of. Download, Wireless and Hyde Park Calling (both of which will now be held in The Olympic Stadium in London, after one too many battles with the local residents around Hyde Park), they have a 50.1% stake in Festival Republic so own Reading, Leeds, Latitude, The (currently closed) Bill Chill and Hove Festival in Norway. They're the majority shareholder of the Academy Music Group in the UK so own Brixton Academy, Shepherd's Bush Empire and others in that estate. They manage (or anyway, did last time I checked), Wembley Arena, Motorpoint Arena Cardiff and Motorpoint Sheffield, O2 Apollo Manchester, plus Metaldown and Way Out West festivals in Sweden, and they promote in many smaller venues UK, since 2007, encroaching on the traditional territory of independent promoters. They don't replicate this behaviour in every territory though. For example, I can only find activity in larger venues in Belgium. They operate in 16 European countries, just opened up in Moscow this year, and opened a Ticketmaster operation in the United Arab Emirates, their first foothold into the Middle East in early 2013. By the way, Live Nation operate a venue in Florida called the 1-800 Ask Gary Amphitheatre.
- Next are AEG, the world's largest owner of sports teams and sports events and the owner of the world's most profitable sports and entertainment venues, including the O2 in London (the most successful music venue in the world). It owns LA Galaxy, David Beckham's former football team, and the promoter Goldenvoice, who take care of the Coachella Festival in California.
- And then there's House of Blues, who own thirteen venues in America and who are, in turn, owned by... Live Nation
- Below these three giants we have, in the UK, the national promoters: KiliLive (set up by Stuart Galbraith, who used to run Live Nation in the UK). They have the touring Sonisphere Festival, operating in eleven European cities. The 'Big Four' played in 2011: Metallica, Slayer, Megadeth, Anthrax. 2012's UK edition was canceled. The company was originally set up as a joint venture between Galbraith and AEG, but AEG exited earlier in 2012
- Then we have SJM and Metropolis, who promote their events together on the gigsandtours website. Metropolis are based in London, SJM (stands for Simon J. Moran, the founder) in Manchester. In 1996, SJM set up V Festival. They still run it. Both can book from the smallest venues to the largest, and because they have a festival in their pocket, that means that a band who they promote has a better chance of getting on that bill
- AMG (The Academy Music Group), whose main sponsor is the O2 mobile phone company. It currently owns and operates 14 sites, including O2 Brixton Academy, the Academies in Oxford, Sheffield, Liverpool, Leeds, Glasgow, and Shepherds Bush Empire. Its promotions company, Academy Events, is the fourth largest promoter in the UK. Its shareholders include Metropolis Music, SJM Concerts and.... Live Nation
- This is complicated. Mean Fiddler are owned by MAMA and Company, which rose from the ashes of the MAMA Group, who were owned by the HMV chain of music stores around the UK until they went into administration in late 2012. Under the MAMA umbrella are The Fly Magazine, Lovebox Weekender Festival, Wilderness Festival, the Student Broadcast Network (radio) and a venue estate comprising Kentish Town Forum, Jazz Cafe in Camden, Barfly, Borderline, Garage, Picture House in Edinburgh among others. The whole story of HMV's entry into the live market through the purchase of MAMA would fill a whole lecture itself
- There are two large regional promoters: DHP in Nottingham, who own six venues around Nottingham, and promote outside the city, around the country sometimes, and DF Concerts in Glasgow, who operate the famous King Tuts Wah Wah Hut venue and T-In The Park festival (one of the UK's biggest). Guess who now has a controlling share? Live Nation
- If you pick up Time Out magazine in London, for example, you'll see adverts showing some of the national promoters booking small rooms like The Lexington, all the way up to Wembley Stadium, and some are in bed with major festivals. This is attractive for some artists and their agents, who hope that they can be taken from small rooms all the way up to stadiums by the same promoter, if all goes well
- London has very few large independent promoters: All Tomorrow's Parties (ATP) and Eat Your Own Ears (EYOE, though it's widely known that they now have some kind of financial backing or partnership with a larger, national promoter) being the exceptions in the 'contemporary music' world, and perhaps Serious in the jazz world. ATP are famous for their weekends in UK 'holiday camps', often curated by artists such as Mogwai, Portishead, Nick Cave, The National, Shellac, Sonic Youth, Nick Cave, or respected media partners such as Pitchfork. These are also held at venues like Kentish Town Forum. They will also, on occasion, book small shows. They got themselves into serious trouble in 2012 though, being forced into administration with £2.6 million of debts. At the time of writing they're in negotiations with a large live music group, presumably for financial backing
- EYOE have built a formidable reputation in 'leftfield/alternative' genres, building from small rooms up to 3,000 capacity rooms plus their now-established one day festivals Field Day, Underage Festival and The Apple Cart, all in London
- Next in line are Bird on The Wire, who are now booking into Shepherd's Bush Empire and now establishing themselves as a major independent, which is good, since they're good people with good ears and ethics, and are well-respected. Their peers in Manchester are worth a mention: Now Wave, doing similar work in a similar way

- Underneath there are countless small promoters, perhaps from 1-4 people working together and while it may or may not be their fulltime job, they take it seriously. They have a brand, promote multiple shows and follow professional standards, to varying degrees
- Otherwise the band themselves may do the promoting, hiring a small venue, booking some friends to support them, DJ for them, knocking up flyers and galvanising their forces, perhaps with the intention of creating their own scene. I worked with a band who employed me to book a venue and promote the show, then we brought in two respected UK music publications to act as media partners and further promote the show

MARKETING AND BRANDING

We're not so good in this business at thinking about marketing. So before we go any further, before we put a ticket on sale, let's stop and have a think about things:

- Do you have a product that someone wants? If you weren't trying to sell gig tickets, but some other commodity instead, would you just jump in?
- Japan is the world's largest automobile manufacturer and exporter, and has six of the world's ten largest automobile manufacturers. If you want to sell a car to the Japanese it had better be a pretty good car and you better have done your research. Music is no different. It's a commodity whether we like it or not
- Björk is from Iceland. When Björk launched in the UK, the UK had no-one like her, and arguably still doesn't, unless we are counting the likes of Joan as Policewoman, or Bat For Lashes, and while these are interesting artists, they are not Björk. This is partly why Björk was so successful in the UK
- Look at your market and see if it needs what you are selling. The UK has plenty of skinny-jeaned indie rock bands and Sweden has plenty of '80s-influenced synth-pop bands, so while you may still be able to find success for your skinny-jeaned indie rock band in the UK, or your '80s-influenced synth-pop band in Sweden, it's fair to say that you may not find it easy
- Think this way on a local level too. If a town only has the capacity for one small music venue, think very carefully before opening another, or about booking a very similar artist to the one that's on sale across town, if the market for that genre is very limited. And think very carefully about whether or not anyone will be interested in the show you're promoting, in the face of all the other shows that are being promoted on the same night
- As with any market, you need to find the thirsty man and sell him a bottle of water
- Branding. You don't need to be a multi-national company to consider it. If you want your audience to grow to trust your shows as a promoter, it'll be helpful to have a memorable and striking identity. It doesn't need to be overbearing; subtlety goes a long way and, once the artists you book become the draw (as opposed to shows which people attend because they like what you book), they'll not be wanting your logo to be bigger than their name on the poster

CHOOSING A VENUE / TECH SPECS / HOSPITALITY RIDER

So, shall we get the show on sale yet?

No, we shall not, for we are not ready

You need to find the right venue first

- How big is the stage? If you have an 18-piece orchestra you'll need some space. Is the venue known for certain genres? If you're booking a quiet acoustic act then you'll not want to book them into Camden Underworld. It's primarily a metal / rock venue. If you've got a quiet act that needs a quiet room, consider what's around the room you want to use. Is there a noisy bar upstairs and will your audience hear it every time someone opens the door between the two rooms (like at The Slaughtered Lamb)? Is there just one door separating the venue and the noisy bar, and are the staff alert to the problems this can cause (like at the Wilmington Arms)? Do the bar staff understand that throwing empty bottles into bins already full of bottles is going to make a racket in a quiet room? What are the staff like? Is the manager all over the place and always drinking? Is the sound engineer rude/any good? It's likely that you'll not be the first promoter to use the room so ask around, see what others think (both bands and promoters)
- You'll want to check out the venue you want to use to make sure it's suitable technically (promoters rarely think about it). If they've got a 16-channel mixing desk you're not going to be able to book a band that needs 30 channels, without bringing a new desk in, and that's maybe more hassle than you want, and the venue may not let you do it anyway. So, before you confirm the band, ask to see their tech spec/rider. It will either be a stage plot/plan, or a channel/input list
- While we're on the subject of tech. riders, think carefully if you're making one for your artist. It should be clear, and it should not be demanding. It doesn't need capital letters, or red ink, or anything underlined. It just needs to be clear. It also doesn't have to have impossible demands such as naming the specific crossover or desk you need, or how many watts per audience member the PA needs to be able to deliver. The venue isn't about to buy or hire a new PA for your show. It's your responsibility to check whether or not the venue's production is suitable for you. And it doesn't need to use 'legalese' like "the promoter hereby agrees to undertake the following". Plain English is good

- If you're making a technical rider for your band, you need the band's names, Sound Engineer and Tour Manager's names, numbers and email addresses
- If you are a venue, this is what your website should clearly state, for the benefit of agents, promoters and artists:
 - Mixing desk spec
 - Outboard specs
 - PA specs
 - Monitor specs
 - List of mics and DIs
 - DJ Booth spec
 - If you can record shows for artists, how, and what it will cost (please: either nothing or not much)
 - Lighting spec
 - Projector spec if you have one
 - Stage dimensions, how big a backdrop can be if an artist brings one
 - Your capacity and some advice to promoters on how to manage it
 - Information about your emergency exits and fire extinguishers
 - Clear rules about the use of pyrotechnics (never, ever allow them) and smoke machines (never, ever turn your alarms off or mask your smoke detectors)
 - Age restrictions (now we're getting into the realms of customer information, but still important for people who might want to hire your venue)
 - Any relevant info about your toilets
 - Opening hours and curfew (so people can plan their journey home)
 - Disabled access and if you have none, what you will do to help
 - Security provision (you'll want to state that promoters can't bring their own)
 - Rules for photographers

So, shall we get the show on sale yet?

No, we shall not, for we are not ready

You need to think about your costs

- You will need to see the artist's hospitality rider and make sure you can afford what they need, because it's going to come out of your pocket initially until the show (hopefully) breaks even and moves into profit. If you're making one of these for your artists, again, think carefully about what you ask for, and how you ask for it. There's no need to shout (NO CAPITAL LETTERS PLEASE), and there's no need to ask for a stack of food that no-one's going to eat. The first thing you need to do as an artist - or artist's representative - is find out exactly what the artist actually needs. If the artist needs 'cheese' then write down what kind of cheese. They like cheddar? Say so. Else you might get goats cheese and if you don't like goats cheese then it may go to waste. Don't ask for 'a selection of snacks'. Name the snacks. Don't ask for 'good quality' anything. It's subjective. Don't ask for 'vodka'. Tell them what kind of vodka you like. The difference between a good bottle and a cheap, bad bottle is vast. Same for wine. Specify, specify, specify. But don't be greedy. Every cost you add to the show (assuming you're being paid a guarantee vs a percentage of the net ticket sales) means that it'll take you longer to reach that % mark, and therefore start to make more money. Don't waste food. And don't feel you necessarily need to clear the fridge out every time you play. Maybe the staff are hungry. Artists: tell your agent what should go on your rider. Agents: ask your artist what the need. Venues/promoters: ask the agent or artist if they really need everything listed. And again, no capital letters, nothing underlined, nothing in red ink. And again, be absolutely specific about exactly what you need, not what you want. The promoter isn't your parents. How the hell hospitality riders got to be as long as shopping lists is unfathomable. Don't ask for socks on your rider, or cigarettes, or 9v batteries. Some water and a hot meal is really all that should be on there. If you want anything else get off your arse and go the shop yourself. What are you; 4 years old? And I speak as someone who manages bands, tours with bands and knows that it's not always easy to stop and find good food when touring. It's got completely out of hand

LOCATION AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- Think about where the venue is in whichever town you're in. If it's a showcase for your artist, make sure it's in a venue that the media/industry are used to going to. They don't want to have to get a map and a compass out to find it. Does it have good transport links? And in some cases, think about the demographic of the area. If you've a Klezmer band, you might want to consider Golders Green (large Jewish Community). You might not want to necessarily consider Peckham in South London
- Once you've chosen your venue, you'll need some practical information from them. Here are some suggestions:
 - Location
 - Parking
 - Load in time
 - Soundcheck time
 - Doors
 - Curfew
 - Load out restrictions
 - Clubnight afterwards which will affect your end-time
 - What does hire fee include and exclude
 - Backline in-house
 - Can you sell your own tickets
 - Dressing room

Space for merchandise, and is there a venue commission
Local accommodation and restaurant recommendations
Wi-fi
Local music shops for spares
Age restrictions
Noise restrictions
How many artists can you book on one night
What promotion does the venue do and how can you benefit from it
Can you bring your own alcohol for the bands, or do you have to buy it from venue

Time to put the tickets on sale?

Wait.

Is the venue safe? Is it a death trap? Go down there first. Use your instincts. They say it's a 200 capacity venue? Really? Do not just shrug your shoulders and think "it'll be all right". You're okay with someone's death on your conscience?

Once you've chosen your venue, how do you want to present yourself?

PROMOTION AND TICKETING

- How much should you charge? Have the band played near you before? How much was it then? Did the show sell well
Are the band more popular now? Consider increasing the price. Are we in a terrible recession? Consider leaving the price as it is. What is the average price for the venue? Look around and see what other similar bands are charging for their tickets, talk to the band and/or agent, see what price their audience will bear
- Now you need to find the band's audience to tell them about the show. If it's possible, knock up some flyers and stand outside that band's next show, and announce yours. Promoting doesn't get any more direct than that: you've found the band's audience, now you can tell them about a product (the band) that you know they like. Mostly though, you'll be guessing where the band's audience are. Welcoming to promoting as gambling
- With flyer-ing you can either do it yourself, or pay someone to do it. There are companies (such as The Entertainist and Don't Panic) who will do this for you. You will either be put into a flyer-ing 'pack' with other flyers, or you can ask for your flyer to be handed out individually. It'll cost you more that way. Don't Panic have a set route of venues, bars, shops that they leave their packs in while The Entertainist choose a certain number of London events each week and stand outside them with their packs as audiences leave and arrive
- If your show is newsworthy in some way, consider writing a press release and hit up the newsdesks of online and print media, websites and blogs and such
- Posters: put some in the venue you're holding the gig in (the artist will be pleased to see it) and around the local area (shops and cafes, in record shops). If you can afford it and - if it's legal in the venue's area - do a street campaign. If you can't afford it and it's legal then do it yourself with water, flour and a paint brush. No-one said this was going to be easy. On the subject of record shops, they might agree to run a competition on their website or to their email database. Whatever you do, make sure the venue has posters up. There's nothing more likely to cause a band to give you a hard time if things don't go well than for them to see no promotion in the venue. Make sure you're allowed to design your own poster. The band may have artwork they insist on using. The agent may also have a tour poster he or she can send you, to save you money
- Press ads. Think very carefully about them. They can be expensive and difficult to target toward an audience, who has to buy the magazine, open it, get to the page your ad is on and actually notice the ad. It relies too much on hope and supposition for my liking. The bigger the ad, the more impact it may have. Can you share it with other shows you're booking? Can you share it with another company? Ads do have the benefit of showing the agent/artist you're 'serious', and can give a boost to your profile, as well as the show. They can keep your shows in the public eye, as flyers, without necessarily being beneficial to a specific show. Part of promoting well is being seen to be promoting well, which also covers you if the show doesn't sell. You can demonstrate that you used best efforts to promote
- If your show is part of a tour you may be asked by an agent - or by a promoter they've nominated - to contribute toward a national ad, which is one that will be placed to advertise the tour in national publications such as NME, Mojo, Uncut, Q etc. It's usually £50, though I've been asked for £100. I say "asked" but I've never been asked by an agent. I've only ever been told to do it and it has caused arguments when and if I have declined, my logic being that I can think of better ways to spend £50 or £100 which is, after all, my money, and since I'm the promoter, I'm taking all the risk. You have no control as a promoter as to where the advert is placed, and you have no idea how much the ad is costing. It has been said that any money left over is then given to the artist (via the agent) but until I see some hard evidence of this, you will forgive me for being sceptical
- Digital marketing has become more and more important since the advent of high-speed broadband and is now an arguably crucial part of the marketing mix. My apologies for saying "marketing mix" there. There are companies such as MusicAlly who specialise in it, and offer online courses where you can learn about the myriad platforms you can utilise to plug your shows/artists/social life/chance of renting your spare room out

- Listings cross the print and digital divide, since some publications (Time Out, Guardian) have both print and digital versions. If you want your gig listed in a newspaper or magazine, look at it and find out how they like them submitted and in which format. Some use a company to collate listings for them (such as PA Listings). Online listings are a little different, and you can make it easy for yourself just by putting a ticket on sale on one of the main ticketing outlets (WeGotTickets, TicketWeb, Ticketmaster, SeeTickets etc.). Many online listings sites take an XML feed from the ticketing sites and post all of their shows without you having to list a finger; the listings companies make a small amount of money from the ticketing companies every time they sell a ticket, in a 'referral' arrangement. And now that there are many more free shows popping up, those won't appear online unless the promoter manually inputs them. WeGotTickets (and perhaps others) do allow regular promoters to add free shows which will then appear on the listings sites, but if the listing site's coding means that all shows have a 'buy tickets' button next to them, then the promoter may not necessarily like that, for fear that it puts the audience off. You may find it more practical (but more time-consuming) to go around the various listings sites and manually submit them
- Companies like w00t and Sonic specialise in marrying advertisers (like you, potentially), with websites such as TheLineofBestFit, DrownedinSound, TheFly, and any one of a number of music sites that you might decide would be a good place for you to push your show. They offer breakdowns of a site's readership demographic and gender split, plus how often they're visited to help you target your advert better. A simple trick to use to decide where to advertise online would be to Google your artist's name and the word "review" and see which sites favour the artist, perhaps considering asking if they want to co-promote the show with you if they're very big fans
- Some sites will charge per number of page views, some will charge a flat fee per month, and ads will vary on price depending on where on the site they appear
- Ticketing agencies will have their own mailing lists. Use them. Ask them to mention your show in their mailouts, maybe run a competition to raise the show's profile. As well as meaning your show will definitely appear on listings sites, putting advance tickets on sale also gives you an idea of how popular the show is going to be, and the ticketing company might also advance you some money from the sales to bankroll the event, useful if you need to pay the artist a pile of cash on the night
- Try and find out where the artist's fans are online and tell them about the show. You'll find them lurking on the artist's own Facebook page and following them on Twitter, for example. You'll also find them on sites like SongKick and LastFM
- But before we go any further, let's look at the golden rule of digital marketing. In fact, any marketing. In fact, any communication whatsoever: don't bore people. Be interesting. Ask questions, nod at the appropriate time, show concern and empathy. Exactly as you would in any other 'offline' relationship. Don't spend the whole time talking about yourself / your shows. We all have friends online who do that. We probably do it ourselves. Don't. It's a turn-off
- Target Facebook events. Don't just invite everyone in your list. I frequently get event invites to shows in countries that I don't live in. The result is that I pretty much ignore all event invites
- Facebook ads are cheap and easy to monitor. Try different designs (you can do multiple ones for the same show) and see what works for you
- I recently ran a Facebook ad which had 8,000+ page impressions though no-one clicked the ad to discover more about it. This either means that 8,000+ people saw it and weren't interested enough to find out more, or that some were interested but knew about it, or found out more about it via another method. It also doesn't mean that 8,000+ actually noticed the ad; just that it appeared on a page they were looking at. But it was free, since Facebook were only charging us for click-throughs (CPC)
- Let's compare that to flyering (using real figures from a previous campaign I ran, using The Entertainist to flyer), and let's assume that we can compare flyering and a Facebook ad, by saying that giving someone a flyer that they may not act upon, and an ad appearing on a page they're reading amount to the same thing: putting the show in their field of vision

8,000 flyers

Printing = £175

Distribution = £12 per hour + £5 booking fee per show

Each show = approx 2 hours of flyering

8,000 flyers would cover approx 16 shows

16 shows x 2 hours = 36 hours at £12 per hour = £432, + 16 x £5 booking fees = £512

= £0.064 per flyer

8,000 Facebook ads

Printing = £0

Design cost = £however much you want to spend, but shouldn't cost you anything

= £0.000 per ad (assuming no-one clicks it)

- Cost per click (CPC) advertising lets you specify how much you want to pay each time someone clicks on your ad. Cost per thousand impressions (CPM) advertising lets you specify how much you want to pay for each 1,000 impressions (views) of your ad

- Facebook's current minimum CPC is \$0.01, and the current minimum CPM is \$0.02, so you can see how you can easily control your spending. Facebook do advise that you might want to set your prices higher, since they might not be high enough to ensure that your ad will be shown. Though I suppose they would say that
- The figures aren't supposed to show that flyering is too expensive. Depending on the size of the show and how well your target your flyering, it could be very effective indeed. And Facebook ads could be either useless, or very effective, depending on how good you get at working with them
- 'Tagging' on Facebook and Twitter is a useful way to achieve further exposure and ensure that those you're working with (the band's label and the band themselves, for example) see that you are promoting the show. If you 'like' them (on Facebook) or 'follow' them on Twitter, then tag them in your post about the show, your post or tweet will appear on their Facebook page or Twitter feed, exposing the post or tweet to their fans or followers
- Applications like Tweetdeck are useful to help you manage multiple Twitter topics, for example if you work with multiple artists or shows and want to see how and how often they are being mentioned
- The people who know their fans better than anyone are the artists themselves so you'll do well to engage them and ensure they're pulling their weight with promotion. The bigger the band, the harder you'll find it to talk to them directly, and the more likely it will be that their manager/label/whoever will not want you to talk to them directly, so engage their team instead
- And give yourself some time to promote the show. I like eight weeks minimum. I like longer if I can get it
- Last point on marketing before we look specifically at Digital Marketing. Charity shows. Don't do charity shows. We hosted over 30 at Luminaire and none of them made any significant money for their chosen charity. Every promoter wanted to raise money for a good cause (there aren't really any bad causes in the charity world) and, after booking three or four terrible bands, expected the audience to show up and support the event because of the charity angle. Never expect anyone to care about your cause. Instead, book a great line-up, give them a good night out, then give the profits to charity. That's the difference between a show for charity (good) and a charity show

DIGITAL MARKETING

- As Mark Muggeridge explained to us; there is no digital marketing. It's all just marketing
- Mark is a big fan of email and newsletters but warns us not abuse it. When someone gives us their email address, we are invited into their inbox, and we should not abuse that with pointless information, spam and to some extent information that they can get elsewhere (on social media for example). Make your newsletter audience feel wanted. They have given us a precious asset. Any exclusives should go here first, otherwise your audience will think "I gave you my email address, and then you go and tell everyone about the show on Facebook first". Newsletters are for notifications and information.
- Experiment with them. Split your database in two, send same newsletter at different times, check the response rate, work out the best time for your audience. Better; write two separate newsletters, perhaps looking differently, with different focusses, see what works the best
- Social media is for relationships and your audience there may not necessarily turn into customers. Twitter has a very low conversion rate in this regard. On average only 2% of your audience will become a customer
- His experience showed that the best time to send email campaigns is early morning (around 0630-0700) midweek. People tend to roll out of bed and check their email immediately (or even while still in bed), but they also tend to take action at weekends when they're relaxed, at liberty to spend money, perhaps make plans to go out with their partners and friends
- Plan your campaigns carefully. You have to have a plan, and campaigns which fit into that plan. Each campaign will have a number of tactics, and the plan and campaign need to have their own set of goals
- Obvious thing to say; but don't buy email databases/marketing lists. They're not your customers. Highly unlikely they'll appreciate being spammed
- Social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter need to be monitored and nurtured. If you're asking a question of someone on there, you should be sure you're around to see and respond to the answer, so decide how much time you'll spend online. A 'mature' Facebook page usually takes 2/3 years to grow, and eventually requires a full-time member of staff to tend to the audience
- What are the different Platforms good for? Your website is good for attracting traffic from search engines, so make sure you have employed some Search Engine Optimisation. Email is best for pushing your marketing message out. Social media is best for customer relationship management
- The golden rule of any marketing is that you must measure the response rates. You could just be throwing your time and effort away otherwise, or worse: you might have a sell-out and not know what piece of marketing bought everyone to the party.

BOOKING AGENTS

This is where the power is. Nothing moves without them. They're powerful, they're not going anywhere, and there's no one way to deal with them.

There are nine major, national, London-based (except one in Brighton; 13 Artists) booking agencies, and they dominate the sector in the UK:

- International Talent Booking (ITB)
- CAA (Creative Artists Agency, headquartered in the US)
- WME (William Morris Endeavour, headquartered in the US)
- The Agency Group
- Coda Agency
- X-Ray Talent
- Freetrade Agency
- Primary Talent
- 13 Artists (based in Brighton)

WME and CAA are talent agencies based with worldwide offices. They look after actors, athletes, writers, filmmakers and musicians. WME have Eminem, Kanye, Gaga, NiN. CAA have Pitt, Clooney, Spielberg, Will Smith, Radiohead, 50 Cent, Justin Bieber. Both have small artists too.

They are hired by artists or their managers to handle the artist's affairs in the live industry. The agent will field enquiries from promoters, contact promoters to find the artist shows - from early opening supports to headline slots as part of a routed tour. An agent will have alliances with other agencies or promoters abroad, to enable them to route shows and tours worldwide. The agent will negotiate the fee with the promoter, issue a contract and collect the fee (usually 50% before the show, 50% on the night), passing this to the artist, minus a commission of between 10% and 15%.

There are a few good independents, such as Nomanis, and their artists are at risk of being poached by the larger agencies, once they start to make money, or look like they will.

For a small band these days they're sometimes seen as being more important than the manager and a hard-working one can be invaluable, in a climate where artists are beginning to see touring as their primary source of income.

They tend to be quite reclusive, their websites often not giving contact details of the agents themselves or their rosters. They can be quite slow-moving, preferring to wait until a promoter or venue is established before beginning to work with them.

FESTIVALS

WITH SOFIA HAGBERG (CO-FOUNDER END OF THE ROAD FESTIVAL)

A recent survey showed that 96.3% of the world's population felt there was too much emphasis on fancy dress at festivals and that those who wear it should be subjected to some form of cruel and unusual punishment

There's been a lot of press about festivals struggling in the past couple of years. There's no doubt that there are far more than there have ever been, and for a while at least they seemed to benefit from the recession forcing people to stay at home instead of going abroad on holiday, but ticket prices can be as much £200, then transport and food and drink and you could get a week on the south coast of Spain, including flights for less. Plus, people generally don't wear fancy dress on the south coast of Spain

We'll come back to that, but I want to look at one of the big players and see what happened to them. Festival Republic - run by Melvin Benn - promote and produce the following festivals: Reading and Leeds, The Big Chill, Latitude, Hove in Norway, Electric Picnic in Ireland and Glastonbury, until last year when Melvin pulled the company out. Note that Festival Republic's parent company is jointly owned by MCD (Ireland) and our old friend Live Nation.

The Big Chill announced its (possibly temporary) closure in January of 2012, issuing the following statement:

"It is with a considerable amount of regret that I have decided not to go ahead with The Big Chill in 2012. I looked long and hard late last year at moving the date so it didn't clash with the Olympics but the mix of the festival fans desire to keep the date and an inability to find an alternative date that works I plumped for maintaining the existing weekend. Sadly, the artist availability and confirmations we were achieving led me to conclude that I couldn't risk going ahead with the event as an outdoor event this year. Efforts are being made to look to bring a smaller event indoors this year with the anticipation of Big Chill being back outdoors in 2013"

According to the NME and the BBC, Melvin blamed The Olympics:

"The Big Chill Festival 2012 cancelled because of The Olympics Games" - NME
"Olympics cancel the Big Chill Festival says boss" - BBC

But as the quote shows, the promoter - while making an early attempt to move the date to avoid The Olympics - seems to be saying that a lack of "artist availability and confirmations" were to blame. Certainly it's not the case that artists weren't touring because of The Olympics, and it's debatable to what extent the two events share an audience. It's more likely that the promoter just wasn't able to book the artists he wanted, either because of routing issues (they were playing elsewhere in Europe that weekend) or financial issues (the artists wanted more money than he was prepared to pay) or personal issues (perhaps the drummer's girlfriend was giving birth that weekend). The statement could be read as an indication of how difficult it is for festivals to book the artists they want due to some of the following reasons:

Artist availability because of competition from other festivals in the UK and abroad
The rising cost of artists, in a climate where recording sales are falling
The general lack of headliners who can draw a substantial proportion of the audience to a festival

The travelling Sonisphere Festival was also cancelled in 2012 (the other planned dates in other European countries went ahead). It's run by Kilimanjaro Live (set up by Stuart Galbraith, ex-head of Live Nation in the UK). This is what they had to say:

"Putting the festival together in what is proving to be a very challenging year was more difficult than we anticipated, and we have spent the last few months fighting hard to keep Sonisphere in the calendar. Unfortunately circumstances have dictated that we would be unable to run the festival to a standard that both the artists and Sonisphere's audience would expect."

Even Jamie Oliver's Big Feastival suffered, organised by him and Alex James of Blur. Cancelled.

Another big one, Morrison's MFest, was cancelled, citing weather conditions. The summer was terrible in the UK. Morrisons is a large supermarket chain. What the hell are supermarket chains doing setting up festivals anyway?

The weather caused havoc at The Isle of Wight Festival, which went ahead but turned into a mud-bath

In the autumn of 2012, Vince Power, a famous promoter (he ran the Mean Fiddler venue in Harlsden), who then ran Music Festivals PLC (which owned Benicassim in Spain and The Hop Farm in the UK), put the company into administration. Here's Vince blaming his misfortune on the weather, along with the UK media and the economy:

"The highly competitive festival market has been impacted by weak economies in the UK and Spain, unavailability of strong revenue-generating acts and adverse UK weather resulting in negative media commentary on recent festivals".

A few weeks later he then bought Benicassim back from his own company and continued to run it. It will go ahead in 2013

After Sonisphere was cancelled, The Guardian newspaper ran an article, inviting readers to say why they thought festivals were struggling. Here are some of the reasons:

1. The Olympic Games and associated events (free or subsidised) taking talent and customers away from the market
2. Lack of demand
3. Crowded marketplace
4. Apathy - "people have seen it all before"
5. Recession
6. High costs of tickets
7. Line-up didn't appeal
8. British weather is a risk
9. Too focused on being and looking hip/cool and booking 'artists of the year', no focus on 'good' music
10. Increased competition from the continent

So, every possible reason everyone could think of, then.

The BBC introduced the Hackney Weekender in East London in the summer of 2012. Jay-Z and Kanye West headlined, along with Rihanna, Dizzee Rascal, Florence + the Machine, Tinie Tempah, Jessie J, Plan B, Professor Green. It was free entry. And BBC2 hosted a huge concert in Hyde Park, aimed at an older audience. Entrance was £35

Vince Power wasn't happy that the BBC had dropped a massive, free, license-fee-funded event into London in the middle of the toughest festival season in recent years, and he said so. Here's Vince saying so:

"If the BBC is giving something out for free, then we can't compete. It's really pissed me off. A lot of people aren't willing to put their head above the parapet, to say that this isn't fair. It isn't right."

And what about the perceived lack of headliners? It looks like it's the same acts coming around each year now, certainly at the top of the bills of the major festivals, supplemented by 'heritage' acts such as The Cure, Stone Roses, New Order, and others who've reformed specifically to take advantage of the festival market. Festivals have recently spoken out about the lack of choice in headliners, and we discussed who might come through to replace these heritage acts. The Arcade Fire, Mumford and Sons and Adele were suggested, though the industry will need more than three to replace the old bands once - as Will Page from PRS put it - their knees give out. Pollstar in America published some figures which showed the average age of lead singers in the top grossing US tours of the last decade:

Over 60 years old:	40%
Over 50 years old:	19%
Over 40 years old:	35%
Over 30 years old:	6%

That's nuts.

But do festivals really need these established bands to sell their tickets? Some do and some don't, and we debated this, with some sure that much of the audience does look at the top of the ticket, while others pointed out that when a headliner is playing, many in the audience are at other stages watching other bands. Festivals like Øya (Norway), Roskilde (Denmark), Glastonbury and Scotland's T-in The Park are all fortunate enough to be able to sell out (or close to it) before opening day, and it's debatable to what extent their headliners are the reason for that. T-in The Park sells out a long time before even the first artist is announced. People like the festival and its environment. It's almost like a summer holiday for some. And some tend not to focus on headliners at all, selling the event as a whole, like Dour (Belgium), and while you'll recognise some of the names, most you won't, and you won't see artists on the scale of Coldplay or Foo Fighters there

So far, audiences continue to buy tickets for the major festivals, whose bills are top-heavy, and we can only guess at what will happen once this audience has had enough. Will the younger festival-goers be happy to watch them too, to see where their own favourite bands got their influences?

Some festivals are trying other methods to better survive. Coachella near Los Angeles has the same bill in the same location over two consecutive weekends, but with the build-costs for one event. Reading and Leeds do it, but they have two sites. But what about the shared experience?

In 1995, whilst playing the Quart Festival in Norway's very conservative, Christian town of Kristiansand, the singer from Norwegian punk band flying crap walked on stage with a sawn-off shotgun and fired it, then strolled around stage for the rest of the song, waving it around. In 2004, at the same festival, the band Cumshots invited two members of the erotic, non-profit ecological organization Fuck For Forest on stage with them. Have a guess at what happened. The point is that if the Quart Festival line-up had have been replicated on the following weekend, neither artist would have been allowed to pull the same stunt

And what of Sofia's wonderful End of The Road Festival? A success story, built from scratch in 2005, with her business partner Simon. It wasn't easy in the beginning and Simon had to sell his house, borrow money from friends and family to fund it. I went down to help out as an artist liaison in the first year. All staff were volunteers and because they started the festival on a Friday a lot of the volunteers had jobs. It was a wee bit hectic in the first day. But it hasn't been easy, even for our heroes

They launched a new festival in 2012 called No Direction home, with a similar vibe, but even with their reputation, multiple awards and very loyal audience, they found it tough:

"No Direction Home Festival 2012 was a great success and lots of fun. It also lost a good deal of money. Not more than we could cope with, but more than expected. We had planned for NDH to get somewhere near to breaking even in the second year, and that is now perhaps a tougher target than it was. We have decided to take a year out In 2013."

It's tough for everyone. It's tough for the audience. Festivals are expensive. Latitude, Bestival and Download have all increased by between 5-10 pounds in 2013, propelling their prices toward - or above - the £200 mark. But it's not just your tickets. You need transport, drink, food, camping gear, electronics for keeping your phone charged, waterproof clothing, toiletries, and your idiotic fancy dress costume

So with all this said, what kind of health is the UK festival market? The economic climate isn't putting some people off who think they've found a gap in the market. The Rewind Festival features a bunch of hoary old 1980s acts like Kim Wilde, Starship and A Flock of Seagulls, and turned a serious profit in 2012.

As far as analysis goes, I'd recommend you turn to the website of the (now defunct) Stool Pigeon newspaper. I consider their article to be the most thoroughly researched piece on festivals in the mainstream media, They asked what the future for festivals was. I was interviewed for it, and I'll leave you with my overriding thought on the whole thing:

"Were in the worst financial climate in history, according to the Governor of the Bank of England, so why anyone thinks that a festival going down the shitter is a surprise is beyond me."

THE QUART FESTIVAL

Beginning in 1991 in the conservative, Christian, coastal city of Kristiansand, Norway, Quart grew to become the largest festival in the country and, at the time of its bankruptcy in 2008, was the oldest. In 2007, the festival struggled for survival, due to increased competition from other festivals, and the local arts body Cultiva bailed it out by settling its debts, allowing it to return in 2008. By late summer 2007, booking for 2008's edition had begun. In the Autumn of that year I was asked if I'd be interested - in theory - in moving to Kristiansand and becoming the head booker. At the time, our venue The Luminaire had won both London and UK venue of the year awards, and was ticking along nicely. Keen for a new challenge, I accepted, despite knowing that it would perhaps be an impossible task. In January 2008 I moved into a flat in the City

It became clear very quickly that my position would be relatively high profile, and was invited on local radio (with Jørgen Skauge, who booked the festival in 2007, then resigned and came to work for me, while giving me a room in his home for a month until I found a flat; I owe that guy my life) to announce our first bookings

We had a launch party in an Oslo venue where I talked on stage to the gathered domestic music industry about our three year plan; the idea being to return Quart to a weekend of great music from the bottom of the bill to the top, and take the focus away from the headliners. In recent years it had become known as a festival for the rich; the region is known as the Norwegian Riviera, due to the proliferation of yachts during the summer months, and the rich people from the Oslo region who came in on them, who spent the day drinking champagne and doing coke, finally arriving on site for the headline bands. We showcased the festival's diversity at the launch with performances by Maria Due (a summery, breezy, folk/pop artist from Norway) and Welsh agit-alt-rockers Future of The Left

I appeared on TV multiple times, the Norwegian media curious as to why I had come from an award-winning venue to try to save what was, to them, the Titanic of festivals (in both senses). While getting on a plane to Oslo, I saw that the entire front page of the local paper's culture section was my face. Weird. I was asked to come on Store Studio, Norway's Saturday night prime-time culture/chat show. There was a feature on Tim Burton's new film, a feature on Chet Baker, then me. I happened to mention that I liked a particular Norwegian chocolate bar. The next day the company sent two kilos to my office. That was also weird

I grew to understand that the interest in festivals was generally higher in Norway than the UK, and I put this down to the amount of tax money that went toward supporting these festivals; something which pretty much doesn't exist in the UK. There was a very clear line that could be drawn from tax income to my wages and I felt a social responsibility to deliver for Quart in a way that I may not have felt if booking a festival in Britain. Once a week I would go onto our public internet forum and answer questions from the audience. Often they would post a long list of bands and ask me if I'd made an offer for them or ask if I would try and book them

On a Wednesday in April, Glastonbury Festival announced Kings of Leon as their first headliner. On the Friday we did the same. The headline in our local paper the next day was 'Unknown Band to Headline Quart Festival', which illustrated both how different the music market was in Norway, and the lack of support we received from the local paper

We battled on, booking the best bill we could, but ultimately failed, when in early June 2008 the festival board took the responsible decision to cancel it one month before its opening day, and declare it bankrupt due to low ticket sales

So what happened? A combination of events, and its debatable which had the largest effect

- I was hired too late. Booking for a July festival would usually begin in the late summer of the previous year. I was hired in January of the same year
- The market was saturated. A new, rival festival called Hove opened in 2007 just 40 miles along the coast
- The staff who left to set up Hove (including the head booker) weren't so concerned with leaving Quart in a good state of operation, and when I started going around the UK booking agents to introduce myself, many expressed surprise at seeing me, assuming that the festival wouldn't happen because of what "they'd been told" by the previous booker, who had done a pretty good job at sewing large seeds of uncertainty. Because of this many agents were reluctant to give us bands
- Before my arrival the festival had done a deal with Live Nation in Norway to get the headliners for us (outside of the UK, Live Nation act as booking agents as well as promoters). But because LN were booking their own festival in Oslo called Norwegian Wood, and because they had their eye on eventually buying Hove Festival (our rivals a few miles away), they weren't very helpful. I had the humiliating experience of going to their office once a week, only to find, as usual, they had nothing for us. It was a ridiculous situation to be in
- The pressure from the audience and local community to book huge - often unattainable - headliners
- Local press wasn't very supportive
- The perception of the festival as being one for Oslo's rich
- From my perspective, the social constructs didn't help either, the focus on family (staff would often leave to pick up their kids at 1500), when what it needed was 14 hours a day of hard work. But I accept it wouldn't have done much good, and I also accept that family is of course more important than a music festival
- The line-up. Despite people still telling me when they're drunk that it was the best in the festival's history, perhaps if we'd booked different bands it would have been successful. I doubt it, but perhaps

TICKETING

WITH DAVE NEWTON, FOUNDER OF WEGOTTICKETS

- We were pleased to welcome Dave Newton, founder of wegottickets.com, a ticketing website that's more ethical than most, with a low booking fee, only selling online tickets, regularly donating to charity. and offering a box office service to small events and festivals, compared to other ticketing companies. WGT have been around for getting on for fifteen years, and have seen many changes, and many players come and go
- We made the point about how many ticketing companies there now are, from online-only, primary companies like WGT, to those who also sell paper tickets, such as TicketWeb (owned by Ticketmaster and therefore Live Nation) and SeeTickets (owned by the media giant Vivendi), to newer platforms which allow promoters to earn a little from the booking fee (but handling their own customer service) such as TicketABC, companies such as MusicGlue which facilitate the selling of tickets by artists direct to their audiences, and then on to the secondary ticketing players (touts or scalpers, depending on which side of the Atlantic you reside) such as Viagogo, Seatwave, Stubhub (owned by Ebay) and GetMeln (owned by Ticketmaster and so Live Nation)
- I tend to use WeGotTickets (loyal customer-base, small, independent), TicketABC, who offer what's called a white-label solution to ticketing, where they build a site that looks a lot like the promoter's site, given the customer the impression that they're buying direct from the promoter. They share the booking fee with the venue or promoter, take card payments, and do what a ticketing company does, except they don't handle the customer service. That's the price you pay for making a little money from the booking fee which isn't, by the way, any higher than any other ticketing site. You set it yourself. And I TicketWeb who have huge marketing reach
- Some companies, though, are removing themselves - so far as they can - from the relationship. Music Glue is run by a friend of mine. They also build white label shops for promoters, venues and and bands, and it's the band angle that has brought them the most success. They've worked with Mumford & Sons since the band first started playing show. They built a shop for the band (where they could sell music, merchandise and tickets) and from the start of their career Mumford sold their own tickets. Not exclusively; they had help from some promoters around the UK but when they got to 2,000 cap rooms they sold 100% of the tickets themselves, including at their recent sold-out arena tour, which included two nights at the O2 (20,000 cap)
- So you can see where technology really can put the control into artists' hands. MusicGlue themselves caution that there's no point doing this until you have a fanbase, but by controlling the sales yourself you can more easily build a direct relationship with your audience, and gradually work out - by talking to them - when you should tour in X or Y city
- A discussion was had about booking fees, with a ticket for the Champions League Final last year (at £150) incurring a £26 booking fee. UEFA said that this was because the ticket had to be couriered to fans via UPS or FedEx. The game sold out of course, which highlights the freedom ticket sellers have to sell for whatever they think the market will bear, since they have a captive audience. No-one likes booking fees and apart from being the way that ticketing companies make money and therefore stay in business, one of the reasons they're there is to pay promoters to stay with them. A ticketing company might give a promoter a percentage of of the booking fee, or they might just give them a load of cash every now and again in what's called a kickback: part of booking fee or lump sum.
- But what's the hottest ticketing topic right now? Also called touting or scalping, the 'secondary ticketing' market has changed a lot since the days of the dodgy guy outside venues, hustling to buy or sell tickets before doors open
- Viagogo were one of the first, in 2006 and are now Europe's largest online ticket marketplace operating local language websites in 26 countries with headquarters in London. Seatwave are UK-based. GetMeln are owned by Ticketmaster. So a ticket company now has its own secondary ticketing company and Live Nation own Ticketmaster. StubHub is the US's most prominent secondary ticketing company, was set up by the guy who runs Viagogo and is now owned by Ebay. Just recently, Ebay have been funneling all tickets for sale on the site to the StubHub platform
- The secondary outlets position themselves as fan-to-fan platforms, allowing the audience to resell tickets to their peers, in a 'safe and secure' environment, and while this does undoubtedly happen, most of the money made by the secondary market is through the practice of promoters of shows and festivals giving the secondary outlet an allocation of tickets which are never made available at the same price as 'ordinary' tickets to the general public. The promoter can make up to 90% of the resell price, while the secondary platform makes 10%, plus the booking fee
- Back in 2010, there was a BBC Watchdog investigation into this part of the industry, and specifically Ticketmaster's alleged behaviour via their GetMeln site, where it was found that as soon as tickets were put on sale on Ticketmaster's own 'primary' site, they appeared as sold out, then reappeared immediately on GetMeln, which Ticketmaster own and profit from. The implication was that Ticketmaster themselves were putting the tickets there to earn more money. Tickets were frequently on sale for upwards of ten times their face value, and as much as sixteen times
- In early 2012, Channel 4 aired its Dispatches programme which, with the help of two undercover reporters, revealed the scale on which promoters (and we have to assume artists and managers unless they tell us otherwise) are complicit in selling their own tickets on secondary platforms, often for enormous prices in relation to the face-value price, suggesting that Ticketmaster are indeed doing what BBC Watchdog accused them of

- In 2011, part of Kate Perry's contract to promoters leaked online and it was clear that she/her team were selling tickets on secondary platforms. Some would argue that this is better than touts keeping the money, since the money then recirculates in the industry. Some would argue she is ripping off her own fans
- Dave told us that at a recent Google seminar about SEO (search engine optimisation, or how to get your website up to the top of the search results), out of 45 companies in attendance, 40 were secondary companies. The number of sites is staggering. Try it. Pick a massive band and type in 'band tickets'. See how many appear.
- One of the main arguments against secondary is that the artist doesn't see any of the money. But now we know the promoters are in on it, we know that the people who're paying the artists are making more money, but we don't know how much is going back to the artists, and if any is, how the artists feel about screwing their fans
- The industry has been lobbying government for a while, to have legislation brought in which would either outlaw the resale of tickets (as happens with Olympics and Premiership football) or capped at no more than 10% of face value. They also warned that, if legislation was not brought in, they would have no choice but to get involved in the secondary market themselves, and Dispatches has revealed to the general public that they have been true to their word
- Geoff Ellis who runs the large T-In The Park festival was quoted on the secondary market, and blamed the government's inaction on the touting problem for the number of official tickets now being sold by promoters at a mark up via the secondary sites:

"We said (to government at the time; if you don't legislate then the music industry will go into the secondary market. Not because it wants to, but because it has got no choice. That's not to say it'll be embraced, but people will do it, because if you've got an artist that you're working with and their fans are buying tickets off a secondary market, if those don't come from the primary source (the promoter) then the artist doesn't get any of that money, and it all goes to a ticket tout. none of the money goes back into the industry".

I responded on a blog post on my website:

""Geoff Ellis - boss of Scotland's T-in The Park Festival - spoke out admirably against touting in 2008, and then, in the wake of the Dispatches programme, seemed to revert to the argumentative level of a six year old in a playground, blaming the government for not legislating against reselling: "We said at the time, if you don't legislate then the music industry will go into the secondary market."
That's fine, Geoff. Go into the secondary market if you feel you need to, but your argument seems to be 'if the government doesn't ban it, we promoters reserve the right to screw our artists' fans with their pants on, just like others are doing, instead of thinking how we can do it ethically.'
Perhaps the Concert Promoters' Association could sit down in a room together, decide if they're okay with screwing their artists' audiences with their pants on, and if they are, have the balls to come out - individually - and actually say so. Then any managers and artists who're complicit might do the same. I'll not hold my breath"

- A discussion ensued about how tickets could be resold 'ethically', for face value, and the website Scarlet Mist showed that this could be done. They provide a platform for the audience to buy and sell tickets, making no money from the sale themselves
- It does seem that, while the government refuses to engage in the issue, and suggests the industry self-regulate, the practice of reselling via secondary outlets isn't going to go away

ARTISTS AND TOURING

MONEY FROM MUSIC: SURVEY EVIDENCE ON MUSICIANS' REVENUE AND LESSONS ABOUT COPYRIGHT INCENTIVES

Snappy title, right? As a springboard for this section, I turned to Professor Peter DiCola of the Northwestern University School of Law in Chicago who did some research into how much musicians earned from various sources, speaking to 5,000 musicians across the U.S. He found that live performance income accounted for 28% of the pie, with recorded sales at 6%.

I Googled the phrase "live music is booming", out of curiosity. I found 15,700 mentions of it. It's often taken as read, and it's rarely said with the speaker taking into account what they mean by "live music". I tend to concern myself with the grassroots. Let's look at how artists get paid in the UK:

1. They Don't
 2. They 'Pay to Play
 3. They Don't + Beer
 4. £1 for every person they bring, over 20 people (or 10, or 15, or
 5. £50 + Beer
 6. Guarantee vs X%NBOR + Beer
 7. All the money. 100% of the gross income
1. Many artists play for free and expect to play for free. Promoters know this so don't offer anything. Bands expect it and don't ask for anything, grateful for the chance to play. And round and round it goes
 2. Promoters either just take cash from an artist in exchange for the privilege of playing. Or, promoters sell the artist a bunch of tickets for the show, then the artist sells those tickets on to their audience, hoping to make their money back. Both practices are bad deals for the artist
 3. As above, but the promoter might give them a few cans of Red Stripe
 4. Promoter expects artist to 'guarantee' a certain number of people. Let's say it's 20. If artist brings 20 people they will make nothing. If artist brings 21 they will make £1 for the 21st person, and £1 per person over that. Some promoters 'blacklist' artists if they do not meet the guaranteed quota
 5. The mythical £50 fee. It's been £50 for decades. £50 used to be worth something. I've been involved with many shows where the headline act takes £1,000 - £2,000 and the support act gets £50. Sure, the headliner brings the audience, but how about feeling morally obliged to help your fellow musician?
 6. Guarantees and percentages. Once a band gets a booking agent he or she will cut a deal with the promoter involving a guarantee and a percentage of the net box office receipts (NBOR) or more simply; a percentage of what's left of the income after the promoter has paid his or her costs. The artist will take the guarantee or the percentage; whichever is the greater. The more costs there are, the longer it will take for the artist to 'break percentage', which just means to get to the point where the percentage of the net box office income is greater than the guarantee. The guarantee is just that: a guaranteed fee no matter what happens. No tickets sold? Doesn't matter; the artist gets the guarantee. In the UK, the booking agents tend to set the percentage at 80% of NBOR. I've seen 85% and even 90%. A promoter will prefer to offer a lower guarantee because the risk is all theirs.
 7. I know of one band whose agent wanted 100% of the gross income. All of the money, before the promoter had paid any of his costs. That's not a deal. That's greed

The Musicians' Union has been campaigning for fair pay for musicians for a long time. This was highlighted in the run-up to the Olympics, when it was revealed that many musicians were being asked to play for free

The 'Toilet Tour' is what we lovingly call the grassroots venue circuit in the UK. Historically, and in legend, this is what bands must do in this country to 'pay their dues'. It's a rite of passage, a badge of honour, and for some people, the worse the conditions, more authentic the experience. As Nick Talbot from the band Gravenhurst says: 'The enemy hides in plain sight. It calls itself Rock & Roll'

Let us look at the So, a band wants to go on tour. Let us assume that the band has booked it themselves, and they are supporting local headliners. They do not yet have a booking agent. We are going to assume that the band will play in small venues with poor facilities because that will largely - but not exclusively - hold true at the grassroots level. The band will play a run of ten dates with no days off

Good routing is important (driving around without doubling back on yourself unnecessarily, but not always easy to attain. If the venue you want to play in Manchester has something else going on, and you need to go to Glasgow first then that's a lot of extra driving which is more fuel.

The band must procure a vehicle to get them around. They will take a car, their own, or one borrowed from a friend, or from mum and Dad, or they might hire a van. They'll get somewhere between 20 and 30 mpg, depending on the vehicle, conditions, and how they drive. Petrol costs, on average, £1.41 per gallon. Their gas bill will be £182 on this ten day tour. They will have to factor in £5 per day for parking, on the five days they can't park at the venue due to restrictions.

Accommodation? Free. They will sleep with the promoter or promoter's friend, or with the headline band, or with a girl or boy they pull at the bar afterwards

The rock and roll band will survive on junk food from motorway service stations. £5 breakfast, £3.70 lunch, £4 dinner. I realise that the band would have to eat food anyway, if they were not on the road, but assuming they become moderately successful, they will eventually pay themselves and their crew PDs (Per Diems, meaning per day, or pocket-money to you and me). Usually £15 or 20€ or 25\$. This will usually get spent on food, so bands may as well get used to thinking of sustenance as a touring expense.

They will perhaps be served a delicious meal of Red Stripe and crisps at the venue, if they are lucky.

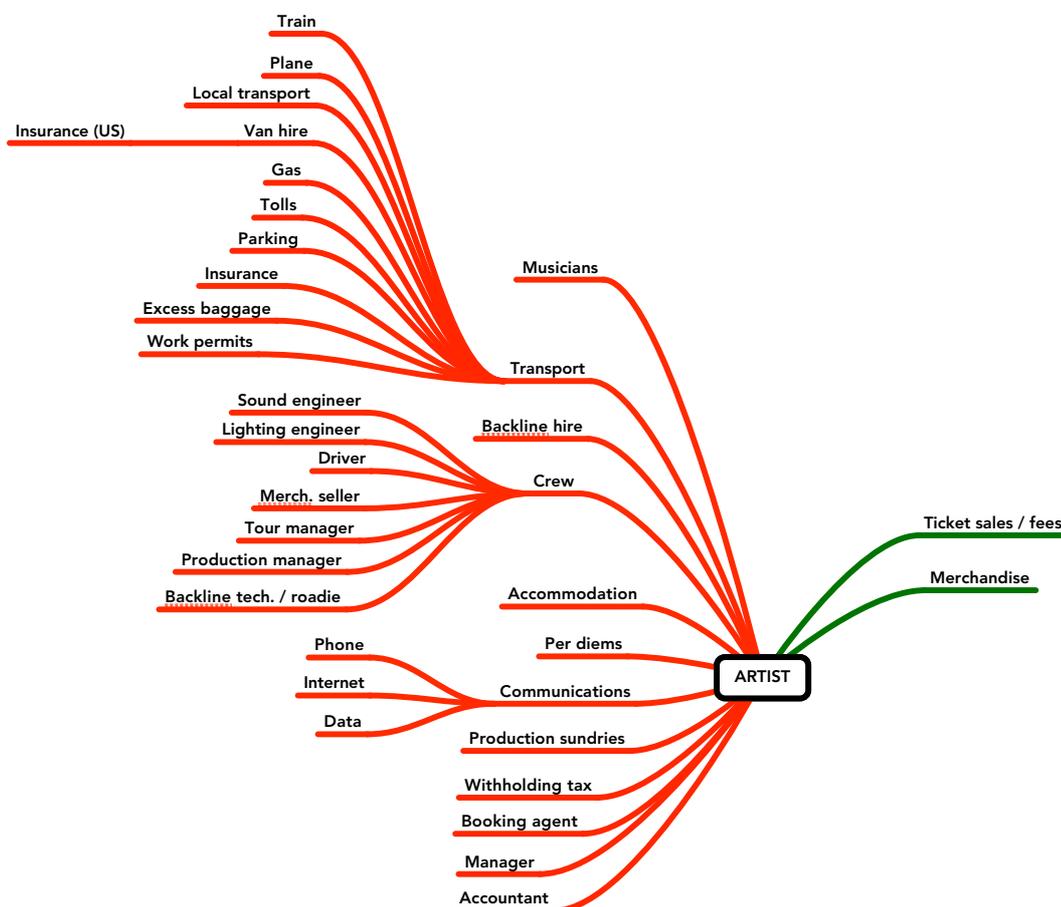
Costs so far: Fuel £182
 Parking £25
 Food £508 (four people for ten days)
 Sub Total £715
 10% contingency £71.50 (something will break. You'll need to pay for it)
Total £786.50

Income: Fees £500 (£50 x 10)
 Merchandise £100 (merch sales aren't so good on the rock and roll circuit)
Total £600

Balance **-£186.50**

And what if they need to hire a van? They can get a shitty one for £70 a day, a good one for £100. So, if we add £700 to our costs, we have a new negative balance of £956.50, or in other words, they need £95.65 per show extra to make the tour break even. Who will fund it? The Promoter? Merchandise sales? A manager or booking agent, if they get one? Or the band themselves? Tour support from a label? More on that in a few minutes.

So when do artists start making money? There's really no answer to this because every artist's career is different, but what we can do is look at some of the new costs that appear, and take an educated guess at fees at certain levels



The diagram shows pretty much all the costs a band will ever encounter, other than carnets for shipping anything by air or sea, independently from the band. Now, some useful points:

- Musicians: if they're not part of the band (session musicians) they will want paid
- In the UK if you hire a van the price will include insurance. It does not in the US
- Europe is full of road tolls
- Your insurance must cover you for work. Your holiday insurance probably won't do
- Excess baggage charges can be ludicrous. British Airways are reasonable: £34 per item per flight. American Airlines charge \$100, Air New Zealand £200. So that's £400 to get your guitar (in a flight case) to America and back.
- Work permits. Very, very expensive for the US. Very time-consuming
- Backline hire: if you're flying to a show, you'll not be taking your guitar amp or drum kit with you. You'll need to hire
- Crew costs also include travel days when they're not actually working, because they can't do other work for another band if they're in a van driving across the desert in Nevada. Costs vary. £150 for a tour manager, £100 for a lighting engineer, £100 driver, £100 for merch seller. £150 for sound engineer. I've seen far lower and far higher prices for all these positions and many people can do some if not all of the tasks, saving you money
- Travelodge hotels are fine, mostly. Premier Inns are better
- Beware internet and phone roaming charges. Vodafone Euro Traveller is by a mile the best deal of the main UK suppliers
- 3 Mobile provide the best mobile internet coverage via a USB stick or dongle. Dongle. Who the hell came up with that?
- Once you're outside Europe, get a second phone and a SIM card for calls and texts. You'll save a fortune
- You'll constantly be buying and replacing electrical tape, guitar strings, drum sticks, marker pens
- Foreign Entertainer Taxes. The US takes 30% on your first dollar earned but exceptions are possible. Some EU countries have deals where it can be offset against some costs. Local promoters and agents can advise you
- Your manager will probably take 20% of your gross income, booking agent probably between 10% and 15%, and your accountant will want a fee for keeping your financial affairs in order

The income side is a bit shorter

- Fees
- Merchandise
- Sponsorship from equipment manufacturers who can save you hiring backline for example
- Brands who you may have a partnership with. They can offer you funding in exchange for using your music in their marketing for example
- Funding. Slowly but surely some funds are emerging for UK artists

I forgot a cost: Tour buy-on. This is when a support band pays for the privilege of joining a tour, which helps offset some of the headliner's costs. Can be anything from £50 per show to a few hundred pounds. Tends to be fairly big shows, and the support knows that playing to the headline audience could be a good thing

Tour support: where (traditionally) a record label funds or part-funds a tour, recouping the money from recorded sales. Prevalent in the old days when artists primary income was recorded sales. It still exists though. All of the main UK independent labels pay it, but not to all artists, and each deal is different. Some continue to take a cut of various income streams after tour support has been repaid, some stop once it's been repaid. A friend of mine has a small label with a UK band signed to him. His band were offered 24 European shows in 2,000 capacity rooms and \$1,000 per show. They also had eight of their own headline shows. The whole endeavour cost the label £16,000. I heard of a US indie label which caps the tour support at \$5,000 per month. The label gets 10% of the performance fee if it's over \$2,500 (after costs) plus a percentage of the merchandise and publishing income. So there are any one of a hundred ways to structure tour support these days.

There are new ways emerging of planning and funding touring. Music Glue build online shops for artists (and venues and promoter), let the artist run the shop and keep the customer data. The artist then builds a personal relationship with their audience, allowing the artist to get to them them, and perhaps slowly start to take a risk on booking their own show, based on what the audience is telling them ("Come to Norwich!"). The band then books the venue themselves, sells tickets. making them the booker, promoter and primary ticket outlet. Riskier? Sure, but potentially more reward, more control, better relationship with your fans therefore more income through loyalty and making your audience feel loved. Mumford & Sons - more or less - followed this route and just sold out a UK arena tour

Songkick are trialing a new platform called Detour. Andrew Bird is the 'guinea pig' for it. Here's how it works: artist wants to tour. Doesn't know if anyone will come out for the show. Through the Detour platform he sets a touring period, chooses a list of cities then asks who wants to see him play. The audience then votes for its own city and pledges money for tickets. Those cities with the most pledges wins and the artist books a show there. It pits city against city, getting a bit of civil pride and blood going. No-one is charged until a show is confirmed. It takes the risk off the artist's shoulders and gives the artist a guaranteed of income.

COMPLIANCE, LEGISLATION, HEALTH & SAFETY, LOCAL AUTHORITIES

WITH ROSS ALLMARK (OLD BLUE LAST/VICE/BIRTHDAYS)

The good Ross Allmark set the scene for us by explaining what the Licensing Act is (or was) in England & Wales (Scotland and Northern Ireland have their own legislation). He has vast experience in dealing with these matters, through running small venues and huge warehouse parties.

The Licensing Act of 2003 is an Act of Parliament which regulates licensed premises; those who sell or supply alcohol, or host what is called 'regulated entertainment', or in other words entertainment which needs a license. In our case: live music venues. If you're a promoter, manager, artist or tour manager there are great benefits to being conversant with the UK's licensing laws, and health and safety compliance. If you're a venue owner you'd be out of your mind not to study this and to become fully compliant with the Act (unless you're hosting live music in a room of less than 200 capacity, in which case you are no longer bound by the terms of the Act, since the amendment that was brought about in October 2012. More of that in a minute).

The Act states that licensed premises must uphold four key objectives:

1. Safety of the public
2. Noise nuisance
3. Prevention of crime and disorder
4. Protection of children

And the Act regulates the following

1. The sale of alcohol
2. The supply of alcohol in a club (this can mean giving it away for free)
3. The provision of regulated entertainment
4. The provision of late night refreshment

Once you have your license, should you be seen to be operating your business outside of this framework then your license can be called in for review. Assuming you follow the conditions of your license, you're more likely to win favour with your local licensing authority, which means you'll be more likely to secure beneficial variations to your premises license (such as later opening hours), which could mean increased income for your business. So, behave yourself.

LICENCING COMMITTEES

In each local authority (council area; Hackney, Westminster, Camden for example) those who decide whether or not your business gets a license are the Licensing Committee.

The Committee is regarded as quasi-judicial, which means it has powers which resemble those of a court of law, or judge. The Committee should make its decisions in accordance with the principles of natural justice and with regard to the Human Rights Act 1998. It has been suggested that councillors should not be involved in decisions on premises in their local area, so avoiding any bias in a decision. But this is government we're talking about here, so who knows how likely that is.

STAKEHOLDERS

You should consider the stakeholders in your business, and how you might deal with them if you need to engage with them. This is anyone that has a direct connection or vested interest in an event. These could include police, local residents, waste collection services, local authorities... even the local hospital, and can turn into your greatest ally or enemy depending on how they are treated before an issue arises, or as one arises. Engage them from the beginning, be visible, be available, be reasonable.

RISK ASSESSMENT

Before granting you premises a license, the local authority will require that you carry out a risk assessment. It's a legal requirement and can be requested by the authority at any time. This should encompass the Health and Safety of the contractors, the employees and everyone at your events. You'll want to think about whether or not your activities will harm others, property or equipment, and explain what you will do to mitigate this. The local council will not give you any guidelines as to what your risk assessment should or shouldn't include. For example, if you were to state that there was a risk of stabbings in your venue, and you state you will mitigate this risk by having metal detectors, it's likely that having metal detectors will become a condition of your license, and metal detectors aren't cheap. If you think there is a risk of stabbings, but don't mention this in your risk assessment, and installing metal detectors as a condition of your license is not added to your license, then someone is stabbed, you'll be on thin ice. You'll be asked what you did to prevent it and you're going to want to show that you took reasonable steps

It's worth spending £500 on having someone carry out a risk assessment for you, than doing a bad job yourself

DESIGNATED PREMISES SUPERVISOR (DPS)

You will appoint a DPS (Designated Premises Supervisor): the person in overall control of the venue and responsible for the sale of alcohol. Promoters and Tour Managers should know who the DPS is in a venue.

In any venue the promoter should be able to ask for a contact list (head of security, DPS, bar manager etc), a contractors list, should have spotted the means of escape through fire exits, and be able to see a copy of the venue's risk assessment on request. See that part about spotting the fire exits. Don't forget it. Make it the first thing you do when you walk into any room that's unfamiliar to you, make sure you tell the others in your party (the band for example) where it is.

FIRE SAFETY AND CAPACITY

Setting a venue or event capacity is now the responsibility of the license holder. It can be tricky to calculate and will most likely be based on the number and size of the fire exits. Seek professional advice. Do not play fast and loose with your capacity. You are responsible for peoples' lives

These are the essential considerations for licensed premises when carrying out a fire risk assessment"

1. Emergency lighting
2. Fire alarm system
3. Fire fighting equipment
4. Signage

DOOR STAFF AND THE SECURITY INDUSTRY AUTHORITY

An SIA license (Security Industry Authority) is required if you undertake the licensable activities of a door supervisor (if you want to be a bouncer, in other words)

Unless your employer or company has been given an exemption under Section 4(4) of the Private Security Industry Act 2001, it is a criminal offence to undertake the licensable activities of a door supervisor without an SIA license. An exemption is applicable only where the company in question has been granted 'approved contractor status' by the SIA and the other conditions of Section 4(4) have also been met. Every condition must be met for this section to be applied. Don't try and cut corners

The application fee is £220 for a three year license. The fee is to cover the cost of processing your application and is not refundable. Door staff will be trained in the law and conflict resolution (how to calm a situation down without punching someone in the head) over a one day course

Given that your door staff are the first people customers will meet at your venue, you might want to make sure they've got decent customer service / social skills, and if they haven't, you might want to think about hiring someone else

SEARCH POLICIES

The Police and Licensing authorities in your area may want you to implement some kind of search policy, primarily for weapons, but for drugs as well. If this is the case, customers must consent to the search

If you've got a folk music venue and you start to do full-body searches of your customers, you're maybe going to put them off. That's the kind of call you have to make

Any illegal items should be bagged, sealed in a box or cupboard designated for the purpose, signed, witnessed by another member of staff and logged. The police should be notified immediately. Of course, as soon as you confiscate someone's cocaine, you're now in possession of a banned substance, which is why you should have a procedure in place as above, and have it listed in your risk assessment

Ideally you should try and hold on to a suspect until the police arrive, but you have no legal powers to do so. Plus you need to decide how much potential danger you want to put you or your staff in. If the customer is waving a sword around, you might decide to leave the premises and go on about his business

SPECIAL POLICY AREAS

Although not specifically referred to in the Licensing Act, the guidance that accompanies it provides for the establishment of 'special areas of cumulative impact', which means that the Licensing Authorities can designate an area of a town or city a Special Policy Area, where there is evidence that more licensed premises in it may cause one or more of the licensing objectives to be breached. It's a way of controlling the number of licensed premises in one area

This was tried in Dalston, London, where the local authority tried to curb more bars and venues opening. A venue called Dalston Superstore fought back, mobilised their customers, and beat the council 75/25, their argument being that they and others were adding vibrancy and bringing money into the area. Ross feels certain, though, that Hackney Council will eventually successfully establish the area around Dalston as a Special Policy Area, otherwise every carpet shop on Kingsland Road will turn into a dive bar populated by complete and utter tools

TEMPORARY EVENTS NOTICES (TEN)

Any address (whether venue, pub, clothes shop, church, house, flat or bedsit can apply for a Temporary Events Notice (TEN) which notifies a council of an intent to carry out licensable activities. There can be no more than 12 TENS applications per address, per year, with a maximum capacity of 499 people. TENS are specifically intended for one-off events but a venue which already has a license can use one as a means to extend their opening hours for a big party, for example. They're administered by police and local authorities, and the police can object on public safety grounds, as can Environmental Health. You'll need to fill out a form, pay £21 and hand it in no less than ten working days notice from your event date. More here: www.culture.gov.uk/regulatedentertainment

OTHER NOTES AND ANECDOTES

Although the Act has made dancing a licensing activity, for some bizarre reason Morris Dancing is exempt. My Dad's got a soft-spot for Morris Dancing though, so I'm okay with that

The Bolieroom in Guildford was subjected to a wide and sustained 'attack' on various fronts, from those in the community who didn't want the venue to open. They mounted a counter-campaign called Keep Guildford Live while doing everything that was asked of them (they have 41 conditions on their license), eventually being allowed to operate

Complaints from the public about noise can't be "vexatious, frivolous or repetitious", so bear that in mind when the old dear in the house across the road starts to complain about your Japanese noisecore nights

If your license application is refused, you have the right to refer it to the magistrate courts for adjudication

Live Nation, who ran various live shows in Hyde Park each year - and paid for the park's maintenance - fought a recent battle with the residents association in that area, who wanted the number of shows (and the music's volume) reduced. Such is the wealth of the residents, they offered to take up the cost of maintenance. Live Nation were allowed to continue their shows, their argument being that the park is for all residents of London, not just for its rich neighbours, though they recently pulled out, moved their shows to the Olympic Stadium, and their rivals AEG now run the major live events in Hyde Park

A venue can feel more or less busy - even if at capacity - dependent on the type of people in the room. 'Roots' shows tend to attract older and therefore often larger people. Experimental noise bands tend to attract a much younger arts crowd, who are more likely to be skinnier and less well-fed. I realise how ridiculous this seems written down but I've seen it proved time and time again at a great many shows. You can fit more slim people than broad people into a room. You should not, however, use this as an excuse to increase your capacity. Have a look at the Station Nightclub fire on Youtube, to see what overcrowding (and pyrotechnics) can do. Warning: it's a genuine, real-life horror film

Some local authorities are trying to impose a 'late night levy' on licensed premises, to pay for extra policing

The divisive (some would say racist) form 696, which the police can insist you fill out before certain shows, continues to be used by some police forces. It asks for names, addresses, and ethnicity of performers, the implication being that the police assume trouble will occur at events which are attended primarily by a black audience, such as hip-hop, R&B and dubstep parties. Often though, a venue might not know who is playing (if the promoter hasn't told them). There seemed to be an increase in the number of these being requested in the aftermath of the London riots in 2011

THE LIVE MUSIC BILL (AMENDMENT TO THE LICENSING ACT OF 2003) COVERING ENGLAND AND WALES ONLY

A private members bill was introduced to Parliament, thanks to the lobbying of the Live Music Forum who've been campaigning for years to have the law that regulates the staging of live music changed. It passed both the House of Commons and the House of Lords unopposed last year and has now become law. Among other things, it now means that any room under 200 capacity (and probably soon to be any room under 500 capacity) that wishes to stage live music (be it a venue, pub, school, community centre, church, whatever) will now be exempt from having to apply for an entertainment license which, according to the Live Music Forum, will cut red tape, bureaucracy and fees (though it's worth noting that, depending on the local authority who you need to apply through, it can actually be a relatively inexpensive and painless procedure)

This will (unarguably) level the playing field, but in a country which already has a globally-derided small venue circuit, do we really unequivocally welcome the potential introduction to the market place of a great many other rooms booking live music, when the ones who already do are struggling to fill their rooms, in a brutal economic climate? And do we really think that the pubs and other rooms who begin staging live shows, in an effort to boost their bar takings, will all be concerned with making sure the artists are paid well, well-looked after and given good production facilities? Further, do we think it's wise - when many more rooms are putting on free shows - to potentially introduce a raft of new rooms, many of whom will do free shows? Do we think that artists will financially benefit from landlords whose goal is to increase bar takings? Do we think the landlords will go with the artist who can bring 30 people but need £100 to play, or do we think they'll go with the band who can bring 30 people, but do it for a couple of pints each?

Finally, do we really expect new promoters working in new rooms which have never previously hosted live music to understand what it means to be compliant in terms of health and safety? Do we think we can trust them all to not oversell their rooms, to keep their artists and audiences safe?

Let us hope I can prove utterly wrong in this, because if I'm not, the grassroots level is about to get a whole lot muddier for artists.

VENUE MANAGEMENT

THE LUMINAIRE

- Founded as a customer service business in 2005, focussing on the needs and welfare of both artists and audiences, The Luminaire was styled as an 'anti-venue', its remit to try and do those things that mainland European venues did so well, yet many (though not all) in the UK - and particularly London - failed at
- Inspired by a once-a-month club night called Take The High Road (after the soap-opera of the same name and also the name of Iain Dury's first band, Kilburn & The High Roads) which was run by me and four friends at the nightclub which would become The Luminaire, artists could always expect hot food, beer, water, clean towels, cake and money
- The room itself was well-presented, with lines-of-sight optimised over the six-year life of the club: a security camera was pointed at the stage and linked to three large flat-screen TVs to give those toward the back of the room a view of the stage
- Carpets were shampooed twice a year and walls were frequently repainted
- All door hinges were regularly sprayed with lubricant to avoid loud squeaks (irritating during quiet shows) and doors and their frames were lined with padded draught-excluding material to stop them banging when closed
- Customers hands were marked on entry with a stamp that said 'thank you'. A simple but appreciated gesture
- Artists were met by a member of staff at the front door, helped to load in and taken on a tour of the venue, meeting the sound engineer on the way, and shown where the office, toilets, backline storage and backstage room were. Anything relevant was pointed out: wi-fi code, backstage door lock-code, where and how to store backline etc. and artists were given the chance to ask what they needed to, instead of hunting around the venue for a member of staff or promoter to ask if they could get a beer
- Customers were treated as if they were valued, being allowed to stay and drink up after closing time (the front door was locked and they were asked to leave by the back door when ready). Any venue needs one to two hours from the time the music stops to the lights being switched off, and so those who wanted to take a little more time to finish drinks (or even sleep in a corner) were frequently accommodated
- Photo and video shoots were staged for free when possible, this being seen by the venue as a community service
- Artists' needs were met wherever it was feasible, so if an artist wanted to have their audience on stage, or wanted to perform from the floor - although it could lead to extra work for the staff - they would be permitted to do so
- During closed events (video shoots etc.) some of the club's rules could be relaxed when it came to requests such as allowing live animals to be used (humanely) on stage, flames to be breathed from mouths, that kind of thing. Extra steps were taken to make sure the safety of those in attendance was never compromised
- The staff were all-important, and an understanding of why the venue was there, its ethics and mission statement, were almost as crucial as the ability to do the job well. Engineers, bar/door/box office/cloakroom staff were expected to be friendly and respectful to artists and audiences at all times, and be mindful of the environment they were working in: closing the till drawer quietly when a quiet band was on stage, moving around the room sympathetically (not collecting glasses during songs), helping to keep loud audience members quiet where appropriate
- The venue had a bar and kitchen on the ground floor where artists would be fed after soundchecks, and the audience could meet before the show
- 'Keep Quiet' signs were painted on the walls around the room (and replicated on promotional material), underscoring the venue's dedication toward the enjoyment of the show for all. Andy accepted that these signs could be interpreted as abrupt by some, but the majority of customers and artists appreciated them, and attempts to adhere to them
- The venue would never take a % of an artist's merchandise sales, often setting up a shop if they needed more space to sell their wares
- Clear and detailed itineraries were sent out before each event to artists and their teams
- Clear and detailed 'how to get home' information was provided to customers on laminated cards in the stairwell, and also on the TV screen, before, between and after the bands had played, along with other useful information such as information on upcoming shows
- Contact instructions for artists were posted on the front door, listing each member of staff's phone number in the order that they would be arriving on site that day, and the sign was changed daily, reflecting the staff on duty
- Polite notices would be posted around the venue, asking customers - for example - to not sit on the floor during busy shows
- A polite notice would be posted on the front door in the event of doors opening late

- The staff, however, were keen that any kindness would not be perceived as weakness (and therefore abused), and wouldn't let themselves be walked over
- Upon closure (an event which was long anticipated, since the venue had never been a financial success), I set about analysing the reasons for its demise, facing up to some truths that I'd perhaps not previously been ready to accept. I identified ten reasons:
 1. An explosion in social media, mobile technology and a proliferation of high-speed broadband, opening the door to a world of at-home entertainment options which didn't exist in 2005 when the venue opened
 2. The recession, forcing the audience to be far more frugal with their money when they did come out, and forcing many pubs and bars to try their hand at hosting live events in an effort to attract people, in turn leading to many more options for the audience when they did come out, and therefore sometimes diluting the audience across all venues
 3. The location. Despite being easily accessible via two tube lines, two overground rail lines and four bus routes into Central London, the location in Kilburn was a problem for some audience and industry
 4. Allied Irish Bank, the venue's banker who - themselves in great difficulty during the financial crisis - attempted to squeeze still more money out of the business in increased mortgage repayments
 5. Brent Council. Charged very expensive rates of just under £4,000 per month and refused to engage in a conversation about a request to lower these, giving an employer of around twenty people a better chance of survival
 6. TFL (Transport For London). Constant closures on the Jubilee, Bakerloo and overground lines played havoc with the attendances and even bookings, since some promoters wouldn't use the venue at weekends, often being unable to find out in advance from TFL if works would be carried out. The Jubilee Line upgrading works, for example, ran over by 18 months. Some promoters were understandably reluctant to book shows with us at weekends
 7. Competition. A proliferation of small venues all vying for the same audience. At the <350 level, the venues compete. The 275 capacity Luminaire was viable with 130 people in the room, putting them in the same market as Brixton Windmill (120) and, at full capacity, in competition with Buh Hall (350). The appearance of many more pub venues and free shows didn't help
 8. Much as it did from the Lower East Side of Manhattan toward Brooklyn, the centre of gravity of London's live scene moved East, as art students and others looking for cheap rent moved in. Once it was established, East London was (and still is) where the industry wants their artists to emerge from
 9. The Music Industry, or certain parts of it - particularly some of the national booking agents - never fully embraced the club, believing the location to be an impediment to busy shows, and also press/media attendance
 10. I see myself as part of the problem. Often vocal in my contempt for some of the industry's behaviour and practices toward audiences, artists, and small venues and promoters (some but my no means all of the national booking agents were the protagonists). I could have 'played the game' better, networking and cosying up to some of the influential players in the business, and not calling a spade a spade while participating at industry panels and conferences

I've a few tips for those who'd like to run a live venue:

1. You're in customer service. Act like it. If you don't like people, don't open a venue
2. Your staff need local knowledge. Your security, box office, guest list, cloakroom, merchandise and bar staff need to know about buses and trains, ATM machines, best restaurants and such
3. Say goodbye to your family, friends and relationships. Unless you've got huge investment, the job will take over your life. It's necessary. If you genuinely want to make your venues the best venue in the world (and if you don't, why are you doing it?) there will be many sacrifices. I sacrificed one of my knees and three relationships. It was worth it. You'll see all your friends at the venue though
4. Don't drink the stock, don't drink with the staff. Don't sleep with the staff either. You're the boss. If the staff see you crawling along the bar, vomiting, at three o'clock in the morning, the respect they have for you will quickly evaporate
5. Stock is cash. Do not over-stock. Do not get 20 malt whiskies and have them sit behind the bar for a year. You may need cash at some point and it will be sitting in front of you. But you'll not be able to convert it to cash until you sell it. And you may never sell it. As you pour your last pint, have the delivery man walking through the door with a new keg. Impossible, but you get the idea

6. Be a good neighbour. Some people will not like you before you've opened your door, because of what they think will happen (noise, disturbances late at night). Be a friend to them, allay their fears, meet local shopkeepers and bars (you may need change for your own tills when you run out). Make friends in the community. Be a good citizen
7. Do not ask your staff to do anything you wouldn't do yourself. It's your business. Work the box office, the guest list, the merchandise stall, spend time at the front door greeting people and saying goodnight to them, help the staff clear the floor when the show's over. Don't ever think you're above clearing up after drunk people. Speaking of drunk people, if you and your staff sell people alcohol all night, do not get annoyed at them when they get drunk. You have the power to refuse to serve them if you think they can't handle their drink. And mop up their vomit. That's part of the fun. Do not shirk the responsibility. Also: everyone changes the lightbulbs. Do not allow your staff to ring-fence their job. It's a small business. Everyone mucks in
8. Eat well. Do not be tempted to eat pizza and drink Coke every day because it's quick and easy. You'll get tired. You'll burn out. Note; if you're in your 20s you'll be able to do this no problem. I was 32 when I started and I managed, but I'd do it differently if I did it again
9. Protect your ears. Tinnitus is serious. I will never hear silence again. Do not think for a second it won't happen to you. It will happen to you if you let it
10. Publicly apologise when you're wrong. You're an adult; take it on the chin. We had bad sound in the club one night. We mentioned that in our newsletter, said sorry to the bands, emailed the bands personally
11. You're in customer service. Act like it. If you don't like people, don't open a venue. I said that already, but it's the most important one

TOUR MANAGEMENT

This is a series of tips, of dos and don'ts

You will need patience

The band will be drunk. It will be late. You'll be tired. You'll want to go to bed because you've got a six hour drive in the morning. They might want to watch the headliner. It might annoy you. Tough

You will need to remain calm when everyone else is losing their head

That's you in the van there in that picture, with a colossal traffic jam in front of you. The venue is a mile ahead. There's nothing you can do. Don't lose your head

You're the bodyman/woman

Now and again you'll need to deal with an asshole. Don't become one. And women have a tougher time in this misogynistic business than men. You're going to have to get in between the band and drunk fans, rude staff, whoever. Try not to punch anyone

A driver's license is a basic requirement at the lower levels, until the band can afford to hire a separate driver

Some knowledge of sound engineering/tech knowledge is very useful

When the guitarist's pedal board stops working, can you help? Those who can TM, and drive, and sound engineer, and know how to fix pedal boards, and also sell merchandise, are very valuable people in the early stages of a band's career. They're also very tired people

Language skills

There are 230 languages spoken in Europe. Luckily you speak the most important one. In some countries (those in the Nordic region, say) the incidence English-fluency is very high indeed, and they mostly won't expect you to know their language (though some basic phrases and words show courtesy: Hello, Goodbye. Please. Thank you. Beer). In other countries a working knowledge of the language would be very useful (some parts of France and Germany for example). And displaying good language skills doesn't just mean speaking someone else's language; it also means moderating your own speech to ensure you're understood. If you have a strong regional accent, alter your dialect. If you speak quickly, slow down. If you encounter someone with a basic grasp of English, simplify your vocabulary and if that person is a sound engineer. Don't use colloquialisms on stage. Don't ask for a "smidgen" more bass in your monitor, for example, because no-one in Croatia is likely to know what a "smidgen" is

Self-awareness

You'll be in an enclosed space with the same people for prolonged periods. You're going to piss each other off, so being aware of how your actions affect other people is a very important trait. Learn what your annoying characteristics are, and curb them

Confidence

You're going to want the band to depend on you but without relying on you. You need to be dependable. You need to inspire confidence in them. You need them to trust you. But they're adults. Treat them like adults (even when they're behaving like a bunch of kids. Set limits and guidelines. They might pay your wages but it's your job to keep the tour on the road and if their behaviour jeopardises that, speak up. If they're causing a ruckus in the back of the van while you're trying to navigate dark roads through the Welsh countryside at 3am, tell them to pipe down

Methodical

A lot of TMing is box-ticking. The band will want - mostly - the same things each day: Lights like this, X and Y backstage, merch set up like this, X bottles and Y towels on stage before the show. Have a checklist on your phone. You need to be able to set up systems and implement them, and to set safeguards for yourself. Do not try to remember everything. You will fail. I use my iPhone's alarm clock to set myself reminders. In my experience, these are the five things that I need to check when I arrive on site at a venue or festival:

- Soundcheck, stage time, set length. May have changed since the promoter advanced the show
- If band is getting fed, when? If a buyout for dinner outside, when? If alcohol is supplied, when?
- Where is merch sold from? Get the shop set up
- What's the wifi code? Write it on the wall (on a piece of paper!) backstage, along with staff names

Good with money

You'll need to juggle cash for performance fees (my preference is always a wire transfer); who wants to carry thousands of pounds of cash around on the road?, merchandise income, PDs (per diems; the band/crew's pocket money) and your own money. Set up a Google spreadsheet for band accounts; all money in and out. If you give the band or crew money for absolutely anything, get them to sign a receipt for it. Date, location, source of money, how much, who got it, their signature, your signature. Then upload the receipt to a Dropbox that you share with the accountant / management / whoever needs to see the receipts. Once it's there, you have a copy in your phone, on your computer and in the Dropbox, plus in your laptop's daily back-up. You don't back up daily? Then you're an idiot. Back up daily. If you do, that's the receipt in four places. You no longer need to carry it. It's just excess weight. Throw it away. Each night, before bed, do the daily accounts. You should write what a receipt is for at the top of it because you'll be struggling to work out where that taxi was from and to after a day has passed. Tours are chaotic

Diplomacy

Depending on what role you've been hired for, your job will be a mix of tour manager, driver, merchandise seller, sound engineer, roadie, backline tech, friend, father/mother, confidante, therapist. It's partly your job to keep the band together when they're tearing each other's hair out, make sure they get on stage each night, keep the contractual obligations. It's a diplomatic role. You need to learn quickly who's who, who they're linked to, who're they're owned by, who's important, who you need to be nice to. In fact, you don't. You need to be nice to everyone. You never know when you'll need their help. You need to get multiple things from multiple people every day, most of whom you won't know and will never see again. You need to be able to flirt, to chat them up and to make them feel important, and / or appreciated. Hell, give them chocolate if you need to

Tools of the trade

You will need a bag. You'll be spending a lot of time with it, in all kinds of weather and indoor environments. You might decide to get something by Fjall Raven or John Chapman. Both great bags, both utterly useless for your purposes. Crack on and get one in beige if you like but it'll get filthy quickly and unless you treat it with wax and a waterproof spray, you'll have a wet laptop. Looking cool should not be your first consideration. A bag that can protect your laptop when you drop it, or that won't get mouldy when you leave it on a damp venue floor should. If your bag can do this and make you look cool, that's great. You need a bag with zips, not clasps that take a few seconds to open. You will be in and out of your bag often and you will need to keep it closed, so anything that will encourage you to not fasten it back up should be avoided. Backpacks are better for your back but then your bag is out of sight and you'll need to keep taking it off to get at it. Do not get a cheap bag. Get an expensive bag with a long guarantee. If you like beer, and you pay £3.80 for a pint, and you drink four pints a night for three weeks, that's £312, which you pissed away three hours later, then woke up with a headache. For £312 you can get a Tumi T-Pass bag, made from ballistic nylon, the precursor to Kevlar. It's almost literally bulletproof. Buy it in an airport at Duty Free, you'll save about £60. You'll need some kind of suitcase thing too. Which brings me on to...

Packing

Washing machines manufacturers have somehow convinced us that all our clothes need 90 minutes to get them clean. That, once the machine has tossed your clothes around in hot, soapy water for 30 minutes, they somehow need another hour to get cleaned and rinsed. They don't. On the road you need a sink, a bar of soap/shampoo/whatever and a nailbrush to clean clothes. Travel with one pair of socks and two pair of underwear. Hand-wash the underwear and socks and let them dry overnight. You'll need to find a laundrette for your jeans and other items of course but a lot of what you carry can be hand-washed in a sink.

Sharpie

You'll need one of these marker pens. No TM is ready without one. Prepare to lose it often. It doesn't matter how careful you are. Someone will need it to do a price list for the merch stand and it'll vanish

Leatherman

It has all sorts of tools and devices. You'll need one with a pair of scissors for cutting backstage passes off. Remember you can't carry it on as hand-luggage on planes, and can't take it on Eurostar, because it has a knife

Pharmacy

Headache tablets, hand sanitiser (particularly if any of the band are female. They'll find it useful after using festival toilets). Speaking of which, you should grab a loo roll from the hotel you're staying in, keep it in the van for use either at festivals, between service stations when someone absolutely has to go, or for mopping up spillages in the back of the van. Multivitamins. You're going to find it hard in some places to eat what you usually eat. There's not always time to stop at services, they don't always have what you want, and they're expensive. So maybe carry some multivitamins

Picnic

If you're on a budget, get a box (not a bag) and buy non or slow-degradable foods, like hard cheese, crisps or crackers, carrots, cherry tomatoes, bottled water but don't keep buying it. Tap water is fine. Maybe not in every country but for the most part. Refill from taps or water coolers. Use washable plastic plates and always have some plastic cutlery in the van/ your bag. Somebody will need it. Carry a plastic or tupperware box to replenish your food Tupperware box. On the European mainland you'll sometimes come across buffet catering and when no-one's looking you can shovel some in for lunch tomorrow

Junk food

Don't eat it. You will get tired more easily. You're not allowed to get tired. You're not allowed to fall asleep at the wheel. Sort your diet out. And stay fit. Run. Do something. If someone gets sick on tour everyone gets sick. Fight it

Hotels

In the UK, Premier Inn are great. Really good breakfast for £5.25, reliably clean and comfortable rooms. Travelodge are variable, but always clean. No breakfast. Days Inn and Ibis are, in my experience, crap

Insurance

Get Travel insurance, make sure it covers your equipment, make sure it covers you when you're working, since some will only cover you while you're on holiday

Tour pre-production

You'll be given a lot of information and it's your job to juggle it and create order out of it. I used to use a Google Doc spreadsheet. There's a lot of information to order. I'd then move the information into a Pages document (Mac) and build the tourbook/itinerary. I can't stand things not looking nice, so I spend a lot of time making things looking nice, when I could be doing something else. I'm efficiently inefficient. I've since scrapped the Google doc and now put all information straight into a template in Pages, but in red ink then, as I confirm information, I change it to black, then clean it up. Otherwise, use Excel to build your tourbook. It doesn't look as pretty but it's faster.

There's an app called MasterTour that many of the top TMs use to build their tourbooks and generally keep the show on the road. I've had two free trials, never liked it. I find it clumsy with an unintuitive user-interface. They have a free version, a \$9.99 a month version and a \$39.99 a month version

Some final tips

On arrival on site, hide the water and towels you need for stage. They might be limited. Also, do you really need water bottled backstage? How about jugs of iced water?

Get a merch. float. Don't rely upon venue to have change for you, so ask when you arrive, so you've time to do a shop/bar run to find change in the local community, if venue can't help

Don't pester the staff with one question at a time. You have a finite number of lives here. Get all your questions together at once if you can

Never, ever run over time. If there's no clock in stage, make sure someone's got a watch. Don't be a dick. It will affect the next act, or could threaten the venue curfew, and therefore their license. Also, you're an adult and the band are adults. Stick to the times

Keep the noise down backstage. In a small venue you could be heard through a wall or door, disrupt someone's else's show, or worse; the support band might hear you say how shit they are

Arriving early or late? Tell the promoter. They might not be there yet. The venue might be closed. Parking might not be available

Beware roaming charges. Get Vodafone Eurotraveller when going abroad. Only O2 Travel comes close, and Vodafone's is still far better. You can load maps on your phone on wifi in the hotel, say, then switch it off and keep data roaming off. The phone will still show your position on the map without it costing you. For mobile internet on your laptop, 3 Mobile has by far the best deal on 'dongles'

Send one guest for the entire team. Don't have PR, management, band and label sending their own

Write down staff names and pin them to a wall backstage. The band will forget. Be their memory. Sound engineer and artist liaison are particularly important

Write the backstage door lock code on their hands or wristbands. They'll forget it and if you're on the merch. stand when they come off stage (you should be), they might get stuck in no-man's land between stage and backstage. Embarrassing

Start collecting Frequent flyer/Eurostar points

Walk in front / stand behind. Take them to security at airport, make sure they're all through safely before you go through, because if you're through first and one of them gets stuck, you may not be allowed to go back to help. Always make sure they've checked in before you do. Always make sure they're on the bus first, before you go. If the band and sound engineer make it to the show and you don't, the show will go ahead. If one of the band doesn't, it won't

Fire Exits

When you arrive at the venue, find them, make sure the band are aware of them. A dead band isn't much good to you

NEW MONEY

WITH RUTH BARLOW, HEAD OF LIVE, BEGGARS GROUP

The group consists of the labels 4AD, Matador, XL and Rough Trade, and also has small labels such as Too Pure Singles Club and Young Turks. Ruth talked about her role (unique among UK labels) and how it began, how her remit was largely open, and the often fun stuff she got to do with it.

We spoke a little about tour support and, prior to that conversation, I'd emailed some friends at the main independent labels, and they confirmed that yes, they do offer tour support (where labels help to fund bands to get on the road, and which monies they recoup from recorded sales) but it's by no means guaranteed, and is negotiated on a band-by-band basis. One of the labels told me that, while they effectively invested in the band's live shows at the beginning, once that investment had been repaid, the label would not take a cut of any further live income, unlike (mostly major) labels who pioneered the 360 deal (where they take a cut of all the artist's income, regardless of what it is

Ruth set up 'unusual' shows for The White Stripes (who performed for The Chelsea Pensioners; based in a London hospital/retirement home for those who were formerly in the armed forces. The event was covered widely in the national media) and Radiohead (who attempted to play in the Rough Trade East record shop in London, before the local authority closed it down due to the shop not having a license to host live music, and the show having to be moved to live venue nearby).

She was a founder of the Concrete & Glass multi-venue arts and music festival in East London

We then had a long discussion about brands in the music arena, the difference between product placement and a mutually (creative) partnership. Brands have long attached themselves to music, with Michael Jackson and Madonna advertising Pepsi in the '80s, in exchange for cash to fund their world tours, to the more recent announcement of Justin Timberlake becoming the 'creative director' for Bud Light, the worst of beers. It's enjoyable to read the nonsense spoken when these collaborations come about:

"Justin Timberlake is one of the greatest creative minds in the entertainment industry, and his insights will help us further define Bud Light Platinum's identity in the lifestyle space" - VP of Marketing, Paul Chibe

"Bud Light Platinum brings a refined, discerning aesthetic to beer that plays well with what I'm doing."
- Justin Timberlake

But for the pinnacle of complete and utter bollocks we must turn to Katy Perry"

"I remember it was late at night, and I was craving a midnight snack without the guilt. The bag stood out in the minibar, and I was pleasantly surprised when I read the back of the label and saw that it was a healthier choice. I was hooked after my first bite! When I discover something good, I want to share it with everyone I know, so I tweeted about it; Popchips came to me, and I've decided to invest in Popchips and join the team as a creative partner!"

Amazing.

Now, we expect this from pop stars, but what about when artists who we see as credible in some way start doing it?

John Lydon, frontman of the Sex Pistols and Public Image Limited. A punk icon. Advertising butter on TV. Lydon was unrepentant:

"The advert was for a British product. All Britain. Fantastic. Plus it was the maddest thing to consider doing. I thought it was very anarchic of the dairy company to want to attach themselves to me. It allowed me to set up my record label and put out this record."

A few months before that Iggy Pop appeared on our screens and bus shelters advertising car insurance. Ironically, the company - Swiftcover - didn't offer insurance to musicians

Brands have always been drawn toward counter-culture, and what's cool, and they're always on the lookout for ways to exploit the marketplace. Vodafone sponsored the UK's Live Music Awards for a few years, and Jack Daniels and Jagermeister have long been associated with music. And then there are brands which have either always been cool or always been attached to the counter-culture. Fred Perry are forever tied to the Mod movement and now, through their Subculture website and Subsonic live shows they're working with some pretty cool artists, like King Krule and Andy Weatherall

Vans now own an indoor skatepark and live venue in Brooklyn and Converse have the Rubber Tracks recording studio, also in Brooklyn. Bands can apply to record their music there, free, in exchange for Converse having the rights to use it on their site, but the band's retain the master and publishing rights. One of my Danish participants told me of the Red Bull studio in Copenhagen

Universal Music are the kings of linking their artists to brands, whether it's Florence and The Machine draped in Bulgari diamonds, or Cover Drive (who?) sitting on a Citroen car in their video

Subtlety? Sure, try this: Moodymaan, the electronic producer appeared on a website called Scion AV, which calls itself a platform for passionate artists to focus on developing their art and exploring the endless possibilities. They support musicians, visual artists, filmmakers and such, and - among other things - give away music from artists like Moodymann and The Melvins who, aside from anything, could not be called anything except 'underground' You may notice that the website shares a name with a range of motor cars. And you may extrapolate and discover that ScionAV is owned and operated by Toyota, the world's third-biggest car manufacturer, and the world's 11th biggest company

There's a great article about brand partnerships, tie-ups and whether or not 'selling out' matters these days in the now defunct Stool Pigeon. You can still view it online

Some of the genuinely new money can be found in Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding is usually when you - the artist - try to convince a load of people - either your fans or people you want to be your fans - that they should give you some money in exchange for something. I found 8 or 9 companies online who offer the platform, but the two most used by the artistic community, as far as I can see, are Indiegogo and Kickstarter. There's also ArtistShare, Bring the Gig, Campfire, PledgeMusic, Sellaband... you get the idea

I was involved in a successful crowdfunding project with a band I manage called Civil Civic. Pre-order our Vinyl LP, they said, so we can make it in the first place. We needed to raise \$5,000 and, managed almost \$7,000, so spent the balance on a PR campaign. The rewards were 'staged': \$8 got you the digital album three weeks before release, \$20 got you the CD and digital album, \$25 for vinyl and digital, \$50 for the same and a signed T shirt, \$80 all that including a very rare cassette of the first EP and on it went, up to \$15,000 for dinner with our drum machine

There was the very famous campaign run by Amanda Palmer, former Dresden Dolls singer-songwriter. In May 2012 she tried to raise \$100,000 to manufacture and promote her new album. She got \$1.2 million and the album reached the Top 10 of the US charts. She had a very loyal fanbase (as do Civil Civic) and crowdfunding works best when you have that, and fully engage and communicate with them

Bjork tried to raise £375k to pay for developers who could convert the education applications on her album into Android and Windows formats (not just Apple, which it was originally developed for). She only managed to raise 4.1% of the funding goal and cancelled it. Some said it was because she was already rich and should have funded it herself, some said she failed because she failed to communicate with her audience

We then had a lively debate about new platforms offering gigs online, controlled by the artist, such as Stagelt

Then she left, refusing to take her £50 fee for coming in. She's a class act

NEW TECHNOLOGIES FOR VENUES AND ARTISTS

Well, I'm not so sure about this. I've been reading a fair amount about it over the past few months, since MusicTank asked me to talk about it, and I've yet to find a new technology that significantly enhances the live experience without negatively impacting upon those also at the show who may not appreciate the enhancement

The first one, though, is very interesting, because it apparently works and while it not be strictly a live artist-audience performance in the commonly-accepted sense (in the same way that a modern mixtape is neither mixed, or on cassette), it's hard to argue that it's not some kind of live experience

Stagelt offer artists the chance to live-stream a performance, monetise and interact with the audience in real time it via the downloaded Stagelt software and a webcam on their computer. Artists create ticketed shows which can be either free or set a charge, and can limit the number of tickets per show, so that a sell-out can be achieved if desired. The show can be anywhere there's an internet connection and the artist is able to perform there; studio, bedroom, toilet, on top of a skyscraper, in a car, on a stage, wherever. The audience logs on at the designated time to watch the show, and can also support the artist through a 'tip jar' as it progresses. Shows are never archived so each show is unique, can't be watched again on YouTube for example.

Useful for bands who can't afford to tour / can't make it to a number of cities or towns on a tour, or for artists who want to road-test new songs before hitting the road, or recording. The interactive feature of Stagelt means the audience can type-talk to the artist during the show and the artist can answer between songs for example. Also useful for offering exclusive shows and 'access' to a fan base

On average 59% of a show's income comes from tips and the average fan is spending over \$13 to see a show. I watched a promo clip of a musician who put 200 tickets on sale then told his fans to pay what they wanted. Some paid ten cents, some ten dollars and with tickets and tips, he raised a thousand dollars, gave it all to charity. He just sat and played acoustic guitar in his kitchen.

Notable users: Korn, Indigo Girls, Jason Mraz, Tom Morello, George Clinton, Bowling For Soup

Does it improve the live experience for audience and / or artist? No: it creates a new kind of one Streamed shows aren't a new thing, but with quickening internet speeds and a society far better used to experiencing content on small portable screens, this kind of performance may become more common and more accepted. Theatres in particular are finding success in broadcasting live to regional cinemas, though some would argue that a theatre audience is used to remaining static, where gig audiences are more used to being able to move around.

Next up: crowd-filming (not funding) shows. The Beastie Boys had a sold out concert at Madison Square Garden, NYC in 2004. They gave 50 audience members hand-held video cameras, told them to shoot the shows. The footage was used to create the 'Awesome: I Fuckin' Shot That' DVD. These days they'd probably not bother with the cam-corders, since phone video is getting to be of reasonable quality, when viewed on small screens anyway.

Now, here's something super-cool: at SxSW in Austin in 2012, Nike handed out a load of their Fuelband wristbands to audience members at a Sleigh Bells/Diplo show. Fuelbands are effectively devices which measure and record energy output as someone moves, so that they can keep track of their fitness levels. Nike somehow wired these wristbands up to a light show on the city's most prominent building, the Frost Bank Tower, and the more energetic the audience members got, the more green the light show became. The visual effect was absolutely spectacular. Did it improve the live experience for audience and / or artist? No, unless they could somehow see the lightshow from inside the venue, but it didn't detract from the audience experience, and it certainly made the show look like the hottest ticket in town to those who couldn't get in

Showscoop is pretty new. It's a concert rating platform. You stand there during the show, or after the show, and give your opinion about a band's performance, rating stage presence, crowd interaction, sound quality, and visual effects. I'm not sure who it's for. This is effectively Trip Advisor for bands, but with TripAdvisor, you're not trying to work out which of your favourite hotels to spend money; you're looking for - probably - a balance between price and quality. I'm not looking for that when I see a show. A show isn't static like a hotel room is. Once the maid comes in the morning and cleans the room up, it's not going to change until you walk in. The quality is controllable, largely. Not so with a band. Sound quality? Maybe the band's own engineer can't get to grips with the room acoustics. Maybe the house engineer can't get to grips with the band's dynamics. Maybe the audience member doesn't know what good or bad sound is. Maybe the singer likes to mumble when on stage. Maybe the drummer's sprained her wrist during load in. Crowd interaction? Maybe I'm not interested in the artist interacting with me. Maybe I just want him to play his songs. Visual effects? At a blues gig? Showscoop seems to exist because it can, not because it needs to

Next is Ampd, which evolved out of a desire (of one of the creators) to have the audience do something better with their phones than holding them up for the whole show to film or photograph it. It has the following features on its free-to-download app (which is controlled by a member of the band's team):

- Custom animations make fans and their phones part of the show (so it's not okay to hold a phone up to photograph the show, but it's okay to hold it up to display a picture or animation?)
- Directs phone use during concerts to engage fans in an artist's performance (it does the opposite, surely)
- Quizzes keep the audience interested and reward them for correct answers (quizzes during a show?)
- Encore voting and requests create a unique and interactive experience

Can I suggest a better thing to do with your phone during a concert?

Put the damn thing away

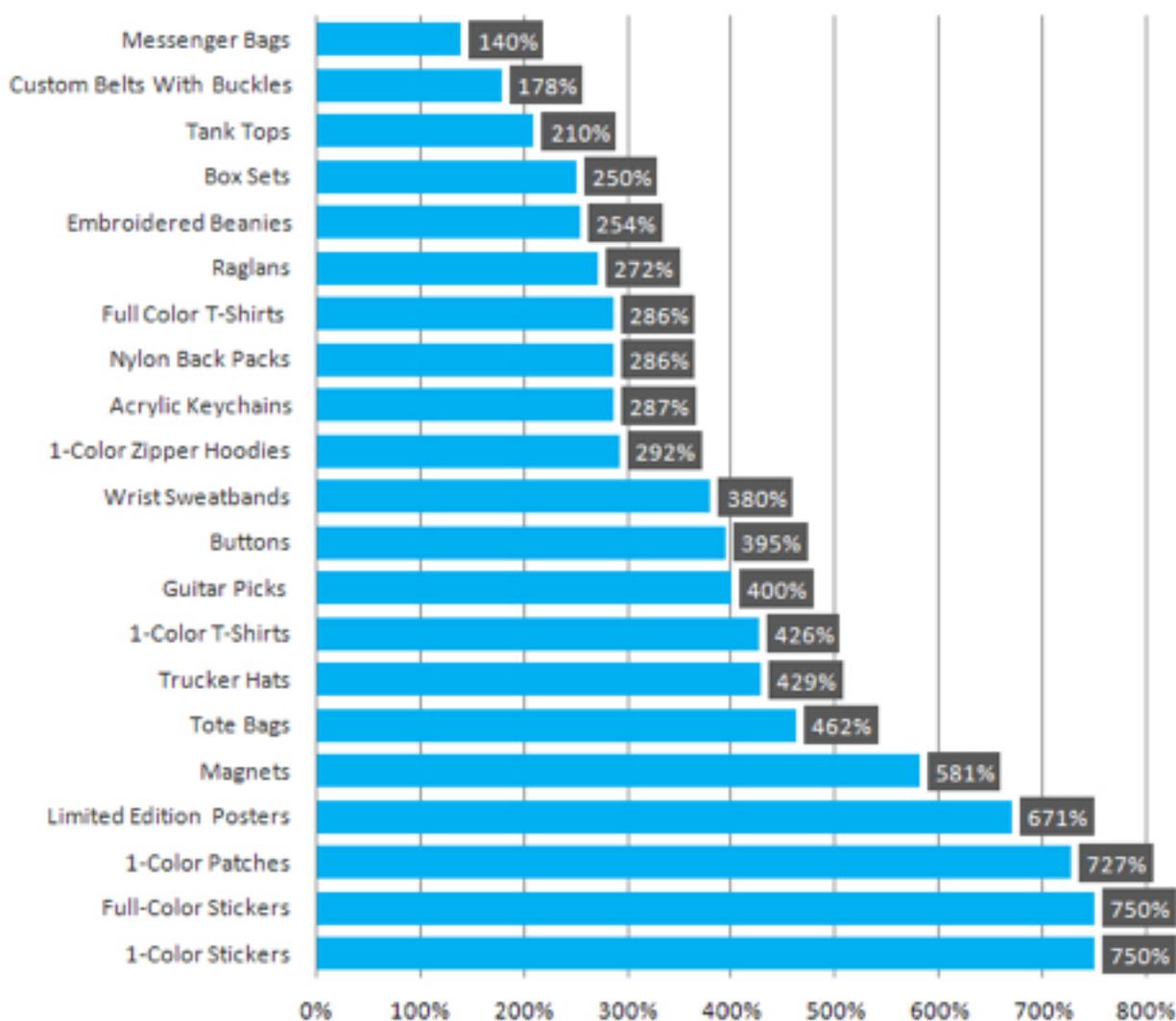
It was after investigating Ampd that I stopped looking for new technology in live music, and realised the most important technologies to invest in already exist: Better PA systems and desks to improve sound quality, cameras and TVs to help those who can't see the show due to low stages and faster beer pumps to serve the audience faster

Before we move on to merchandise, can anyone tell me of a technology advance that genuinely improves the live experience?

MERCHANDISING

There are huge sums of money to be made in merchandising. I remember standing next to the merch stand during Zooropa's 1993 tour in Scotland and, for the first time, being aware of just how much money bands can earn from merch. I later found out that the merch was the only thing that put the tour into profit, that without it they would have lost millions of pounds

Where is the money to be made? Luckily for me, Jakprints - a merch. firm based in Cleveland Ohio - did some research into this. They worked out the most profitable pieces of merchandise, based on average cost and average retail price and as you can see, stickers come out on top. Now, that's useful to know, but what if your audience are no younger than 50 and as old as 80 (as, say some of the Roots artists' audiences are?). They're probably not much interested in stickers, more so in CDs



Jakprints had some advice for you:

- Start with small quantities. See what your fans react to, then scale up on that item
- Know your audience. Teen girls won't need XL shirts. 50 year old men won't want glo-sticks
- Often-used items increase exposure. Lighters, bottle-openers, key fobs with band name on
- Do giveaways and deals. Buy EP, get badge, but two Ts for £17 instead of £20
- Do pre-tour pre-sales. So you're not taking CDs if no-one wants CDs
- Don't carry everything. Can you have something manufactured when you're there? Can the exchange rate help you? Get some Ts made in Serbia maybe, collect them when you play Exit Festival
- Delegate, then give it away. Look at Firebrand, Grindstore, Sandbag who can design, manufacture and sell your merch, both online and at your show. They'll take a cut but you'll eventually see their value, if you get big enough

Whatever you do, do merchandise and do be apologetic (on stage) about selling it, as many UK artists tend to be. Be sure to always carry it with you, and get creative about what can be sold. As Metallica proved with their light-switch covers and Monopoly games, you can put a logo on anything. U2 Lego, Bloc Party condoms, Feist music boxes, Kiss coffins

New artists are starting to get creative with how they approach not just merchandise, but how and where it's sold. The hip-hop collective Odd Future give away lots of their music for free, but set up pop-up shops when they arrive in towns while touring, and sell limited, custom-made items for a lot of money (100 T-shirts are not uncommon).

Some more tips:

- Have some to sell in the first place. It's amazing the number of bands who can't be bothered, or forget to carry it with them
- Dominate the space. Set up shop early, have things looking the way you want it
- Don't dominate the space. Leave space for the other bands. If you don't, they might screw up your display to make space for theirs when you're not there. The choice is up to you
- Travel with a lamp, spare bulb, extension cable, foreign plug adaptor if you're going abroad. Be prepared. Don't expect the venue to have what you need, or to have a designated place to sell merch
- Take local advice as to what items normally sell for, but don't charge fractions of pounds/euros/dollars. You'll end up coming home with a bag full of 50 pence pieces or whatever the currency
- Carry an email sign-up book, attach a pen to it, collect email addresses, build a database. Don't rely on Facebook or Twitter being there in a year. Take control of your own fanbase
- Staff it. Amazing the number of bands who set it up then walk away. Work out a rota. Staff before the show then have someone there two songs from the end. People might have to leave early so either buy on the way in, or before the show's over if your singer's a miserable bastard, don't put him or her on the shop
- Carry coat-hangers with you. How else will you hang your Ts up? Carry tape too but make sure venue don't mind it on their walls. It can take the paint off
- Have everything available in your online shop. No XLs left? They're in the online store now. Here's the address. We take Paypal, all major cards
- Make it look nice. But not with candles. They're a fire hazard and the wax will ruin your nice table cloth that you've brought to lay down. Use matching price tags, fairy lights, whatever it takes. Make it look attractive. It's a shop
- Keep track of stock. Have an online spreadsheet which shows venue and city, what was sold, what was lost, what was given away as promo. When you add stock, add it to the sheet. Always keep a running total of what you've sold and where
- Check how much the venue will take from your sales, if anything. Some can take from between 10%-40% of your total sales for letting you sell / using their shop and staff
- You're in customer Service. Act like it

FUNDING AND SUPPORT

I began with a quote which isn't particular popular among some in the industry:

"The UK has the World's worst small venue circuit. It's globally derided."

I asked some friends and acquaintances for their thoughts on touring the UK. This is my favourite, from a Canadian artist living in the UK:

"Generally speaking, touring all over Europe involves fine food and wine, being met at the train station by beautiful hostesses, playing to enthusiastic, mixed crowds in well-organised, creative festivals and venues with great backstage and technical staff. Generally speaking, touring in the U.K. means all the tins of Red Stripe you need to kill the pain."

So why - with many notable exceptions - is it so bad? The UK is, next to the US, the most arrogant country on the face of God's Earth. These tiny islands gave us the television, the telephone, The Beatles, The Queen, The industrial revolution, whisky, and, of course, it won both World Wars single-handedly, right? It had, at one time, the largest Empire since the Mongols in the 13th Century. It once had huge political, economic and military influence. Now it has The Falkland Islands. Now all it has is the Falkland Islands. And Kasabian. But it still leads the English speaking world (along with the US) in terms of the cultural impact of its music, which, for such a small place, is staggering

So, there are two reasons why touring the UK can be such a miserable experience: arrogance which leads to poor customer service, and lack of funding, which leads to poor conditions and production levels. And if there's no funding, how do UK venues support themselves?

Commercial income (tickets, alcohol, merchandise; either their own, or a cut of the artist's fee, which they really shouldn't be doing at the grassroots), a little bit of hire fees, a little bit of ticket money

How can venues access alternative funds?

If you're a charity you can apply for Arts Council money. London's Southbank Centre is a world-class arts centre. Arts Council England funding covers 53.5% of their operating budget, the remainder generated through sponsorship, charitable donations, and commercial activities (alcohol, tickets, room hire etc).

And how much is 53.5% of their operating budget?

It's £20,000,000.

Arts Council England give The Southbank Centre twenty million pounds a year in funding. Between 2011 and 2015, Arts Council England will invest £1.4 billion of public money from government - tax revenue - and an estimated £1 billion from the National Lottery. Very little - if any - will be used to support grassroots venues.

How does Southbank raise the other 46.5% of their operating budget? In many ways

They have an old pipe organ in the Royal Festival Hall (part of South Bank Centre). They need to repair it and it'll cost £2.3 million, so you can sponsor a pipe through their Pull Out All The Stops campaign. £60 will get you a 1ft pipe, £10,000 will get you a 32ft one. They're close to their target. Otherwise you can become a member of Southbank for £40, or £1 will buy two plants for the Queen Elizabeth Hall Roof Garden. So you can see they get pretty creative with their funding

What about that other world-class arts centre, The Barbican? In 2011 their income was forecast to be £13.6 million (commercial). The City of London gave them £19.8m, Arts Council England gave them £339,000, increasing to £583,000 in 2013

Who else is dishing out money to venues?

The O2 mobile phone company paid £5.4 million for the naming rights to the Academy Music Group venues. Jack Daniels gives a lot of free stock away, or can supply venues with branded furniture. For a while Time Out Magazine was sponsoring The Roundhouse venue in Camden's toilets and even at The Luminaire, we were helped by Wharfedale who provided us with free stage monitors and amps to drive them

PRS for Music Foundation support many groups and individuals, including promoters and festivals. They paid out £1.6m in 2012. Not a lot of money. Promoters can apply for grants of up to £5,000. To access that money you must be able to demonstrate the following:

- At least one year's track record of promoting events
- Promoting at least 8 events over a 12 month period
- Programming innovative, ground breaking new British music of any genre

PRS' British Music Abroad scheme supports up to 75% of the total budget of your foreign trip, up to a total of £1,500 for a solo artist, £2,500 for a duo, £3,500 for a trio or up to £4,500 for a four piece +

Who can't PRS they support?

"We are currently unable to support: companies limited by shares; recordings/demos; bursaries or tuition fees; capital projects (e.g. building work); fundraising events for other charities; equipment purchase and organisations which have been running for less than 18 months."

We tried to get funding at The Luminaire to help us build a new stage, but because we were a Limited Company (limited by shares) and because building a stage is classified as a capital project, we were unable to. Contrast this with the Southbank Centre's £20,000,000 which is paid as 'block funding', enabling them to build a new stage if they decide to. The point of barring Limited Companies from accessing funds is because these companies are not charities (like Southbank) and can therefore pay dividends to shareholders. In the six years of our operation we couldn't afford to pay a penny to our shareholders

ACE also have the £45m Strategic Touring Programme fund, to encourage collaboration between organisations, so more people experience / are inspired by the arts. It's available to organisations, individuals, Partnerships, networks and consortia, which can include promoters, artists, agencies, companies, marketing or audience development specialists, local authorities and public sector arts organisations. Grants need to be more than £10,000 per project

They have also just announced the imminent launch of an artist development fund, totaling £500,000 over two years. Administered by PRS for Music Foundation, it will be awarding grants of up to £15k for emerging and mid-career artists to develop their recording, writing, performing and touring careers

There are other bodies who - in some way - fund the art: Youth Music, Making Music, Sound and Music, Jerwood Foundation, UK Trade & Investment, Paul Hamlyn Foundation, Incorporated Society of Musicians and the Musicians Benevolent Fund

The Police have been known to dish out a few quid here and there. I know of a venue in Guildford who received £500 from their local police force for putting on under-18s nights

Rich people like giving money out, don't they? Yes they do. Private donations from them - and companies - can be forthcoming, though they tend to want everyone to know that they've given you money, which might not suit your profile. For example, Sting is a founder sponsor of The Roundhouse while Paul Gambacini is a sponsor of The Southbank Centre, both London. Similarly, Louis Vitton and Mastercard, among any other businesses, support Southbank Centre. Companies might want their logo plastered on things, or to be able to milk the association for good PR. Some don't

When London's 100 Club was threatened, Converse came in and financially propped it up, securing the club's future in the medium term. They don't brand the venue, but they do get to host Converse Represent nights featuring high-profile headline acts. The PR around it was great for them

Not all brand associations are as natural a fit. The Garage in London was renamed The Relentless Garage, thanks to a tie-up with the energy drink. They were widely mocked for insisting it was referred to as The Relentless Garage, which, let's face it, is a ridiculous name for a live music venue

Let's look at how other countries do it

Norway's a super-rich anomaly, but it's interesting to look at it. There are national, regional and local funds.

Arts Council Norway gives funds to promoters, venues, musicians, ancillary companies, managers, labels, booking agencies, festivals, whatever

Musikkutstysordningen (Music Equipment Scheme) manage grants for equipment for venues, clubs, promoters, rehearsal spaces

Fond For Lyd Og Bilde (Fund For Audio and Video) helps artists record, produce and manufacture music

Music Export Norway (now just Music Norway) look after funds that used to be administered by the Norwegian Embassy in London. They would give promoters in the UK money when they promoted Norwegian artists. They provide support to bands who want to travel abroad; flights, accommodation and such

Innovation Norway is a huge company with 500 staff, with access to enormous sums of money to help promote Norwegian businesses both home and abroad. I know of an artist manager who got £10,000 for his band by proving that his band was a business.

I work with two bands; one of whom got £2,000 to release a 7" single, the other got £30,000 grand per year for three years, just to continue being an artist. Both from The Arts Council

Cultiva is a regional body in Kristiansand in the South. They paid all of the Quart Festivals debts in 2007 (over £1m), allowing them to operate in 2008 (until I came along and destroyed it)

Culture has a very important place in the Nordic Countries. It's part of the fabric of their society. Offering universal access to healthcare, schooling and culture is seen as a public service. Culture is not just for the wealthy. It's not a luxury

France next. "There are many ways to apply for public funds in France", says Thomas from a venue called La Nef in Angoulême. He continues... Nationally: The Ministry of Culture helps some venues through a body called SMAC (Scènes de Musiques Actuelles, or modern music venues, which was set up by the government to try and standardise the quality of venues across France. Criteria: booking and supporting unknown bands (if you book only big famous bands you don't match the criteria), helping local bands through rehearsal, CD production, tour support and whatever else helps them, nice entrance prices (so that those people on lower incomes can attend gigs easier). You can get as much as 150,000 Euros each year for your venue. Only one venue per county can get this money
You can access local and regional funds if your functions as a venue are deemed to be "public services". For instance La Nef has been rebuilt with rehearsal studios and recording studios with the help of four funds : local, regional, county (or Département) and EU.

Beside the public bodies, you can apply for funds from "civil societies", which are societies that venues give money to according to their wealth (if I'm a poor venue I give little, if I'm a big one I give a lot), so that they can redistribute the money when you need it (for instance, if we need a new sound system we can ask for money there).
So venues in France are greatly helped by public funds because they are asked to promote music and bands that are not profitable and who couldn't play if it was a question of a show being profitable

There's also something called 'Musician Status (this exists in Belgium too). In France it's assessed per number of shows. 100 or so a year. In Belgium it depends on how much money you earn as a musician. I think it's around 50,000€ per year. That figure needs checked. Don't quote me on it. If you meet the criteria you can apply for the status and, if you're accepted, you're effectively paid a monthly 'wage' or benefit by the Government to continue to live as an artist

The Danes have around €3m per year for their venues to access, 50% from government, 50% from local funds. They're able to pay artists a union rate, which - some suggest - lead to laziness among some venues and promoters. They know they have the money to support the bands, so may not work so hard at promoting. This is not unique to Denmark, however

Canada has some of the highest levels of funding in the world for exporting its music, and Australia are no slouches either

CMU Daily asked me some questions about the live industry, including about funding, and published the interview as a Q&A. There was a lot of interest in the article among the grassroots, but of course no comment from anyone who could actually affect any change. So if we can't rely upon those with the money and power to affect any change, who do we turn to?

We start by looking in the mirror. We have a culture of taking guest list in this industry, and it has to change. My problem with guest list isn't that it exists; my problem is that it's both expected and abused. It's seen almost as a right. We've all taken guest list, we've all taken free CDs and MP3s? But all these £5 and £6 tickets add up and before you know it you're a bit skint at the end of the month. Tough. That's what happens when you pay for stuff. Please, start to realise the worth of watching a band live because if YOU don't - you people who work in the business, or want to work in the business, you people who love music... then what chance do we have? We should be first in line to buy a ticket for our artist's show. We are lucky that we get to go to see our artists soundcheck, visit them in their studios, and generally work with music we love. That's the perk of the job, not free entry. I like the quote from Thor Harris of Swans: "Guestlist is for friends, family & people you might want to fuck. Everyone else can pay. They have day-jobs". Personally I'd make friends pay too

SO, WHERE ARE WE?

The course ended, as it always does, with a couple of points to provoke though, maybe get a bit of debate going.

In 1887 Thomas Eddison invented the wax cylinder to be played on the gramophone. It was the first physical, recorded musical format to be played on a physical player. In 1976, Sony publicly demonstrated their "optical digital audio disc" which was to be played on a compact disc player. It was the last physical, recorded musical format to be played on a physical player. That's around ninety years of physical formats

This (see slide) bone carving, found in Slovenia in 1995 is reckoned to be the world's oldest, melodic musical instrument; a flute, estimated to be between 43,000 and 67,000 years old. If that's true, and we assume it was the first (it almost certainly wasn't) humans have found a way to monetise physical music only in the last 90 years of a period that goes back tens of thousands of years. And now it's all over. There will never be another globally marketed, successful physical, recorded musical format to be played on a physical player, again

The second thought is from Francis Ford Coppola, the winemaker, as he calls himself (he made Apocalypse Now and The Godfather among films)

"You have to remember that it's only a few hundred years, if that much, that artists are working with money. Artists never got money. Artists had a patron; either the leader of the state or the duke of Weimar or somewhere, or the church, the Pope. This idea of Metallica or some rock 'n' roll singer being rich, that's not necessarily going to happen anymore. Because, as we enter into a new age, maybe art will be free. Maybe the students are right. They should be able to download music and movies. I'm going to be shot for saying this, But who said art has to cost money? And therefore, who says artists have to make money?"

Now, Francis Ford Coppola may be a rich man, but it's an interesting point regardless of his wealth. Streaming hasn't (yet?) filled the hole made left by the gradual demise of physical, recorded sales and people are still looking at the live industry as being the some kind of golden goose. They'd be advised to stop. How we shape the next 90 years is up to us, but for those of us at the coalface, the grassroots, we are unlikely to be the ones getting rich

Maybe we need to start producing wine...

ADDITIONAL CONTENT

A NUMBER OF ARTISTS, TOUR MANAGERS AND PROMOTERS WERE ASKED TO CONTRAST THEIR EXPERIENCES OF TOURING IN THE UK WITH THOSE OF TOURING ABROAD. THEY WERE FREE TO ANSWER HOW THEY SAW FIT. SOME OF THEIR RESPONSES FOLLOW

NORWEGIAN ARTIST, LIVING IN NORWAY

When the Angus and Julia Stone tour hit the mainland again after two weeks in the UK, we had already forgotten how unbearably pleasant it was to tour mainland Europe, with warm food, good equipment and tidy venues that didn't reek of dried beer and piss. Having said that, doing a good concert in the UK, where you actually manage to turn the odds in your favour, and getting the feeling of having touched something deep inside the most difficult audience on earth, really gives you a feeling that you're on the right path. It's just that the Brits have no intentions of paving it for you.

AUSTRALIAN ARTIST, LIVING IN UK AND SPAIN

At the end of our last tour, we played Brussels. It was a huge venue and run with a community spirit, I think many there were volunteers. There was great home-cooked food, and wine and beer provided. A really great vibe. Unfortunately there was heavy snow and the show was poorly attended. The promoter would have lost money but he insisted on paying us our 500 Euros fee, and also put us up in his home. The next show was Southampton. It was also poorly attended but this time it was because the promoter had done no promoting whatsoever. They offered no food drinks or accommodation and our fee was only £60, we were already losing money with car hire and fuel alone. The promoter repeatedly asked if we would take less money. He was practically begging and trying to make us feel bad, saying that he was going to lose money. We refused.

UK ARTIST, LIVING IN THE UK

Europe - in my experience, of course. Upside: better (more accurate, lush) riders, friendlier promoters (genuinely pleased to see you and have genuinely done their best to promote), better hotels (mostly). Downside: if the routing is badly done, it can mean some LONG drives, stopped by police when leaving Holland, tax problems. Really though I find touring Europe a breeze, hopping from place to place, being picked up and looked after well. Switzerland is amazing for it, Belgium, Scandinavia also. UK is more of a grind - a salesman touring the motorways, stopping off to sing a few songs!

CANADIAN ARTIST, LIVING IN THE UK

Generally speaking, touring for Son of Dave all over Europe involves fine food and wine, being met at the train station by beautiful hostesses, playing to enthusiastic mixed crowds in well organized creative festivals and venues with great backstage and technical staff. Generally speaking, touring in the U.K. means all the tins of Red Stripe you need to kill the pain.

UK PROMOTER AND MANAGER, LIVING IN THE UK

My main observation would be that you're far more likely to get looked after better overall in mainland Europe than in the UK. Much more common to get accommodation, a decent rider, a decent meal, and a far longer soundcheck. This is at the smaller level though; I would think things even out a lot once you're pulling over 800 people or so.

ICELANDIC ARTIST, LIVING IN UK

I find in Europe people treat you nicer in venues than in the UK or the USA (this is all stereotypical I might add as there are some exceptions to every rule!). I'm not sure why that is, maybe it's just a cultural thing, but when you go to Europe you are given a reasonable fee, people seem genuinely happy to help you out with your equipment, and with the exception of one naughty French soundman I've encountered, most of the sound people are helpful and friendly and try to get the best sound for you. There is usually an okay rider (I say "okay" because I'm a vegetarian and Germany has trouble with that concept, but they do try). It's nice to have some fresh fruit and stuff when you've been on the road for a while (nutrition is hard to maintain on tour). Accommodation is usually sorted when you do gigs in Europe too: some venues have apartments upstairs for the bands, others put you up in hotels, so you know you will have a bed to sleep in and that's nice. In the UK you are lucky to get a fee that covers your expenses of getting there, upon arrival at the venue one is often greeted by a surly hello from a venue manager who may or may not know who the heck you are, the sound-person seems annoyed that you are there and while spending most of the time on their iPhone will not listen to your constant request for more vocal in the monitor and can't seem to hear the feedback that keeps recurring, if there is a rider it is likely to be some warm cans of cooking lager and maybe some crisps. You are often left to sort out your own accommodation which means the whole band cramming in a family room at Travelodge or crashing on someone's floor. It sure isn't glamorous! One of my female friends in a touring band used to try and pull so she would have a bed to sleep in for the night. I will not reveal who that was though (ha ha!). One thing is for sure, if you tour in the UK it's for the love of making music and playing for people, not the lifestyle. In Europe you could kind of get used to being treated so well. It's nice.

UK TOUR MANAGER, LIVING IN THE UK

From my perspective, when it comes to touring in Europe, you can guarantee that venues will look after you a lot better than in the UK. Sure, the people (within the genre I work in) are mostly lovely, wherever you are, but in terms of actually getting fed and watered, European promoters pay more attention to basic human needs - like food. I don't work with any divas, so it's all fairly basic stuff. Perhaps it's because Europeans have a healthier view on eating? Or it's an important part of family/community life in mainland Europe? I'm not sure. When you're on the road, it's so valuable to be able to have good food - but also, it really helps the budget of musicians when they're not constantly having to shell out for an evening meal. On the breakfast side of things, it's rare to find a European hotel that doesn't include breakfast in the price,

which also helps. It's all about food! Coffee in the UK sucks. It doesn't in Europe and you can mostly guarantee that toilets in Europe will be better than in the UK.

Food aside, in comparison, I really feel that Europeans value live music more in this current climate. The economy doesn't help here in the UK, but you only have to look at the fees that European countries can offer in comparison to similar venues in the UK. German fans, for example, are still buying CDs. Lots of them. Are people in the UK? Or is the UK consumer a downloading one? All of that makes a difference. But perhaps mainland Europe isn't so saturated with good live music? The UK, I think has always been able to put up a good fight for creating and establishing quality musicianship.

AMERICAN MANAGER, LIVING IN LONDON

The difference between my last sizeable run of European dates, and a comparable American run, could not have been more stark. Your audience is no doubt familiar with the typical glowing praise of Continental promoters and shows – the fees that make English guarantees feel so deeply, personally insulting in comparison, the exotic cheeses, wines and whiskies that seem to appear backstage whether you ask for them or not, the enthusiasm of the audience and their delight in actually dancing to your music; even the sun and the beaches and the unusually attractive women, all things whose lack cannot, strictly speaking, be blamed on the UK music industry, but that help to make touring in western Europe such a joy. I was lucky enough to enjoy all of that with one of my bands on a string of Spanish dates in July 2009, as the temperature hit a record-breaking 43 degrees and they played, on the last day, to about 5,000 people on San Sebastian beach at sunset, as part of a free, government-sponsored festival. What a delight, we all thought, to have experienced this. What a wonderful society; what admirable, civilised values. What a laudable use of taxpayers' money. It was one of the greatest days of all our lives. My bass player borrowed my phone to ring his mum right before they went on, and when he handed it back, his eyes were suspiciously shiny.

As in the UK, you won't find that kind of festival in America. Anywhere. Ever. And the drives are so long and petrol is so expensive and everyone who's not a sophisticated dweller of either coast is such a hick. Rather than feeling privileged to be having a stab at the sweetest dream imaginable, bands seem to think their American fans should feel lucky that they're even stopping in that dump of a town. I was lucky enough to be touring with a band who would never dream of making any of those complaints, but when we set off from New York in November 2010, on a self-booked tour of the South we knew would lose us money, it is fair to say morale was not as high as it would have been had we been heading for a Spanish bikini extravaganza. A concrete-block town hall in Durham, North Carolina was the biggest venue we were set to play; a single-car garage in Charlottesville, Virginia was the smallest. (It had, technically, a capacity of zero; the band just about squeezed in and played an un-amplified set to about 15 locals who sat in the street or on the pavement opposite.) Mostly, there were no guarantees other than a promise that a tip jar would be passed.

But the kindness of strangers was all the more overwhelming for being unexpected, humble and unassuming. In Charlottesville, the promoter apologised for the fact that only one pizza takeaway was still open after our midnight loadout and had stacks of food delivered to his house, where he was putting the band up – all seven of us, sleeping on freshly laundered sheets. In the morning he got out a guitar and my band spent a sunny hour jamming on his porch and talking about God, and love, and heartbreak, and things you'd never expect to share with a stranger. In Roanoke, the promoter, who also put us all up in her tiny flat, brought out vast bowls of amazing veggie chili and cornbread made with love by her mother, who has been quietly sustaining her daughter's touring-musician lodgers for years. In Durham, a local guitarist's wife fed my carsick singer homemade kombucha tea and the promoter gave us an extra \$100 out of pure kindness, apologising profusely that she couldn't do more. Did we still lose money? Of course. But we were profoundly moved by the experience. There was no question as to who the lucky ones were on that tour.

The earliest experiences that come to mind are playing in Spain at the Benicassim Festival in Valencia and Bam Festival in Barcelona. Compared to my time spent touring the UK where it can be very hit and miss, the Spanish really know how to look after bands. Not only do they make you feel like you are contributing something amazing and unique to their culture, you also get exceptionally well looked after. A fully stocked dressing room, wonderful dinners and hotels you would choose to stay in. All very calmly organised with a designated person to take care of almost every need.

Wonderful