

T H E I N D I E

M U S I C I A N

THE EASY WAY TO BOOK YOUR GIGS

Here's all the steps you will need to take to successfully book your gig or tour and make all the necessary arrangements.

This book is organised in order of the steps you will need to take. It includes a 10 step guide to booking your gig, how to write a bio, what to put in your press kit, a booking sheet, a gig checklist and much more to help make booking your gig or tour easier.

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INDEX

Click on a topic below to go directly to that page

10 SIMPLE STEPS TO BOOKING YOUR GIG(S)

BOOKING A GIG

PUTTING TOGETHER A PRESSKIT

SAMPLE BIO

FOLLOWING UP VENUES

BOOKING SHEET

BOOKING SHEET (printable version)

GETTING OFFERED A GIG

PERFORMANCE CONTRACT

PRE - TOUR/GIG ARRANGEMENTS

TOUR CHECKLIST

TOUR CHECKLIST (printable version)

10 WAYS TO PROMOTE YOUR BAND AND GIG

GETTING ANOTHER GIG

10 SIMPLE STEPS TO BOOKING YOUR GIG(S)

- 1 Read '*Booking A Gig*' on page 4 and '*Putting Together a Press Kit*' on pages 5, 6, & 7).
- 2 Locate the contact details for the venues suitable to your style of music and that you would like to perform at. You can make this task quicker and easier by using a venue directory such as '*100 Aussie Gigs*' available through <http://www.theindiemusician.com>
- 3 Prepare some demo/promo CD's and Bio's ready to post. Send a CD & Bio to the address listed for each venue that you have selected, as appropriate for your style of music.
- 4 Read '*Following Up Venues*' on pages 9. Keep notes on the progress of your follow ups. This will require your patience as you will probably have to make contact with the venue more than once. If you stay committed you should be able to get some idea of whether the venue will give you a gig.
- 5 Read '*Booking Sheet*' on pages 10, 11 & 12, '*Getting Offered a Gig*' on page 14 and '*Performance Contract*' on page 15.
- 6 Complete a booking sheet for each gig you get confirmed. If applicable, send out a performance contract for the venue to sign and return to you.
- 7 Read '*Pre - Tour/Gig Arrangements*' on page 16 and '*Tour Checklist*' on page 17 & 18.
- 8 Start arranging the relevant travel and accommodation, sound, lighting and publicity using the appropriate pages included in this book.
- 9 Read '*10 Ways To Promote Your Band and Gig*' on pages 20 & 21. Take action on promoting your band and music.
- 10 Your tour/gig. Read '*Getting Another Gig*' on page 22.

CLICKING ON THE HEADING, WHICH IS AT THE TOP LEFT OF MOST PAGES
WILL RETURN YOU TO THE MAIN INDEX PAGE

BOOKING A GIG

Basic tips... Keep a 'gig' file and keep all records relating to gigs together in one file so you can find them easily. When you have selected the venue/s you think would be most appropriate for your style of music, send the booking contact your bio and demo CD along with a cover letter. The cover letter should be kept short and give your name and the name of the band you are representing. Let the venue know that you are planning some shows in their city (if you have an idea of when, you can put that in) and would appreciate if they could have a listen to your demo with a view to booking your band for a performance.

These are the questions venues will be interested in before booking your band.

How many people can you bring to a gig?

What sort of promotion will you do for a show?

Where else are you playing in the same city and when?

Where is the band based / from?

What genre is your music?

What is the line up of the band?

Are all band members 18+? (you will not be permitted entry if under 18 - ID's may be checked)

Make sure you include all your contact details on ALL promotional material; ie.

a) band name and contact name

b) contact phone number(s)

c) contact email address

Be sure to *clearly* put your contact details on each item you send. Remember that most entertainment bookers get loads of CD's each week and are usually pushed for time to listen to everything. If you don't follow up each venue after sending it to the booker, you probably won't get your CD heard or get a gig. On the other hand, don't 'hassle' the booker, they are busy people and have a responsibility to the venue to get punters in to the venue. That's the bottom line for any venue, they exist to make money and they make money by selling drinks. If your band does not have its own audience base you won't be a booking priority, however most venues are willing (and do) take a chance with an unknown act and this is your opportunity to make a good impression.

PUTTING TOGETHER A PRESSKIT

What it is and why you need one... A press kit is a media package documenting your band's career and distinguishing your band as unique from other bands. You should present your press kit either binded in book form or in a folder with insert compartments, so all your band's information can be put together in the left and right sides of the folder.

Stick to a Black or White folder rather than something bright unless it keeps with a band theme. The folder is the first visual image the recipient will have with your band so it's best to keep it as professional as possible. If your band has had professionally made stickers, you can stick one on the front of your press kit.

What to include... Your press kit should include your band's biography, your band's forthcoming gig/tour itinerary, your band's releases to date, unique or important information about your band's successes, a photo of your band and your band's published articles or reviews. When you receive printed articles that are favorable to your band you should cut them out and make a file for them. Be sure to make a note of the publication and the date of the article. When you include these articles in your press kit make a photo copy of it, do not send the original article. Not everyone you send your press kit to will take the time to read everything you have included, so it is important to make sure your entire press kit looks professional and has good content. Make each page clear and concise and set up the kit so that even with a quick glance, the reader will see some of your band's achievements and get an idea who what you're about.

EPK (Electronic Press Kit)... An EPK is just a digital version of a press kit. It's a good idea to have one available as some venues and music industry people will accept or even prefer them. Ideally, you should have your own unique domain website or at least a page hosted on some-elses site as well as an EPK

PUTTING TOGETHER A PRESSKIT.....continued

BIO (BIOGRAPHY)

What it is and why you need one... A 'bio' is written to tell the reader basic information, band history and contact details for your band. Anytime you send a music demo for potential gigs, press, radio play, prospective record labels etc you should send an up to date bio as well. It is important to remember that the person you are sending your bio to is probably not going to have the time to wade through pages of information on how great you are and how much you rock !! So KEEP IT SIMPLE and RELEVANT, the most important thing about your bio is to keep the reader interested in reading about you.

What to include... If you have received any press, you should put the strongest part of the article in your bio followed by the name of the publication that featured your article and the date it was featured. If you have some professional band photos (colour or B&W), scan one and print it out on an A4 size paper attached to your one page bio. If you don't have the facility to scan and/or print the photo yourself, take the photo or digital file of the scan to a commercial printer or stationery suppliers such as 'Officeworks' or 'Kinkos' and have them print it out for you. This is not expensive and should be within a band's budget to do.

PUTTING TOGETHER A PRESSKIT.....continued

BIO (BIOGRAPHY)

Basic tips... Keep your bio to one page. Write your bio in the third person and keep it neat and easy to read. Leave a space between each line in your bio. Put a date on your bio so the reader knows how up to date it is and make sure you include full contact details for your band including a contact name. If you can afford it, have your bio laminated or printed on a stronger/thicker paper, this will help your bio to be more durable and last longer when it gets folded, handled and left lying around. For a professional looking bio that will get noticed, print your bio with your band's logo and/or a colour or design consistent with your demo CD and other press kit materials. If you are needing a little creative inspiration for the written content, get on the internet and find similar style bands or bands that you like and see what they have written about themselves in their 'about the band section'. Never make up content or lie. If your band is new and you have not done any gigs or had any press you can still make a bio, you'll just have to make it clear in your bio that you are a new band and have not been around long enough to accumulate press and gigs. Once you start getting gigs put this on your bio, this will then increase your ability to get some press then radio play etc. Update your bio as you need to and keep a mail / e-mail list of music industry contacts so you can send them an update them on your bands progress.

Sample bio... On the next page you will find an example to give you some ideas. You can use this as a guideline or come up with your own. There are many ways to write a bio and as long as you remember the purpose of your bio (see above) you will be fine.

SAMPLE BIO

YOUR BAND NAME

About us

John (20, vocals), Lee (20, Bass), Mike (21, Guitar) and Chris (20, Drums) formed **OUR BAND** in 2001 while all four members were attending the same school on the outskirts of Melbourne. **OUR BAND** performs their own material co-written by the guitarist and the vocalist. Their musical style and influences include The Living End, Powderfinger and Eskimoe Joe. **OUR BAND** started performing live at school functions and recorded a 4 track demo to sell at these performances. This recording has now sold 50 copies and with a 20 song original set list **OUR BAND** have plenty of material for live performances to excite both new and existing audiences.

What they say

“**OUR BAND** are a young band with an infectious and tight musicality, a rare feature indeed for a ‘new’ band.”... Karen Simons, Bay Music News, Aug 2003

“If **OUR BAND** continue to record and perform with the same dedication to excellence as they have been, they will surely soon be a band on the lips of many a music fan. Seeing **OUR BAND** perform will captivate your rock and roll imagination and leave you wanting more of what **OUR BAND** can offer.”... Russell Baker, Edition, Jan 2004

What we say

OUR BAND has received airplay on Melbourne independant radio stations 3PBS and 3RRR for their demo CD as well as being the feature act in a local community event for the Ourtown Arts Festival in November 2004. Having built **OUR BAND** up from 4 school mates getting together after school to jam, to a confident and solid live band with strong polished material, **OUR BAND** are dedicated to building a live following. A debut 8 track CD is currently being recorded and scheduled for a May 2005 release. **OUR BAND** has already received interest from radio presenters willing to give airplay to the upcoming release as well as interest from independent music stores willing to stock it.

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FOLLOWING UP VENUES

At the top of a blank page, write the name of the venue. Use a new page for each venue you send your CD & Bio to. Under the heading of the venue name make a note of the address and contact name where you sent your press kit. Make a note also of the date it was sent out. This will help you stay up to date with details such as when and where you post your CD, who you speak to and when. You should make a follow up call or e-mail about a week after you have sent off your press kit, to the venue's entertainment booker to confirm they have received your press kit. This follow up will give you an opportunity to ask how long you should allow for the booking person to get a chance to have a look and listen to your CD and Bio. This procedure will require a delicate balance between 'hassling' the booking person and politely asking for your band's CD to be given a listen for an opportunity to perform at the venue. Each time you make a phone call or e-mail to follow up the gig booking process, make a note of when you phoned (or e-mailed), who you spoke to and the outcome of the contact.

If you are asked to call back , schedule a suitable date and time to call back then make a note of what was said. This process will keep you on top of where you stand with regard to a possible gig. It will also give you the 'facts' so when you phone you can say something like this.....

“My name is (your name), I represent (band name), I sent you a CD & Bio on (date you sent them your press kit). When we last spoke on (mention the date you last made contact) you suggested I call back on today to find out if you have had a chance to listen to our CD (name of your CD) and consider us for a live booking.”

BOOKING SHEET

What it is and why you need one... A booking sheet will ensure that when you book a gig you take care of all aspects of the gig. The booking sheet will serve as your checklist ensuring you have taken care of all the details regarding your gig. You can keep your booking sheet along with a copy of your set list for future reference and royalty payment information. Remember that you may wish to perform again at this venue but even if you don't, you should always adopt a professional attitude towards the 'business' side of selling and promoting your music.

What to include:

Day and Date of Performance:

Venue:

Venue's Website and E-mail Address:

Address of Venue:

Contact Name for Venue: Write the name of the person who you booked the gig with here

Phone Number: Write down the phone number for the venue and if applicable, a contact number (if it is not through the venue) for the person with whom you booked the gig.

Venue's Opening and Closing Times:

Flyers: Ask if the venue would post up some flyers at the venue for you. If not ask if you can go in yourself a week or so before the gig and put some up.

Sound Engineer and Cost:

Lighting Technician and Cost: Don't be afraid to ask the venue what lighting they have. Most venues will have at least some basic lighting that you should be able to move around before you start, to accommodate your show. The venue may have an in house lighting technician they prefer you to use but if you have your own lighting technician just make sure that it's ok with the venue first.

BOOKING SHEET.....continued

Stage Set Up: Not every venue will have a stage, so if you're not sure, ask. This is really only an important factor if your band needs a fair amount of stage space for equipment/instruments.

Special Equipment Requirements: Most venues will have their own P.A and microphones. If you're not sure, check with the venue to confirm that they have all the sound equipment that you will need for your gig.

Load in Time:

Sound Check:

Load in Directions: Note any special requirements for load in. Not all venues will want you to bring all your equipment in through the front door, they may have a side or back entrance that will make loading in much easier for you and keep you out of the way of customers.

Performance Time:

Set length:

Number of acts/bands also performing on the night:

Names of acts/bands also performing on the night: If you can, try to get a contact name and number for the other bands playing. Apart from goodwill you may have opportunities to share equipment, advertising costs and/or sound and lighting costs. Introducing yourself to other bands is a good way to start networking and if you are from out of town it may be an opportunity to invite a band to play a gig with you in your town.

Band Room/storage of equipment: It's a good idea to know if there is somewhere you can store (preferably a lockable room) your equipment whilst waiting to set up and/or play.

Rider:

Guest List:

BOOKING SHEET.....continued

Cost of Entry to Gig: If there is a door charge, note how it will be split between band/s and venue.

Door Person: You may have to provide a person to collect payment at the door. If there are other bands playing on the night, you could share this between band members while you band is not playing.

Venue's Advertising and Promotion: Most Venues will list their featured upcoming artists in a music publication's gig guide section. By finding out which publications the venue uses, you will be able to co-ordinate your advertising and possibly some featured interviews or articles on your band.

Band Payment: Make a note of the agreed payment details and method, cash or cheque (or both). Also, make a note here of how and when you are to collect your payment and who you are to collect it from.

On the next page, you will find a blank version of a booking sheet that you can print out and use if you wish.

Venue:

Day and Date of Performance:

Venue's Website and E-mail Address:

Address of Venue:

Contact Name for Venue:

Phone Number:

Venue's Opening and Closing Times:

Flyers:

Sound Engineer and Cost:

Lighting Technician and Cost:

Stage Set Up:

Special Equipment Requirements:

Load in Time:

Sound Check:

Load in Directions:

Performance Time:

Set length:

Number of acts/bands also performing on the night:

Names of acts/bands also performing on the night

Band Room/storage of equipment:

Rider:

Guest List:

Cost of Entry to Gig:

Door Person:

Venue's Advertising and Promotion:

Band Payment:

Notes:

GETTING OFFERED A GIG

Congratulations!

When you get offered a date for a gig you can pull out your booking sheet and ask the person confirming your gig if they have time to go through a few of the gig details with you now. Fill in as much as you know about the gig on the booking sheet, some information you may need to confirm at a date closer to the gig date. Attach the booking sheet to your follow up notes so everything relating to this venue is kept together.

PERFORMANCE CONTRACT

What it is and why you need one... A performance contract is simply an agreement between two parties (artist and venue) on the conditions expected for your performance. It's not essential that you have one but it's professional and a good idea if you are going to be performing out of town gigs. Having a contract signed will help save any dispute between the band and the venue/promoter as all the details will be signed and agreed upon in writing so there can be no misunderstanding.

What to include:

Venue: Write the both the name and address of venue

Date of Performance: Also include the performance time

Payment: Write in the amount agreed upon that you'll receive, when and how payment will be collected. This is the most important detail in your contract

Performance Details: Include your expected performance times and any special requirements (e.g. noise restrictions)

Recording: If the gig is going to be recorded by the venue, ensure you make clear if you authorize the venue to reproduce your performance at a later date. This authority is normally up to the artist, but make sure you give an authorization either way

Sound & Lighting: If you are expected to pay any costs for these (or have the cost taken out of your earnings) state so in your contract

Merchandise: Do you have the right to sell your merchandise at the venue. Also note if there are any requirements as to where you can set up and what times (e.g. before/after your set as well as during)

Meals and Accommodation: May not be applicable, but include this if a meal and/or accommodation is included by the venue. If it is, make sure you put the number of meals & beds required

Signed: The contract must be signed by both parties. The artist/performer *and* the venue. Don't forget to give a copy of the signed contract to the venue and keep a signed copy of the contract for your records

PRE - TOUR/GIG ARRANGEMENTS

Making the most of your gigs... Now that your gig is booked, it's time to book some accommodation then put some promotional strategies in place. Check out the 'Accommodation' section in this book or make alternative arrangements. Keep in mind that you may need to access to your accommodation all hours and make sure you will have lockable storage for your equipment. Also make sure you can access your equipment when you need it. Another thing to consider is what cooking and kitchen facilities are available. You can help keep your expenses down if you can cook at least some of your meals where you are staying.

To get maximum promotion for your gig/s, it's worth sending some CD's to some local radio stations and street press for possible airplay and reviews. Look into to setting up an 'in-store' unplugged show, live to air radio performances and/or interviews. See if you can 'share' advertising costs with the other bands you will playing with so you can afford bigger more professional ads. Don't forget to to check out '10 WAYS TO PROMOTE YOUR BAND AND GIG' included in this book.

And remember to list your gig in as many (appropriate) gig guides as possible.

Make sure you check out the requirements and deadline of the publication so you don't miss out.

TOUR CHECKLIST

A tour checklist may help you to make sure you have covered all bases and don't leave anything until it's too late.

On the next page, you will find an example of a tour checklist and what things need to be arranged for your gig.

Feel free to print the blank version on the page the following the example or copy this format for your own use. Using the same method you can manage more than one gig to suit your tour. Start the checklist process when you have confirmed your gig date/s. If you don't have much time before your gig date, you can still use the same checklist order but you may have to make a number of pre-tour arrangements simultaneously.

Book a flight / arrange transport (if required):

Book accomodation:

Two months before 1st gig date: Organise advertising, radio Interviews, instore shows and press articles

One month before 1st gig date: Organise a sound engineer and lighting technician

Two weeks before 1st gig date: Place gig guide listings and send/take some flyers to the venue

One week before 1st gig date: Work out how you will be getting to and from the venue

Things to pack for your tour: ID, money, phone, clothes, toiletries, musical equipment & accessories (eg. leads), CD's, flyers, press kits, merchandise, your venue gig booking sheet

Date of 1st gig:

Book a flight / arrange transport (if required):

Book accomodation:

Two months before 1st gig date:

One month before 1st gig date:

Two weeks before 1st gig date:

One week before 1st gig date:

Things to pack for your tour:

Date of 1st gig:

10 WAYS TO PROMOTE YOUR BAND AND GIG

1. Get your band a website A website does not have to cost you a fortune to set up. You can buy inexpensive software which helps you to do a simple design yourself on your home PC. It costs very little to register your domain name.

2. Start a mailing list You can do this by old fashioned mail outs to addresses or by e-mail or by text message. Keep people up to date with your gigs, news and recordings.

3. Get yourself a recording that you can use as a demo A 'demo' doesn't have to be an expensive polished production, you can record your band at rehearsal yourself or contact a professional engineer to record it for you. Record at least three songs so you give the listener a good idea of your sound/style and competency. Audio engineer schools often need bands to for their trainee engineers gain recording experience.

4. Make a song available as a free download Get at least one of your songs on a MP3 site such as www.mp3.com or www.mp3.com.au There is no cost to do this.

5. Make a sampler CD of your band's music make up a CD sleeve including a brief story of your band. The idea here is to use the CD to get your music heard and your band name recognized by as many potential fans as you can. If your music fits a particular demographic or interest group you can possibly distribute your promo CD through these channels. Hand out CD's to punters free at a venue that you are booked to play in advance to your playing there, or make up a display where you can promote you band playing at a particular venue and provide free CD samplers available at the bar or elsewhere. Use your imagination and remember to ask permission before promoting yourself through someone else's business or interest group. Although this will cost, it can be done fairly cost effectively as the cost of producing CD's can be kept to under \$1 per CD (you can use wallets instead of CD cases if you like). Keep in mind that you are best promoting your sampler to people who are already gig goers or are likely to have an interest in your style of music. This might sound like you are preaching to the converted, but you want to target the people first who are most likely to buy your CD and/or go to your shows. Grow your audience base and 'followers' will catch on as you grow.

10 WAYS TO PROMOTE YOUR BAND AND GIG.....continued

6. Make yourself newsworthy If you want someone to write an article or story about your band you must first have a story to give them. Sounds logical but just having a gig or a CD is not a story. You can make yourself more newsworthy by having an angle or story about your band that sets you apart from other bands. Has your band done something special/different or have a special event or a CD release gig.

7. Organise your own event or gig This doesn't have to be at a pub or live music venue, it could be outdoors, at a house, theatre, community hall, church, school or an 'instore' appearance at a CD retail outlet. There are government grants available to help you put on some type of events and most councils have an 'entertainment' budget should you be able to arrange an event that fits in with the communities needs.

8. Power in numbers Network and join forces with other musicians, organisations and groups. This will enable you to share budgets, resources and skills. Helping other people get what they want is the surest way to help you get what you want.

9. Get on the Internet and promote your music. Look for sites that include reviews or gig notices. Ask other website owners to add your band's website link in return for a reciprocal link from your band's website. Avoid common or generic keywords and optimize your website for the best search engine keywords. Remember to know your target market as best you can and keep your promotions directed to those most likely to be interested in your music.

10. Promotional merchandise Get you band name and or logo out to your fans through your website and live shows. A great 'gimmick' to add to your press kit.

GETTING ANOTHER GIG

Getting another gig... When you've played your first gig at the venue, it's a good opportunity to develop a relationship with the venue and it's booking person for future gigs. You won't have to go through all the initial steps of sending in press kits etc, you will have a fair idea of how the venue operates and the venue will also have a fair idea of you. This is why it is so important to always be polite and professional, apart from simply making dealing with other people a pleasant experience.

Touring Tips... Domestic flights have never been cheaper, quicker and easier to book. With a little effort, you can get your band in front of new audiences in a D.I.Y. interstate tour or promotional gig.

Of course you can also load up a car or van with your equipment and drive to your destination.

Once your gig and accommodation are booked, the biggest factor with 'out of town' touring is going to be your band's equipment. There is usually a lot of it and it can be heavy and awkward to carry and will need to be kept in a secure place when you're not around to mind it.

Try and hire the large and/or heavy items such as amplifiers and drums or arrange to share them with a band you will be playing with. Bring on tour with you, only equipment that is particular to your act. Things such as : microphones, drum sticks, drum cymbals, guitars, bass guitars, leads, strings, tuner, effects units etc.

Check with rehearsal rooms to see if they will let you hire equipment for use outside the studio. If you are hiring equipment it's a good idea to rehearse using the 'new' equipment so you can get a sound you like and get practise with the equipment you intend to do your show with.