

GIG ADVICE from Gig & Events Guide

Gigging and Touring Luv it or hate it Gigging & Touring are essential if you want to tighten up your act, build a fanbase and get noticed. Over the next few months we'll be filling these pages with useful advice, humorous stories and links to essential services for you and your fans.

Join us with YOUR gigging stories some of which you'll find on the articles sections! Share the best and worst gigs or warn fellow muso's of problem venues!

If you are an amateur musician looking for P.A. set up advice, check out our Equipment page at Vocalist whilst Pro Muso's will find links to Equipment Suppliers and Manufacturers at the Electric Blues Club main site.

[Protecting Your Identity](#)

[Pre Booking Advice](#)

[Pre Gig Advice](#)

[Travel Info](#)

[Area Guides & Info](#)

[At the Gig and Beyond!](#)

[Be a Responsible Performer!](#)

[Links to Essential Resources](#) PROTECTING YOUR IDENTITY Before you set out on the live circuit you should ensure that you are not using a name currently in use and protect the name you choose by registering it with a recognised company

ACTS - can check with the relevant countries Equity organisation although they can only inform you if the current user is a member.

BANDS - can use [Swarming Midget Band Name Archive](#) to search for names in use and [BandName](#) to search and register their band name Free.

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

1. Do some research, call or visit when its quiet and the booker has time to chat.
 2. Keep a list of who you contacted, the date, their reaction and any call back date.
 3. Record a clear 'live' demo for sending to prospective bookers. Studio recordings are ok but venues really want to know how you sound 'live' - if you can't reproduce it onstage then don't send it!!
 4. If the venue is a regular booker of entertainment try and arrange a 'floorspot' with a freindly resident act or band to showcase your ability or invite bookers and agents to gigs at regular venues.
 5. Supply your own flyers, posters etc., to ensure your gig is publicised.
 6. Once a booking has been agreed if you dont have a contract then confirm the date, start time and cost in writing including your publicity and keep copies, (in case of disputes/double bookings etc).
 7. Contact the local newspaper and radio stations to request addition to their gig, events or whats on guide. PRE GIG ADVICE Simple tips to help you avoid those awful 'oh no' moments, especially if your band members are bad timekeepers, lousy with directions or have short term memories!
 Of course if you have never been late, missed, double booked, forgotton or mislaid anything you can skip this section!!
1. Ensure all band members know the Gig Date, Venue Address, Set Up Time well in advance and remind them again the day prior to the event.
 2. List and mark all your equipment including leads, spares, plugboards, accessories etc., and check everything prior to leaving for the venue and of course at the end of the gig.
 3. Set up and check your equipment regularly to ensure there are no embarrassing failures on the night.
 4. Always carry spare speaker, amp, power leads, power supply, fuses, an extra long extension plug board, strings, plectrum and spare microphone -

working bands need all of these sooner or later so be prepared.

5. Solo acts, DJ's and Karaoke Entertainers when using their own P.A. should get a second amp and carry a back up disc of their songs for emergencies where possible. TRAVEL INFO Getting ALL the band from A to Z can be a real pain in the u know what..... Someone invariably ends up photocopying the maps, sending out the flyers and organising the publicity (in my band.....yes it's me!). Trundling down to the local jam can be just as complicated if you suddenly discover the trains are on strike & you've already consumed your quota of the old amber stuff ;-P & Be prepared and check out the time tables and routes for all your gigs with these handy links.

[Transport for London Journey Planner](#) Check routes and plan your journey

[Public Transport](#) UK nationwide public transport info.

[London Transport](#) Info & Links for Public Transport around London

[The Tube](#) UK London Underground Railway info, tickets etc.,

[The Train Line](#) Buy advance train tickets online

[Network Rail](#) (formely Railtrack) UK Mainline Railway info and timetables

[MultiMap](#) Links to configurable and printer friendly maps are in County gig guide or you can search for a postcode address using the Search Engine below

[StreetMap](#) Another good Road Map service.

For cheap flights:

[Easy Jet](#)

[Ryan Air](#)

[Go Fly](#)

AREA GUIDES & INFO If your gigging away from your local stompin' ground it's worth checking out the area before punting for gigs - after all it's a complete waste of time booking your great Heavy Metal band into a venue whose clientel are jazz purists, or allowing your manager or promoter to put your Soul or Dance Duo on at a Rock n Roll Bikers Rally. & Yes it might give you exposure - probably not the kind you want though!! AT THE GIG & BEYOND! You've arrived, set up and performed a blinding gig to a lively and appreciative crowd (probably!!!), so all that remains is packing up equipment and collecting your fee!! If you have made an equipment checklist and marked everything then it will be easy to make sure you have everything you came with!

Never leave your instruments or equipment unguarded

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

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

[Musicians Union](#) or [Equity](#) members can approach their union who may act on their behalf to recover the money. & Serious and Repeat offenders are often included in the Musicians Union newsletter or blacklist to warn fellow performers. If you are not a member you can still report the offending venue as they will often monitor the offender for the benefit of their membership. It's worth joining as the MU has a number of free and reduced fee services for musicians.

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

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

If the venue double books you and you're pipped at the post by another performer the venue is still obliged to pay you some recompense. If you have a contract or letter you may insist that the other act leave and you complete the gig. Alternatively, depending on the contract or terms of the letter you can request payment in full, payment for time, travel and advertising expenses and/or an alternative booking. & Which course you follow often

depends on how well you get on with the venue, whether it was an isolated incident, genuine mistake or how far you have travelled.

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

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

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

We have supplied an example contract and a booking letter for you to read, print or download [Agents and Performers Contracts](#). There is a comprehensive Entertainment Agencies contract sample and a very basic letter used by acts/bands/venues to confirm bookings, both of which can be adapted to your requirements. Do not be put off by its terms and conditions as venues, agents and performers alike tend to work things out between them. For example, a club or pub booking a rock band would not expect them to wear tux and tails! The same follows for any problems that may arise, you should always endeavour to reach a compromise or alternative agreement, especially if you want to perform at the venue again. In the first instance contact the agent or manager who issued the contract who will try to negotiate on your behalf. **BE A RESPONSIBLE PERFORMER** Many newcomers are unaware of their responsibilities towards the venue and fellow performers, so heres a few pointers.

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

Thats all folks - Happy Giggiging!!! Links to Essential Resources All of the following links provide free online information.

[Electric Blues Club](#) Musicians Free Resources, Agents, Venues Listings & Info

[10 Big Myths About Copyright Explained](#)

[Band Names at Music Law](#) Rights and protecting the rights of your band name

[Band Name \(UK\)](#) (formerly known as The Band Register) A searchable band names database and free registration service

[British Music Rights](#) Providing information and advice on Music Rights

[Equity](#) The Actors, Singers, Musicians & Performers Union

[Media UK](#) Contacts, Addresses & Links to UK local & national press, magazines, radio & more.

[Music Law](#) Information on legal issues regarding music and musicians

[Musicians Union \(UK\)](#) Established Union for Musicians, Performers & Music Tutors

[Phonographic Performance Limited](#) (amalgamation of PAMRA & AURA) - music industry organisation collecting and distributing airplay and public performance royalties in the UK

[Performing Rights in UK](#) UK Government information on Performing Rights

[Performing Rights Society](#) Seminars, Industry & Artist Info plus collection & distribution of royalty payments

[Swarming Midget Band Name Register](#) Archive of band names in use

[The White Book](#) Production Directory. & Music, Theatre & Events Directory (Essential!!)

[The Stage Newspaper](#) UK weekly actors & performers news, ads n more.

[NME](#) Weekly music newspaper for original & groundbreaking artists

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About the Author

[Gig & Events Guide](#) is part of the [Electric Blues Club](#) and [Vocalist](#) group of non-profit websites providing free online advice and information to musicians and singers.

Tracey Howard-Baker (aka [RoXi](#)) is the founder, club organiser, singer and author of [Karaoke!](#) and has a wealth of experience in working in various aspects of the music industry and who writes a large proportion of the articles and advice columns at all of the sites.

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