



# MU

## Live

# Music

A Guide to Hosting and Promoting Live Music

## Kit

Musicians'  
Union

**MMU**

Musicians'  
Union





Live

# Music

## is Good for Business...

Live music is valued by customers and venues alike. For customers, live performance is another reason to go to a pub, and an enjoyable accompaniment to a few drinks. However, for pubs and venues the value of live music is realised through increased sales and rising levels of customers.

Research released by PRS for Music\* revealed that:

- Live music is the best way to increase sales – with 24% of publicans reporting an increase in takings of 25%-50% on nights when they have music, and 71% reporting an increase of 10-25%.
- On average, pubs without featured music are three times more likely to close than pubs with featured music.
- One respondent said: “Since taking over 6 months ago, we do music 6 nights a week where there was none before and profits doubled”

\*“The value of music in pubs’ – research conducted by CGA, 2010.

# The Live Music Act 2012...

The Live Music Act, which came into force on October 1st 2012, means that many small venues are now able to put on live music without a music licence (this does not apply to PPL and PRS licences, which you will still need – see ‘Music Licences’ section)

## Am I Covered?

You are able to put on live music under the terms of the Act if:

- You are based in England or Wales
- You have an alcohol licence\*
- There will be fewer than 200 people in the audience (for amplified music).  
**There is no audience limit for unamplified music**
- The live music will **not** take place between the hours of 23.00 and 08.00

\* In some circumstances an alcohol licence may not be required. Contact The MU for advice.



# Incidental Music

In addition to the exemption detailed previously, you will not need regulated entertainment on your licence if you want to have music as part of another event, and if the following conditions apply:

- Music is **not** the main, or one of the main, reasons for people attending the premises
- Music is **not** advertised as the main attraction
- The volume of the music does not disrupt or predominate over other activities, and could be described as 'background' music



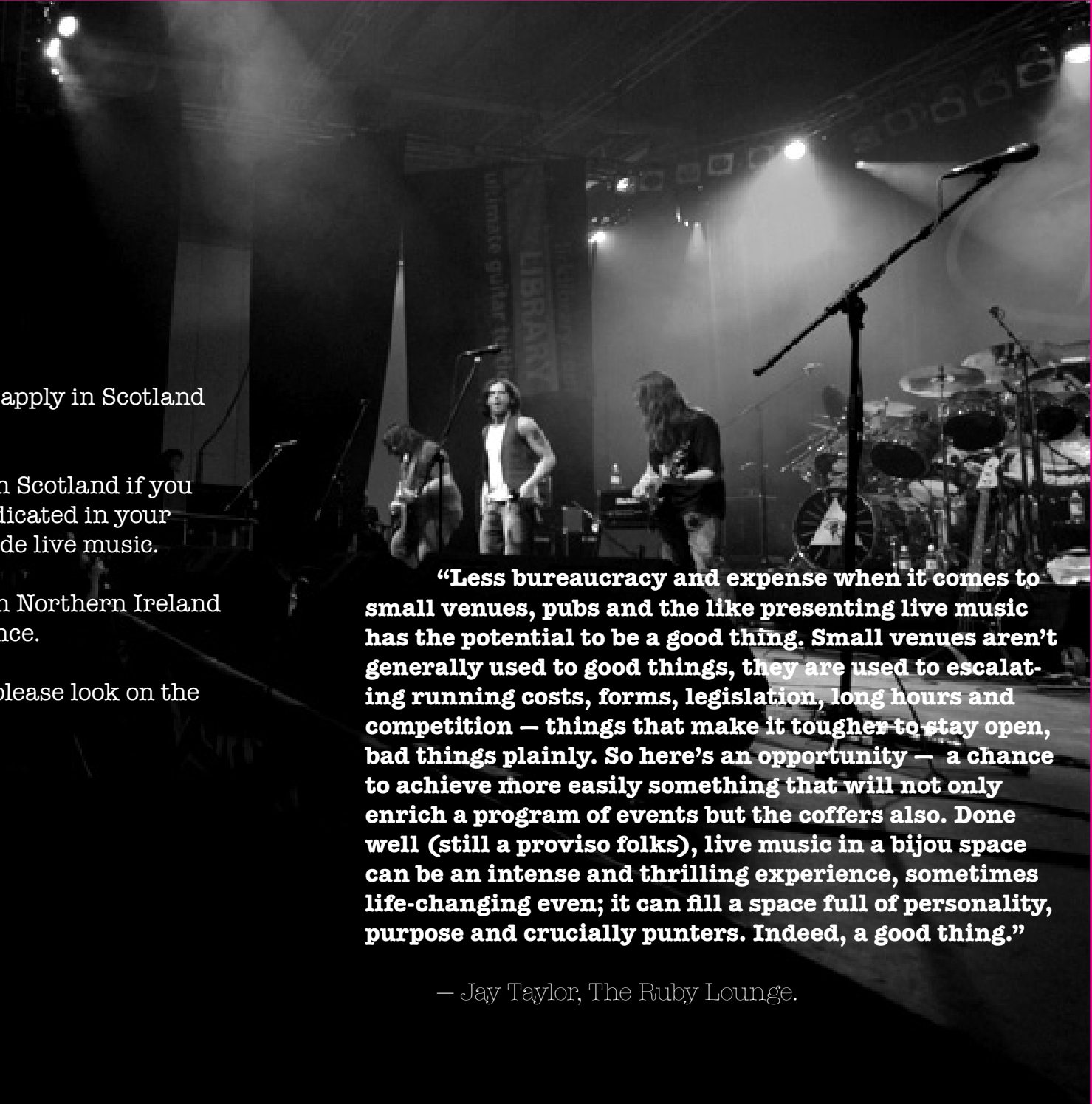
# What about Scotland & Northern Ireland?

The Live Music Act 2012 does not apply in Scotland or Northern Ireland.

You are able to put on live music in Scotland if you have a liquor licence, and have indicated in your operating plan that you will provide live music.

You are able to put on live music in Northern Ireland if you have an entertainment licence.

If you would like further details, please look on the MU website – [www.themu.org](http://www.themu.org)



**“Less bureaucracy and expense when it comes to small venues, pubs and the like presenting live music has the potential to be a good thing. Small venues aren’t generally used to good things, they are used to escalating running costs, forms, legislation, long hours and competition — things that make it tougher to stay open, bad things plainly. So here’s an opportunity — a chance to achieve more easily something that will not only enrich a program of events but the coffers also. Done well (still a proviso folks), live music in a bijou space can be an intense and thrilling experience, sometimes life-changing even; it can fill a space full of personality, purpose and crucially punters. Indeed, a good thing.”**

— Jay Taylor, The Ruby Lounge.

# Introducing The Live Music Kit...

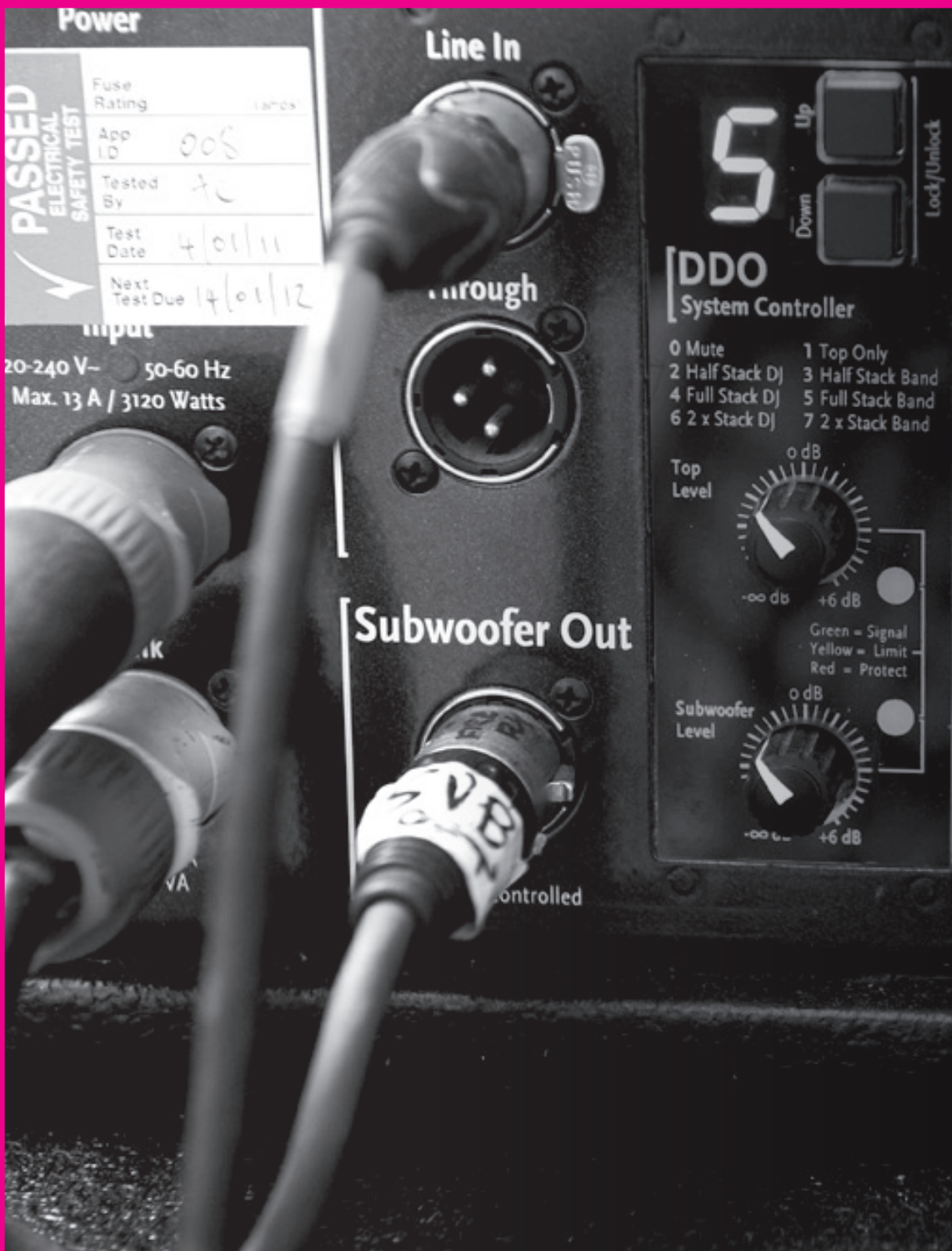
Britain is renowned for its vibrant, eclectic and engaging live music culture. From the backstreet pubs and clubs to the major concert halls and arenas, live music entertains audiences and generates significant revenue.

This informative guide demonstrates how live music can help your business to thrive, and will assist you to attract new customers, increase sales, generate a better atmosphere and develop a higher profile within your area.

The Live Music Kit also provides you with a range of resources and advice, including contracts, health & safety issues, promotion and useful contacts.

**“Both the feeling of playing in, and the feeling of listening to a good live band can be amongst the most exhilarating for anybody who likes music. Everything that can be done must be done to make sure that live music remains as a pre-eminent art form.”**

— Keith Harris, PPL UK.



# A Live Music Programme for your Venue.


Live music doesn't have to be a permanent or frequent fixture within a venue, and can be used effectively for one-off gigs and special occasions.

However, live music can also become a regular and crowd-pulling event, perhaps as part of a bigger programme of entertainment.

When starting out, it's advisable to be sensible in terms of the number of bookings that you make, and to appreciate that it won't necessarily be an overnight success. It may take a few shows — over weeks or months — for you to understand what your audience wants and the most suitable days and times to feature live music. With this in mind, don't over-commit yourself in terms of bookings, and allow your live music programme to grow slowly, but steadily.







**“The nerves, excitement and satisfaction that I felt when playing at Glastonbury Festival on the main stage last summer were just as intense when we played the Corner Pin pub in Stubbins twenty years ago. The encouragement the landlord and the friends that gathered back then gave us kept us writing and playing long enough to make a life from our passion. This result is a very important step towards easing the path for musicians of tomorrow. British music is one of our proudest exports, and every-one involved with raising this issue and voting in its favour should be enormously proud. Now let’s get drunk and have a sing!”**

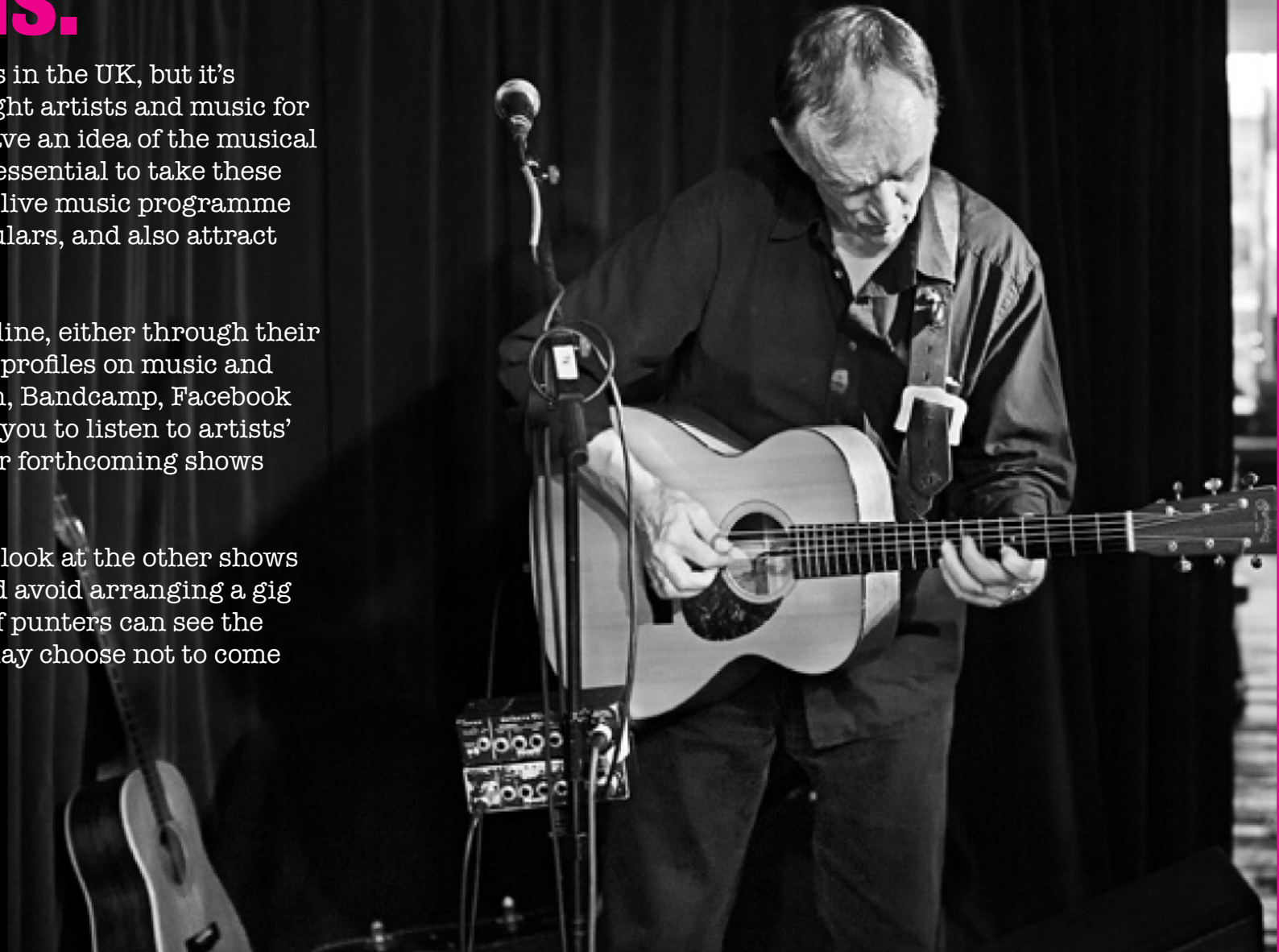
— Guy Garvey (Elbow), pub and music fan, speaking about the implementation of the Live Music Act.

# Finding the right Musicians.

There's no shortage of musicians in the UK, but it's important that you select the right artists and music for your venue. You may already have an idea of the musical tastes of your regulars, and it's essential to take these into consideration. Ideally, your live music programme will appeal to your existing regulars, and also attract new customers to your venue.

Most musicians can be found online, either through their own website or through hosting profiles on music and social media sites (ReverbNation, Bandcamp, Facebook etc). These sites will often allow you to listen to artists' music, and will also display their forthcoming shows and contact details.

When booking gigs with artists, look at the other shows that they are playing locally and avoid arranging a gig too close to their other dates – if punters can see the band the following week, they may choose not to come to the gig at your venue.





Alternatively, if you'd prefer to enlist the help of someone who's in-the-know, try getting in touch with local promoters to see if they'll work with you by hosting some shows in your venue. Check regional listings and local venues' websites to find freelance promoters working in your area. Promoters will be able to assist you in putting line-ups together, setting ticket prices and promoting and selling shows.

Similarly, many artists are now adept at self-and event-promotion, and may therefore also be able to help you in putting shows together, or in hosting a residency (weekly/fortnightly/monthly) whereby they curate shows, and bring in different artists for each event.

Residencies and themed shows can attract a regular and increasing audience, as customers learn to trust that the music will generally be to their taste.

# Money.

When booking artists to play at your venue, you will need to agree the terms and conditions before you confirm the show.

As each show is unique, many promoters and artists negotiate fees on an individual basis, in order to find a mutually beneficial deal. It is important that both the booker/promoter and the artist are aware — and agree upon — the deal, in order that a contract can be exchanged. The use of a contract is imperative, as it assumes commitment from both parties and sets out the terms and conditions of the show.

There are many different types of deals and fees that can be negotiated. These include:

- A guaranteed fee payable to the artist. You agree a fee with the artist, and this won't subsequently vary in conjunction with audience size, ticket revenue or bar takings.
- A guaranteed, but smaller fee, plus a percentage of the door takings (when an entry fee is charged). The potential risk and profit are therefore shared accordingly by both parties.
- A deal that doesn't involve a guaranteed fee, but allows the artist to receive all of the door takings/ticket sales.



- A ticket deal, whereby artists sell tickets for their show, and receive some or all of the value of each ticket sold.
- A standard house deal. As opposed to negotiating fees with artists, you may choose to have a standard house fee that is payable to all artists/bands that you work with. If so, ensure that the fee is appropriate and that it will allow you to afford the kind of artists that you wish to work with.

If you're working with an agent or outside promoter, they may require a financial cut of the fee or door takings/ ticket sales. Alternatively you may choose to give them a budget for each event, out of which they pay themselves and the artists.

In addition to the fee or deal on offer, it is also important to ascertain with the artists:

- How and when the fee will be paid;
- Event timings and set length/s (including arrival, set-up, sound-check etc);
- Who is responsible for providing the equipment e.g., P.A;
- Who will deal with the promotion (this is often best handled together. See 'Promotion' section for further details).

Further advice:

- A copy of the standard MU live performance contract is attached for your information and use. If used as prescribed, this is a legally binding document.
- For guidance and advice in relation to fees, contact your Regional MU Office for an up-to-date list of gig rates (see 'Contacts' Section.)
- The MU's Fair Play Guide offers advice to artists and promoters, including how to negotiate fair deals. This can be downloaded from **[www.themu.org](http://www.themu.org)** or, for a printed copy, contact your Regional MU Office..

# Promotion.

As soon as you've started booking artists into your venue, it's vital to start the task of promotion. This will enable you to share the news of your entertainment with existing customers and new, potential customers. You won't necessarily become a successful promoter overnight, but as you build your audience and the profile of your venue, you will find that the role of promotion becomes clearer and easier.

There are several methods of promotion, and these are often best used in conjunction with one another:

- **Internal** — Start within the venue itself. Make use of available wall space to display posters, chalkboards to write details of listings, and distribute flyers via tabletops at busy times. If you are charging an entry fee to events, sell tickets behind the bar in the run-up to shows, in order to encourage customers to commit to events in advance. You may also want to offer advance tickets at a cheaper rate than the walk-up ticket price.
- **Website** — If you have a website for your venue, and/or a profile page on an external site, keep them up-to-date and include details of your events. Depending on how sophisticated your website is, you may be able to use it to invite people to shows and to sell tickets online. You can also link to an external site whereby people can buy tickets through a ticketing agent. There are various national and local agents who can facilitate online sales whereby punters can buy tickets for shows at your venue. Many agents will also provide you with a supply of paper tickets, in order that you can sell them within the venue and through the artists that you have engaged to play.



- **Social Media** — Digital platforms like Twitter and Facebook allow for great interaction, and can also be used for venues and artists to promote events together, in order that you reach as wide an audience as possible. Information is easily disseminated and shared by fans and customers, and events can be communicated as invitations, through which people can express their interest in attending and can also follow links to purchase tickets. You can also operate and centralise your social media promotion and listings through sites such as crowd.fm.

- **Local press** — Free newspapers and local magazines often provide free listings services for entertainment providers. In addition, they may run a story or feature on your venue, if you have a new or interesting programme of events scheduled.

- **National press** — Many national newspapers and entertainment magazines also offer free listings, although the lead-time for these publications can be several weeks or even months. Familiarise yourself with lead-times and the information required, in order that you can submit the appropriate details for shows in advance.

- **Listings magazines** — Many cities and towns are served by local listings magazines, e.g., ‘Time Out’ within London. Some of these publications will charge a fee for listing an event, but their distribution and readership can be vast.

- **Online music, entertainment and community forums** — Use these platforms to invite people to shows, and to ask potential musicians to be in touch if they’re interested in playing at your venue.

- **Work in collaboration with artists** — Talk to artists in relation to how you will promote their show, and ensure that you’re both clear in terms of what is expected of one another. Many artists have (electronic) press kits, featuring photos, biographies and information surrounding their act. Use these details when handling the promotion, as they will help you to appropriately and effectively sell the artists’ shows. Ask artists to use their mailing lists to promote their gig at your venue to their fanbase. Provide them with sufficient contact details for your venue, in order that punters can be in touch directly with you, and can find the venue both physically and online.

If artists have other local gigs in the weeks and months following their show at your venue, ask them to be considerate in their advertising, in order that their date with you isn’t overshadowed by promotion for the other gigs.

# Promoting your own Venue...

Finally, when advertising live events, it's important to remember that you're also promoting the venue itself. People reading information relating to the events that you're hosting may not have previously been to your venue, so it's vital to use these opportunities to make potential customers aware of what else is on offer. In addition to the information about the gigs, try to also include special details about your venue, particularly features that you consider to be unique or appealing. These may include:

- Other entertainment on offer e.g., quiz nights, comedy etc. If you're hosting weekly or monthly sessions, give the event a name in order to help build a regular audience;
- Drinks — specialities, cask ales, are you a member of CAMRA?;
- Food — do you offer organic meals, a seasonal menu, themed nights etc?;
- Are families welcome?;
- Opening hours;
- Your building/venue — does it have any significant history, is it listed, or of a particular style or character?





# Health & Safety

Health and safety issues are a priority to us, and we expect employers to take the health, safety and welfare of musicians just as seriously as we do.

## **Portable Appliance Testing...**

To comply with Health & Safety requirements you will need regular Portable Appliance Testing (PAT) carried out.

Regular inspection and testing helps you to meet your legal requirements under the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, the Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 and the Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1992.

The Electricity at Work Regulations 1989 require that 'any electrical system be constructed, maintained and used in such a way as to prevent danger'. A system of inspection and testing is needed in order to determine the need for maintenance. PAT is preventative maintenance, it helps to reduce the risk of electric shock and burns, faults which could cause fire or explosion where electricity could cause ignition. A full report of the testing should be retained for your records.



### **Volume...**

Be sure that, when hosting a music event in your premises for the first time, volume will not become an issue, particularly if a drum kit is to be used. Consider noise levels in the context of your venue's capacity. Nothing deadens noise like people, so if you've got your advertising right, this shouldn't be a problem.

### **Setting up...**

Gig line-ups often consist of multiple acts, in which case changeovers are required between artists and sets. Be realistic with your line-up, and leave ample time for artists to comfortably set-up and dismantle their equipment.

Where possible, artists should perform on a stage or a raised area within a venue. However, if your venue doesn't offer a designated stage, be careful to choose an area that doesn't obstruct fire exits, walkways and toilets etc.

Ideally, artists will have access to a secure, lockable dressing room. Where this isn't possible, allocate a designated area for artists to prepare for their show, and offer them somewhere secure to store their valuables whilst they are performing.

### **Public Liability...**

The MU encourages musicians to take the appropriate measures to protect themselves and their equipment, as well as venues and audiences. Public liability insurance protects against claims made by members of the public for both bodily injury and damage to property.

Public Liability Insurance is provided by the MU to a current level of indemnity of £10m per individual member.

# Music Licences



When hosting live music, it is a legal requirement to hold the relevant licences from collecting societies, PRS for Music and PPL UK. If you currently play recorded music and/or use televisions within your venue, you will already have obtained licences from these societies.

It is therefore merely a matter of updating your licences to reflect the addition of live music as part of your entertainments programme.

**“80% of pub managers said they felt music would help them survive the recession.**

**One respondent said: “If we didn’t have music we would have closed months ago””**

– PRS for Music, ‘The value of music in pubs’.

# Contacts

## **The MU**

[www.themu.org](http://www.themu.org)

## **MU HQ**

020 7582 5566 / [info@theMU.org](mailto:info@theMU.org)

## **London Region**

020 7840 5504 / [london@theMU.org](mailto:london@theMU.org)

## **East & SE England Region:**

020 7840 5537 / [eastsoutheast@theMU.org](mailto:eastsoutheast@theMU.org)

## **Midlands Region**

0121 236 4028 / [midlands@theMU.org](mailto:midlands@theMU.org)

## **Wales & SW Region**

029 2045 6585 / [cardiff@theMU.org](mailto:cardiff@theMU.org)

## **North of England Region**

0161 236 1764 / [manchester@themu.org](mailto:manchester@themu.org)

## **Scotland & NI Region**

0141 341 2960 / [glasgow@theMU.org](mailto:glasgow@theMU.org)

## **Agents' Association**

[www.agents-uk.com](http://www.agents-uk.com)

[association@agents-uk.com](mailto:association@agents-uk.com) / 020 7834 0515

## **Bandcamp**

[www.bandcamp.com](http://www.bandcamp.com)

## **British Beer and Pub Association**

[www.beerandpub.com](http://www.beerandpub.com)

[contact@beerandpub.com](mailto:contact@beerandpub.com) / 020 7627 9191

## **British Hospitality Association**

[www.bha.org.uk](http://www.bha.org.uk)

[bha@bha.org.uk](mailto:bha@bha.org.uk) / 0207 404 7744

## **DCMS**

[www.culture.gov.uk](http://www.culture.gov.uk)

020 7211 6000 / [enquiries@culture.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@culture.gov.uk)

## **In a Pub**

[www.inapub.co.uk](http://www.inapub.co.uk) / 0845 230 1986

## **PPL UK**

[www.ppluk.com](http://www.ppluk.com)

[info@ppluk.com](mailto:info@ppluk.com) / 020 7534 1000

## **PRS for Music**

[www.prsformusic.com](http://www.prsformusic.com)

[musiclicence@prsformusic.com](mailto:musiclicence@prsformusic.com) / 0845 309 3090

## **Publican's Morning Advertiser**

[www.morningadvertiser.co.uk](http://www.morningadvertiser.co.uk) / 0800 652 6512

## **ReverbNation**

[www.reverbnation.com](http://www.reverbnation.com)

## **UK Music**

[www.ukmusic.org](http://www.ukmusic.org) / [info@ukmusic.org](mailto:info@ukmusic.org) / 020 7306 4446

## **Photography**

Mike Whelan / pages 18–19

Imelda Michalczyk / pages 38–39

Jonathan Stewart / all other photography

## **Design**

Tomato / [tomato.co.uk](http://tomato.co.uk)

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