

# POST-COVID GIG BOOKING

## PREFACE:

Of course, predictions about when certain clubs, festivals or countries will open up again is guesswork and there's no way to accurately predict this. But assuming that there will be a return sooner or later to wider touring, it makes sense to start thinking now about what we can do.

The goal of this short session is to share a few thoughts on what you can and can't be doing right now, and also to answer some questions.

This break in touring is in some ways a great opportunity for any musician who feels they weren't on top of their bookings, or weren't getting the gigs they should have been before.

And I say that because this time allows those who want the chance to spend a real focused amount of time getting organised and putting everything in place to make themselves more bookable post-COVID.

### What we don't know for sure...

- When things will get back to normal (=stop/start)
- If things will get back to normal (=reduced audience/travel restrictions)
- Which clubs & festivals will still be around afterwards (out of business)

### What we do know...

- Short distance travel will likely be more feasible earlier than long-distance (= double down on local contacts)
- Venues & festivals with funding will want to restart as soon as possible, even if that means reduced line-ups or capacities = short lead times (story: 3-week notice for gigs = trust/existing relationship)
- Some festivals will copy/paste programmes that were cancelled which means less new opportunities (=play the long game)
- Some festivals will have to cancel foreign artists which means more opportunities if you're local (=double down on those connections)

### What we can't do right now...

- Send blanket booking requests (=insensitive & didn't work anyway!)

- Ask for specific dates (= hard enough to get interest, without adding that)
- Plan specific tour periods (=hard to 'put all eggs in one basket')

### What we can do right now...

[this is the most interesting part!]

- Get gig-ready by
  - Upgrading your database (every new contact is a possible gig) = if you want to do 50 gigs a year, you probably need to know 500 well-suited venues & festivals (= research means higher success rate, less ignored emails, better ability to personalise and send at the right time)
  - Build relationships with these people (check in, not "book me") (= when the situation is delicate, promoters want a safe option, so get to know them better)
  - Upgrade the presentation of your project (bio/website/photos/video) (= will help promoters sell you better which influences their decision to book when faced with too many good bands)
- Grow your career by
  - Build news (releasing music & content to pitch to press & industry) (= promoters want to work with projects that are *happening*)
  - Grow your fan engagement (= releasing music & content to grow the people who are excited to support you = 1000 true fans)
  - Planning further ahead

Survey stat: 60% of festival & clubs bookings were done direct with the artist, no agent involved...

2 things that separate an agent from musicians: consistency & organisation (story: my work doing research & keeping spreadsheets for hours a day)

I started out as a musician and three things that helped me become a booker:

1. Learning how to find out which promoters would likely be interested in each of my projects.
2. Figuring out how to contact them and what to say or write.
3. Getting feedback & advice from more experienced agents and managers.