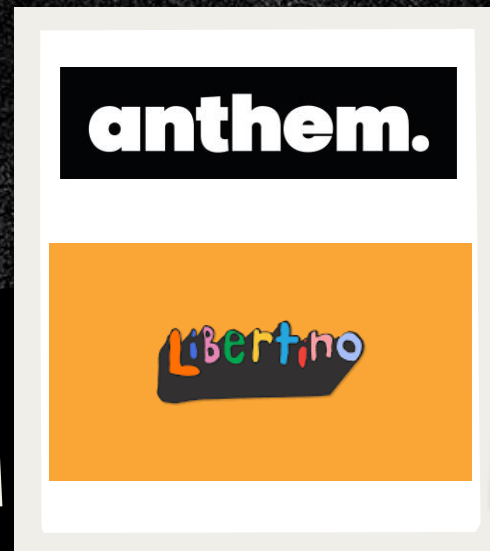




How to put on your first gig as a promoter?

An informal guide to facilitating live music

Promotion Promotion Promotion... I feel like that's the only word we hear nowadays, but what does it actually mean to be a promoter? By definition, a promoter is 'A person or company that finances or organizes a sporting event, concert or theatrical production'. Ok so you're not into boxing and you hate musical theatre, maybe you've been in a band for a while, or you're interested in the behind the scenes of the music industry and want to try putting on a gig of your own. Here's how.



1. LEARN THE BASICS

Music industry knowledge is vital, now I'm not saying you need a big fancy degree or an MA to become a promoter, however you do need to be clued up on who does what in the industry. Do research, understand the different roles including artists, managers, agents, venues and record labels – these are the people you'll be working closely with.

2. THE FIRST STEPS

Now that you're all clued up on the biz and full of that tasty industry knowledge, you're going to want to put the first steps in place. Being a promoter takes extreme organisational and communication skills, if you're not a people person then it's probably not the job for you! The first step to putting on your first show is to make sure you are financially prepared, promotion will need investment, don't risk what you can't afford to lose! There are many funding bodies listed on the Anthem Gateway where you can apply for small pockets of money, especially if you're just starting out and are between the ages of 18-25.



3. VENUES

Now that you've got your pockets filled, you'll need to secure a date with a local venue. Think carefully about what venue you'll go for. You should already have an idea of which band you'd like to headline so do some research on that band – how many people showed up to their last show etc and plan accordingly. I wouldn't recommend putting your first show on in a venue more than 150 capacity, keep it small and easy to manage or it might get overwhelming very quickly! Once you've decided on a venue, you'll want to send an email to request to book a date. The events manager will then email you back and let you know if your chosen date is available or not, and if it's not available, don't worry, there's always a different date for you to choose from.

4. BUDGETING

Now that you've got a date held in your chosen venue, you should probably look at your budget, generally to hire out venues between 80-150 capacity it'll cost you around £100-150 for the night, make sure you check if the hire includes backline hire, security and staffing or you might get hit with some sneaky fees!

Make sure you also agree a fee with the bands before booking them, there are multiple different deals that are standard practice in the industry. Typically, there are 3 main payment types:

- **Set Fee** – This will be a set guaranteed fee you and the bands/agent agree on. E.g £100
- **Ticket Splits** – this is where the promoter will split the profits between the bands. E.g, if 3 bands play a show that makes £300 in profits, each band would be paid £100
- **VS deals (£XXX vs XX%** – This ensures both parties walk away with money. For example, If I were to offer a band a fee of £200 vs 80%, the band get paid with whatever the biggest value is after profits. Say the show costs me £600 total, and I make £1000 in ticket sales, that gives me a profit of £400, 80% of £400 = £320 which is more than £200, so the band gets £320. However, if that same show was to make £700, I would be £100 in profit, 80% of £100 = £80 which is less than £200, so the band would get the flat fee of £200.

Think carefully about how much you're willing to spend on the night, adjust your ticket price accordingly. On average I find a local 3 band bill will cost around £500, keep that in mind when starting out.

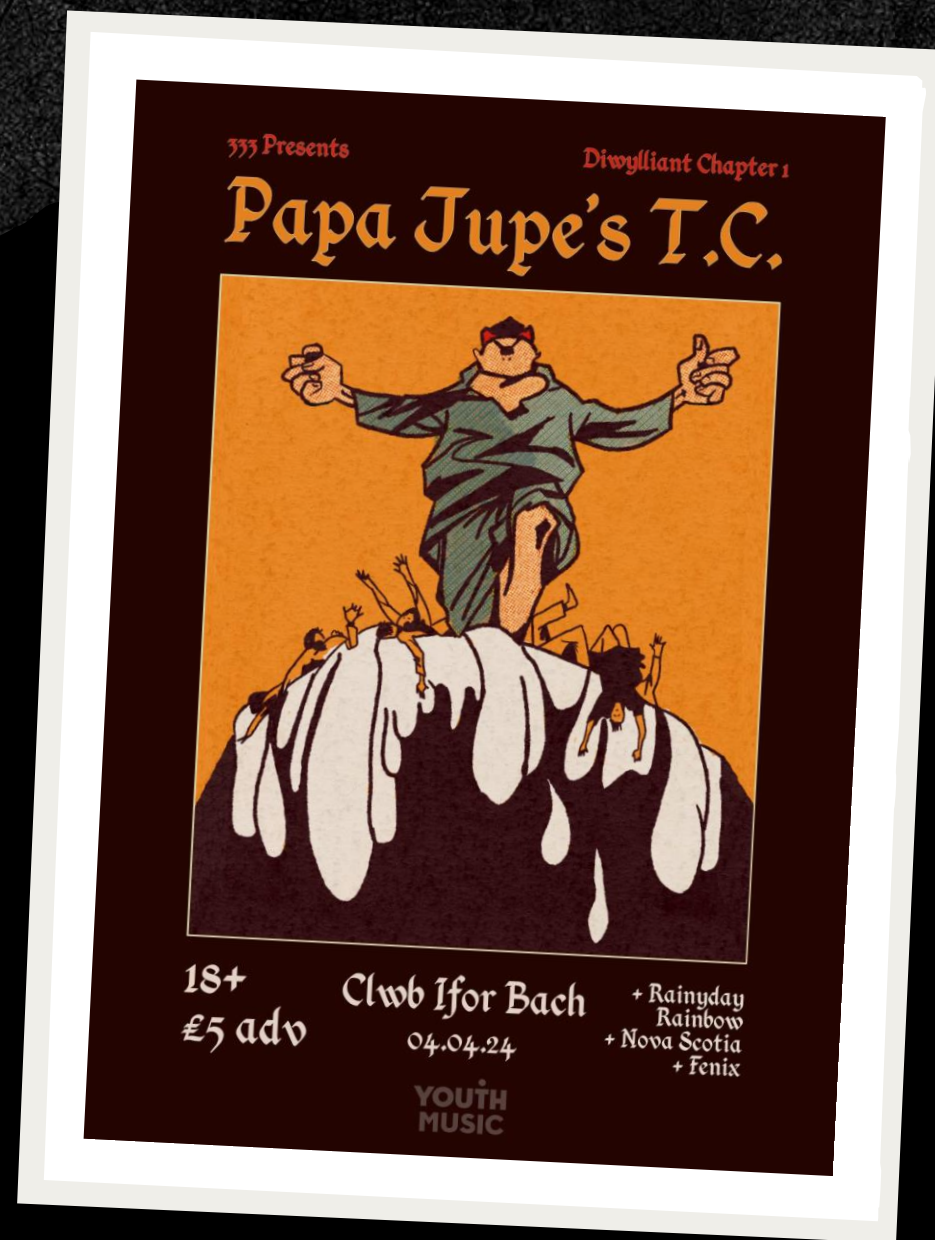


**OK, THAT WAS A
LOT OF TEXT,
BREATH, TAKE A
MINUTE TO ENJOY
THIS WATER DOG**

5. PROMOTING YOUR PROMOTION

You've got a venue. SICK. You've got your bands. SICK. You've got a date. SICK.

Everything is booked in, but how do you actually promote your gig? First things first you'll need a poster, typically in 3 different formats – 1 in A4 for physical prints, 1 as a square to post on Instagram, and one as a rectangle for the Facebook events & ticket listing. Once you've made or commissioned someone to create your poster, send it out to the bands & venue, pick an announcement time. Then you'll need to create a link to buy tickets, there are many different ticketing platforms that are great – Ticket Source, Event Brite, Gigantic, Headfirst, Dice, Skiddle and soooo many more, a lot of it comes down to personal preference. Upload that to socials and send it to all your mates! Print off some A4s and go into town!



6. What Time Is Soundcheck???

Make sure your show is planned out well from start to finish. Typically, this is how a show will run:

Load in – 16:00

Soundcheck headliners – 16:30

Soundcheck main support – 17:30

Soundcheck openers – 18:15

Doors open – 19:00

Openers – 19:30 – 20:00

Main support – 20:20 – 20:50

Headliners – 21:15 – 22:00

This of course depends on how long of a set each band is playing, plan accordingly and leave enough time between acts to change over. Some venues may have a curfew for live music, make sure you check this before you plan your stage times.

7. ADVANCING

Advancing? What's that? An Advance is a document that the promoter sends to the bands & venue, typically a week or so before the event.

This document should include:

Date & time of show, Venue & address, Ticket price, Age limit, Promoter name, Sound engineer name, Nearest parking info, Contact info, email & phone number, Payment info, Guestlists and Backline info.

It's important to send these advances out so people know what to expect on the night, don't want people turning up confused now, do we?



8. HOLY MOLY IT'S THAT TIME ALREADY?

That dates crept up quickly, right?!?!? Ok wake up, big breakky, last minute admin work, make sure you've sent off the tech specs to the venue, weathers lovely, walk around the park, meet some dogs, LUNCH TIME, 2pm and your feeling nervous, 3 o'clock and you keep checking the ticket sales, BANG. 4PM. Make sure you're at the venue for load in, greet the managers & sound tech with a smile on your face. Help the bands load in if you can then let them get on with soundcheck.

BOOM, 7pm, doors open and you're running around like a headless chicken waiting for people to arrive. 7:30 strikes and it's time to get your first band on stage, hey look, people are arriving. Make sure you keep the gig running smoothly, obviously you want to enjoy yourself but don't forget at the end of the day you're working, make sure to keep a level head.

When the gig finishes, if you can, help the bands load out. Make sure you thank the venue staff & sound tech at the end of the night, manners go a long way and the venue will be more likely to invite you back if you're kind. Now go celebrate and enjoy the rest of the night.

9. ACHING ALL OVER BUT HOW GOOD

WAS THAT?

You've just woken up and have 3 invoices in your inbox, pay the bands, reflect on your show and do it all again next time. Congratulations soldier.