

PROGRESSIONS

Official publication of the Reno Musicians' Union, Local 368

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UNITY • HARMONY • ARTISTRY

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER

It's also Election Season for Local 368

Thanks go out to member Marcy Benner for organizing our participation in the Labor Day Parade in Virginia City. Thanks to Corky Bennett, J.R. Johnston, Marcy Benner, Catherine Matovich, Tyler Cravines & Mark McKinnon for performing at the lunch after the parade. A fun time was had by all of those that attended!

- John

- Please update us when you move!
- Make sure you send us any change of address, email or phone #.
- If you would prefer to receive your newsletter online and not get this paper copy, please let us know by email or phone 77/329-7995

LOCAL 368 BOARD MEMBERS

President-Sec./Treas.: John Shipley Vice President: John Beckman

Board Members: Paul January—Peter Supersano—Catherine Matovich—David Gupton

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

This is your official notice of Local 368's
**GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING &
EXEC. BOARD & OFFICER NOMINATION MEETING**

Monday October 29 @ 7PM

Unity Center 2207 Kings Row Reno NV

IS THIS GIG RIGHT FOR YOU? BY ARI HERSTAND

Remember, nothing in the music industry is black and white. Not streaming. Not pirating music. Not playing gigs for free. Is playing for free ever okay? Short answer is yes. Should bands take free gigs? Short answer is maybe, but nothing in the music industry can accurately be answered with a short answer. Use this guide to help you decide if the gig is right for you.

FOR PAYING GIGS

Don't take a gig unless it meets The Perfect 30 Test:

Payment = 10. Career building = 10. Enjoyment = 10.

You don't want to play any shows for less than a total of 15 on the scale. If the payment is incredible (10), but there will be very little career building potential (3) or enjoyment (2), that equals 15. If there is decent payment (5), but will bring great enjoyment (9), but little career building potential (1), that also equals a 15. Take these shows. The shows you shouldn't take are the ones for little to no money (1), very little career building potential (3) and very little enjoyment (3) = 7 total. Pass!

FOR FREE GIGS

Of course the decision to take a free gig is up to you, but as someone who has played countless free gigs I can tell you the ones that I'd do again for free and the ones I definitely would not. There are a few instances when free gigs are no brainers:

For Charity or A Worthy Cause

If you believe in the cause or the organization, then absolutely offer your services free of charge. Your "normal performance fee" can sometimes be a tax deductible donation for certain organizations. Always ask the org. You can also always ask the organizers if they have a "stipend" for you. Can't hurt to ask. Oftentimes they will have a bit of a budget. So if your normal performance rate is \$500, they may be able to give you a stipend of \$100 (and you may even also be able to write off \$400 as a tax deductible donation).

As a Favor or Trade

Sometimes your friends are throwing an event and will most likely lose money on it. It's always cool to play for your buddies' and ladies' parties or events for no charge because they're your people. Maybe they're a graphic design artist or a videographer or a doctor. Maybe you need a logo, a music video or a check up. Bartering is sometimes even better than cash.

Sitting In

Sitting in is a time honored tradition in the singer/songwriter and jam communities. But every band should do it at some point. It's when you call up a friend to sing harmonies or rip a solo. Or even just join you on stage with a tambourine. It's an honor and an endorsement of that artist. Of course, the host band should announce the artist's name who sat in and give their project a plug. Fans love to see this kind of community building. Some of my favorite shows are ones where the main act brought out special guests. These guests aren't paid. They're doing it because they want to. It's usually a lot of fun to step outside your performance norm and it can also help promote upcoming shows.

IS THIS GIG RIGHT FOR YOU? BY ARI HERSTAND**For Practice**

If you're new to the performance thing or your band just formed, you need practice performing. Young bands should take any and every performance opportunity. Most often these will be free shows. In LA (and unfortunately it's starting to happen more frequently around the country), "promoters" will get bands to pay-to-play in sneaky ways like requiring them to sell a certain number of tickets for their set. And if they don't meet their quota they have to make up the difference. Or, sometimes the "promoter" keeps all income from the first 50 tickets sold and then the band keeps the rest - or something absurd like that (at \$10 a pop that's \$500 off the top to the promoter. 5 bands on the bill, \$2,500 to the promoter before any band earns \$1!). Do not take the bait. Find low pressure performance environments to hone your chops where they don't charge you to play (ahh!) - but you may not get paid either. That's ok. You don't deserve to yet.

Strong Merch / Tip Potential

Ok, this is slippery. Because bookers will promise you good merch/tip potential and rarely does it work out to be so. However, sometimes it really can be. I performed a small side stage at "The World's Largest Music Festival" Summerfest in Milwaukee 2-3 times a day for 4 years and I averaged about \$300 A SET in merch and tips. Yeah, the fest didn't pay me anything to play this stage, but I made up for it in the regularity of the performance slots and the merch/tip income.

We can debate how ethical this was for the festival to do, but regardless, I walked away from the 11 day festival \$8,000 richer every year. Not bad.

For Enjoyment

Like The Perfect 30 test, sometimes you know you're going to just have a darn good time. And isn't that what life is all about?

As a Creative Outlet

This argument is used by hobbyists. There are the school teachers, bankers, construction workers and others with full time jobs that have nothing to do with music and these hard-working day-jobbers are just looking for a creative outlet. A way to express themselves artistically, openly and outwardly. In front of an audience. Unfortunately, these hobbyist musicians accepting the free gigs undercuts the professionals. Because of this, the pros have a much more difficult time demanding a fair price for their performances. I don't encourage the "creative outlet" practice, but it happens and there are many hobbyists who fall into this category.

Dear all hobbyists, please ask for a fair price for your performance. Because if you don't, you're hurting those who are trying to make their livings with their art!

Love, professional artists everywhere.

- Ari

6 Money-Making Gigs You Haven't Yet Thought Of by Gregory Douglass

There are many ways musicians and bands can make money with their music. Perhaps the most obvious way is through performing and touring. Any given tour might rely on club, coffeehouse, and even college performances to generate income along the way – but there are other ways to generate additional revenue that may not already be on your radar. So here are 6 music money gigs you haven't yet thought of:

1. College Keynote Concerts.

College gigs are great, and are arguably the most lucrative gigs in the indie music biz. While college gigs can be a nice payday, they are also the most competitive gigs to book. Most musicians and booking agents are going after college gigs in the same ways – through college booking conferences like NACA, or directly through Student Activities organizations. Try thinking outside the box and consider an educational tie-in with your performance pitch in the form of a keynote concert. Perhaps you or your band-mates could talk to the student body about the songwriting process and cap off your presentation with a performance. For keynote concert bookings, consider

contacting various clubs & organizations outside of the Student Activities department.

2. House Concerts.

House concerts are still an underground, growing trend – though they are still met with great resistance by many shy musicians who feel that they are just too close for comfort. As a touring singer/songwriter myself, I personally give house concerts my golden stamp of approval. They certainly are intimate, but you can't ask for a more appreciative audience than a house concert audience! They are ideal for solo artists but great opportunities for bands to strip things down for a night as well. House concerts can be more lucrative than public venues with a \$10-20 suggested donation jar and the higher level of interest in merch sales that they typically generate. If you're lucky, your house concert host may even make you a home cooked meal or offer you their guest room for the night to help save you some dough on the leg of a tour.

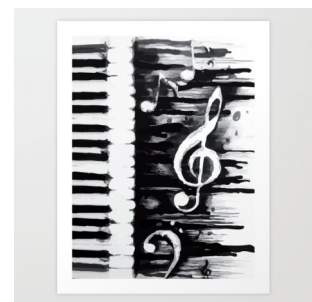
3. Virtual Concerts.

With platforms like LiveStream, Ustream, Justin.tv, Stageit, and even Google Hangouts now – virtual concerts have never been easier to administer behind

the scenes. Consider setting the stage at home in front of your computers built-in camera, or step up your game if you have the right gear to do so. Stageit is specifically for concerts and has a virtual tip jar already incorporated, but you can also embed some basic HTML code on Justin.tv and sport a Paypal-powered virtual tip jar yourself. Make virtual concerts like these apart of a larger crowd-funding campaign for your next tour or album campaign.

4. Venue Rentals.

If you're really ambitious, you might consider doing what Ani DiFranco did to build her legacy and rent venues. This will obviously cost you a chunk of change up front, but you might be able to fast-track your way into presenting your band in venues that are more suitable or more preferable than the usual direct-booking venue. If you are willing to hustle and ensure that enough people fill the house to make it worth the cost of the venue rental, than you can have your cake and eat it to.



5. Corporate Events.

There are always Corporate companies looking to book entertainment for various internal events, and they usually have a decent size budget to work with.

Corporate events gigs are not unlike the wedding gigs in that they are typically background music for attendees, so they may not be for everyone – but they are usually a nice pay day in the end.

6. Street Performances.

For more seasoned/ professional artists, street performances may seem too entry-level, but they don't have to seem that way. Adapting to the new indie music biz model is adapting to fresh perspective on how to sustain a living as a working musician, so this might be the perfect exercise in checking one's ego at the door. Street performances can be great opportunities for fast-generating tip money, as well as great new exposure opportunities. Especially on the pedestrian streets of tourist cities and towns, or any other areas with heavy foot traffic. Even KT Tunstall still plays street performance gigs now and then for nostalgia purposes.

You're a rock star. Here's to your creative genius!

- Gregory

Being a Musician is a Business

I'm tired of people who think that the only true musicians are tortured, broke, on drugs and dead by 27. What a miserable life. Musicians who work hard by practicing, writing lyrics and composing music, playing in the clubs and concert halls are the ones who ARE getting paid. And getting paid well. I've met (and played with) so many of these tragically depressed musicians who AREN'T getting paid because they can't get their act together. Some of these musicians create great music but can't draw 10 people to their shows because they refuse to put in any effort to their business.

The AFM Pension Fund—How Good is it?

With all the negative information going around the internet and on social media about the AFM Employers Pension Plan I thought I would give you some positive information concerning it. Yes there are some very big problems with it but our International President Ray Hair and the Pension Plan people are working hard to protect our benefits. Yes there will be some reductions in future years but we are in this together and I hope to have a pension plan that continues far into the future, giving benefits to us and to future members.

- John

What is the AFM-EPF?

The AFM and Employers' Pension Fund is a defined-benefit, multiemployer plan that is protected under Federal Law.

Huh?

The Fund is like an annuity or Social Security: when you retire, you get a check every month for the rest of your life. The Fund is also a multi-employer plan, so you can participate by playing in an orchestra, playing on a recording, or playing a gig in a club; there are many ways to fund your pension, even on contracts you file yourself.

How do I get Pension?

If you play on a gig or recording session with an AFM Union contract, you're already getting pension credits. If you're playing a wedding or at a club or have a corporation, there are ways for you to file your own contract and make contributions on your own behalf. With a minimum contribution made each year, it takes five years to become vested, at which time you cannot lose credit for any contributions made, even if you never play a gig again.

Is it Safe?

The AFM-EPF is no Enron. For starters, the Fund exists solely to provide pension benefits to participants they don't have a side business that could go bankrupt, taking pension money with it. It's also a

multi-employer plan, so if one organization were to stop participating, there are many others left to continue making contributions. The Fund, with over \$1.6 billion in assets, is actually ranked in the top 1% of pension funds nationally. And of course, all pension funds are regulated and insured by the Federal Government.

Why Don't I just get an IRA?

Well, for starters, you can only put \$4000 a year into an IRA; your AFMEPF contribution can be as much as 15% of your total income. If you start early and are good at investing, your IRA might do well (compounding is an amazing thing). Just don't retire during a recession! But since the AFM-EPF has nearly 50,000 participants and over \$1.6 billion in assets, they're much better prepared to weather a few bad years in the market.

Pension Fund Facts...

Established in 1959

46,000 current participants

8,000 participants/beneficiaries currently receiving monthly benefits

Investments valued at \$1.6 billion

Disability and death benefits



Bylaw Changes

**Subject: Local 368
Bylaws Amendment to
be discussed and voted
on at November
General Membership
Meeting**

Since our current Bylaws have no language for handling electronic official communications between the union and its members, this proposed change to our bylaws will decrease the number of trees cut down and reduce carbon footprint now involved in sending out paper announcements and newsletter

**AB 5 and its effects to
Musicians who live in
Nevada**

When playing as a member of an orchestra or a band, musicians should be employees because:

- They clearly do not meet the standards or spirit of the law that allows for independent contracting.
- Workers Comp: Venue owners or band leaders should take responsibility to ensure that musicians are working in a safe environment. Workers comp and workplace safety regulations achieve that.
- Unemployment/Disability Insurance: When a musician is unable

to find work or unable to work due to injury or illness, they should have the same safety net as other workers. Without unemployment and disability insurance requirements, musicians who can't work for a short time fall into poverty.

- Social Security: Without employee status, musicians reach the end of their playing careers with nothing to provide for a dignified life in old age.
- Discrimination protections: Music industry bosses are afraid of giving musicians rights, because of the rampant abuses in the industry that could be exposed. Sexual harassment, racial discrimination and a host of other types of abuse that are endemic to this industry have gotten out of control because they are legal when done against an independent contractor.

○ Many of the employers in the casual live gig sector of this industry have built their business models around shifting responsibilities onto the lowest, least-powerful person. The fact that this has been going on for decades doesn't make it ok.

○ We do think more should be done to help employers transition into compliance with the law:

- Payroll services provided at low-cost to all musicians statewide:
- Tax/accounting guidance for individual musicians, especially for deductions.
- Arts funding: We support Senators Lorena Gonzalez and Christy Smith's call for an additional \$20 million in arts funding to assist non-profit organizations adapting to an employer/employee model.

Targeted enforcement and collective action: We will call for the state to focus enforcement resources on the biggest bad-actors in the industry: the

companies reaping millions of dollars off the backs of musicians by denying them their rights. In the meantime, we will focus our own organizing efforts on those same entities: pushing to shift responsibilities off the individual musician, off the band leaders, and onto the venues, festivals, promoters and concert presenters whose core business is profiting off of musicians' work

**RENO MUSICIANS' UNION
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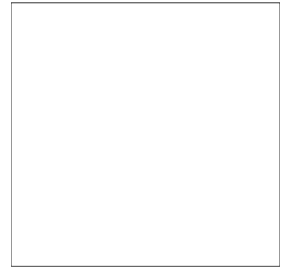
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