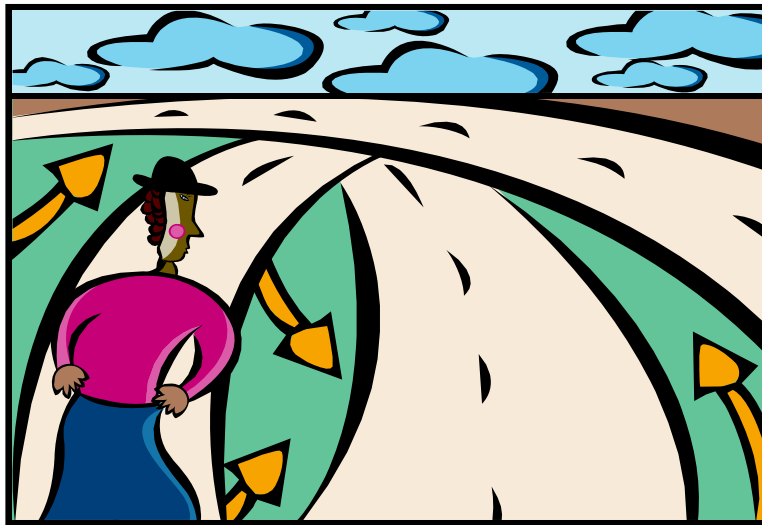




# Connecting the Dots: Making Touring Work for You



**A Workshop**

By

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**Definitions:**

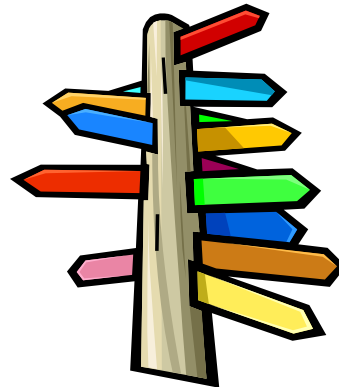
Producer: The artist – you or your organization.

Presenter: The organization that signs a contract with you.

Venue: The place you will perform; sometimes owned and/or operated by the presenter

Booking: What both the producer and the presenter want – the presenter wants to ‘book the performer, and the performer wants to be ‘booked.’

This can be confusing because, obviously, you ‘present’ that show, but you are not the ‘presenter!’



**Step One: Decide why you want to tour**

There are many motivations for touring and not all of them are money. Touring might:

- Raise the profile/status of the company/artist
- Provide for artistic development
- Facilitate the continuity of the group by providing additional income
- Link to other potential opportunities
- Open new markets for products
- Reach a target audience that is widespread (schools, for example)

If you are clear about your reasons for touring it will influence how often you tour, the markets that you target and the specific venues you seek. As in many other areas, the clarity of your purpose will make success more likely.

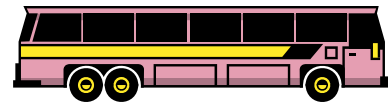
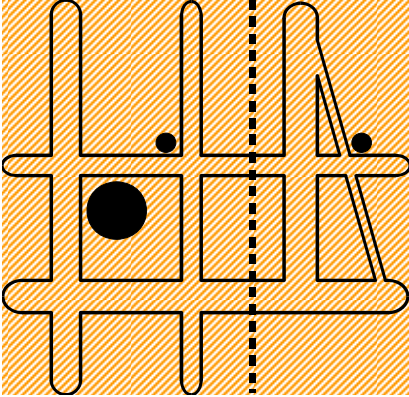
## **Step Two: Are you ready to tour? Have you met the following pre-conditions?**

- Your purpose for touring is clear (see #1 above).
- The product is of excellent quality and will resonate with the intended audience
- The technical and administrative infrastructures to support touring are in place
- There is a plan for touring at least 18 months to two years in advance
- Arrangements for cash flow during the tour have been addressed.
- You understand the touring industry and its many components and know how to reach them.
- Your performance is shaped so that necessary equipment and supplies can be packed and loaded a number of times without requiring major overhauls.

Take this interactive “Tour Readiness” online survey. It will show you where you need more thought or more planning. [www.artsontour.ca/checklist](http://www.artsontour.ca/checklist)

## **Step Three: Set fees and secure bookings**

- Identify the ‘going rate’ for similar products and set fees
- Develop marketing tools – videos, recordings, promo packets
- Determine if you will do the booking yourself or use an agent or promoter
- Distribute marketing materials; attend booking conferences
- Contact potential venues, follow up, and complete tour plan



#### **Step Four: Confirm tour details and preparations**

- Negotiate and finalize contracts and tech riders with all venues
- Know the venues and work to meet their needs: unions, local crews, credits on
  - publicity, ticket outlets, hospitality events, etc.
- Develop tour promotional materials and provide to venue
- Arrange transportation, lodging, meals, insurance, freight as necessary
- Get any necessary licenses, visas, other documents
- Train and brief the tour participants
- Alert allies, advocates about the tour
- Remember to “sell the next tour” as well as this one
- Research cultural issues

#### **Step Five: Tour**

- Present the best possible product
- Optimize press and media coverage
- Document the tour
- Expect the unexpected
- Be kind to yourself/artists – performing is hard and touring is much harder
- Be flexible
- Leave something behind besides a performance: training, ideas, workshops
- Keep excellent expense records and receipts

#### **Step Six: After the tour**

- De-brief and evaluate
- Thank everyone involved; contact and thank all venues--ask for input and follow-up
- Make a final accounting of tour expenses and receipts; close the books
- Start thinking about the next tour



## Who might present you?

The touring/presenting industry is divided into segments that are all potential types of touring for you.

1. There are 'arts' presenters who are either nonprofit, tax-exempt organizations or part of municipal government who contract with artists for events that range from fairs and festivals, to glorious concert halls. These 'arts' presenters come in sizes from very small to very large, from single arts presenters to presenters of multi-level seasons. Some of the very large presenters have series focused on one art form and present a whole season of classical music or dance, for instance.

They will generally have a committee that chooses the events they will present a year to two years in advance of their season. They provide the venue and technical support, sell the tickets, market the event and generally manage the entire performance. They can be guided by professional staff or by volunteers. You show up and perform.

These presenters often get grants to help present you to their community and to keep the ticket prices reasonable. This sometimes means they will have requirements stipulated by the grantmaker. It also means they can sometimes take a risk on a relatively unknown performer and balance their books with a different more well-known one.

2. There are college and university presenters of several kinds as well. Some are just like

the presenters above, but others are comprised of student committees. Because the students arrive in the fall and want to have events throughout the year, and because student enrollments change frequently, these presenters are often on a much more rapid schedule and will need to book very quickly.

3. There are for-profit presenters who are usually called promoters. They book events for clubs, lounges, amphitheaters, stadiums and the like. Because making a profit is their intention, they are usually more interested in big-name performers who generate lots of ticket sales. Their time frame also tends to be very short, sometimes only a month or two in advance.
4. There are occasional presenters such as restaurants, conferences, or specialized organizations like a women's studies group. These organizations are hard to make generalizations about and can be difficult to discover and contact.
5. There are in-school audiences. These are a completely different variety of presenter. These events are booked by the school administration or by a parent group that pays the entire cost. Many of these performances are directly linked to curriculum and are much shorter to fit into the school day.
6. Community events around holidays are another type of performing opportunity and will be booked by civic organizations or governments. These are another set of potential presenters who are hard to reach.
7. Lastly, there are fairs and festivals that often have several stages and that want continuous entertainment. Associations of fair and festival presenters make these people relatively easy to contact.



## **What types of tours might you do?**

Here again, there are a number of options.

1. You can do "run-outs." These are performances within about 2 hours driving time. You go to the performance and return home the same day.
2. There are single day performances where you stay over one night but return home after the single performance.
3. Residencies, where you perform and offer workshops and additional events over a period of several days or more, are another form of touring.

4. Regular tours are booked to have each performance link to the next in a reasonable time period and with do-able distances between events. These must be booked far enough apart so that potential audiences do not overlap.

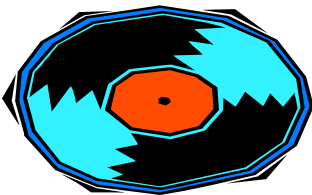
## **What kinds of financial arrangements are there?**

The most desired arrangement is where the presenter provides all the publicity and marketing, the venue, handles all technical aspects, sells the tickets and guarantees you a specific fee for the performance. If there is a loss on the performance, that is the presenter's problem.

Some presenters will ask you to "split the house" in some pre-arranged percentage. This can help the presenter to cover their up-front costs and not lose any money. They provide the venue and other services, but instead of giving you a set fee, they calculate their costs, identify the profit, and then split the profit with the performer. Permutations of this kind of financial arrangement are "guarantee plus percentage split" and the "guarantee against percentage split." In the first example the guarantee is the first thing paid from the ticket sales and then the presenter's costs are calculated and the rest of the profit is split by a percentage. The second way is that the presenter agrees to pay the performer either a guarantee or a percentage of the profit, whichever is greater. In any of these instances, it is to the performer's benefit to assist with promotion and drum up as much interest as possible.

You can always do all the work yourself and take on all of the financial burden. While this is a lot of work and can be risky there are some time when you would want to do this. For example, if there is the potential to get a review from a nationally known critic, or for the opportunity to say you have played a well-known venue.

One other area of revenue is important to arrange with the presenter. If you have 'product' to sell (t-shirts, CD's, etc.) who will handle sales and who will get the profits? Some places, such as county fairs, require that a percentage of sales are due to the organizers. Other presenters will require that their people handle the sales and take a percentage. Don't assume that you are entitled to the income from everything that is sold. Just like a visual artist pays a gallery a percentage to sell their work, you might need to pay the presenter to sell your goods.



## **How do you connect with these presenters?**

### Booking Conferences:

Many presenters group together into organizations that hold ‘booking conferences.’ A booking conference is essentially a trade show for artists who wish to tour. Artists rent booths in the trade show area and can apply for showcases, or can often create their own showcases around the conference but without official sanction. In the resource section there is a list of booking conferences.

If you are new to touring it is best to start with Arts Northwest which holds the Northwest Booking Conference each fall. Generally speaking, this conference targets small and medium sized arts presenters. Larger presenters attend the Western Arts Alliance annual conference and many of these large presenters also attend the Association of Performing Arts Presenters conference.

The college presenters also hold a booking conference, as do some other associations.

### Touring Rosters:

Many state arts agencies have a ‘touring roster’ which is a directory of juried artists that are available to the state’s grantees. Sometimes, presenters in the state can only select from this list if they wish to get funding and in other cases the roster is just a helpful starting place. You must apply to be considered for these rosters. Some state will only accept applications from in-state artists and others will allow any touring artist to apply. Washington does not have a roster. Arts Northwest has a touring directory for its members who are mainly from Washington, Oregon, and Idaho. This directory is not linked to any funding in Washington. You should check with the State Arts Agency in any state in which you wish to tour. There is a full list at the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (in the Appendix.) State arts agencies may also have lists of presenters in their state, fairs and festivals, or other resources you can use.

### Other Presenters:

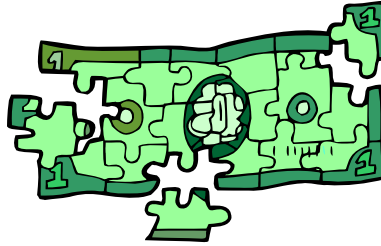
You have to be a little more creative to reach other presenters. The Washington Recreation and Parks Association publishes a member directory that you can use as a resource. The Washington Festivals and Events Association and the Washington State Fairs Association have online member directories. There are a variety of festival and fair directories available for purchase. You will have to contact each of these events separately and determine if you are a good fit with the needs of the presenter.

Young Audiences is an example of a coalition of artists and schools that promote educational assemblies by artists. They have local affiliates and handle the booking for contracted artists.

Touring to schools can be a good source of performances if you are educationally oriented and are willing to promote your program and make school booking independently. There is no central booking system for K-12 schools.

Clubs, lounges, and casinos can be a starting place and Washington's no-smoking law has made this venue more possible for many performers. The newspapers and online listings of events are the best way to find which places might match your performance style.

Don't overlook other performers as a resource. They can't perform at the same places all the time so are often happy to share ideas about appropriate venues with you. Networking with artists also gives you a community of touring artists who know what being on the road is like. This can be a real help when you need support from experienced people.



### **What does it cost to tour? How much should I be asking for in my contracts?**

As you set out to tour, you must take into consideration the rehearsal and pre-tour expenses and the cost of traveling in addition to your fee. Then you need to find out what others in the field are charging and set your price in that ballpark. Until you have a solid support base it is unrealistic to charge more than the other talent available to a presenter. You simply won't get the job. That is not to say that you shouldn't be compensated appropriately for your performance. Too many free performances (those that are great for "exposure") will undermine your professionalism and leave you struggling.

## **APPENDIX**

### **Arts Northwest**

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

### **Western Arts Alliance (WAA)**

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

### **Association of Performing Arts Presenters (APAP)**

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

## **National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)**

[www.arts.gov](http://www.arts.gov)

## **National Association of Campus Activities (NACA)**

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

## **North American Performing Arts Agents and Managers (NAPMA)**

<http://www.napama.org/>

## **National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA)**

[www.nasaa-arts.org](http://www.nasaa-arts.org)

## **Book Review: How to Be Your Own Booking Agent by Jeri Goldstein**

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

The homesite of Jeri Goldstein

## **www.Getsigned.com: Two articles by Jeri Goldstein**

“Successful Touring Strategies: Approaching Booking Agents”

“Attending Booking Conferences”

## **http://www.schoolshows.com/resources.htm**

Articles on presenting performances in schools

## **http://www.storyteller.net/amphitheater/3**

Interview with David Hefflick on performing in schools

## **http://www.amazon.com/How-Make-Money-Performing-Schools/dp/0963870580**

How to Make Money Performing in Schools: The Definitive Guide to Developing, Marketing, and Presenting School Assembly Programs by David Hefflick

## **www.Billboard.com**

Industry information

## **Western State Arts Federation (WESTAF) TourWest**

<http://www.westaf.org/prog-perfarts.php>

## **New York Foundation for the Arts**

Free national information resource for artists in all disciplines and

Everyone who supports them in any way

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

## **Artist Trust**

Dedicated exclusively to supporting generative artists in all disciplines in Washington State.

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

## **Arts Resource Network**

An online source of information for artists and arts organizations provided by the Seattle Mayor’s Office of Arts and Cultura.

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

## **Artlynx – International Arts Resources**

<http://www.artslynx.org/>

## **Go Tour-Mapping the Performing Arts**

[http://www.gotour.org/?session\\_id=4550f4d4bedd0cc1\\_48861](http://www.gotour.org/?session_id=4550f4d4bedd0cc1_48861)

## **Artists Overview – Opera American**

<http://www.operaamerica.org/artists/overview.html>

## **League of American Orchestras – Career Center**

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

## **Theater Communications Group**

<http://www.tcg.org/>

## **North American Folk Music and Dance Alliance**

Business directory resources

<https://www.folk.org/directory/index.php?option=content&task=view&id=6&Itemid=62>

## **National Dance Association**

<http://www.aahperd.org/nda/>

## **Young Audiences**

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

## **Victory Music**

<http://www.victorymusic.org/>

## **Earshot Jazz**

<http://www.earshot.org/>

## **Washington Recreation and Parks Association (WRPA)**

<http://www.wrpatoday.org/>

## **Washington Festivals and Events Association**

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

## **Festivals Directory Northwest**

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

## **The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP)**

<http://www.ascap.com/index.html>

## **Broadcast Music, Inc. (BMI)**

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

## **SESAC**

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

## **Musicians Local 1000**

Local 1000 was set up to serve the special needs of touring musicians, particularly those in the "folk" and "acoustic" music fields, most of whom travel to play predominantly "casual" engagements.

[www.local1000.com](http://www.local1000.com)

## **Other Unions:** Actors Equity [www.actorsequity.com](http://www.actorsequity.com)

American Federation of Musicians [www.afm.org](http://www.afm.org)  
Resources for Union Organizing-Labor Union List  
<http://www.union-organizing.com/unions.html>

### **Road Records** advice for artists

<http://www.roadrecords.com/artistadvicepage.html>

### **Booking and Tour Management for the Performing Arts** by Rena Shagan

<http://www.amazon.com/Booking-Tour-Management-Performing-Arts/dp/1581150954>

### **Media and Performing Arts** – instructional DVD and booklet for performing Artists and arts organizations to help develop effective work samples Idaho Commission on the Arts

<http://www.arts.idaho.gov/what/public.aspx>

### **On the Road Touring Handbook – for Artists**

<http://www.canadacouncil.ca/development/ontheroad/touringhandbook/kf127729250448311227.htm>

### **On the Road Presenters Handbook – for presenters**

<http://www.canadacouncil.ca/development/ontheroad/presentershandbook/>

## **Booking Conferences**

Association of Performing Arts Presenters New York, NY January 9-13, 2009  
Chamber Music America New York, NY January 16-18, 2009  
International Society of Performing Arts New York, NY January 13-15, 2000  
Folk Alliance Conference Memphis, TN February 2009  
Midwest Arts Conference Kansas City, MO September 17-20, 2008  
National Association of Campus Activities Conference (also, regional conferences. See website [www.naca.org](http://www.naca.org) )  
Northwest Booking Conference Eugene, OR October 13-16, 2008  
Pacific Contact BC March 27-29, 2009 see website [www.bctouring.org](http://www.bctouring.org)  
Performing Arts Exchange Atlanta, GA September 24-28 , 2008, Norfolk, VA  
September 23-27, 2009  
Western Arts Alliance Seattle, WA September 1-5, 2008  
Western Fairs Association Reno, NV January 25-28, 2009  
Northwest Festivals and Events Conference, Ocean Shores, WA  
March 1-3, 2009

A list of Canadian Booking opportunities is at

<http://www.artstouring.com/about/links.php>

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