

GOOD
HOW TO
HAVE A
SHOW



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(Use your misery rectangle to scan this square
for music, poetry, tour dates, more zines & CONTENT)

IMAGINE THIS:

You're feeling lost in this freaky dystopian world. The "normal" people you encounter at the drug store make you feel scared and lonely. You are persistently exposed to callous displays of injustice and hyper aware of the impending climate collapse. Your phone is feeding you an unending display of chaos, disaster & exploitation alongside the memes and cat videos. You're forced to engage with circumstances so unfathomable in their distortion and degradation of humanity that to distinguish them from satire would be futile. Any consensus on reality itself has been long abandoned. The things you need to stay alive are prohibitively expensive. You have to go to work at a job that makes you antsy and unfulfilled and best, and pathologically miserable at worst. You feel disconnected - from those people at the drug store, certainly, but from your friends and family - from yourself, even. You are given very few opportunities for authentic expression of your thoughts or emotions. Your avenues for creating meaning are confined to the purchase of consumer goods, what TV programs you watch, or what "influencers" you are influenced by. You drink too much booze, or too much coffee, or too many milkshakes. You feel sad, or scared, or numb, or angry, or tired, or all of those at the same time. You've got angst pumping through your heart. Each one of your nerve endings is electrified - building up and ready to explode at any given moment.

YOU NEED TO SCREAM AND DANCE OR YOU WILL FREAK OUT!!

Then, like the hand of God reaching out to you personally, you notice a flyer stapled to a telephone pole. There's a punk show happening in your neighborhood. Maybe this is the answer, maybe this can release the pressure in your crowded lonely brain. You go to the show. People offer you food. You are one with the crowd, sharing sweaty hugs and labored breath, rambunctious energy and joyous hollers. When someone falls down in the mosh pit, there is a rush of people helping them back to their feet. As your ears ring, your chattering mind stops berating for a moment. Even if fleetingly, you feel free.

OKAY, FINE maybe that's a bit romanticized, but simply put, shows are a way to bring people together. In a world so saturated with commodified experiences, where concepts like "fun" and "art" and "community" and "rebellion" and are co-opted by cartoonish villains with dollar signs in their eyes, DIY punk shows can offer us a place to create models of the better world we're striving for, give us space to put our ideologies into practice, allow us opportunities to be joyous despite our grief, to celebrate and be in love with the beauty the world has to offer us even in its death throes. A chance to fully express ourselves, and be met in that expression with acceptance, to the approving cheers and hoots of our friends. When done right, punk shows can challenge the status quo, setting an example for different ways of organizing our world.

That being said, shitty shows are **SO SHITTY**. They bog down an entire network of traveling bands, show goers, and venue spaces. When we throw a shit show, we only reinforce the idea that all we are is a disorganized social club with nothing to offer to a better vision of the world. If we're going to throw shows, hold space host gatherings, get rowdy- **LET'S BE GOOD AT IT!** This ain't another shift down at the factory, ya'll. Let's curate something special every time we get down. Let's have shows that are a good time, but also well organized & welcoming. Let's create scenes and communities that are antagonistic to the status quo by mutually benefiting everyone - or at least let's try our best. Let's have fun and also serve as a net positive for the neighborhoods we gather in and the people with gather with - all sorts of folks, not just to the cool kids with the bad haircuts and the studded jackets.

We aren't going to build a utopia in a moldy basement. We aren't going to iron out the contradictions of modernity in a single evening. There is more to revolution than dancing. **HOWEVER:**



"A REVOLUTION
WITHOUT
DANCING
IS NOT A
REVOLUTION
WORTH HAVING"

- MASK GUY

SHOWRUNNER



This is the person who puts the show together
APPRECIATE THEM

If you've got the skills & gumption become one of these people

- WOW, THANK YOU SO MUCH!

By some stroke of misfortune, someone somewhere said you could "help set up a show". Your job is thankless and difficult. You do it for the love of the game. Without you shows don't happen, and we appreciate you deeply, **BUT ALSO - you have a job to do - YOU GOTTA ACTUALLY DO IT.**

-YOU'RE THE MVP (MOST VITAL PUNK)

You act as the point person for this event, you put together the pieces. It's up to you to find the right venue for this show, book the bands, get a flyer made, promote the show, make sure the bands get paid. You connect all the performers, the venue, the person running sound, and a place for the touring band to crash. This requires you **COMMUNICATE WELL**. Don't ghost people!

-THE PROMOTOR MUST PROMOTE!

This means more than just making a facebook event and calling it a day. Make a flyer. **PRINT PHYSICAL FLYERS**. Put them up around town. Post them in places that folks frequent* Go to other shows and hand out flyers there. Text your individual friends (especially catering to those who might be interested in this *particular* lineup) and tell them to come out. If you're a good show promoter, your friends will be **SICK** of hearing about the next gig you're putting on, but if yr skilled at what you do, they'll know that if you're putting it on, it's gonna be a **GOOD SHOW**

* infoshops, café's, libraries, record stores, bars – where do the weirdos in yr town hang?

- THE ORDER OF THE LINEUP MATTERS

As a promoter, it is often your job to make this call, and decide what will be best for the flow of the show. The order of the acts doesn't have to be totally strict, but you should order the bands with intention and communicate to each band about the order of the acts before the show. **THE TOURING BAND SHOULD NOT PLAY LAST**

It's as simple as this, and I think most fellow touring acts would agree - the order of the bands should be as follows:

1. Local opener(s)
2. Touring Act
3. Local Draw

The **"Local Opener"** warms up the crowd and gets the show going. Pay attention to the "energy levels" of each act on the bill. It might not make sense to have the loudest or most high energy act play first.

The **"Touring Act"** should be in the middle because you don't want the locals to leave before they perform. The priority should be to have the most people in the crowd engaging and listening to the touring act's set. The way to accomplish this is by NOT having them play first OR last so that people coming to the show late and people leaving the show early are all present when the touring band plays.

The **"Local Draw"** is the local band who has the largest following in town, which people are most likely to stick around for.

- DON'T BOOK TOO MANY ACTS

If you have five or six bands on a bill, things can become chaotic quickly. With set changes, delays, smoke breaks, and inevitable technical difficulties, your event is now approaching six hours long. It's a challenge to hold the attention of a crowd for the time span of two LOTR movies. My personal preference is a three band bill, as described above. If it's a weekday, have some sense - don't book a six band show and start the music at 9. Nobody will stick around and it won't be a **GOOD SHOW**

* I've played so many shows where the locals insist on playing first, saying the crowd will "for sure stick around". NO THEY WON'T. It's 10pm on a Wednesday. People wanna see their friends play, and then they wanna get in their jimjams as soon as possible.

- MIX IT UP

When you're booking acts for the show, don't be afraid to cross over boundaries of genres and scenes. If there's a metal band playing, maybe a shouty folkpunk opener would be cool. If you're booking a hip hop act, invite a local poet to perform. Add some variety so the audience doesn't feel like they are watching the same band three times in a row. It diversifies the crowd and brings different kinds of people together. You don't always have to go too far out of the wheel house - sometimes it doesn't make sense for a burlesque clown to share a bill with an anarcho-thrash band ***BUT SOMETIMES IT DOES***.

-SHAKE PEOPLE DOWN FOR \$\$\$\$

It's true, money is fake and the ultimate ill of our society. However, gas and food cost money, and bands need these things to do rock n roll for the people. **NOTAFLOF** (No One Turned Away For Lack Of Funds), or **PWYC** (Pay What You Can) or **Sliding Scale** policies are the norm at our shows. If folks are unable to pay for the show, no worries! We'd rather they be here and not paying than someplace else and not paying. But as the show runner, it is your duty to charge at the door, pass the hat or shake a tip jar at people. You should take an active role in collecting \$\$\$ for the show. Walk around with a donation bucket. Make eye contact with people. Throw the charm on and ask if they can help support.*

- MORE THOUGHTS ABOUT STUPID MONEY

A ***GOOD SHOW*** for a touring band means getting paid decently. It's your job as the organizer and promoter to make sure they at least break even by plying a show you put together. Touch base with the venue, the local bands, the soundperson if there is one. Make sure you understand what the "money breakdown" will be before the show if possible. Does the venue take a cut of the door, or are they paying the bands to play? Are the locals expecting some of the cut, or are they willing to give it all to the touring bands? Regardless of how the money is split, the touring band should get the largest piece of the pie!

* If some nerds come through with a case of PBR and no money for the bands, let them enjoy the show, but don't be afraid to give 'em a little shit about it. If you can afford booze, you can afford to kick a few bucks down to the bands.

*This person has opened up their space
so we could have a show
Let's show we're grateful by
NOT TRASHING THE PLACE*



-WHAT'S THE VIBE?

As a performer, it can be nice to know what sort of environment you're going into. Is this a bar or an infoshop? Will there be a bunch of bros watching sports to compete with? Is it a listening crowd who will be seated and attentive, or is this a bunch of folks looking to get rowdy and thrash around?

- OFFERING MORE THAN JUST A SPACE

Is this a place where the touring band could sleep after the show? Can you provide food for the bands and/or the attendees? Is the venue handicap accessible? Is it all ages? Is it a sober space or a boozy space? Is there drinking water available for folks? Consider these things and more when hosting a show.

- SOUND SITUATION

Is there a PA provided here? Are we planning an acoustic only show? Is there a person running sound? What gear does the band need to bring? Communicate all this before the show so a bunch of drunken dropouts aren't scrambling to find cables five minutes before their set.

-READY THE SPACE

I think making signs is a great way to host at yr spot. Mark bathrooms, which doors not to open, what food is up for grabs, what's vegan and what's not. Pay attention to lighting - it matters! **EARPLUGS ARE PUNK!** Do you have them on hand? Also, would it kill ya to clean up a bit? We wanna feel welcomed in yr space, not like we're in yr gross dorm room.

-TALK TO YOUR NEIGHBORS

Don't ya know one of the punkest things you can do is make friends with your neighbors? Talk to them about the show and exchange contact information. Ask them to talk to you directly if there are any issues - if things are too loud or someone parked wrong. To run a venue you'll have to enter relationship with your neighbors. If they seem into it, invite 'em! This is how we build community that reaches outside of our subcultural bubbles.

LOCAL BAND



*These are the folks in the local scene
"supporting acts" who bring their friends
This is how we build networks
This is how we start the revolution
HURRAY ART!*

-INVITE YOUR FRIENDS

Your first duty for this show is to **FUCKING ROCK** and share your art with your friends and embody the glowing expression of vulnerability and authenticity that you were born to be.

But a close second is to **GET PEOPLE TO COME TO THE SHOW**

Invite your crew! Invite people who aren't your crew! Invite the weird kid at your work that doesn't seem like they get out much. Promote it on social media, but do more than that. Shout: "**GET TO THE GIG!**", or if you prefer, "Hey, I'm playing show with a punk puppet troupe. I think you'd really dig it- you should come!"

-BE ACCOMMODATING TO THE TOURING ACT

You should try your best to make sure the touring band is stoked about their experience. Don't insist on taking the "good" time slot. Don't talk at the bar during the other band's set. Watch everyone play and encourage the people who came to see you to stay and watch the other folks on the bill. Chat up the touring band up, go visit their city on your next tour, and ya'll can play together again. Become buds. That's the point of all this.

- DON'T PLAY TOO LONG

Be aware of how long your set will take. Be respectful of the time of those who have come to support you. Stick to a solid 30-45 minutes of tunes and get outta the way so the touring act can get to it. I don't say this to be harsh, but just to recognize that people have taken time out of their lives, **WENT TO A PLACE TO DO A THING!** That's no small act in our time. Play your set, be concise, and allow the flow of the evening to go unimpeded by long meandering stage banter about your cat.

TOURING BAND

*This is the group of people for whom
we have all taken time out of our miserable lives
so they could share their art
We have curated an entire event just for them
THEY BETTER NOT LET US DOWN*

-TRY GOOD

Listen, **I KNOW**, you're tired and grumpy. You're goddamn sick of the 3-8 smelly farty annoying people you call your bandmates. You're hungover, you haven't eaten vegetables in weeks, and your mom is disappointed in you. You've put your body, relationships, financial security & mental health at risk. Despite all of that, **GET YOUR SHIT TOGETHER**. Be on time. Communicate well with the promoter. Be prepared to set up your gear, figure out the sound situation, and to jump on stage when it's your time. You want to leave this city with a venue and promoter who are excited to book you again.



-GIVE 'EM HELL, KID

If your life ended up so strange that you're on tour in a punk band, take advantage of that by playing a damn good show at all costs. Play your fuggin' heart out, connect with people, go crazy. I get sad when I see folks just going through the motions. Give the people something special, so next time you're in town they'll come see ya again. So, when the revolution starts, you'll have an outpost in Cleveland.

-ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF

Perhaps you're playing a show where the promoter, or the venue, or the local bands have not read this zine. Maybe you're at a show where everyone is **DOING IT WRONG**. You might have to stick up for yourself! You deserve to be treated well and you are allowed express your needs. **but also:**

-BE KIND, MAKE FRIENDS

Make pals in this town. Connect with folks who connect with your art. To build mutually supportive community is the ultimate goal here. Do what you must in the times between gigs to ensure that you have the capacity to be decent to people. If you're not getting enough sleep or drinking so much that it makes you an irritable asshole **GET SOME SLEEP** and lay off the booze a bit. If the only reason you're here is to look cool and party, find a bar crawl somewhere or a country club to join, nerd.

SHOWGOERS



*These are the folks for whom
we do all this nonsense.
They come to the shows to support
clap and holler, dance and sing
Without these friends
we'd all be screaming at the walls
DON'T BE A JAGOFF*

-GO TO SHOWS!

If you're a person who doesn't want everything in the entire world to be commodified, drained of its soul, sterilized and packaged in plastic - support independent art and the artists who make it. The greatest performers, most articulate poets, shreddiest of riff rippers, most poignant political commentators, the goofiest, most loveable folks this world spits out are independent artists. They ain't famous because they're too damn good at what they do. They won't compromise what they have to say and the fury with which they say it. I don't want to live in a world without these goobers. If you feel similarly, get to the goddamned gig. Your "responsibilities" and the comforts of Netflix will be waiting for you in the next life.

-SUPPORT WITH \$\$\$ IF YOU CAN

If you're hard up and can't afford to drop some duckets in the hat, **PLEASE** come to the show anyway, we want you here. There's no shame in being broke, and us meek peoples gotta stick together and fight for an earth worth inheriting. But if you're able to, please **GIVE MONEY FOR THE SHOW!** It supports the space, the bands, and the continuation of these scenes. A ticket to the movies costs damn near \$20. A Rage Against The Machine concert costs hundreds. You can see the best performances on offer, buy a CD, and leave a fatty tip for the bartender for less than the cost of a night out at Chili's. If you can't drop any coin on the gig, try to find other ways to contribute. Do some dishes, gather some trash, help carry stuff (but don't touch musicians' gear w/o permission). If you ask the promotor of venue host if there's anything you can do, I bet they'd be happy to assign you a task and grateful for the help.

- Shhhh!

I can't believe I have to say this: **DON'T TALK WHEN PEOPLE ARE PLAYING**
In an act of courageous vulnerability, these performers are ripping their heart out on stage & serving it to you on a silver platter. Shut the hell up and pay attention for twenty minutes Chat up that cutie you've been flirting with between sets.* I know - you've come to socialize with the coolest people in town. You're all dressed up in punk show attire - omg, you are **SO CUTE!** You wanna catch up with old pals, make plans for monkeywrenching & plot to overthrow the government - **I WANT YOU TO DO THAT**, just do it between bands and after the gig. As a performer, it is preferable to play for 10 people who're engaged & listening than 50 people chatting and not paying attention

-WATCH THE PERFORMANCES (YOU'RE AT A SHOW, SILLY)

Picture this: You're on tour. The venue is great - welcoming, artsy and radical. The people are groovy and friendly. The other bands are fun and talented. The sound person isn't a dick. "This is going to be a **GOOD SHOW**" you think to yourself. Then, when it's time for your set everyone goes to smoke, or gets food, or chats at the bar, or goes home. **IT'S SUPER DISHEARTENING** as a touring musician to drive countless miles, eat gas station food every day, sleep in **YUCKY** places, all in an attempt to share your art

hoping to find a brief outlet for the tormenting thoughts that live inside your mind, relieving if only for an instant the unbearable weight of being human

and then you're ignored. I understand there's more to all of this than watching live music. I commend you for somehow defeating the urge to lie in bed and look at tiktok until consciousness leaves your body. But, since you've made it this far, could you also watch the bands play? Please?

-DON'T BE A JAGOFF

In Pittsburgh, we have a loving term for "asshole who is making this less fun for everyone else" It's called a "Jagoff". Don't be one. Check the vibe of the gig. If there are small people in the front quietly swaying, don't start hardcore tough guy moshing. If it's a sober show, don't sneak booze. I encourage you to be a troublemaker and rascal in your life - just don't be crummy to our friends

* If you're the cutie and they talk while the bands are playing, they ain't the one

A FEW ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

- “SAFE SPACES”

I won't go too in depth on this subject, because it's so vast and leads to a variety of conversations that might be too weighty to take up in this particular zine. What I will say is that we should foster inclusive welcoming environments, being especially diligent to make our spaces as safe and supportive as we can for marginalized people - from queer youth to substance users to BIPOC to the unhoused. The definition of “safe”, how it is applied and the nuanced dynamics of practice are relative to you and your community. These conversations are worth having if it means we can carve out section of the world for people comfortably express themselves how they see fit and come together to be affirmed and celebrated for doing so. We also make our spaces safer when we keep harm reduction supplies on hand (Narcan, Naloxone, “safer use kits”, test strips, etc) and are equipped with knowledge and ability to use those tools if necessary. What happens if the cops show up? Speaking of safety, we should **have a plan** for what to do if a bunch of armed agents of state sanctioned violence come knocking.

-**Drinking is cOmPliCAtED**

Have you noticed that our subculture is deeply embedded with a less than healthy relationship to alcohol? Booze and punk shows feel like they go hand in hand – but they don't have to be synonymous. Have I experienced moments of extreme bliss while drunkenly moshing? Absolutely. Have I seen people do stupid, shitty, and even harmful things at shows because they were drunk? Yup. Do I think that the presence of alcohol makes a space inherently unsafe? No, I think it's more complex than that. Have I seen communities fall apart as the result of toxic drinking culture? For sure. Whatever your scene is like, be mindful of the role substances are playing. I find, even if there is drinking at yr show, providing seltzers and food can help manage the binge drinking impulse. Be intentional with the relationship your event has to substances, and if you're in a position of organizing or hosting, keep your wits about you so you're able to adequately address anything that might come up at your gig.

-FOOD MAKES EVERYTHING BETTER

If you can find a way to incorporate food into your show, you just leveled up. I award you punk points. Nothing nourishes community like providing food. If you can offer someone a punk gig for \$10 they might come. If you can offer them a **GOOD SHOW** and a half decent meal for \$10 they're more likely to pull up. Even some dip and chips change the dynamic for the better. Potlucks are great. Make everything you do in your life a potluck & you'll die happy.

- DON'T BE A "TOO COOL FOR SCHOOL" KID

We get it - in the early aughts you opened for a band that is now legendary. You've got stick-n-pokes in all the right places. You're more vegan or more radical or more trauma informed or more traincore than these poseurs. "The scene sucks these days!" "This city was cooler 10 years ago." **WHATEVER!** Quit actin' like such a cool kid all the time. Be welcoming to other people, be kind and start conversations with the newbies, curate events that are accessible to people who ain't like you. Take interest in what the younger folks are up to and what kind of art they're making. Did you come here to be seen in the scene, or did you come here to engage and connect with people? Our movements, artistic or political, will never lead to a better world if all we're concerned with is looking cool. Let's open up this pit **AND OUR HEARTS**♥ Let's welcome in freakies and misfits of all stripes.

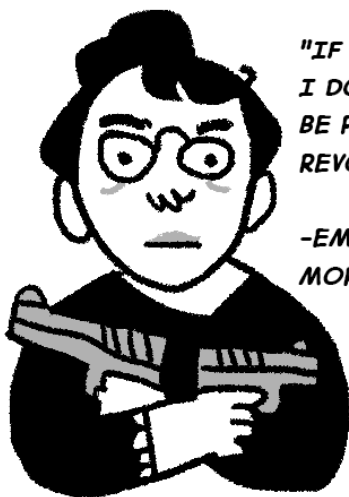
- THIS AIN'T A BLUEPRINT

There's no correct way to have fun, or build community, or throw a show. You're a punk - think for yourself. Follow these tips in a way that feels good for you. Shape these suggestions to respond to the needs and dreams of your friends, neighborhoods, towns, cities, scenes, and communities. Put some thought into how you're throwing shows and how you could make 'em better for everyone. It will never be perfect, but we can bring people together in common cause and for the right reasons.

As our **PUNKASFUCK** artist Jonas says:

Magic takes practice.
Musicians, hosts, and
attendees are all getting
better at their spells - hopefully





*"IF I CAN'T DANCE,
I DON'T WANT TO
BE PART OF YOUR
REVOLUTION".*

*-EMMA GOLDMAN
MORE OR LESS*

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