



PERFORMING & TOURING RESOURCES

# Alternative Ways Of Touring

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# Alternative Ways Of Touring

## PERFORMING & TOURING



This resource explores alternative touring ideas and helps artists create unique live shows that connect with audiences.

There are many ways to put on a live performance. A great show doesn't always come from bigger production or bigger venues – often it comes from creative ideas that make the experience feel special for the audience.

A distinctive live experience can take many forms. It might mean performing in unusual venues, creating an immersive stage setup, building storytelling into the show, playing exclusive setlists, inviting special guests, or including moments where the audience can interact with the performance. Even small creative decisions can make a show feel more personal and memorable for fans.

Developing these points of difference isn't just about standing out for one night. It's also about building your artistic identity over time. Whether it's a full tour or a one-off performance, every show should reinforce the story you are telling as an artist. Each performance contributes to how audiences, promoters, and the wider industry see your project.

**When planning a unique show or tour idea, it can help to work through three simple questions:**

- Why are we doing it?
- How are we going to achieve it?
- What do we need to make the show work?

### Why are we doing it?

Start by thinking about the purpose of the show or tour. The most successful non-traditional shows start with a clear goal.

**Ask yourself:**

- Are you trying to grow your audience in new cities or regions?
- Are you creating a memorable live moment around a new release?
- Are you trying to connect more deeply with your existing fans?
- Are you hoping to generate content or build momentum online?
- Are you testing a new creative direction or live format?

Your “why” will shape everything that follows - from the venues you choose to the way the show is designed.

For example, if your goal is discovery and reaching new audiences, smaller intimate shows in unexpected locations might work well. If your goal is to create a major moment around a release, a larger one-off event or special show may be more effective.

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### How can you achieve this?

**Once you know your goal, the next step is figuring out how to bring the idea to life. Think about the format and concept of the show:**

- Could the show take place in non-traditional venues like galleries, rooftops, warehouses, community spaces, or outdoor locations?
- Could the performance be built around a story or concept connected to your music?
- Could you collaborate with other artists, creatives, or communities?
- Could the tour involve limited-capacity shows or pop-up performances that create excitement and demand?

The aim is to design an experience that feels distinct and memorable. Fans are much more likely to talk about and share something that feels unique.

### What do we need to make it work?

**One of the biggest challenges with non-traditional shows is cost. Creating a memorable moment can sometimes require extra planning and resources, so it's important to consider a few practical questions early on:**

- Do you need production/amplification to perform?
- Who is your audience and how will the event work for them?
- How will you cover your costs and generate income?
- How will you market the event?

### **Do you need production/amplification to perform?**

The level of production you need will affect the type of venue you can use, the cost of the show, and how many people are required to run the event.

You might choose to perform with a full production setup including backline, microphones, PA systems, and lighting. Or you may decide to strip things back and create a more intimate performance.

Some artists perform acoustically or with minimal equipment, such as a single microphone, a small portable speaker, or even no amplification at all. This approach can open up opportunities to perform in unique spaces like galleries, small rooms, outdoor locations, or community venues.

### **Choosing between a full production setup and a minimal setup will influence:**

- The type of venue you can use
- The cost of equipment and production
- The number of people required to run the show
- The overall atmosphere of the performance

For example, a high-production show might need a venue with professional technical facilities, while an intimate performance might work best in a small space where the audience is close to the performer.

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Thinking carefully about the technical requirements will help you choose the right venue and ensure the show runs smoothly.

### Who is your audience?

It's important to consider who your audience is and how the event will work for them.

Different audiences have different needs, which will affect the venue you choose, the atmosphere of the event, and the legal requirements involved. One key factor is the age group of your audience. If the event is under 18s, the venue must be safe and legally able to host minors. This might include youth centres, community venues, halls, or daytime outdoor spaces where alcohol is not served.

If the event is all ages, the venue needs to safely accommodate a mixed audience. This often involves rules around alcohol service, such as separating bar areas or ensuring underage attendees cannot access alcohol.

For 18+ events, venues such as bars, clubs, or licensed spaces are often easier to work with. These venues usually already have sound systems, security, and staff in place.

In every case, you must ensure the venue can legally and safely hold the expected crowd size. This includes checking capacity limits, safety regulations, emergency exits, and crowd management requirements.

Creating a safe and comfortable environment will help ensure a positive experience for everyone attending.

### **🔥 HOT TIP!**

There are companies that specialise in running unique or non-traditional gigs.

Organisations like The Push and Sofar Sounds help facilitate intimate and alternative live music events. It's worth researching whether working with organisations like these could help bring your idea to life.

### How will you cover costs and generate income?

Once you have considered your venue, production needs, and audience, the next step is estimating the cost of putting on the show.

#### **Start by listing possible expenses such as:**

- Venue hire
- Equipment or backline rental
- Sound and lighting production
- Marketing and promotion
- Staff or security
- Transport and setup costs

Once you understand the costs, you can think about how the event will pay for itself.

The most common income source is ticket sales. Ticket pricing and expected attendance should ideally cover your costs and generate some profit.

#### **Other possible income sources include:**

- Venue partnerships
- Sponsorship
- Grants
- Donations

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However, if you are using a public or unconventional space, generating income may be harder. In those cases, the event might be more about creating a special moment, building your audience, or generating content.

You can still offset costs through things like merchandise sales or by collecting audience data - encouraging fans to follow your social media or sign up to a mailing list. This helps grow your audience and makes it easier to promote future shows.

Balancing costs, income opportunities, and long-term benefits will help you decide whether the event is financially worthwhile.

### How will you market the event?

Marketing is what ensures people actually know the event exists. Start by thinking about how you will announce the show and where your audience is most likely to discover it.

#### **You might promote the event through:**

- Social media posts
- Event pages
- Posters
- Email newsletters
- Collaborations with venues or communities

You should also think about where your audience spends time online. If your fans mainly follow you on platforms like Instagram, TikTok, or mailing lists, those channels should be the focus of your promotion.

Another decision is whether the event should be exclusive or public.

Exclusive events might only be announced to your mailing list or through private links. This can make the experience feel special and limited.

Public events can reach a wider audience, helping attract new listeners who may not already know your music.

Whatever approach you take, your marketing should clearly communicate what the experience is and why people should come.

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### Marketing checklist

- Decide if the event is exclusive or public
- Exclusive announcement to existing fans (mailing list or private link)
- Public promotion to reach new audiences

### Create promotional materials

- Event poster or artwork
- Social media graphics or videos
- Clear information on how to get tickets or RSVP
- Venue details and entry requirements

### Announce the event

- Share the key details: date, time, location, and tickets
- Explain what makes the event unique

### Engage with your audience

- Respond to comments or questions
- Encourage fans to invite friends or share the event



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