

Oisín Interview Transcript

Name: Oisín

Age: 26

Occupation: Part-Time Session Musician

Qns: Please describe your role in securing gigs to play at.

Oisín: I play as a hired member of lineup bands. Personally I have never been in the front end of dealing with a booker or venue, generally I would deal with an agent or a friend of somebody who works in the venue. At this stage my general role of getting a gig is through an established network. Personally I wouldn't be communicating with a venue or promoter, I would be one step behind that.

Qns: For context, could you please name some of the venues that you have performed at?

Oisín: In Dublin- 3 Arena, Vicar Street, The Academy, Button Factory and smaller stuff such as Bernard Shaw. They are all closing now... I would like to play at the Olympia, I haven't played there. I have also played at festivals at every level for years.

Qns: Could you please run through the current (pre-covid) process of how you find a venue and gig to play at?

Oisín: To me, there are 2 Scenarios - we want to put on a show or we get asked to put on a show. If we want to put on a show, I would be responsible for budgeting and size. We would then go to an agent if it was a large show or a personal contact within a venue that we negotiate through. Rarely I would deal with the venue or promoter, only with small gigs when it is with people I know personally. Otherwise, we usually use an agent.

Qns: What are some of the frustrations in this process?

Oisín: With an agent, I haven't had many gripes at that level because everybody is getting paid and things are going smoothly and negotiations are easy. The networking element is really dominant- you'll get more gigs if you know more people. For example if we wanted to get a gig in Belfast, that would be difficult as we don't know people from that network. It's easier to get a high level gig through an agent but if you're not at a high level gig it can get annoying in terms of networking.

Qns: Do you currently know of, or use any technology to find gigs to play at?

Oisín: No, it was never application or digital-based. You have to be playing at gigs and talking to people after, it's the really old school style of networking where the only way to get gigs is to hang out with people and have pints and stuff like that. People would have careers from going out because there was somebody out, and showing up at nights out when there's important people there. It takes years but it works so that's how I have networked and that's how we have gotten gigs. I don't put my soundreel online personally because I am not a full time musician and I am not interested in social media networking, but a lot of my peers do. Even BIMM Institute teaches modules on how you effectively use an online presence to promote yourself as a musician.

Qns: If there was a dedicated app for showcasing your work to promoters & bookers, would you use it?

Oisín: Personally, no. But in my opinion a lot of musicians would use it and would be quite interested. Maybe something more geared towards the performance scene could be interesting... besides Instagram and the usual stuff like that.

Qns: What are some suggestions you would have for an app like this?

Oisín: If you're a small enough band trying to escape your locality, being able to find promoters or venues available in other cities is useful. The threshold for a need of an agent would increase if such an app exists because you are visible to venues and they can see that you have taken the steps to be

credible. But you have to be at a certain level. The app for musicians and bookers would have to be easy to use or much easier than doing the research traditionally (ie. looking for contacts online), which people are used to already.

While there is a call for accessibility in the music industry, there should be a way to show an act's credibility, that most musicians now build up over the years of experience and networking. If an app like this exists, I don't think venues and promoters are interested in being swamped by amateurs or start-up musicians, this would be a risk of an app like this. The networking and organic process now has its use in establishing an experienced musician's credibility. There needs to be filtration and moderation of content for this app.

Qns: Lastly, can we have permission to use your name and picture in our research to form a User profile? This will only be used for UX research purposes and possibly published on our personal blogs.

Oisin: No problem, I hope I have been able to help you with your research.