



presented by:
DIT LANCASTER

INTRODUCTION

introduction

booking shows is a beautiful, stressful, rewarding, thankless, non-paying job. there aren't a lot of people who do it, and the ones who do are mostly very exhausted, but just keep doing it because they're dedicated to community and have a passion for music. are you someone who likes huge undertakings or needs a project to feel productive? then booking shows is probably your bag. here's all the info i have to offer about getting started.

disclaimer: i don't have all the answers nor claim to be an authority on this subject, the following has been gathered via a few years of personal experience.

THE BASICS:

- bands
- space
- the details
- promotion

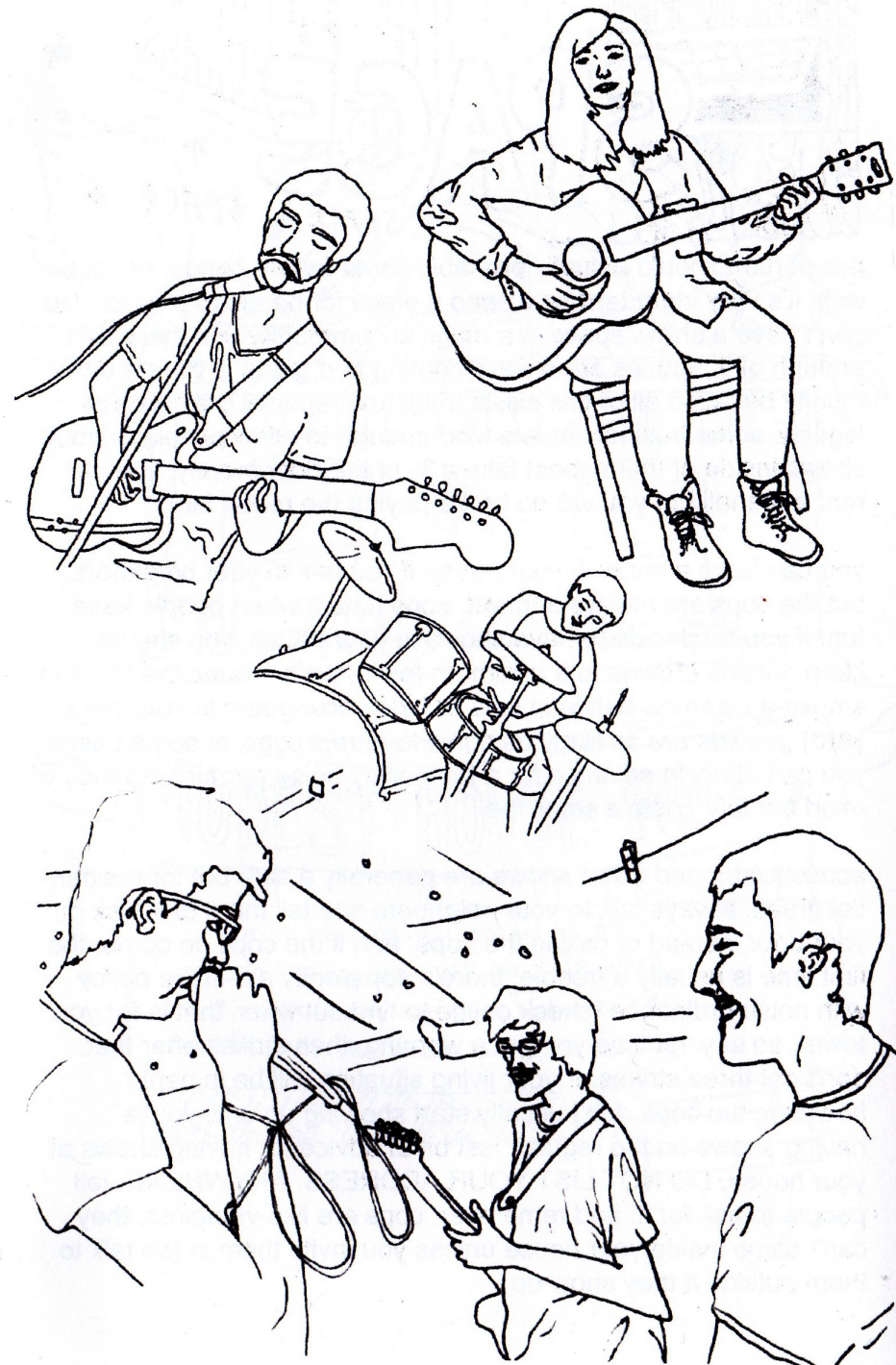
* BANDS * BANDS * BANDS *

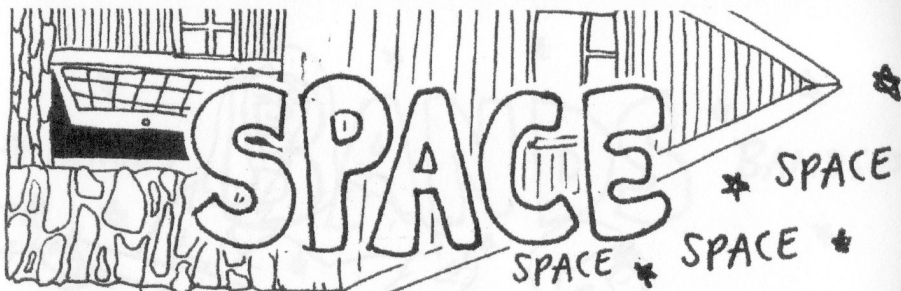
to book a show, you need some bands. most people get into booking by accident, say your friend's band needs a show and they are too lazy to book it (or they're touring in from outta town and can't book it, or there's a dream show you wanna see and no one else is booking it). if you don't have any bands, plenty of websites exist for this reason- you can put your services on dodiyusa.org or ditphonebook.com. touring bands will hit you up, i guarantee it.

being an organizer is sort of like being a drug dealer. at first you have to ask people to play, but once folks get wind that you set things up, they will inundate you with booking requests, even when you're desperately trying to get out of the game. other ways to find bands include acquiring their contact info from facebook or bandcamp and asking them to play (this works best locally unless bands are trying to fill up tour dates). example: "hey band, can you play a show on this date at this place? let me know, thanks." make sure you tell confirmed bands the address of the show, when to show up before the show, approx set length, where they can crash after the show, and a phone number where they can reach you with questions way before the show actually happens.

it's a good rule of thumb to have more locals on a show than touring bands. why you ask? well touring bands need money to get to the next town and feed themselves. and if you have four touring bands on a show with one local, well, you can do the math. unless you have some magical promotional powers, you're gonna have like 5 dollars each for them. also, keep shows down to 4 bands/15-20 minute sets (maybe 5 bands tops*) because people's attention spans generally peter-out after the 3rd band and they will leave your show and go get burger king or something. (pro tip: if you feed people at a show they almost always stay longer).

*unless you're having a day-long event like a variety show, fest, etc

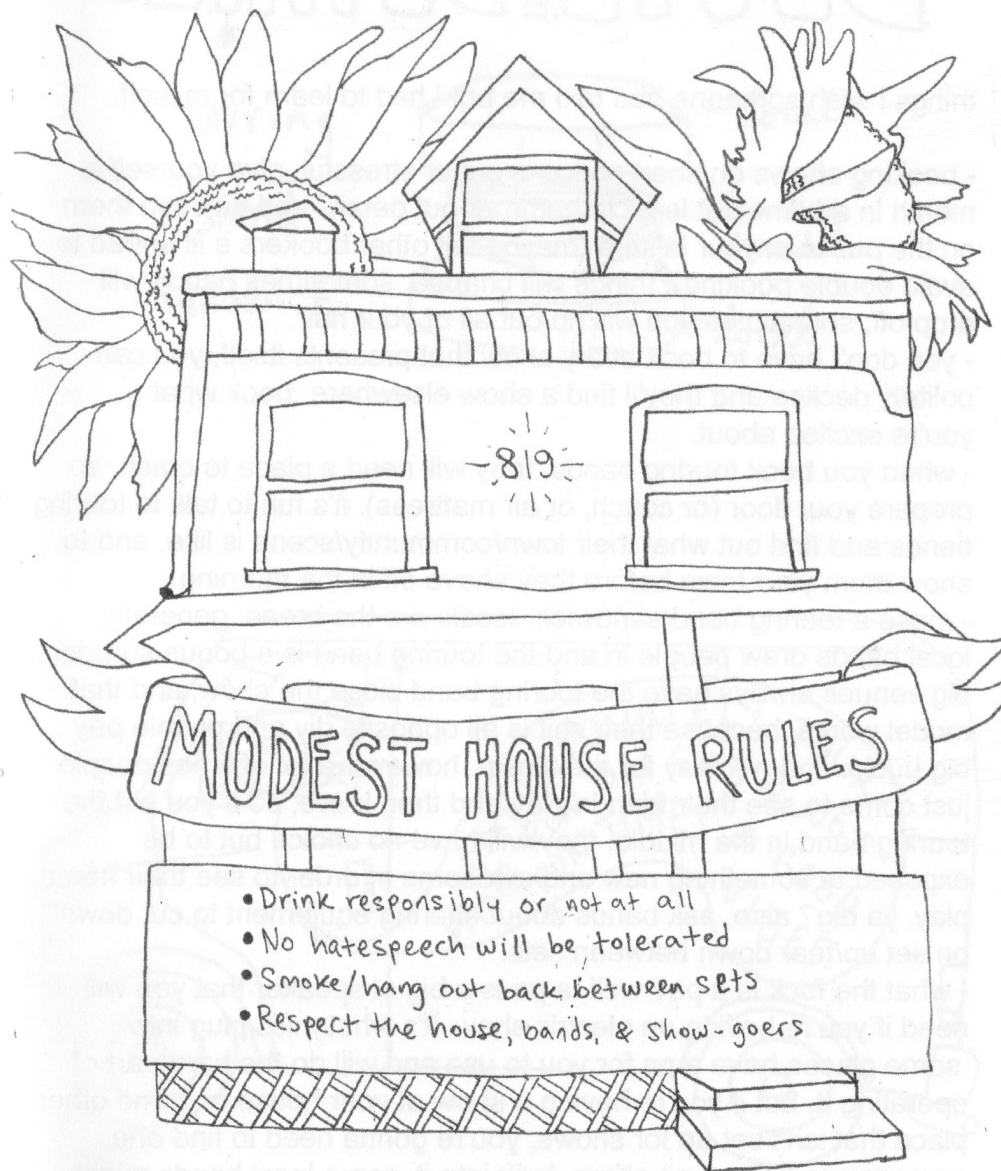




this portion should actually probably come before bands, because well, it's very important. you need a place for bands to play, or you don't have a show. space is a magical commodity and there isn't enough of it. spaces are always coming and going in the diy community because all of this exists in a super-special gray area of legality. some businesses are kind enough to allow people to book shows inside of them, most take a % of the door money. you can rent a firehall but you will go broke paying the rental fee.

you can have a show in your house if you talk to your neighbors but the cops are always a threat. cops hate it when people have fun. if you do decide to have shows in your house, you should keep outside crowds to a minimum (as in, walk around the block to smoke a cigarette between sets or hide show-goers in your backyard). crowds are as likely as noise to attract cops. in some cases you can apply in advance for a temporary noise permit for peace of mind but that costs a small fee.

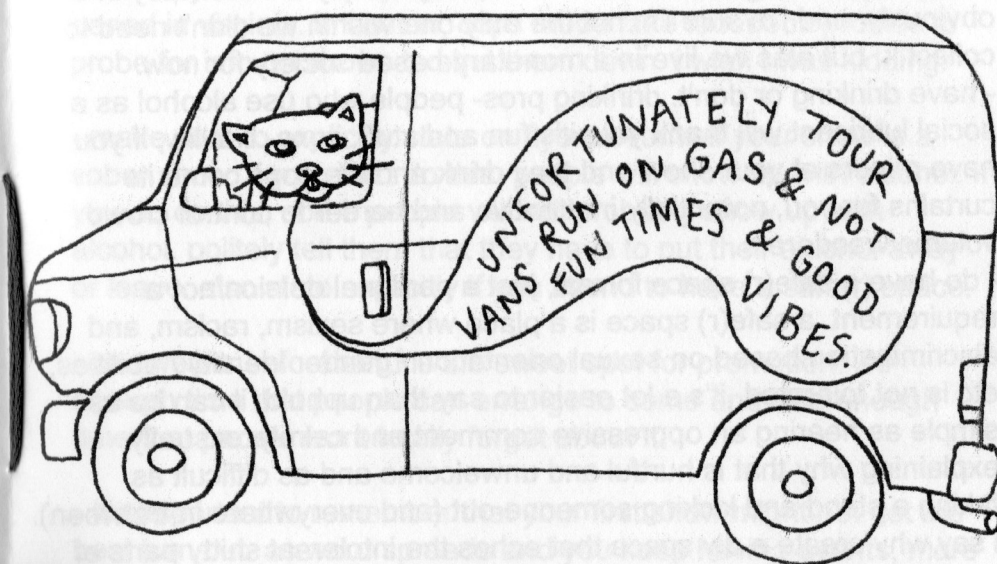
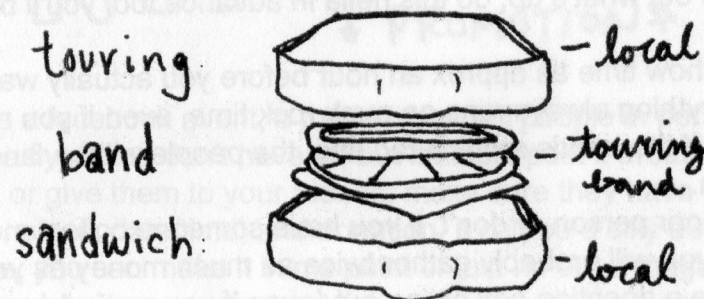
acoustic/stripped down shows are generally a safe bet for residential areas. always talk to your neighbors and tell them to knock on your door instead of calling the cops, and if the cops do come, the first time is usually a freebie. there's apparently a 3-strike policy with noise ordinance (check online to find out when that is for your town). so say 1st time you get a warning, then strikes after that. don't get three strikes or your living situation will be in peril. however, the cops don't usually start showing up until you're having shows on the regular. last bit of advice for having shows at your house, **DO NOT LIST YOUR ADDRESS, ANYWHERE.** tell people to ask for it. and remember, cops are like vampires, they can't come inside your house unless you invite them in (so talk to them outside if they show up).



★ DEVIL in the DETAILS ★

things i wish someone had told me but i had to learn for myself.

- booking shows on short notice is super stressful, give yourself a month in advance at least to hammer out details and unleash them on the public at your leisure (maybe tell other bookers a lil ahead to avoid double booking). things will change, sometimes bands will drop off, sometimes you will rip out all of your hair.
- you don't have to book every show that presents itself, you can politely decline and they'll find a show elsewhere. book what you're excited about.
- when you book touring bands, they will need a place to crash, so prepare your floor (or couch, or air mattress). it's fun to talk to touring bands and find out what their town/community/scene is like, and to show them your town before they shove off in the morning.
- make a touring band sandwich. locals are the bread. generally, local bands draw people in and the touring band is a bonus surprise. big venues always have the touring band close the show, and that model works, because their shit is all opposite diy and people pay big bucks and will stay for the closer. however a lot of times people just come to see their friends play and then leave, so if you put the touring band in the middle, they will have no choice but to be exposed to something new and awesome in order to see their friend play, ya dig? also, ask bands about sharing equipment to cut down on set up/tear down between sets.
- what the fuck is a pa? well, a pa is a big ol speaker that you will need if you're having an electric show. it's what mics plug into. some places have a pa for you to use and will do the hard part of operating it, but if you're having a show at your house or some other place that isn't set up for shows, you're gonna need to find one. some towns have a pa share, look into it. some local bands might also have pas and it is a good idea to ask them this well in advance so you wont wind up with your thumb up your butt wondering what happened on show night.



- tell bands to be there early, like at least a half hour before your show is slated to start (tell them way in advance, remind them closer to the date). get phone numbers so you can call when they are late and figure out what's up, do this hell in advance too. you'll be thankful.

- set the show time as approx an hour before you actually wanna start. everything always runs on punk rock time, even if you run a tight ship. if the bands aren't a tad late, the people will be, and vice-versa.

- have a door person or don't. if you have someone collect money at the door, you will probably gather twice as much money as you would if you have a donation box sitting out (even if you remind people tirelessly). you can mark hands for extra assurance. it sucks to have to be sort of hassling people for money, but given the option, a lot of people simply won't pay at all (i've gotten everything from fortune cookie fortunes to pokemon cards to gift cards to buckets of change with an unattended donation box). it's only cute if you actually have real money to hand to bands in there, too. money is secondary in diy, obviously, and i'm sure i'm not the only one wishin we didn't need to collect it, but alas we live in a monetary-based society for now.

- have drinking or don't. drinking pros- people who use alcohol as a social lubricant will thank you, it's fun and stuff. cons- liability, if you have minors at your show and they drink and the cops come it's curtains for you, potentially inattentive and harder to control crowd volume/wanderers.

- do have a safe(r) space for real, just a personal opinion/not a requirement. a safe(r) space is a place where sexism, racism, and discrimination based on sexual orientation / gender identity / abilities, etc is not tolerated. it's a lot easier to say than uphold. it can be as simple as hearing an oppressive comment and calmly, casually explaining why that is hurtful and unwelcome and as difficult as taking a stand and kicking someone out (and everywhere in-between). i say why create a diy space that echos the intolerant shitty parts of greater society within a movement that is all about creating an alternative to that? the 'safe(r)' is for the fact that no one can promise to preemptively mute any problematic language/behavior, but you can promise to address it when it arises.

* PROMOTION *

* PROMOTION *

- make a facebook event, a tumblr post, tell people in person, make a flyer! you don't have to, but it helps. post it around in local shops or give them to your friends. make sure they have the bands, place, date/time, and donation. it can be a silly doodle or collage, you can make it in ms paint or just rip out a magazine page and do it ransom note style. anything goes. you can make your friend make it, you can make it with a friend.

- donations not dollars! if you put a flat dollar amount on a flyer without "donation" somewhere following it you can be considered to be making a profit off the event and angry govt people can come at you for not paying taxes on it. this has legitimately happened in virginia. in boston, cops made fake facebook profiles to probe for info on shows to shut them down. i wish i was kidding.

- make sure to explicitly state on flyers/events if your show is a sober show. if you don't do this, people will show up with alcohol. if you do do this, some people will still probably show up with alcohol. politely tell them that they have to put their alcohol away or leave. also state explicitly if you intend to have a safe(r) space.

- two weeks beforehand is the sweet spot for promotion. it's enough time that people can arrange to come and little enough time that people won't totally forget about it.

- it's important to remember that your first show might not get the best turn out. as word spreads and you keep having events, more and more people show up. humans are fickle creatures, they might have to hear how fun it is 10 times before they dedicate their time to it. don't get discouraged if the first time isn't a walk in the park. starting with acoustic shows first is a good idea, they are much lower intensity/risk. try only one a month at first, too.



all doodles done by alyssa giannini
unless otherwise stated

bands drawn on page 3:
top corner- laura rowe (lancaster)
middle- henry (philly)
nachoproblems.bandcamp.com
bottom- french in van (lancaster)
frenchinvan.bandcamp.com

flyers on page 10:
top right- derek riley
top left- katie hanna
bottom right- alyssa giannini
bottom left- danica strushensky

further reading on this topic:
building: a diy guide to creating spaces, hosting events and
fostering radical communities
(available as free pdf or zine via dodiy.org)

★ ★ now, go book a show! ★ ★

you'll make meaningful connections with people from other towns or even your own, gain new favorite bands and maybe a few pen pals. you'll get to marvel at people coming together for a genuine, human purpose and probably learn a cool thing or two about life.



this zine was written by alyssa giannini,
distributed via dit lancaster & craft or diy.

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