



FAQS for performing arts companies/individuals

Will you book my show?

Spot On doesn't book shows directly, like an arts venue might. We offer a curated menu of recommended companies to volunteers who take charge of the venues themselves. They have to make sure it's suitable for a public event and as accessible as possible. They choose a show they like from a menu produced by Spot On which they receive twice a year. It's a bit like a dating agency! It can take up to 2 months from earmarking dates with companies, to knowing if you have bookings.

How do the community choose the shows?

We get 100s of emails from companies wanting to be on the network. We sift these down to about 12 per season which we place in our menu. We then send this out to the volunteers and library staff. Due to the high level of competition for bookings, our limited capacity and the limits of our budget we cannot guarantee to respond to all company emails. We reserve the right to make the final decision regarding our programming based on available budget, artform spread, audience mix and local venue knowledge. Occasionally we commission work or solicit specific companies as part of our artform development programme around dance, digital art and diversity.

The menu contains information about the show, cost, technical details (ie will it fit their venue) and dates available. The volunteers then choose 3 companies they want in order of preference and return it to Spot On. We then piece together the choices and make the tour work across the county. It is this process which makes rural & library touring different from other venues.

"The audience chooses the show, owns it, takes responsibility for marketing it and hosting it on the night. They buy into the experiences. No promoter wants a flop on their hands. They have to live in the village! This can mean people play safe with choices, but good marketing, and great artists help overcome this."

I'm not a professional performer, will you book my show?

No. Spot On supports professional artists who earn the majority of their income from performing and touring. We are funded by the Arts Council and see our role as enabling

people in rural areas and small urban towns to see work they wouldn't normally be able to see without driving to a large city arts venue. We consider our venues to be potential theatres/music venues, they just need some magic to make them so for one night.

I'm new to touring and have a show I want to try out. Will you book it?

No. We want a tour ready piece of work. You can sell us a show in development knowing it will be ready when you actually tour, but we need evidence that you know what you are doing.

We can't take risks with untested, unseen new work with new artists who have no touring experience. This is because it's the volunteers who are really taking the risk, and it's them who have to deal with the audience reactions long after the show has gone. If you want advice, book a meeting with us.

I'm touring a dance piece. Are you interested?

Yes, we love putting on dance in village halls and libraries! But there are some essential things you need to consider:

- We may not have changing rooms or showers
- We may not have a sprung floor
- We only have one venue with raked seating. If your choreography includes a lot of floor work, please don't sell us your show. Our audiences won't be able to see it.
- Intervals are preferred. Sometimes dance pieces are sold to us which don't have this.

Think about how to build a break into your work so that our promoters have a choice of an interval or running straight through. The thing we hear from our volunteers over and over is their need to book a "full night out".

There are plenty of creative challenges to dance in small spaces but we want you to talk to us. We know what works and if you get it right, it's a wonderful experience for all. You might also benefit from finding out more about the Rural Touring Dance Initiative which exists to support dance in rural spaces across the UK.

I'm in a band/am a solo musician. What do I need to consider?

We get lots of offers from bands/musicians, it's very competitive and music goes down well in our venues where the audience is excited and entertained and feel they've had a great night out.

We are looking for a tight, professional set, good communication skills, engagement with the audience as well as musicianship. You need to consider having a PA, lights and excellent

marketing. Most of our audiences will be generalists so if you're a jazz band, for example, you're more likely to get booked if you have broad appeal. We are inundated by folk musicians and people who play in pubs and festivals. Nothing wrong with that at all, but we

seek groups who can sustain a full length concert on their own with a listening audience.

Your gig may be one of two a year in that village or library. Can you make it the best night out?

There are 20 people in our group. Will you book us?

Most of our venues are tiny. The bigger your show, the less chance of a booking. You just won't fit! However, if you can tour 20 people, get them in our venues, provide your own accommodation & food costs and be affordable, we'll talk to you.

We are quite technical in our needs. Is this a problem?

Not always but there are some key things to remember:

- You will be carrying your own set.
- Our venues don't have support staff to help you so you may need to bring your own technician and gear.
- Sometimes lighting rigs need to take into consideration low ceiling and audience safety.
- Some venues may only have a few plugs.
- The longer you need to get in, the harder your show will be to sell. This is because venues are busy all the time, with toddler groups, badminton, etc which earn them regular income. Your show is a one off being fitted in alongside regular earners.
- Be very aware of sightlines. We only have one venue with raked seating. If key plot changes happen on the floor, you won't be seen. This irritates audiences and they'll all stand up to try and see what you're doing.
- If your show relies on the internet/wifi/ or a mobile phone signal, you need to seriously consider if it will function in our venues. Not all of our venues have a reliable internet service or any form of reliable mobile signal.

How much do you pay?

Everything is negotiable. We always negotiate a fair fee, and you get a contract. We can be flexible if we think you'll sell and our venues will book you. Our final tour commitments always come down to venue demand, and if our budget can make it work. On average venues pay between £300 and £750. We only work on flat fee rates so what we agree in your contract is what you get regardless of the number of tickets sold.

What publicity will you need?

We expect you to provide A5 flyers and A4 posters. These need to be high quality printed materials. As a minimum we would expect 150 flyers and 20 posters per event. Consider making your flyers double-sided as it offers more information and doesn't cost a huge amount more to print.

If you're touring in a number of venues create a generic poster that doesn't involve gathering specific data for every tour date and putting it in a list on your publicity. It slows down the process of getting print to us and it costs you more in the long run. We'd prefer a nice blank space on posters and flyers to allow room for over printing or labels.

What work is suitable for your audiences?

Rural communities are no different to urban ones. There will be people who love live theatre and go everywhere, people who prefer sport, people who hate swearing on tv, people who don't mind, people with children who want to get out at night but can't find a babysitter. All we try to do is find work which appeals to a wide audience.

A village may only have 400 people to draw on for its event, and not all those people may be modern jazz fans, for example. So that limits the audience. We can do specialist work, it just has to be very well presented and marketed. It's always wise to provide us with an age suitability for your show but not all of our venues and audiences follow that guidance. What's different is the sense of community you find in villages. It's this which makes the model work.

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