

**Open Space
IETM Meeting Berlin 17. April 2010**

How do I as a multi genre artist present my work to promoters - for them to be interested in booking my work.

5 people came plus one editor.

Three artists (2 Germany + 1 UK who had lived in France for several years), one promoter (UK), one manager (Belgium).

Beforehand make good research of what it is that interests the promoter, then present only a small selection of your work.

Otherwise you overwhelm people with too many possibilities to choose from, they might not choose any.

It also undermines confidence in your work + projects if you present too much.

Find pairs, build networks to see that you are not alone in this world with this problem.

Develop relationships with promoters and festivals over time, to build up trust, that all the various parts of your work are interesting and have substance.

Get management.

In Germany this can be a problem as there are not so many good managers and booking agents.

Because of being multi genre it is even harder to find a good manager.

One colleague said that once he was better known, he got a manager who at that time destroyed his touring circuit by asking for too much money, so he wasn't booked anymore.

I have experienced a similar problem in the past, at a time when I was well in business; I took a manager, and from then on had very little work for the next two years. She was more like a secretary, did not have many contacts and not much chance to build up and sustain good relationships with promoters.

A question arose: How do you ask for a decent fee. - My strategy is to tell promoters to be fair with me and I will be fair with them as well. Then I tell them a range of fees I have been given in the past starting from the lowest possible - making a difference in if the gig is in my hometown, in my home country, or abroad, and also if I really want to do the gig for various reasons. Promotion, new contacts, friends with the promoter, to support a good cause, holiday on top of the show etc. By telling promoters to be fair I make them feel good and am often offered a good and decent fee.

One colleague said that the business works like a circus, once you get seen by the right people you get into the touring circuit.

I said that this happened for me in the mid and late nineties after having had an article in Der Spiegel, an important German magazine. I got asked to be in all the German TV talk shows and made good money. Also by appearing in a Cabaret (Variety) Show I got into several other Cabaret Shows - all in all for three years I made good money. Then I took the manager....

Another problem of being multi genre is that you have to keep up with so many scenes and be up-to-date of what is happening and who wants what; that you can be forgotten if promoters do not hear from you enough.

A problem in Berlin is getting funding for solo shows. Though I do work with lots of people in the production: director, sound editor/musician, graphic designer, costume designer, puppeteer/puppet builder, prop maker, photographer, various actors are lending me their voices, press agent, etc. but I am alone on stage, so what actually is a solo show? Good new question!!!

A problem is that promoters and festivals want to put a label on a performer to categorize what you do. A pro in my multi genre work is that I work mostly in the performing arts (but I also do collaborations with musicians). The lady from Belgium told us about the problems of the artist she represents - who works between dance and visual arts / installations. He can perform in theatres, museums and small venues. He was lucky to get funded as a dance company, though he is not a dance company. It seems that in dance there seems to be some kind of openness to certain extends for other art forms. I do experience that within puppetry, music, poetry/literature, performance, theatre as well - with some people who are open minded. I do experience the people who are not open minded in the same fields as well...

The promoter from the UK said face to face meetings are helpful.

It has happened to me that a promoter became a very good friend by face to face meetings, but never booked me.

It is also helpful to be minimal in how you present yourself and not to press too much.

And if a festival or a venue thinks your work does not fit, there are soo many other venues....

NEVER GIVE UP!!!!!!!

ADDITION:

Then I went and started doing solo shows in English, then German + English and changing roles a lot, I started appearing in the English speaking and the queer scenes. Then I started doing short transgender performances and striptease performances and landed in cabaret. I was kind of ignored by the dance scene after doing cabaret - as in Germany art and entertainment are very much devided from each other. It is changing somewhat now, but it was very much the case in the 90's.