10 Top Tips for Tour Booking

1. **Tour for a reason**
   Think about why you want to tour a specific piece of work. Who is your target audience? Be honest with yourself and the creative team around your reasons for touring, the viability of doing so and whether you think that there is an audience for the type of work you produce.

2. **Know your needs**
   Have an understanding of the needs of the production (size, scale, number on tour, specific technical needs, etc.) and have this clearly spelled out in a tech spec, as far in advance as you possibly can! Regional venues like shows over 60 minutes or with an interval.

3. **Show me the money**
   Do a working touring budget and also a pre-tour budget. Know the costs of touring to help you decide how much you are asking programmers to pay for your work. If you need an element of sponsorship/fundraising to make any tour or pre-tour work happen, start looking into options and timeframes around any funding applications.

4. **Stand out from the crowd**
   Write down the unique selling points of the production (USPs) to get you thinking why audiences and venue programmers would be interested in your work. Back this up with reviews, quotes, recommendations, images and information, but remember to be brief.

5. **Knowledge is power**
   Research the venue/festival/booking organisations online to find venues and organisations who programme work similar to yours. Don't be afraid to compare your work to others' and show knowledge of their programme.

6. **Get personal**
   Contact each programmer by name and send individual correspondence, not an automated 'Dear Programmer' email or using a mail service such as MailChimp. Add a phone number on your email signature strip AT ALL TIMES. You want to be contactable and available for a conversation.

7. **Stay positive!**
   Don't complain if programmers don't respond. Just like you, they are busy people. Start conversations by asking if it's a good time to talk about programming – and if not, ask when would be a better time, and make sure to call back then. Be the kind of person you would like to work with.

8. **Listen**
   Be politely persistent but not a stalker. Be open about what you need and what you can offer, and listen when you're told no, it's as important as a yes as it allows you to move on to finding other venues who are a better match. Be friendly and interested, and remember that even if they don't book this tour, you are still developing a relationship.

9. **Play the long game**
   Be proactive and use the wealth of information online to help you research and book your tours, including tour-finder.org and our own resources section. Share contacts and tour lists with fellow touring companies. Stay in contact with programmers, and be an ambassador for your work wherever you go.

10. **Think of the art**
    Remember, you are not a cold caller selling double glazing or insurance. If you've heeded the above then you've identified like-minded artistic programmers at venues and arts centres who take work like yours and who need you as much as you need them. We are lucky to work in a very generous industry of creative people who as a whole want the best for audiences and touring companies.