

THE GIGGING POET

How to get Paid to Perform

So You Want To Get Paid To Perform?



A Few First Thoughts

- ▣ Have you performed before?
- ▣ Have you featured as a poet?
- ▣ Do you have good (or reasonably good) stage presence?

There Are Many Ways For Poets To Get Paid

- ▣ Café/ Bar gigs
- ▣ Library Gigs
- ▣ College Gigs
- ▣ School Gigs
- ▣ Conference Gigs

- ▣ Setting up your own Gigs



How Does it Work?

- ▣ 3 Basic Steps:
 - ▣ 1: Establish Yourself as a Performance Poet (via a press pack/website)
 - ▣ 2: Spread the information to potential clients
 - ▣ 3: Start getting gigs.

Step 1: Establishing Yourself as A Performance Poet



- ▣ Feature for free at monthly poetry events.
- ▣ Have pictures taken of you in action.
- ▣ Gather information about past performances.

Press Pack

- ▣ A press pack is simply your credentials that make you a viable act.
 - Pictures or videos of recent performances
 - A list of venues that have booked you before (free or paid)
 - Testimonials from previous hosts or audience at your shows
 - Promotional materials from previous engagements
 - If you have a book or books.

Step 2: Spread Your Press Pack Around To The Right People

- ▣ Compile an email list to send your press pack to.
- ▣ Make sure the list is comprised of places and people that actively look for acts.
- ▣ The more options you have, the better chance for gig.



Cafes/ Bars

- ▣ These venues often have performers and entertainers to help bring in business.
- ▣ Identify the ones that do.
- ▣ Figure out who does the event booking (in many cases it will be the owner, or general manager.)
- ▣ Add them to your list, or find a general venue email from the establishment website.

Libraries

- ▣ Libraries host events every month.
- ▣ Libraries have budgets they have to spend.
- ▣ They bring in speakers, lecturers, musicians, story-tellers and yes, poets.
- ▣ They usually have a librarian in charge of planning events.



Colleges/Universities

- ▣ Colleges and Universities have clubs and organizations that book speakers and performers
- ▣ National Association of Campus Activities (NAC) actively books entertainment for college campuses.
- ▣ If your writing has a theme or topic related to something a college club or org is interested in, they can use club budgets to schedule events.

Public Schools

- ▣ Schools sometimes hold assemblies or special events.
- ▣ If the writing can be linked up topic-wise to something educational, it can help.
- ▣ School librarians are a good place to start, they bring in authors for story-time, and sometimes poetry time can be a great fit.



Theaters

- ▣ Many small theaters look for other acts to keep people in the seats when plays aren't running.
- ▣ Music, comedy, drama, and even poetry are possibilities.
- ▣ Theater managers or event managers are the prime people to talk to.



Conferences/ Conventions

- ▣ Once you are established as a performer, certain conventions and conferences might be willing to bring you in.
- ▣ It helps to define what your poetry or writing is about and match it to an similarly themed event.
- ▣ These type of gigs are harder to get than libraries or cafes but usually pay better.

Retirement Communities

- ▣ Retirement communities and nursing homes frequently have acts come to entertain their residents.
- ▣ Many of them have an event coordinator you can contact.



Step 3: Start Getting Gigs

- ▣ Once your press pack has been made and your list of potential venues compiled, you should start spreading the message, and responding to queries that come back.
- ▣ Prices will vary, especially in the beginning.



The Numbers Game

- ▣ You will need to advertise your press pack to a large number of potential prospects.
- ▣ In marketing, a well-targeted proposal usually yields a 1-4% return.
- ▣ 200 or 300 is a good number to start with to see some results.
- ▣ As your reputation grows, and you get connections, recommendations, relationships, the ratio of return should improve.

Create Your Own Gigs

- ▣ Don't want to take the path or go through the hassle of finding paying gigs?
- ▣ You can create your own gigs.
- ▣ Book your own venues
- ▣ Create your own act
- ▣ Do your own advertising
- ▣ Sell tickets

Renting a Venue

- ▣ Hotel conference rooms
- ▣ Banquet rooms at restaurants
- ▣ Small theaters
- ▣ VFW Halls
- ▣ Lodge Halls

- ▣ Libraries (But you can't charge admission.)



Advertising

- ▣ Once you have the venue booked, you need people in the seats.
- ▣ Do you have a newsletter list?
- ▣ Do you use social media?
- ▣ Can you put out an ad?
- ▣ Find organizations and audiences that are similar to your act's theme (comedy, religion, hunger, etc etc)

Do You Have a Book?

- ❑ It's not necessary to have a book to tour but it does help.
- ❑ Extra source of income, and it opens up more venues (bookstores for example.)
- ❑ Having a book helps your reputation and raises your star.

