

How to

START YOUR OWN BAND

A lot of readers have been asking me for advice about how to put a band together, so I thought it was time to write a post about my experience. Every band has a different story, but hopefully some of the stuff below will be useful to you.

First, you've got to choose your band members.

¹ _____ I was at college with a great bunch of musicians, so I didn't have to look far. You might not be so lucky, but there are all sorts of other ways to find members. In fact finding musicians isn't as hard as you think, as a lot of people want to be in a band. You can place ads in local colleges, music shops, or even the local press if you're willing to pay. Or just ask around – friends, friends of friends. Do make it clear which musicians you're looking for though, so that you don't waste people's time. Drummers are always the hardest to find!

It's important that you play the music that feels right to you. Don't just go for what's popular at the time – you need to play what you love. Your favourite bands and their styles will obviously be an influence on you, and that's fine. However, you need to do something a bit different. Don't just copy them! Mix and match until you find a sound you all like. ² _____

You don't have to write your own songs. Some bands just play other people's songs all the time, and are quite happy with that. ³ _____ Not everyone has the musical talent for this, but if one or more of you in the group do, you're in luck. Maybe one of you has a tune they created. Any of you can suggest ideas, and you can all use this as a base to build on. Keep it simple at first, and you'll get there eventually.

Finding a good place to practise is essential. There has to be enough space for the band and all the gear, plus it has to be somewhere where the noise won't bother other people too much. A garage can be good, as long as there isn't a car in it. Some towns and villages have community rooms that you can use. ⁴ _____ Take your time to have a look around. You'll find somewhere eventually.

When you're good enough, you'll want to promote your band and start looking for gigs. Setting up a website is easy nowadays, and you can do it for free. ⁵ _____ This will cost you, as you will need to book time in a studio. Get your songs as near perfect as possible beforehand, because studio time is expensive. Three or four should be fine – then upload them to your website so people can hear what you've got.

When you get your first gig, try to produce some promotional stuff – T-shirts, badges, that kind of thing. They get your name 'out there', and most bands make more money doing that than from playing live at the beginning. Work hard, practise and keep writing new songs. Play at local venues and get to know other bands in your area – all contacts are good contacts. ⁶ _____ Whether or not you ever make the big time, being in a band is an experience worth having that you'll remember all your life.



LIVE MUSIC

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