GETTING READY FOR SOUND OFF!

GETTING TO KNOW SOUND OFF!

The first question you might be asking yourself is whether or not your music would be a good fit for Sound Off! The short answer is YES! The long answer is still yes, but we invite you to check out videos of past participants and read more about the program on the Sound Off! page.

Here’s why it’s important for you to watch the videos of other artists in action:

- Sound Off! has seen tons of different genres represented, from folk and hip-hop to instrumental metal and funk.
- There have been a wide variety of band sizes, from solo acts to sprawling ten-piece bands.
- The one quality that carries acts through the competition is that they know exactly what they do and they focus on doing it well.
- Think about your music and what makes it compelling. Do your best to plan out what you intend to present not only to the people reviewing your application but the judges and the audiences that come to the Sound Off! performances if you are accepted. Focus on your strengths, not on what you think will make you more competitive.

GETTING YOUR SOUND OFF! APPLICATION READY

The three most important elements of your application are:

1. Your songs
2. Your bio
3. Your digital presence

Our panelists do not judge on production quality for any of those elements, but here are some tips, tricks, and resources to help you get ready to apply and to help you make the most out of your Sound Off! experience if you are selected to play.
Recording your songs
Many Sound Off! applicants do not have access to professional recording studios or equipment, but there are plenty of options for recording your music for free. Here are a few links about how to use free software to record a demo:

A Beginner’s Guide to Multi-Track Recording with Audacity

How to Use Garageband

Need recording equipment to capture your sound? Check with your local library to see if they offer those resources. But remember that a phone or iPad can work as well.

Writing about yourself and your music
You have the power to help your music stand out by crafting a compelling story about yourself and what inspires the art that you create.

There are a lot of differing ways you can tell your story. Here are a few good pieces to read before you start writing:

Do’s and Don’t’s for Writing a Band Bio

How to Write a Band Biography: Sell Yourself Like a Book

Creating a Platform for Sharing Your Music
Dedicating an online space to your music is critical to building your fan base. We encourage you to take some time to figure out what platforms works best for you. Soundcloud and Bandcamp are two of the biggest digital music platforms in the game:

Setting Up a Bandcamp Account

Setting Up a Soundcloud Account

Having a place for people to listen and purchase your music is the first step, but there are lots of other channels to promote your art. Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, the list goes on and on. If you cultivate the use of any of those platforms, they can serve as powerful tool to let people see you as a person or people who create art and can shine a light on how the life you live informs your art.

Check out this session of Mastering The Hustle on Promoting Your Music and Shows. It features Seattle musicians talking about how best to use new platforms to get your music into the ears of potential fans!
GETTING READY FOR WHAT HAPPENS NEXT—MASTERING YOUR HUSTLE!

After you’ve submitted your application to Sound Off!, don’t sit on your hands! There is a lot of work you can do to get yourself ready to hit the ground running if you are selected, or to keep your momentum strong to reapply next year.

1. Keep practicing!
2. If you can, play some shows.
3. Sign up for the Mastering the Hustle series, produced by MoPOP, KEXP, Upstream, and the Recording Academy. There are three professional development sessions for emerging artists in the fall where you can hear from and speak with industry pros.
4. Build your community. See some shows. Step outside your lane and dig into other genres.
5. Find the all ages venues where you live and support what they do.
6. If you need help, or want to find other resources for honing your craft, check out workshops hosted by other folks who serve young artists like The Vera Project, Totem Star, Fremont Abbey Arts, Artist Home, and Gigs4U
7. Last but not least—take care of yourself. Staying healthy physically, emotionally, and mentally, should always be your number one priority and will ensure that you continue to flourish and grow as an artist