



The Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast

Ep87: Music-Preneur Spotlight: Frankie Raye

You're listening to Episode 87 of the Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast.

Hello! You're listening to [Episode 87: Music-Preneur Spotlight: Frankie Raye](#).

I'm your host, Suz - a mindset coach helping music professionals get clear on their goals and find the time to get it all done while maintaining a healthy work/life balance.

As almost everything these days goes, this is a different kind of spotlight than we're used to publishing on this podcast.

This past February I had the pleasure of speaking with music-preneur Frankie Raye, focusing on how she's built her career around booking live shows.

A few weeks later the world was under lockdown and the live entertainment industry as we knew it halted.

Serendipitously, the other week I was contacted by Jack Forman, executive VP of booking agency Bi-Coastal Productions to discuss the current state of live entertainment. We connected over Instagram Live last week and I thought it would be helpful, after listening to Frankie's insightful advice about being your own advocate when booking shows, to hear from Jack about what to do now that most entertainment venues are shut down for the foreseeable future.

In addition, I've released a bonus episode about what it's like to work with a career coach and you'll get to hear a live coaching session between Frankie and I. We're managing to cover a LOT with this one spotlight, don't ya think!?! Simply listen to Episode 88 right after this by going to the show notes page or hitting next on your podcast player.

All of the resources and links that are mentioned throughout this episode can be found on the

The Music-Preneur Mindset Podcast (c) 2019 The Rock/Star Advocate, LLC All Rights Reserved.

www.therockstaradvocate.com/podcast

show notes page as well. Go to www.therockstaradvocate.com/ep87

So, first up with have Frankie Raye, a singer-songwriter based in Tampa, FL. Her second album, "Brave," was released in 2019 and is made up of upbeat, acoustic-pop originals. In addition to writing her own music, Frankie has collected over 300 cover songs into her repertoire and during our conversation she'll explain the importance of having so many songs to pull from when playing live.

When we spoke, Frankie was averaging 5-6 shows a week and has performed at over 100 venues, including at NAMM for three consecutive years. She has managed to master the art of advocating for herself, a skill set every great music-preneur needs to have in their tool box, and has stayed flexible during these last few months in quarantine with no sign of slowing down as a performer.

We've got a jam-packed episode, so let's dive in!

Suz: Frankie, thank you so much for taking the time to sit with us today.

Frankie: Thanks for having me.

Suz: So I've already told our listeners a little bit about you, but I want them to hear from you. Why music? What makes you get up every day and say, I'm gonna do this even though it can be incredibly hard and tiring? What do you find satisfaction in with being a musician?

Frankie: For me, I just don't know anything else that I could do that would make me happy. It's just who I am. I'm a musician. I don't know what else I would do. I have a degree in a couple other things, I went to college and then those things just weren't fulfilling me. I don't know what it was, just the passion wasn't there.

Being a musician is who I am. Connecting with people through music, being able to share my story, being able to work with other artists and just create awesome sounds - that's just who I am.

Suz: Yeah, that's beautiful. I know you play so many live shows, and I definitely want to get into that. I know a lot of our listeners are like, 'How does she do it? I want to play a bunch of

live shows!' We'll definitely get to that. But I'm curious, for somebody that is on stage as much as you are, what have been some of your favorite moments? Can you share for us some of your favorite moments from stage and interacting with the crowd? What's something that really stands out to you?

Frankie: Recently I played a show at the Seminole Hard Rock Casino. It's in Tampa, and they have this big, beautiful stage. Of course, when I first started music, I've always dreamed about playing on that stage, and I actually got booked a show there. What was cool about it, is it's a four hour show, and I don't have four hours worth of original music, so I was playing a lot of cover songs, too. But my favorite moment was when I would play my own original music, everyone just seemed to love it.

They would just ask me questions afterward, like, what was that song about? Oh, I really like that one song. Oh, are you on Spotify? Let me follow you! So they weren't there just to be entertained and have background music. These people were really interested in my own music, so that was really rewarding - that was a really great moment. I went on social media and all of a sudden I had all these followers and all these people were like tagging me in their Instagram story and their Facebook story. It was just really cool to see that interaction.

Suz: Oh, that's wonderful. That's got to be a really cool feeling. I know you mentioned covers, I had seen on your website somebody had reviewed your show and said that you did a cover of 'No Diggity' and that's really cool.

When it comes to, as you mention not having enough original material to fill such a long show, how do you choose your covers? What makes you kind of go from something as different as 'No Diggity' and put your own spin on it or I know you also really respect your fellow female singer-songwriters. So how do you choose what kind of goes into that cover song catalog?

Frankie: So when I first started finding cover songs to play, I was just kind of doing the songs that other people wanted to hear. I would always take requests or I would say, what kind of songs would you like me to learn? And, they would say, 'Wagon Wheel' or something just kind of a very common, easy song to play.

So I started with that, but then as I started doing it more, I just started doing the songs that I like or covers I would hear other people do. And I'm like, 'Oh, that's really interesting. I'm going to try my own spin on that song'. Or, I've been doing a lot of the late-90s bubblegum pop stuff. At first I wouldn't cover that stuff - I was like 'oh, no one wants to hear that'.

But I grew up in the 90s, especially the late 90s was when I was starting to buy my own CDs. I was getting into middle school, so that kind of stuff was on the radio. It was dominated by Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera, and a lot of people kind of scoff at that and turn their nose up on it, but I can't deny the fact that that's what was on the radio when I was growing up and that's what I had access to. So, I've kind of been going back to that. I did some Backstreet Boys covers and 'NSYNC because that's just what I remember growing up.

Suz: Absolutely. It's feel good music, and if you're looking to connect with an audience and they might not know who you are, that's a really great way to immediately connect with them and take them back to a time that made them really happy. And they know the words - that's great!

Frankie: Exactly! It's nostalgic. And I also grew up listening to the music that my mother listened to, so 60s and 70s, music from those eras, and I started by learning those songs because I just felt like the people at my shows, I don't wanna say older crowd in like a mean way, but they always come up to me and say 'oh, how do all this old music?' How do Joni Mitchell? They're like, 'That was popular when I was growing up!' I mean, it wasn't popular when I was growing up, but in my house it was popular. I mean, I'm just as familiar with Joni Mitchell as I was Britney Spears and she was all over the radio, .

Suz: It sounds to me like you also have a good sense of just knowing your audience to have that catalog, so if you do get an older crowd, you know what bag of tricks to kind of pull from and if you have a younger crowd of more of your peers, you've got a bag of tricks in there to pull from.

I know you're somebody who plays a lot of live shows. I think you've mentioned 25-30 shows a month. I mean, that's every day playing live to people, and I know a lot of our listeners, many of them have told me a struggle for them is to play more live shows. So what's kind of your process? Have you found certain things that work best for you? Was there a time where

you really struggled with it and maybe have learned stuff since then? What can you shed some light on when it comes to booking shows?

Frankie: Well, I guess I should start by saying there's a difference between the cover gigs I play and actual shows. I mean, I still connect with other songwriters to try to book original shows, but unfortunately, some people don't always come out to them. It's kind of hit or miss, so a lot of the shows that I play, they're more of gigs at restaurants, but it's so cool because I could sell my CDs, and I can still play my own original music. Sometimes your background music and sometimes you're not.

But I did start struggling with it simply because I just didn't know anyone. I'm lucky enough to live in an area, because I live in Florida and there's a lot of tourists and we have our snowbirds season and all the restaurants along the beaches are just packed with visitors that are here for the next few months. A lot of these places have live music every day, twice a day, so there are more opportunities to find places to play.

But when I first started, I would go into these restaurants and they had no idea who I was. They're just like, 'Yeah, well, we have a lot of other musicians that play here, too', and then it's kind of just a waiting game. I started sending out 25-30 Facebook messages a day to these restaurants in addition to going in there and introducing myself.

At first I thought, 'Message them on Facebook? No, I'm not going to do that. It doesn't sound professional,' but a lot of these restaurants are booking through their Facebook - the manager logs on and sends me a message back, so I started by doing that just constantly, daily.

By the week I would have sent out hundreds of messages to restaurants, and usually was for every hundred that you send out, you only get a handful of replies. And even then, it's like, well, we're kind of full right now, but we'll keep you in mind.

So I'd say for the first year I was getting, 'We'll keep you in mind,' but then I'd be lucky enough to have one of them say, 'We had a last minute cancelation. Can you please come in and play?' And then I would, and then that's kind of how you get your foot in the door with that place.

I kind of started being, I guess, more aggressive, at the end of those shows. If it was my first time playing somewhere, I would try my hardest to meet up with a manager or someone and say, 'OK, well, who does the booking here? Can I speak with them before I leave?' And then I would say, 'I have my calendar on me. Do you want to put some dates in the books right now?'

I kind of became a little bit more aggressive with that and usually worked out pretty well, and meeting other musicians and going to their live shows and just rubbing elbows with them a little bit, letting them know, 'Hey, if you ever need coverage, let me know. I would love to play.'

It's a combination of so many other things. I used to think there was one quick and easy way to just book as much as you can, but what won't work for one venue will work for another venue. Some places only want to book you if you come in and audition. They'll say, 'Come in and play for an hour and let us hear you first' and other places we'll never hear you at all on Facebook, they'll say, 'Yeah, I have all these dates available'

Suz: I love those tips, and thank you for sharing your process with us, because, it also sounds like just as you've come to learn you've got your bag of tricks there for your audience in terms of what songs are right to play, given the audience, you also, and this goes for every musician, have your own bag of tricks that you don't know which trick or which approach is going to work with which venue, so you gotta keep just trying them all.

And as you said, as you've gotten more and more experience under your belt with each venue, then you know when you go back to them, this is how I have to approach this venue or this is how I have to approach these people, and you start to learn by doing.

So I love especially when you said getting more aggressive and it's really not so much being aggressive as just being your cheerleader to say, 'Hey I'm going to make this request. This is what I want to do. Who can I speak to? Let me get face time with them.' That's such an important thing that many overlook.

Frankie: Yeah and I used to be so nervous about that. I'd think, 'Oh, I'm gonna get on their nerves and they're gonna hate me.' And some restaurant managers do say, 'Well, I'll get back to you when I get back to you' because you gotta remember a lot of these restaurant

managers care about bringing in good musicians, they want that to be a part of their restaurant, and they want us there to kind of help create the ambiance and everything like that, but they also don't really know the music business.

A lot of them just want to like a lot of these restaurant managers are like, 'I just want to book out the whole year so I don't have to think about it' And once that started happening, I started saying like, 'Well, if you want to put me on a steady rotation, that'll work too. Like every other Tuesday or something or every other Wednesday.' And they would say, 'Oh, great! That's easy.' They have all these things that they have to think about to run a successful restaurant, so music is just one small part of it.

Once you realize that, you can kind of communicate more - they don't want to be bothered. You know what I mean? They're too busy, so make it easy for them. Send them the dates that you have, because I used to wait for them to send me open dates, but they don't have time to type all that out. I send them what I have open, they open their calendar, 'Oh, she's got these? Let me just book you for those. Easy. Done. Now I can go on to the other million things I have to do for my restaurant.

Suz: I love that. We talk about that a lot on the podcast is coming from a place of service and putting yourself in their shoes, saying, 'How can I make your life easier?' And if you can, if you come at it from that approach, it'll be much more smooth sailing. I love that you do that.

It's professional and it's understanding, as you said, you're gonna have those music venues that are music venues and you might have some of those booking agents that are just kind of snooty about music, and they're very particular about the sound that comes through *their* venue. When you're dealing with a restaurant, you've got to pivot with your approaches and really understand who you're dealing with. That's great.

Frankie: Yeah, and you've got to understand their types of customers. Some places are a little bit more, I guess, rougher? Some restaurants want to hear old school rock or something like that. They don't want to hear slow and soft and sweet.

Then other places are just trying to eat and they prefer a nice little mellow sound, so then I do some of my softer songs and I keep the volume down. It's all of those things you have to think about.

And the managers notice that, too. They say, 'You're a good fit here because you actually understand what's going on. You know who you're performing for.'

Suz: Absolutely. If you don't mind me asking, can we talk about getting paid versus not getting paid for certain shows? How do you navigate those types of situations?

Frankie: Usually restaurants, they'll always pay. Some restaurants, when I first started out, didn't pay as much. Now when I look back, I'm like, 'Wow, they really don't pay their musicians much at all', but I was just starting out, so I didn't really know any better, and I said, well I'm going to have to not get paid at first.

But restaurants and those types of cover gigs they always pay. Some musicians have their own price points, usually fifty an hour, give or take.

Then you get tips, you put out your tip jar. Some places are better at tipping than others, but I've walked out of some places where the tips have been more than the pay of the show, so I keep those places in mind, and I'm just like, 'I'm going to try to get some more dates there'

As far as original shows, for example, I played one just a couple of weeks ago at this awesome little brewery, and I loved it. There were so many other songwriters there, but we really didn't get paid. There was a tip jar that was out and we all split it, but it was enough to cover the bar tab, but it's fine. I don't want to look down on those restaurant cover gigs because that's like my day job, doing those restaurant cover gigs, but that kind of makes it sound like it's less than it is.

I take those things very seriously, and they're what help me pay the bills, and then the original gigs, you don't really get paid for those unless you're selling tickets. I've had some shows where we would sell enough tickets, but even then, it's still not as much as what the restaurant gigs would pay, but that's the sacrifice.

I'm make sure I have enough of those cover gigs to pay the bills, so that way I can take off a Friday night or a Saturday night and go do this awesome songwriter night and probably not get paid.

Suz: Sure. I love that you've embraced the cover band shows and to see the value in them is really important because, as you said, it allows you to do the other opportunities that you want to do.

And I'm sure, please correct me if I'm wrong, but these other performances, when you're playing cover shows, you're still working on your craft as a performer. You're still practicing interacting with the crowd. There's so much of it that it's not wasted time. It's certainly not wasted money because you're making money, but it's also just always improving your craft as a performer.

Frankie: Absolutely, and that's how I've been able to learn so many new songs and learn about new artists that I've never heard of - someone would come up and go 'Have you heard of this girl?' I'm like, 'No'. And they're like, 'You should cover one of her songs. It'd sound really good.' And I listen, and am like, 'Oh my gosh, I love this!' So finding new music's always great and learning new music's always great.

Another thing, too, I've played some shows recently - last month I was in Anaheim and I played the House of Blues. Normally that kind of show, it was an all original show and there were tickets - it was kind of a big thing. Normally that kind of show would have just scared me to death, but I wasn't nervous because we're doing the same thing.

I'm performing the same songs that I perform every night in front of strangers. I perform in front of strangers every night playing songs - sometimes I know the songs well, sometimes it's my first time playing them, and I totally bomb it, but it's fine because I've learned how to mess up in front of people and figure out how to let it go.

It's constant practice and it's constant experience, no matter where you're at - whether you're at the hard rock or whether you're at some tiny little cafe.

Suz: And I wanna I want to hit upon your original music too. I know your last release, 'Brave,' came out last year, and congratulations on that! Can you tell us a little bit more about that? I know that your influences from those 60s female singer-songwriters and those in the 90s, what role do they play in how you craft your original music?

Frankie: I have always been attracted to the storytelling aspect of music from those eras. Joni Mitchell is always telling some kind of story. I just love that element of just here's my story, here's an idea that I had, here's something that I want to explain to you. This situations going on in my life, so that's really what influences my own music.

With 'Brave' you can listen to different songs and they're each telling a different story, whether it's me feeling insecure about my music or whether it's me telling people to back off and let me do my own thing. I don't need you to give me advice on everything some of this stuff I want to figure out on my own.

'Something Else' is it's kind of a fun song about being in a relationship with someone that you maybe shouldn't. You might have to hide it and sweep it under the rug and not let anyone know about it. There's all these little stories that are going on, and that's really what I write my music around.

I have the story first and then ponder the melody a little bit and think about do I want it to be upbeat and what do I want this to be about?

I just love telling the story. I love having these lyrics where you can read them, without the music you can still read them and know what I'm talking about, like a poem.

Suz: Yeah I really enjoyed, I took a listen through it before we spoke and it's beautiful music. It's got a lot of different emotions and, and as you said, stories to tell. So I do really encourage everybody to go listen to it. For all of our listeners, links to her Spotify and all streaming services can be found in our show notes and you can also find it at frankieraye.com and that link is in our show notes as well if you need to go find it.

But before we wrap up this part, and I still got a few more questions that we ask every guest, I want to know what's next for you in 2020? I mean, you seem like you've had a great start so far. You've had some some cool TV appearances and you've been continuing to book shows, but what else is coming up for you in this new year?

Frankie: I want to release another album at the end of this year, or at least start the process of recording a new album. I do have a single that I want to release that I'm kind of planning right now with some people to get together in the studio and release that. The song is called

'Theodora,' so that should be releasing in the next couple months. It's probably one of my favorite ones, especially lyrically. I'm really excited. I like what I did with the song.

While I'm doing that, I'm gonna start laying down tracks for another album. It's so early in the process, I don't know if it'll happen this year or maybe January of 2021. This year is about making new original music. I had the 'Brave' release and I kind of rode on that for a little bit and was really trying to push those songs, but now I have a lot of new songs that I'm just excited to start getting down.

Suz: Well, congrats with that. We look forward to seeing what comes next for you. I do want to let our listeners know, as I said in the beginning of the episode, stay tuned, because Frankie was brave enough to allow us to do a coaching session, which we'll have as a bonus episode. So keep listening and stay tuned for our next episode with her.

But Frankie, before we leave, I have a few questions, my rapid fire questions that we ask every guest, and so here we go!

If you go back and tell your younger self one lesson, what would it be?

Frankie: Be patient. Don't compare yourself to others.

Suz: Such a hard lesson to learn, especially when you're young.

Frankie: Patience. You've got this. You don't need to look at someone else's success and think that you're not gonna get there because they got there before you did, just keep truckin', be calm, be patient.

Suz: Gold right there. If you could have one superpower, what would it be?

Frankie: I'd like to be invisible. I love to travel, so if I were invisible, I could just hop on a plane and stand and go wherever I want to go like literally wherever you want to go.

Suz: That was probably our most creative answer we've had so far for that question.

Frankie: Thank you.

Suz: So if you could invite three musicians, living or dead, to dinner, who would they be?

Frankie: Let's see... Harry Nilsson. Alanis Morissette, and Bob Dylan.

Suz: Solid guesses. Being that you're our guest, you get to choose an action. What is something you would like our listeners to go do this week?

Frankie: I started reading *The Artist's Way*, which is a really cool workbook about being more creative, and she had this one task where she said write down three things in another life or just your wildest dreams, three maybe professions that you would like to be, whether it's an astronaut or whatever it is, write them down and then go try to do something related to those things.

For example, if you want to be a country singer, maybe go to a guitar store and try to strum a few chords on a guitar, or if you want to be like the CEO of a business, maybe go to like a business park and bring a laptop and do whatever you need to work on. So three things that maybe you'd want to be in another life, any kind of career, and go try to do something related to those things. I had some fun with that.

Suz: That is so cool! Yeah, I'm a big fan of *The Artist's Way*. Listeners, I'll definitely put a link to that book in the show notes. But that's such a great exercise because it also just unlocks so much more creativity, perspective about different lives and different paths. Thank you for sharing that.

I'm also going to give everybody a second actionable this week, and that is to go follow and check out Frankie Raye. Go stream her music 'Brave' online. You won't regret it. And thank you, Frankie, so much for taking the time to shine a light on how you've built a career out of playing live and doing what you love and sharing with us your process, because I know a lot of musicians struggle with that a lot. Learning from the steps that you've taken and the way you've learned to be an advocate for yourself is really an important lesson for a lot of people to learn. So thank you for taking the time to share that with us.

Frankie: I appreciate it. Thank you for having me.

I want to thank Frankie for sharing her insights and experience with us and I know that she hasn't let this pandemic slow her down! As you're about to hear, being able to pivot is crucial for withstanding this ever-changing industry.

As I explained earlier, I'm providing the recording of my conversation with Jack Forman of Bi-Coastal Productions to shine a light on ways independent musicians can still continue to perform live through streaming and make money and build a following while they're at it.

First, a little background on Jack...

Suz: Jack Forman serves as Executive Vice President of Bi-Coastal Productions, the New York City-based concerts and theatrical booking agency. His current clients include Lee Rocker (of Stray Cats), Naturally 7, Colin Mochrie from *Whose Line Is It Anyway?*, The Hit Men, Scotland's Red Hot Chilli Pipers, Vegas-strip favorites The Bronx Wanderers and The Daily Show Writers Comedy Tour.

Originally spearheading the agency's coverage in the western United States, Jack now oversees the core agency staff and global touring strategy. He remains actively involved with industry organizations such as Western Arts Alliance, North American Performing Arts Managers and Artists, and The Association of Performing Arts Professionals.

So we are very lucky to have him here with us, I can't wait to get started. I'm going to bring him on...

Jack: Hey, Suz, how's it goin'?

Suz: Alright! So we got some great peeps here joining us, thank you so much for taking the time to talk to us! I just read everybody you're very impressive bio and I first want to just ask - how are you doing? Since this pandemic started, how are things going for you?

Jack: You know what? I'm trying to keep things half full here. Working from home, here in New Jersey, my office is usually in New York City but I haven't been in the city for several months now, it feels like a record, and I'm not gonna lie I've kind of embraced it.

We have a one year old daughter here at home, so I really got to enjoy that time, way more

than I ever would have commuting in everyday, so that's really been a blessing.

Suz: Nice, yeah we gotta keep focused on the positives here, so I'm definitely all about that. So I wanted to kind of jump right into it and say, you know beyond the the traveling, how has your role changed? I mean how are your clients? What have you guys had to do since everything's been kind of on hold in the live arena?

Jack: We've had to kind of think outside the box so that we can be a resource to our clients right now. We can still continue to serve them while they're not out on the road touring or they're not booking shows like they were.

Luckily, we are still booking shows for the future, you know we're kind of keeping resilient with the venues that we work with and the promoters that we work with. And the biggest thing we've been able to do for artists is really advise them on alternative ways they can still engage their audiences and alternative ways that we can offer them up to the promoters and buyers when we start booking them again.

When people are at scaled down capacities, we're working with a lot of different streaming services and things like that to really try to give them something to partner with to really keep them motivated. So, you know, we do it more with some artists and less with others, but it's something we've had to do I think right now when we're not just focusing on their bookings.

Suz: Right, yeah. Pivoting! It's what makes us all survive this industry - pivoting constantly. So what do you say to musicians who maybe don't have an agency behind them, maybe who thought they'd be touring or booking shows throughout the summer and now can't - what can we say to them well?

Jack: Whether or not you want to hear it or not or whether or not this actually is something you want to hear from an agent, we've kind of adopted the belief that adversity is a terrible thing to waste and you're given this opportunity to use this downtime as an artistic incubator for your career.

And yes, obviously supporting your family and putting food on the table comes first, but if you have the time to be creative and really reflect on your art and your strategy, you're really doing the right thing. And also trying to find new ways of engaging your audiences, you know, it really

doesn't take that much to go live and still make an impact.

All you really need is a laptop or an iPhone and your guitar and a mic and some people have it set up a little bit more advanced than others, but I really think that you can't just wallow in it or else you're gonna be waiting a long time. You know, if you speculate on what you're seeing in the stock market and what you're seeing on CNN, or whatever new source to get your news from, there may be another wave of this, there may be a lot of changes with social distance guidelines, but you can't really afford to think that way when it comes to your touring career as an artist whether you have an agent or not.

You really need to look at it as, "All right, I gotta adapt, I'm gonna survive," and I'm sure you advise your clients on this. You can't really in 2020 afford to not have some sort of a business mind to your artwork.

Suz: Right. Absolutely, and I think it's also important, and we talk about this a lot, too - having multiple streams of income. If you're relying solely on touring and something like this happens, this is why, you know, you gotta keep those other interests and other areas open for your career and I wholeheartedly agree with what you're saying.

Sometimes the real talk is tough love and the sooner we can accept that this is the position we're in, the sooner we can do something about it and as a musician your creative so be creative. And I think a lot of musicians forget to... they put all of their creativity into the songs but they don't give themselves credit that that means you can also be creative in business and you don't have to have an MBA to have this all figured out. You know, you can get creative and try new things.

And I love what your agency is doing how you're adapting and being there for your clients.

One of our lovely viewers asked, "When musicians are going live, do you recommend promoting it to your audience first or just going live in the moment?"

Jack: Definitely promoting it first because you want to give people an experience that they are anticipating a little, especially if it's free. Somebody that's looking to go live, I recommend doing it regularly and at the same exact time every week. You make it an event.

And once you start integrating ticketing, which is something you can do now because of the software and the technology that's available to just about anybody, really you really have a lot of benefit there and if you go live at the same time every week you build an audience a lot better that way.

I 100% think you promote it in advance and you get a lot better return on it.

Suz: And are you finding... you know I'm kind of testing this out myself, I've found not leaving too much time in between when you're promoting and when you're going live. I mean I think because so many people are going live that if I give my audience too much of an advance it just kind of gets lost in the shuffle. I mean that's what I found, but what do you recommend in terms of how often you remind them or how much leeway do you give them? You know, how much runway time you give to promoting a live... you know what what would you recommend?

Jack: I would recommend if it's free, definitely doing that. You know, it's going to be an impulse-type of thing, kinda like when you're promoting a concert on the radio, don't give a lot of lead time.

However, if you are selling tickets I would recommend giving it some more lead time because then it becomes a marketing and sales cycle that you have to be concerned with so that you can actually do something with it. I mean one of the platforms that we partnered with on a friendly basis is Joel and Benji Madden's platform [Veeps](#) from the band Good Charlotte, and one of the things that Joel told me was that it really comes down to what the artist wants to put into it, you know?

They could decide that they just want to see what happens or an independent artist who may not have a massive fan base can decide to get very creative, you know, go live, set up a five dollar ticket, and end up walking away with a few thousand dollars because they sold to an audience that just wanted a fun experience, where they got to be interactive with that, and they got to they got promote it from their own voice.

It's funny to think about, you know, somebody like me talking about it, because typically agents are involved in live streaming and that kind of stuff, but now with ticketing and with the various performing rights organizations you need to worry about, you have to... you may want to consult somebody, whether it's an agent or a lawyer or somebody, just so you're not stepping

on any toes and getting in trouble with that.

Suz: Makes total sense. Another thing that comes up a lot is the virtual tip jar. Do I do it if I'm already charging for the live, how do I bring it up, you know, what do I just put up like a sign... you know I think people get iffy asking for money, asking for tips, but I know so many people have made majority of their money from the virtual tip jar, so what would you say to that?

Jack: It doesn't hurt. You know, you really won't know until you try it, but I don't see any kind of a downside to it, especially if you can also tie it into some sort of a not for profit or service organization where you may have two tip jars, you may have one of yourself and one for "x" organization or you can say out right, "A portion of this is going to be going to a certain organization of my choice," and that really is a good way of engaging people and people with the means do want to support.

You know we're finding we're finding some crazy crazy case studies happening now. We have a friend of ours who has like an orchestral big band down in the Carolinas and they've been going live every week and they really produce it nicely and they ticket it and what they do is they offer a \$10 ticket to join, but they also offer a \$50 ticket and \$100 ticket and \$500 ticket where are you getting the exact same experience, but you're able to support the artist on a much higher level and every single broadcast they're getting at least five people buying those \$500 tickets and it's crazy because, you know, you're not... and you know you may be able to offer something extra - with Madden's platform what they're able to do is they've integrated a thing where you can you can include some extras with your ticket.

Like if you pay a \$30 ticket we'll also send you a free T-shirt or some other type of merch category with that. You want to get creative with it, but you know what? It's okay to ask for money because you are working, you are putting your life's work out for people, and people who have the means do want to be contributing and you also can't fault the people who don't who just want to be entertained because I guess entertainment is a right, whether you want to look at it blanket like that or not, I genuinely think there's a lot you can do with it.

Suz: Right, yeah and Shay was mentioning a lot of artists are pinning their tip jars in the comments in the live, yeah! Because as Jack said guys, ask. You know as Amanda Palmer said in her TedTalk, like you gotta ask and and there's no shame in that. And as Jack said, you're working, you're providing a service and there's nothing wrong with putting a price on that.

That was great. And Diana says, "How long do you go live?" Like how long do you make a show? Do you like a short and sweet set or do you do more of like an hour long thing? Do you have any suggestions for that?

Jack: Again, it also has to do with whether it's free or not, but if it's free I'd say keep it between 30-45 minutes, 45 minutes to an hour if you've got a large fan base tuning in, because you do want to give them an experience. If it's ticketed you're going to want to go at least 45 minutes to an hour, if not an hour to an hour and a half, you also need to keep in mind the people's attention spans in their homes are a lot less. Millennials, you cut that in half even. I think millennials had the lowest attention spans than anybody in history, including myself, and I really think that you shoot yourself in the foot if you try piling on too much.

You see that, you see the people who do it on Twitch every day, whether they're influencers or gamers or musicians, you know, they keep it simple and they just have it scheduled to go live at that one time.

Suz: Right. Yeah I think that's great and just to reiterate what Jack said earlier, for those of you might have missed it, you know, pick a time, pick a day during the week that you're always going to go live. Keep it consistent so that way you build up that habit with your audience of like, "Oh, it's Tuesdays at 8, it's time to watch Diana." It's like people then know that they can tune in see you more regularly.

Jen says, "What you find people enjoy most? Music or music mixed with Q&A?" That's a great question, I get asked a lot about like how interactive should you be? Should you just stop every couple of songs and talk with the audience? Do you have any tips or anything you've been noticing that's been working for artists?

Jack: I, personally, when it comes to the way I consume content, I hate frequent interaction. I do like a little bit though. You know, if you're... especially if you look at Twitch again, as an example, because they're trying to grow their music programming a lot more with the live streamers, I think it's cool they recognize people that support them, but when it's every second I lose interest, again my millennial attention span kicks in. I do love interactive concert though, I think it's I think it's a lot of fun. It's not a new thing, you may remember a number of years ago before we even dreamt of a pandemic or even a lot of virtual live streams, I think Ben Folds did

it with... he did it with chat roulette like 10 years ago or something and it was hilarious. People were making requests and they were sending in songs, I love that.

I think it's something that that people really like doing, but at the same time as long as it's not a constant back and forth, you kind of want to let the artist sit back and do their thing, you wanna still not lose that mystique if you will. It's tough to maintain a mystique in the modern age and a lot of it's going out the window, but I'm a firm believer that you still want to keep a shred of it.

Suz: I think it's really comes down to what your audience is responding to. I agree with Jack, if you were sitting up in the Bitter End and you're going to play a few songs, stop may be introduced to the song is about, you know comment about it or get feedback from the audience, but then like get to the music.

I really think also it comes down to - what did you tell people this was going to be? If you said, "I'm going to play a concert for yo," u and you're spending the whole time just like, "Hey guys like what do you do and what's going on?" That's not what they were promised, so just make sure that whatever you're doing is what you said you were coming out to do because that's going to build trust.

Jack: I like to know what I'm buying into pretty quickly, unless it's something that I know for a fact I'm going to be a little surprised, but then you really don't have as much that with virtual programming as you would with a real live show, which it is coming back you just got to be realistic and kind of speculate a little bit as to what it's gonna look like.

Suz: Have you, I'm just curious I don't know what you're able to share, we're not asking for names, but have you found your clients... was there are a lot of panic? Like what was kind of the... how have you guys been? I know that you've been able to pivot and be there for them in different ways, but was there a lot of like talking off the ledge a bit? Like what has been the experience or have your clients just been like, "I'm game let's just go with it, what's the next thing?"

Jack: The first two days, when I think when things really started to go downhill, it was the middle of March and the show cancellations started coming in - we had several different bus tours out on the road in the U. S. Two of them were internationals, so I was panicked that we're gonna be to get them home to their own countries and a lot of people did kind of get.. they

got uptight, they got uneasy, they got a little bit angry to be honest with you because every state was different and every situation was different and we couldn't give them as clear direction, but I'd say after those first two days we were very fortunate to have most of our people come and say, "You know what? It's gonna be what it's gonna be, just get it rescheduled. If we can get this rescheduled there's gonna be a light at the end of this tunnel even though it's not necessarily going to be new revenue, it's going to be deferred, but it's still gonna be revenue. It's better to have it later than to lose it completely."

I think that was something that a lot of people were able to embrace and now it's just... people have really impressed us and it's been very humbling. The best thing people have been doing as venues start reopening and planning their re-openings it's adjust the scope of their performance where they may say, "You know what? We'll do two shows in one day because you're only able to sell half cap. So we'll do two shows that make up for it, we're already there why not, you know?"

We all do our part. We'd rather do that then cancelled the entire trip so it's been great, it's also been challenging and we have had to be there for people, I've had the listen to a few people scream and a few people really have had to have difficult conversations. I've had to have some of the most difficult conversations of my career with people, with venues that I've worked with for years, it's been the farthest thing from pleasant, but it's also allowed all of us to grow and it's something that's not made us stop we're really just looking ahead and trying to be optimistic about this.

Suz: Yeah absolutely, and you know I feel like with what's going on right now, not that it can compare precisely, but I was working at the major labels in the sales department in 2005, 2006 when Tower Records was closing and Virgin Megastore was closing and all of the accounts that we relied on to buy our product were closing and so we had to kind of reimagine what the sales department did and how the sales department got the product out and what the product was now going to be so you know I think pivoting and reimagining our roles in the music industry is something that comes with the territory and I think you guys are are doing a great job there.

We have a few more questions, Alex wants to know if you have any recommendations for services for selling tickets. Is there any service that you would recommend if people are selling tickets to their live show?

Jack: You want to find one that's not going to gouge you on the percentages because it's essentially a door split. You know, when you go to a venue and you do a backend split or a door split, it's really just that there's no guarantee. So you wanna find one where you're gonna get a fair split or you're gonna get 100% of it.

One of the things I like about Veeps with the Maddens is that they've created something where the artist actually gets 100% of the ticket revenue because their fee is charged to the ticket buyer. The only thing you really have to split at the end is you just have to factor in the credit card processing fees which they're gonna be pretty minimal, it's gonna be a few dollars here and there. We've seen people literally clear... there was one artist that I think cleared \$40k in one stream on Veeps because they got creative. It was a bigger artist, mind you, it wasn't an indie artist but there's another one that I just was on the phone with on Monday, there's another new service that some of you may have heard of if you're into the scene is noon chorus, is one.

They actually found a way to... I guess they don't have a set percentage that they take or that they ask the ticket buyer to pay, but they do also factor in the credit card percentage, so I like that one.

What it really comes down to though is how you're going to market it and I don't like... I wouldn't always recommend sticking with a conventional platform only because they're not built for that. I'm sure they will adapt and you'll see new ones come out, but for now there's some good resources to use in the meantime.

Suz: Awesome and Diana says, "What platform do you think has the best audio or streaming quality or is it more based on what you use on your end?"

Jack: Yea, that's a tough one. A majority of the streaming platforms are gonna depend on your wifi connection and your sound card and everything you input. A lot of them are relying on the software OBS that some of you may know about. It really was a software that was made popular by other gamers on Twitch but not musicians are using it like crazy to go live because basically turns their laptop into a TV studio where you can switch between your cameras if you have two and it really allows you to run whatever quality of audio you're going into through this software, just output it into the streaming platform.

Again I don't think it matters if you use Veeps or if you use Stagelt or if you use Facebook Live,

it really has to do with your wifi and your mic. You know if you don't have an expensive mic, it's okay as long as you really have a good connection and you're in a quiet enough space that's a big one.

But that's another one, where you better keep in touch with them because they're going to have, they're gonna have new ones every day. I can or I've already seen it - podcasters there's one where you can literally have your guests record in crystal clear audio while you're recording on your end without a lot of latency issues, too, so it's gonna change every day but I think it really has to do with what you're putting on your end.

Suz: Yeah I totally agree. Excellent and now I have one more question for you are you guys still taking on clients? I mean in this new world is it just kind of managing the ones you have now as you guys reconfigure what's going on or in the streaming world are there things you look at to see like, "Oh this person is making waves, let's see how we can get on board!" Or is that not really a thing yet?

Jack: We're open. You know if you have a great... if a great opportunity comes along where we're the right fit for an artist, I'm not gonna just dismiss it out-right. I'm not as keen on taking a risk on something or really committing to something that I have to spend years to build right now, when the future is so uncertain.

Really though, I'm always open, you know, if I see something with trajectory and I see something where an artist has just really developed a full package to make my job so much easier, I'm always open. It's really, that's really the best thing for me - to come to us with is the full package of a great marketing road map for their career with great numbers, great data. I guess great materials in general, that's really what I look for, so I'm not opposed to it, I may not take as many risks right now.

Suz: Right. No, that makes a lot of sense and you know as they say build it and they will come, but unfortunately guys there's no magic wand, an agency is not going to swoop in and just do this for you. You guys have to play around with it, take your own risks and see what's working and then an agency like Jack's, if the power's really there then you know then they'll know if it's something they can work with.

As the we wrap up here, Jack I just wanna thank you for making the time to come and speak

with us about this because I know that this has been a real stress for people and a real question mark of where they go from here, so thank you for sharing and being very transparent about what you guys are doing over there as a booking agency and production company

Jack: Yeah and thank you for having me as your guest and it's great to talk to you and great to talk to anybody that you're working with. You know, the only thing I can say is really just keep at it and "Half Full" really. That's all you can do and you know if you want to find out more about us - www.bicoastalproductions.com. For submissions the best way to do it is talent@bicoastalproductions.com. It's not just the dump email I promise, it's really something we read, it's just better than getting lost in my inbox where a lot of things could get lost and you know if you've got any other cool ideas about streaming please send them my way. I'm wide open, I'm always looking for quirky new ideas especially in the tech space.

Suz: Thank you so much for being a part of this, I really appreciate you sharing all this info with our community. Thanks so much!

Jack: Thank you appreciate you having me.

So, now that you've heard from Frankie pre-pandemic and Jack pandemic-present... what are your biggest takeaways? What actions will you take to build your career in new ways?

Be sure to tell us in the comments of the show notes page, <http://therockstaradvocate.com/ep87> and stay tuned for the bonus episode, my coaching session with Frankie as well as my tips on finding and working with a coach.

Until next time, Rock/Star! Have a wonderful week and I hope to see you back here next time so we can get grounded to get rising! Take care.