

#### 4. Do presenters prefer to deal directly with the artist instead of the representative?

Without generalizing *too* broadly, clubowners do, concert presenters don't, and the semi- or non-professional can go either way depending upon whatever their personal motivations may be. As I've stressed repeatedly, the passionate attraction to the music and its performers is a major element in the involvement of nearly every professional non-musician working in jazz. And the "personal relationship" factor is enormously influential in securing work for both the musician and representative.

Veteran presenters, however, are well aware of the business shortcomings of musicians in general. For some, this provides a significant edge in both negotiation and potential exploitation. A shortsighted musician may view dealing directly as an advantage simply because it eliminates the agent or manager's commission. This self-imposed barrier between artist and rep is often much more detrimental to the relationship and its potential than most artists realize. There are many responsibilities that the agent, and even more so the manager must undertake *without payment*. The artist should view these commissions as a way of paying for those services rather than taking the position that "I didn't need you to get me the gig, why should I have to pay you?"

Some musicians also feel that by insisting a presenter deal with a representative, it will impact negatively on their relationship and thereby diminish, or even eliminate the likeliness of the gig. Often presenters – most commonly club owners/bookers – will intimidate the artist (by implication or straight up) into dealing directly to avoid having to deal with the rep. In such cases, a smart musician will insist that the presenter deal with their rep, or handle the negotiations directly while having their rep issue all paperwork and handle all of the related aspects for their standard commission.

To my experience, engagements are rarely lost under these circumstances unless there is an insurmountable issue in existence between the presenter and the artist's rep. Furthermore, the artist who takes such a position on this clearly displays the sense of partnership and mutual concern that the quality representative views as essential to a good working relationship.

I'm extremely suspicious of presenters who take the broad position of preferring to deal with musicians rather than agents or managers. There are certainly some representatives who are either incompetent, untrustworthy or unpleasant in their dealings, often guilty of all three. But that should result in a refusal to deal with *those* reps in particular, not *all* reps across the board. There are many musicians whose professional comportment also contains those same undesirable attributes.

On the higher end of presenting – major venues, fine arts series, festivals – the predominant choice is to deal with professional representatives even if the promoter has a solid relationship with the musician. But not necessarily the mates, amateurs and "go-fers" who make up so much of the management side of jazz.

The presenter's responsibilities are far too large and costly to take chances regarding cancellations, untimely execution of contracts, potential errors in touring coordination, and proper specification of performing needs that can crop up in dealing directly with the musician. Additionally, the ongoing business function of the professional representative means that the presenters can maintain contact as

needed without having to track the artist down while on tour, or leave important messages on a service, machine, or with family members. Artist reps are also more likely to serve the presenter's needs regarding promotional materials and other paperwork in a more timely fashion.

There is plenty of opportunity to forge a strong personal relationship between presenter and artist during the engagement. And just like in other walks of life, money matters tend to *damage* relationships, not *enhance* them.