

# FIVE PEOPLE ON THE STAGE, THREE IN THE AUDIENCE: WORKING WITH NEWCOMERS

We all know the story of an unknown band from Liverpool that one day met a producer and became world famous. When Brian Epstein discovered the Beatles, studio time and distribution were extremely expensive – a bottleneck that young musicians had to overcome. Since the 2000s, with the arrival of Napster and other electronic distribution channels, everybody has theoretically the same chance to get heard and find his or her audience. Every kind of music is available online, so why should people leave their homes and take the time to see a newcomer band on stage?

Spider Promotion's Jan "Hage" Hagerodt doesn't fully agree with this pessimistic view: "With every movement comes a counter-movement, and this is the chance to get in touch with the right people," he says. "Of course, there is still a bottleneck of sorts for young musicians, but it has become larger. Newcomer bands today have many more opportunities than in the past."

Hagerodt knows exactly what he is talking about: he is the founder of the Hanover-based artist management agency Spider Promotion and has been working with newcomers for many years. The discovery of a band is much more complex than most young musicians expect. "It's rare that I am totally

convinced when I hear a band for the first time," he admits. "It takes time to create an appeal, maybe by selling some interesting merchandise. Sometimes it can be a person who offers support for layout or similar tasks that changes everything."

This "additional band member" can be crucial for the long-term success of a band, especially when looking for a good booking agency, Hagerodt says. "You need perseverance, you need to insist but not molest – and you need to be authentic. Everything you do should be congruent with the actual status of the band." This also applies to press work, which tends to be neglected by newcomers.

Hagerodt knows the mistakes young musicians can make if they lack advice. At the age of 11, he started playing the guitar and drums in his own band Seedcake. They tried to become professionals, but decided to give up the project after 10 years. "We just weren't good enough," he says. "Once we were even offered the chance to do a professional promo for just the shipping – and we refused! We never crossed the line to professionalism. And then we thought: we still like each other, but if we go on like this we might not like each other any longer."

## 5. CITY OF MUSIC-TALK

**WITH:** Jan "Hage" Hagerodt  
Spider Promotion, Hanover  
[spider-promotion.de](http://spider-promotion.de)

**WEB:**

**Date:** 12 November 2018

**Where:** Centrum Café, Hanover



**You need perseverance – and you need to be authentic”**  
Jan Hagerodt

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Nonetheless, the contacts Hagerodt had built up in that period proved very valuable when someone asked him to handle the booking for another band. "It was very different from doing the booking for our own band; when I did it for myself I took every refusal as a personal failure," he remembers. Despite that, it took him seven more years before he started his own agency in Hanover. "At the beginning I needed some time to get to know the bands I was working for. Then I started to know the scene better and find new bands that I was convinced of. And I had to learn to admit that there are some styles I cannot handle the bookings for."

Hagerodt has been running Spider Promotion for ten years now with lots of enthusiasm. "You never think about the money because you know that you cannot get rich," he says. "You always try to do your best, but that is dangerous, because sometimes you meet people who do not appreciate your efforts. But on the other hand you get these moments, when you drive 800 km for a gig, you don't know why, but then you see the happy faces of the audience and the people backstage and you feel it's all worthwhile."

Hi 5

#### **Your last concert epiphany?**

Yesterday. Or at least that's one I can remember! I watch 200 concerts every year ...

#### **Radio, Spotify, CD or vinyl?**

Spotify and vinyl

#### **Have you met all of your music legends?**

I have not met all of my music legends, yet. I used to be a big fan of Marillion, the band that sounded like Genesis.

#### **A recent music discovery?**

I think you should listen to The Mission.

#### **When is your next concert?**

Tomorrow.

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