

All Kindza Gigs for Singers: Performance Venues, Types, Features

CLUBS & BARS

Though these can be invitation-only spaces or events, more typically they are open to the public. These are adults-only venues that serve alcohol and sometimes food. Gigs are anywhere from 70 mins to six hours (with breaks). These spaces may or may not have a dedicated performance area with appropriate sound and electric. Whether they allow sales of merch and music varies. Some clubs (hotels) can be an opportunity for regular weekly, or monthly, gigs. These gigs may be booked by someone from the venue, or may be booked by a booking agent. Repertoire may be original music, covers, standards, or tribute acts.

HOUSE CONCERTS

These are private, invitation-only events. There is a circuit for house concerts, and they are wonderful ways for artists with original material, as well as classical and cabaret singers, to garner an audience. Gigs are normally two 45-60 minute sets. Sales of merch and music are part of the deal. These gigs are booked by the home owner. Repertoire is typically original music, but can also be more specialized genres such as classical. There is a wealth of information online about house concert circuits.

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Performance Venues, Types, Features

PRIVATE EVENTS

This can include house concerts, but more often they are parties. Typically these events are smaller, and related to a one-time event such as a birthday, anniversary, or holiday (as opposed to as steady, weekly event). Corporate parties fall in this category. Gigs are normally 3 or 4 hours with breaks. These events are booked by the host of the event or a professional event planner. Repertoire is most often covers and standards. There are web sites for artists to list their services for these types of events.

SOCIETY EVENTS

These are large events such as a wedding or fund-raiser at larger venues such as hotels or banquet halls. These gigs go by different names in different places; "casuals" in California, or "jobbing" in Chicago, for instance. Typically the band leader is the star and everyone else (even the singer) works for that band leader. Most commonly the gig is planned by a client who hires an event planner who subcontracts to the band leader who subcontracts to the singer. It's also common for the band leader to be contracted directly by the client. For dancing, gigs are 3-4 hours, with breaks, with singing shared by two or more singers. For cocktails, gigs are small groups that play for 30 mins – 2 hours. Repertoire is covers and standards. These gigs, particularly fundraisers, can also be venues for theatrical presentations.

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Performance Venues, Types, Features

PARKS, STREET FAIRS, MUSIC FESTIVALS

These gigs are booked by government agencies such as a city's special events department, a park district, or a chamber of commerce. They are annual and plentiful. Musicians of all sorts are used for these events, from solo acts to big bands. Gigs are usually one or two 45-60 minute sets. Sales of merch and recordings is allowed but generally not facilitated. Repertoire can be anything. Ethnic music, original music, tribute bands, or covers, or standards. The person or department in charge of booking for these events is easy to find, but usually difficult to get a response from. Emails are not often effective unless your act is already well-known. Be the squeaky wheel and keep calling.

PUBLIC SPACES (Libraries, city- sponsored events, etc.)

These gigs are booked by government agencies or public spaces such as a city's special events department, a library, or a museum. They are either part of an ongoing program ("Friday Jazz at the Museum") or a one-time event ("Springfield's Fourth of July Party!"). Gigs can be anywhere from 30 mins to 4 hours (with breaks). Sales of merch and recordings is usually allowed but not facilitated. Repertoire is usually covers, tribute bands, ethnic music, or standards. Sometimes it takes a little detective work to track down who is booking for these events.

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Performance Venues, Types, Features

ONLINE SPACES (YouTube, Etc.)

There are literally hundreds of places to post videos online. Any length, type of repertoire. No booking required. Any genre. Don't underestimate the value of having a video (or 10 or 120) of yourself online. You can use it as audition, promotion, to become a better singer, to show off to your students, and any other application you can think of. Most importantly, though, the process of making the video makes you a better singer.

SCHOOLS

Nearly every school district has a budget for enrichment programming. These programs cover everything from safety demonstrations or nature programs to history or music offerings. Different districts or states have different processes for contracting these programs. You can look it up for your state or region. There are presenters who make a nice annual income doing school gigs exclusively.

RETIREMENT COMMUNITIES & SENIOR CENTERS

These can be found everywhere. Both private and non-profit organizations have a budget for bringing in musical entertainment for residents. These gigs are almost always concert-type performances (as opposed to being background music) and are usually 50-70 minutes. These gigs are easiest to book if organized around a theme (e.g., if you want to sing standards, find 12 songs that Peggy Lee did and call it "A Tribute to Peggy Lee.") Gigs are booked directly from the individual community's Program (or Events) Planner (or Coordinator).

All Kindza Gigs for Singers:

Performance Venues, Types, Features

- CHILDREN'S EVENTS** These can be private events such as birthday parties or nursery schools, or public events such as libraries or park districts. Typically the space and budget for these is limited, so they prefer solos, duos, or sometimes trios. The venues typically do the booking themselves. However, mommy-networks, home schooling groups, daycares, and nursery schools also talk to each other, and will refer you if they like you. You'd want to stay in touch so they don't forget you. If it is an event/venue where the parents are present, you can usually sell recordings and merch. These can also be venues for theatrical presentations if one keeps one's audience in mind!
- STREET MUSIC (BUSKING)** Make sure you're in compliance with local laws. These gigs can be great. You can make a surprising amount of money, clock a lot of hours, get your confidence up, and have a lot of fun. Also, nobody tells you what to do.
- CRUISE SHIPS & RESORTS** These are a booked by agents, and you can find a lot of information about the gigs from those agents online. Different types of jobs have different pay scales (e.g., the after-dinner dance bands makes one rate, the dinnertime pianist another, and the stage show singer another). These gigs require auditions, and time commitments. They also allow you to get paid to travel. If you do not want to create your own show, use BandMix or Craigslist to find cruise ship shows that are auditioning singers.

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Performance Venues, Types, Features

STAGED EVENT (PUBLIC)

This would be a cabaret, songwriter night, or musical revue that takes place at a venue that caters to this sort of thing. It can happen in a theater (on a dark night or between shows) or a dedicated performance space. For this sort of gig you will be either the producer (if it's your idea and/or your show) or a sideman (if someone wants/needs to share a show). These are gigs that insist on an attentive audience, and the repertoire can be anything (as long as it's in keeping with what was promoted). These typically call for an energetic promotional plan, and selling merch and recordings are part of the deal, often facilitated by the venue.

STAGED EVENT (PRIVATE)

This is a combination of a public staged event and a house concert.

All Kindza Gigs for Singers:

Performance Venues, Types, Features

BANDS: 3 or more musicians

Type of gig	People will or might listen	You may or may not get paid	You get paid something	You actually make some money	It's likely you'll be treated well or left alone	Primarily Day	Primarily Evening	Plan on Promoting
Clubs/bars		✓	✓				✓	✓
House concerts	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Private events				✓			✓	
Society Events				✓	✓		✓	
Parks & Street Fairs	✓		✓		✓	✓		
Public Spaces	✓		✓		✓	✓		
Online Space	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓
Schools	✓			✓	✓	✓		

- Plan on Promoting: You can always promote anything you do if you want to make getting the next gig a little easier. But some gigs rely on your efforts so they can sell tickets or drinks.

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Performance Venues, Types, Features

SMALL GROUP: 1- 3 musicians

Type of gig	People listen	You don't or might not get paid	You get paid a little	You get paid more	It's likely you'll be treated well or left alone	Primarily Day	Primarily Evening	Plan on Promoting
Clubs/bars		✓	✓				✓	✓
House concerts	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Private events				✓	✓		✓	
Society Events				✓	✓		✓	
Parks & Street Fairs			✓	✓	✓	✓		
Public Spaces	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Online Space	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	
Schools	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓		
Retirement Communities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Children's	✓		✓		✓	✓		
Street Performer		✓	✓			✓		
Staged	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓

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Performance Venues, Types, Features

THEATRICAL EVENTS (not music theater)

Type of gig	People listen	You don't or might not get paid	You get paid a little	You get paid more	It's likely you'll be treated well	Primarily Day	Primarily Evening	Plan on Promoting
House concerts				✓	✓		✓	✓
Private events				✓	✓		✓	✓
Society Events				✓	✓		✓	
Public Spaces			✓	✓	✓	✓		
Online Space		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Schools			✓	✓	✓	✓		
Retirement Communities			✓	✓	✓	✓		
Children's			✓		✓	✓		
Street Performer		✓	✓		✓	✓		
Staged			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓

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