

## **FAR-West Folk Alliance - Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Who attends the FAR-West conference?**

FAR-West is attended by folk and acoustic musicians at all career stages, festival presenters, venue owners, concert programmers, house concert hosts, radio programmers, record label personnel, journalists, management and booking agents and other artist support personnel. The common thread that ties attendees together is the love of folk and acoustic music and a desire to bring it to wider audiences.



### **What does my registration fee include?**

Registration includes three days of panels, workshops and master classes, showcases, networking events, our Best of the West Awards Brunch, exhibit hall and contra dance. Travel, lodging and food (other than Saturday brunch) are not included.

### **Are there discounts available?**

Discounts are available for bands, on-site volunteers, and members of a company or music organization attending as a group. This group discount does not apply to members at large of a trade group, such as a songwriting organization or folk music society. It does apply to the executive board of a non-profit group, including songwriting organizations and folk music societies.

### **Are there scholarships available?**

Applications are accepted in the Spring for the Howard Larman Scholarship, established in 2007 in memory of FolkScene co-founder Howard Larman.

### **What happens at the conference?**

People connect, presenters audition acts for their venues, festivals and concert series', new collaborations are born, late night song circles go on until dawn, friends are made, seeds are planted, skills are learned, light bulbs come on, paths are paved and many have said that they have found their tribe. What seldom happens at a FAR-West Conference is sleep.

### **Do I need to attend the conference for all three days?**

Single day conference passes are available. However, we encourage you to attend all three full days to get the most out of your conference experience. The conference begins with the first session at 9:30 am on Friday and officially ends with the last educational session on Sunday afternoon at 2pm. Those who stay through Sunday evening, however, find the relaxed atmosphere is conducive to even more networking. An informal song circle often forms later on Sunday.

### **What educational opportunities are available at the conference?**

The three-day conference includes a variety of educational panels, workshops geared toward artists at all levels as well as presenters, venue owners, DJs and artist support consultants. SIG (special interest group) round tables provide an opportunity for peer groups to learn from each other, and master classes provide artists with a unique opportunity to learn new or hone existing

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skills under the tutelage of true masters who love to nurture and support the FAR-West community.

### **I'm a presenter and I'm already overwhelmed with artists contacting me for bookings – why should I attend FAR-West?**

FAR-West is first and foremost about networking, community, and recharging your batteries for another year of bringing music to your audiences. Many presenters find FAR-West a great place to a) keep an eye out for up-and-coming new talent, b) personally preview talent they are considering booking and c) reconnect with touring artists they haven't seen in awhile. In addition, connecting with other West coast presenters and participating in educational sessions is a great way to build camaraderie and further the goals of your organization.

### **I'm an artist - if I attend FAR-West will I get bookings?**

The most important thing you can do at a FAR-West conference is to make connections, and keep building those connections over time. The connections you make at FAR-West may not result in bookings right away, but the relationships you build will serve you well through your career. That being said, many of our artists – both those who are selected for Premiere Showcases and those who are not – find themselves booking shows with presenters either at or in the weeks following the conference. Many presenters – especially house concert presenters – do not book their next year's series until after attending FAR-West.

### **Is FAR-West like a festival?**

FAR-West is not a festival; it is a business conference designed to facilitate networking and business between musicians, presenters, radio programmers, and artist support consultants and others interested in promoting and supporting folk and acoustic music and dance. The conference is not open to the public, although the local community may attend the contra dance for a cost of \$5. These dancers receive a wrist band pass for the evening which also admits them to the Saturday night Premiere and Private Guerrilla Showcases.

### **What is a Premiere Showcase?**

FAR-West Premiere Showcases are juried showcases that allow artists to present themselves to talent buyers in a concert environment, with stage, lights and sound. Each showcase is 25 minutes long. Two to four rooms of showcases run concurrently on the Friday and Saturday evenings of the conference. Presenters often move from room to room in effort to audition all acts that are showcasing.

### **How are Premiere Showcase artists selected?**

A team of judges reviews three songs submitted by each artist. This team of judges then selects the group of Premiere Showcase Artists that they feel represents the best and most diverse array of talent from the pool of showcase applicants. The 2009 Premiere Showcase deadline was June 30, 2009. Premiere Showcase artists will be announced by August 15, 2009.

### **Why is there a fee to apply for a Premiere Showcase?**

The Premiere Showcase application fee is standard procedure for Folk Alliance Conferences. This fee helps us to put on the conference, and at the same time, ensures that those who apply for

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a Premiere Showcase are serious about their commitment to marketing themselves through the showcase process.

### **Why does FAR-West use SonicBids?**

Each year FAR-West creates a team of judges that represent various aspects of folk and acoustic music throughout the Western Region. These volunteer judges spend hours and hours listening to three songs each from anywhere between 100 and 300 artists who apply for Premiere Showcases. SonicBids provides the simplest and most efficient and cost-effective platform for the judges to review and critique the volume of submissions we receive.

### **Why does it cost more to submit a paper application and physical CD?**

We use the SonicBids platform to review ALL Premiere Showcase applicants. We do not, however, require that artists be members of SonicBids or submit their applications electronically. When we do receive hard copy and CD submissions, we charge an additional \$5 to convert the submitted songs to MP3 format and upload them and the artists' bio information into the SonicBids platform, so these applications can be judged on a level playing field with the electronically submitted applications. These temporary SonicBids profiles are not accessible by the public and are destroyed after the judging process is completed.

### **Why is there an additional Showcase Production Fee?**

Your showcase is a marketing opportunity for you to present yourself to presenters in attendance at the conference. The production fee helps offset costs of stage, sound and lights, as FAR-West is a non-profit organization run entirely by volunteers.

### **What is a Private Guerrilla Showcase?**

Private Guerrilla Showcase (PGS) rooms are privately run and privately funded showcases held on one floor of the conference hotel. The rooms are rented by individuals at their expense through FAR-West, which holds insurance on these rooms. PGS room hosts must sign a contract with FAR-West agreeing to the terms by which Private Guerrilla Showcases may be presented. The selection of artists presented in each room is at the sole discretion of the room's host. [

### **Who hosts Private Guerrilla Showcases at the conference?**

Many rooms are sponsored by house concert hosts, venues, or artist collectives. Many more artists team up to share the expense of presenting a room and create showcase opportunities for themselves and other artists. It is common for hosts to ask for payment of \$20 - \$50 for these showcase slots to offset room and promotional expenses.

### **How can I get private showcases at the conference?**

Showcase room hosts are listed on the FAR-West Web site as they sign their contracts and pay for their rooms. You may contact these hosts individually to request information about how they choose artists to perform in their rooms, and if they charge a showcase fee. Remember, these are private showcases and artists performing in these rooms are at the invitation of the hosts, who are paying for these rooms. It is common and customary – especially for artists running rooms – to charge a showcase fee to defray room and promotional costs.

### **How can I get noticed at the conference?**

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There are many promotional opportunities to help you make the most of your conference investment, including our exhibit hall, program book advertising, tote bag and other sponsorships. Many artists also print special post cards with their contact information and FAR-West showcase schedule to pass out to those they connect with at the conference. Please note that starting with the 2009 conference, there will be NO paper flyers or posters allowed to be posted on the hotel premises, other than tasteful signage immediately on or outside your Private Guerrilla Showcase Room door.

### **Who puts on the FAR-West Conference?**

The FAR-West Conference is run entirely by volunteers; there are no paid staff members. Our working board and “Movers and Shakers” Conference Planning Team work year-round to plan and execute this conference. There are no discounts for volunteer work completed prior to the conference – these planners contribute their time and talents in support of the FAR-West community.

### **How can I speak on a panel or give workshop or master class at FAR-West?**

The educational program is put together by a volunteer committee. You may suggest topics and/or speakers using an input form on the panels and workshops page.

### **Are speakers and instructors compensated?**

No. FAR-West is first and foremost a community and we draw from this community to create our educational programs. No one is compensated for speaking or giving classes at FAR-West.

### **If I go to the Folk Alliance Conference in Memphis, why should I attend FAR-West too?**

The Folk Alliance International Conference provides a tremendous opportunity to connect and network with music business contacts from all over North America and the world. The regional conferences are much smaller and more focused. This creates a more targeted opportunity for artists interested in touring specific regions, and a more focused less hectic atmosphere for presenters and DJs who want to really connect with artists.