

Zack's Open Mic Do's & Don't

Written by Zack Guitarman

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Ed: Zack is a very experienced open mic player and gigging artist. You'll find these "do's & don'ts" apply to Australian Open Mic Nights and can be quite different to US ones.

Some Things To Think About When You Go To Open Mics

- ✎ **DON'T play and leave.** Especially if you were on early and others who were playing later came and listened to you early. Leaving defeats the whole purpose and you might as well stay at home and play to the mirror.
- ✎ **DO talk to EVERYONE** and remember their names. You will make new friends and contacts and that is a fine thing.
- ✎ **DO CONNECT with other musicians.** This is a networking opportunity. Open mics can lead to gigs if you work your follow up opportunities.
- ✎ **DON'T just say "great set".** Be specific about what you liked in the set.
- ✎ **DO introduce yourself** to others and introduce those you know to other new musicians.
- ✎ **DON'T criticise.** No one wants to hear that they "were bad" it is about encouraging free expression of music.
- ✎ **DO be thoughtful.** If only one person is listening, play just for that person, and yourself.
- ✎ **DON'T talk loudly** over songs. Stop and listen if you want to chat leave the room or keep the conversation low.
- ✎ **DO make friends** with everyone in the place if you can and smile.
- ✎ **DO have lots of fun** and enjoy the experience this is what it is all about.

Here are some additions to Zack's posting based on things that happened recently:

- ✎ **Don't change your strings** half an hour before your set
- ✎ **Tune up before you go on stage** - do you think that is entertaining for the audience to watch you tuning?
- ✎ **Don't TRY to tune up on stage** then say your tuner isn't working and ask the other acts if they can lend you theirs - you are just wasting yours, and other acts performance time.
- ✎ **Don't take it personally** if audience members (or even other performers) are talking during your set. People come to these venues to have a drink and a chat - they have every right to do so. If their conversation is distracting you, feel free to politely let them know, but don't ask them not to talk at all. See if you can think of ways to entertain them more effectively, so they stop talking and listen to you (e.g. throw in a cover that they recognise. Ed: But not in a songwriter's night!)
- ✎ **Don't offer suggestions** or advice to other acts unless they ask for it. If they have just completed a set, they are probably thinking either "that was great" or "that was terrible", either way they don't want or need negative comments from you!