

Ever get the feeling you've been cheated?

Tips for beating the touts when
buying music tickets online



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Standing up for fans



For fans of live music it is the best of times *and* the worst of times.

Technology has revolutionised how we enjoy gigs and festivals, and especially how we buy tickets. The idea of queuing at a box office, or sending off a cheque in the post, is mostly a distant memory.

From the largest outdoor events to the smallest club shows, the vast majority of tickets are now purchased online.

In most instances, this works perfectly well. Buying from your computer or mobile is super convenient.

However, there can also be major frustrations at the most sought-after shows where demand is at its highest.

Why?

Ticket touts.

In the digital age, these shady operators are capable of scalping masses of tickets, often using specialised software, before listing them at marked-up prices on sites like **GET ME IN!**, **Seatwave**, **StubHub** and **Viagogo**.

These websites (often called “secondary ticketing sites”) then charge 20%-25% fees on top of the resale price, generating huge profits at the expense of fans.

The **FanFair Alliance** was set up to challenge these practices, and to make ticketing fairer and more transparent for audiences and for artists.

That’s why we’ve put together this guide, with 10 tips to successfully navigate the ticket-buying process.

Of course, there are no guarantees of success. Every show has a finite capacity and sometimes you can genuinely miss out.

However, we hope our advice will reduce your risk of getting ripped off – and help you buy tickets at the price set by the artist, not by a ticket tout.

FanFair Alliance

10 tips for ticket buying

1. Get alerts!

People usually miss out on tickets for a simple reason - they hear about an event too late.

To get on the inside track, sign up to your favourite **artists' mailing lists** and **social media accounts** - as well as mailing lists for **venues, festivals, event promoters** and **ticket sellers**.



2. Do your research

Here's a simple but vitally important question: who is **authorised** to sell tickets for the event you want to attend?

Ticket allocations for many gigs, concerts and festivals tend to be split between the **performer**, the **venue box office**, and a number of additional **authorised sellers**.

These authorised sellers should be clearly listed on the **artist's website**.

3. Check for pre-sales

The majority of music events go on 'general sale' on a **Friday morning**. However, batches of tickets are often allocated for a 'pre-sale' **controlled by the artist** (for their fanclub), **sponsors, promoters** or the **venue**.

Pre-sales are a widely accepted part of the ticketing process, but you're unlikely to hear about them unless signed up to the appropriate **mailing list** (see: Point 1).

Certain **brands** reward customers with the opportunity to buy pre-sale tickets.

4. Don't trust search engines

Increasingly, search engine results for concerts and festivals are **dominated by the big secondary ticketing websites** – GET ME IN!, Seatwave, StubHub and Viagogo – all of whom spend big money to top the rankings.

We advise that you **ignore search engines** and **go straight to the artist website**. This is where you should find definitive information about ticket sales and the authorised ticket agents.

5. Get organised

Save valuable time by **registering and creating an account** with any authorised ticket sellers.

And on the day tickets go on sale: **make sure you're up and awake in time**, that you're **logged in** to the relevant ticket page, that you know the location of the 'buy' button, and you've got a **credit or debit card handy**.

Keep open the websites of other authorised sellers too.

6. Don't panic

At the most high-demand shows, you might be placed in a **queue**. This is frustrating, but bear with it.

If a "sold out" message pops up, then **don't despair** – other authorised sellers may still have face value tickets available. Check their websites immediately, and keep your eye on **social media**.

Artists will often alert fans to any available tickets.



7. Check the T&Cs

If you're successful, then congratulations! But please, *please* **check the T&Cs** on your tickets.

In order to **combat touts**, artists and managers are increasingly demanding stricter terms and conditions to limit the transferability of tickets.

For instance, by having them personalised by printing the lead booker's name on the ticket. Such T&C's should be made clear when you purchase a ticket.

If you are required to **bring ID** on the night, then make a note of it now. It could save you major hassles later.

8. Resist the 'secondary ticketing' sites

Missing out on tickets is hugely frustrating. We all know the feeling. Especially if hundreds - or even thousands - of tickets miraculously pop up on GET ME IN!, Seatwave, Stubhub and Viagogo.

But please **pause before doing anything rash**. These listings will be made by ticket touts, looking to maximise their profits when buyers are desperate. On top of that, the secondary ticketing sites use a range of **persuasive marketing techniques** to hook the unwary – buying themselves to the top of search results, implying they are an "official" seller, or bombarding potential buyers with reminder emails.

So **resist the emotional blackmail**. Keep calm, and refuse to be manipulated. If an event sells out within minutes, there's a strong chance **extra dates will be announced** to meet demand. Or **extra tickets will be released** nearer to show time.

It often pays to play the waiting game.



9. Re-sell at face value

Over recent years, a number of services have launched to **help fans** sell unwanted tickets for face value (or less) to other fans, typically for a small fixed fee. Similarly, many authorised ticket sellers offer **face value ticket resale**, ‘waiting list’ or ‘**reallocation**’ facilities – enabling unwanted face value tickets to be **transferred** to another fan.

Genuinely spare or unwanted tickets tend to become **available closer to show time** – and occasionally right at the **last minute**.

10. Act like a fan, not a tout

Sometimes you can’t make a show, and you don’t want your ticket to go to waste. We’ve all been there.

If that’s the case, then please **sell your ticket for face value** and do not use the for-profit resale services. **Boycotting** these websites sends out a clear message.

Act like a fan. Don’t be a tout.



Where to buy tickets at face value



Key UK ticket sellers

**have signed the FanFair Alliance Declaration*

***alt. tickets**

www.alttickets.com

Offers a 'waiting list' facility on sold out shows and a 'remind me' option for on sale.

***Active Ticketing**

www.activeticketing.com

Amazon Tickets

tickets.amazon.co.uk

AXS

www.axs.com

***Billetteo**

www.billetteo.co.uk

***DICE**

www.dice.fm

Offers a 'waiting list' facility for sold out shows.

Eventbrite

www.eventbrite.co.uk

***Eventim**

www.eventim.co.uk

***Gigantic**

www.gigantic.com

Face value resale offered through Twickets

gigsandtours

www.gigsandtours.com

***Music Glue**

www.musicglue.com

***MyTicket**

www.myticket.co.uk

Face value resale offered through Twickets

***PledgeMusic**

www.pledgemusic.com

***Resident Advisor**

www.residentadvisor.net

Operates a fan-to-fan face value ticket resale service.

***Sandbag**

www.sandbagheadquarters.com

***See Tickets**

www.seetickets.com

Operates a Fan-to-Fan Marketplace - allowing resale at face value or less.

***Skiddle**

www.skiddle.com

Operates a Re:Sell function – allowing face value transfer of tickets.

***Songkick**

www.songkick.com

***The Ticket Factory**

www.theticketfactory.com

Face value resale offered through Twickets

***the ticketsellers**

www.theticketsellers.co.uk

***Ticket Arena**

www.ticketarena.co.uk

***Ticketline**

www.ticketline.co.uk

Ticketmaster

www.ticketmaster.co.uk

Owns secondary ticketing sites Get Me In! and Seatwave. Ticketmaster frequently direct users to these services when its allocation of tickets has sold out.

Ticketweb

www.ticketweb.co.uk

***Ticket Text**

www.tickettext.co.uk

***WeGotTickets**

www.wegottickets.com

Operates a reallocation function, so buyers can change the name on a ticket.

Face value resale services

***Scarlet Mist**

www.scarletmist.com

A fan-to-fan ticket exchange service. Listings permitted at face value or less. No additional fees to the buyer.

***Twickets**

www.twickets.co.uk

Face value fan-to-fan ticket trading platform on web, mobile and social media. Buyers pay a standard 10% booking fee, sellers sell for free – all ticket purchases are guaranteed.

“Secondary Ticketing” services used by touts

GET ME IN!

www.getmein.com

Owned by Ticketmaster. Charges buyers a “processing fee” of approximately 18% of the listed resale price **per ticket**, and up to £10.57 for delivery.

Seatwave

www.seatwave.com

Owned by Ticketmaster. Charges buyers a “booking fee” of approximately 19% of the listed resale price **per ticket**, plus up to £9.99 for delivery.

StubHub

www.stubhub.co.uk

Owned by eBay. Charges buyers a “fee” of approximately 19.5% of the listed resale price **per ticket**, including delivery.

Viagogo

www.viagogo.co.uk

Owned by a range of private equity interests. Charges buyers a “booking fee” of up to 34% of the listed resale price **per ticket**, plus up to £17.89 for delivery.

Key UK promoters

AEG Live

Aiken Promotions

Bird On A Wire

***Communion**

***Cross Town Concerts**

DF Concerts

***DHP Family**

Eat Your Own Ears

Festival Republic

Glasswerk

Harvey Goldsmith

Kennedy Street

***Kilimanjaro**

Live Nation

Marshall Arts

Metropolis Music

Regular Music

Robomagic

Rockfeedback

Serious

Solo

SJM Concerts

TGC Concerts

U-Live

About FanFair

The FanFair Alliance was founded in July 2016 to campaign against industrial-scale online ticket touting.

Our Declaration for fairer ticketing practices has been signed by more than 100 managers, agents, promoters, trade organisations, ticket sellers and music businesses

We support consumer-friendly business practices, legislation and technologies.

www.fanfairalliance.org



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