



Conclusion

For most of us who produce tours, touring is addictive. We come off the end of producing a tour vowing never again. But then you see a show that excites you and you're off. Budgets, cash flows, creating another limited liability company, selling shows to venues and festivals, schedules, schedules and more schedules, endless production meetings, late nights... And somehow it's both new and familiar simultaneously.

The key to being a good tour producer is to think laterally, keep hold of the details and stay calm. When things become very intense, as they undoubtedly will at some point in the touring process, remember to stand back every so often and view the whole thing from a respectable distance.

But what's it *really* like?

People ask me this all the time. And the answer if I'm feeling like being truthful is that it's really a strange thing. You go away with a bunch of people – some you may know, some you won't – with whom you work and socialise with maniacal intensity in a little, concentrated bubble. You meet and interact with a lot of different people but always there is *the show*. Every tour is both the same and different. There's always a feeling of sadness at the end.

The first time out you think 'I'll save all my per diems' (you never do); 'I'll get to spend time with that friend in Dunedin' (maybe for five minutes pre-performance or if you have a day off in that town); 'I'll finish that report from the previous tour in my spare time' (there's never enough time).

It's odd the little things that keep you sane. I pack without thinking now – the tour bag. It's always the same things – these are the things that will hold me together in the tour to come, the familiar things, the things that have routine attached to them and keep me from feeling dislocated.

Coming home is always longed for but rarely lives up to expectation. There's inevitably a post-tour blues syndrome where you wake at four in the morning wondering which city you're in and realise you're home. Partners tend to suffer the consequences of this until you come to recognise that the first 24 hours of home are always weird.

Why do I do it?

I think Neil Finn can have the last word – because he got it so right.

Why am I here? For the show, that glorious hour and a half where I get a chance to give all my energy to music and, in return, feel the warmth of an audience. This is the simple and beautiful exchange that gets me out the door and on the plane. With all the twists and turns of a tour, the show is a chance to find purpose in the day, the only way to know for sure I was there.<sup>6</sup>

Neil Finn

<sup>6</sup> Once Removed, Neil Finn (Words), Mark Smith (Photographs), Sanctuary Publishing, London, 2000.