



# Muse:forward

## Pay Your Wage

BY CHRISTOPHER CORBELL

This is a brainstorm for discussion among the Muse:forward community.

Discussion should be directed to the Muse:forward [Groupspace mailing list](#).

**The Problem:** The Portland independent music scene has prices that may be characterized as deflated, creating a situation in which most musicians play for free or for token compensation.

**The Proposal:** An opt-in pricing framework is promoted in the music scene, based on wage level of attendee at a show.

The basic formula: when attending a music performance, pay an amount that represents an hour of work for you, with current Oregon minimum wage representing the baseline.

For example, if the minimum wage is around \$10, it's expected that a minimum cover charge or donation for a musical performance will be \$10. Audience members who earn \$25 or \$50 per hour are encouraged and expected to pay more, so the median ticket price will scale with median income of the city.

While it will take time this could become the same kind of social convention of consumer-controlled calculated price that is currently the norm when tipping for a meal at a restaurant.

It will be easiest to adopt this approach at informal (unticketed) venues; online ticket sales where the customer can set the price at or above a minimum would be encouraged as a later development.

Also, it may still be appropriate to have a free/casual tier of performances, such as open mic nights or amateur nights, where this level of compensation is not expected. Higher-priced ticketed performances would not be affected unless those producing such wanted to use this formula to price their more accessible tickets.