

Imposter Feelings in Live Music - Reflection and Practical Tools

Live Talks Panel - Sarah Page, Executive Coach (ACC)

Working in music often means stepping into visible, high-pressure environments.

Whether you're performing, pitching, leading, releasing work, or making decisions behind the scenes - moments of self-doubt can appear, even in highly capable people.

Research suggests around 70% of people experience imposter feelings at some point in their careers.

What are imposter feelings?

These feelings may include:

- Believing your success is due to luck, timing, or effort rather than ability
- Feeling others may have overestimated your competence
- Worrying you do not really belong in the room
- Fearing you may eventually be "found out"

These feelings often appear when people:

- Step into new roles or opportunities
- Perform, present, or share work publicly
- Gain visibility or recognition
- Enter unfamiliar rooms, stages, or environments

Important to Understand

Imposter feelings are **not the same as low confidence**.

Confidence question: "**Can I do this?**"

Imposter question: “**Do I deserve to be here?**”

Many people who experience imposter feelings are already capable, experienced, and achieving.

Practical Tools

1. Compare yourself to yourself

Instead of measuring yourself against others, ask

- What have I learned in the past year?
- What can I do now that I could not do before?
- Where have I grown that I may be overlooking?

2. Shift The Focus

When you feel self-conscious, shift the focus.

Instead of asking:

How am I being judged?

Ask:

What is needed here?

How can I contribute?

3. Work To 80%

Perfectionism fuels imposter feelings.

Choose a non-critical task and complete it to **80% of your usual standard**.

Then ask yourself:

- Did the outcome actually suffer?
- Did anyone notice?
- What did I learn about my expectations?

4. Watch Your Self Talk

Notice thoughts like:

“I don’t belong here.”

“I just got lucky.”

“Anyone could have done that.”

Try replacing these with more balanced thoughts:

“I was invited here for a reason.”

“I am learning and growing.”

“My perspective has value.”

5. Gather Evidence

When doubt appears, look for facts.

Consider:

- feedback you have received
- achievements you have overlooked
- challenges you have successfully handled

Evidence helps counter the imposter voice.

6. Create a ‘Celebration Folder’

Save:

- positive messages
- Emails thanking you
- moments you’d usually brush off

Come back to it before:

- presentations
- interviews
- new opportunities

7. Use the “Yes, and...” technique

When someone gives positive feedback, the imposter voice often dismisses it.

Instead of rejecting it, try adding:

Yes, and...

Example:

“Yes, and I handled that situation well.”

“Yes, and this is becoming one of my strengths.”

This helps your brain internalise success.

8. Reframe Failure

Mistakes are often interpreted as proof we do not belong.

Instead of: “I shouldn’t have done that.”

Ask:

- What can I learn from this experience?
- What would I do differently next time?

Growth often comes from reflection.

9. Practise Failing Safely

Choose a small, low-stakes situation where you can experiment or stretch.

Examples:

- sharing an idea before it feels perfect
- asking a question in a meeting
- trying something new without over-preparing

The aim is to build evidence that imperfection is survivable.

10. Rewrite Your Story

We often carry outdated narratives about ourselves.

Reflect on:

- The story I often tell myself is...
- What is true now is...
- A more accurate story could be...

Final thought:

Imposter feelings are not a sign you're failing. They often show up when you're growing, visible or doing something meaningful.

If this resonated

These thoughts come up more often than we admit.

I share honest reflections and practical tools on confidence, imposter feelings, and navigating the music industry - written for women - in Off The Record.

It lands in your inbox every Tuesday at 10am ET.

Join me here: www.sarahpagecoach.com/newsletter

