

## Getting It Together: Your Career, Your Life

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The previous chapters have focused exclusively on the specifics of moving ahead with your musical goals and projects. But these goals and projects do not exist in a vacuum. It's essential to consider these goals in the context of your total life experience. This includes your social and family life, health, finances, as well as your living situation. The focus of this chapter is on that bigger picture, putting together the total package.

Developing a career in music takes time. As you develop your career, you still need to put food on the table, pay rent, and take care of yourself, body and soul. How do musicians pull it all together? The majority of professional musicians do not make their livings solely from performing. Unless you win a full-time position with a top orchestra or chorus of a top-tier opera company, your performance work—especially as an emerging artist—will most likely be part-time. The good news is that musicians are multi-talented and that there are many ways to use your talents to do good in the world.

### Portfolio Careers ♦

Almost all musicians have what can be described as “portfolio” careers, meaning that their professional work is made up of multiple strands of jobs and projects. There's an amazing variety in the ways musicians combine freelance work with teaching, entrepreneurial projects, and various day jobs. This diverse work package can tap into a musician's full range of talents and skills to make for a satisfying life.

How do musicians create niches for themselves in the professional world? How do they end up with satisfying careers? The answer is typically through experimenting. Musicians try out various music-related and non-music projects and part-time jobs. Through trial and error, luck and calculated risks, they explore and test themselves in the professional world. The more exploring they do, the more options they uncover.

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### *Career Profile*

Vic Firth, the legendary Boston Symphony Orchestra timpanist, retired in 2003 after fifty years with the orchestra. Conductor Seiji Ozawa said Vic was one of the two musicians in the

BSO from whom he'd learned the most. Five decades with the same employer sounds like a very traditional career, but this same Vic Firth has had a "side" occupation. His drumstick manufacturing business (<http://www.vicfirth.com>) has evolved into the leading percussion equipment company in the world.

Vic started making drumsticks because he was dissatisfied with the available equipment. He began by modifying drumsticks, then experimented in making his own, fine-tuning the process to make superior sticks, perfectly balanced and precision matched in pairs. His products are now used and endorsed by classical, jazz, and rock musicians, and his company employs more than 140 people. With its manufacturing facilities in Newport, Maine, the company produces 85,000–90,000 drumsticks per day. As reported on the CBS Sunday Morning program, Mar. 29, 2009, "Vic Firth offers four hundred different models of drumsticks, all made from Appalachian hickory from Tennessee, dried in Firth's own kilns, shaped and molded and measured to his own strict specifications, then computer-matched by weight and pitch, and shipped all over the world."

As for the secret of his success, "The key word for me is persistence," he said. "Whatever you set out to do, you have to have a magnum passion for it, and you've got to work beyond what you ever dreamed you're gonna work to succeed at the level that you want to succeed at." What else? Vic adds, "Persistence, persistence, persistence!"<sup>1</sup>

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## **Project-Based Career Advancement**

As detailed in earlier chapters, music career exploration typically takes the form of projects, from various recording projects to forming or joining different ensembles, launching concert series or festivals, commissioning works, or starting a private teaching studio. Musicians' careers are often a series of such projects, one leading to the next, through collaborations and freelance work. These projects may last days or years, overlap or conflict, but they are sustained by the interest and enthusiasm of the musician. From month to month it can seem—to both the musician and others—that there's no big plan or career direction with these projects. It's usually only in hindsight that a musician can look at a series of projects and trace a path and a progression. The connecting threads of interests and skills that run from one project to the next are a kind of through line, a sustaining passion. The accumulation of talent, skills, experience, and contacts help musicians advance in their projects and create satisfying portfolio careers.

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### ***Building a Portfolio Career***

Stephen Beaudoin is a multi-talented and entrepreneurial young tenor. While completing his bachelor's degree, he served as an administrative intern for the Gay Men's Chorus of Boston, working on grant writing and fund-raising projects—a real education for an undergraduate! Stephen then used the skills he developed as an intern to find funding for his own project. He collaborated with a colleague, composer Martin Near, to write an opera dealing with the AIDS epidemic. Stephen applied for a grant from the American Composers Forum and was able to produce the opera at both Roxbury Community College and at the Boston Center for the Arts.

After graduating, Stephen juggled several part-time jobs. He performed with a professional choir, wrote classical music articles and reviews for two small Boston-area newspapers, and worked both at Starbucks (good benefits, flexible schedule) and at the American Composers Forum. He then went on to a full-time day job doing development work at a local cultural alliance. This allowed him to hone his skills in grant writing, event planning, donor development, and project presentation. The skills he has developed in his day jobs have helped him with the performing side of his career.

Stephen also performed regularly in the area with a classical guitarist, handling the duo's booking and promotion. The duo started a concert series at a local historic mansion. How'd they do this? They made an appointment to visit the director of the mansion. They presented their concept for starting a series, offering their proposed programs and their promo kit. The director loved the idea, gave them an extremely reasonable rental fee for use of the hall, and promised to help with the publicity.

Stephen found ways to knit together his varied interests and skills to make a busy and satisfying career path. Staying flexible and being open to possibilities brought him new opportunities.

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## **Making It Work**

If you're building your repertoire, launching a new ensemble, and/or preparing for auditions and competitions, then most likely you will need to consider ways to earn money while you pursue these projects. Many musicians struggle with trying to balance the need to make a living with the need to pursue their passion. There is no easy way around it. The process of developing your professional career and earning income as a musician takes time. So most musicians, at some point in their careers, work "day jobs." As you network, ask musicians what kinds of work they have done outside of performing and composing—you'll be amazed. Ask them what work they liked or didn't and why. Ask what jobs fit well with their musical pursuits, and ask what they might recommend you explore.

## **Transferable Skills: What Musicians Have to Offer** ♦

Music training builds a wide range of skills and abilities that have practical applications in many professional disciplines. In other words, musicians have *transferable* skills. Below is a list of the assets that trained musicians typically possess. This is what comes with music training, what a music education provides:

## ***Skills***

Communication	Listening
Analytical	Creative problem solving
Arranging/synthesizing	Teamwork/collaboration
Leadership	Interpersonal
Organizational	Presentation
Critical thinking	

## ***Abilities***

Analyze/interpret ideas and emotions	Work well under pressure
Assess/synthesize large amounts of data	Attend to details
Concentrate/work intensely for long periods	Develop ideas
Conceptualize/work with abstract concepts	Relate to people of varying backgrounds

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Hornist Debbie Engel has played with the Delaware Symphony for more than twenty-three years. Her career “package” has also included working as both the orchestra’s and opera company’s librarian and director of education, overseeing an extensive community outreach program. She’s had all this plus three (now teenage) children! How did she manage? Ms. Engel pointed out four key factors: her supportive family, extreme organization, her faith, and her positive attitude.

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## **The Day Job Dilemma: Five Key Considerations ♦**

In looking for the right fit for your work/life balance, there are some important questions to consider:

1. *Do you want to work at a day job within the arts or beyond?* Some musicians want to have all of their working hours connected to the arts, to be around others who think and talk as they do. These musicians look for day jobs with various arts organizations, within the recording industry, or with music retailers, publishers, or music schools. For networking and feeling connected, this route can be a plus.

Other musicians prefer non-arts-related day jobs that give them some distance from music. They want to explore other skills and interests, or they find that with a non-music day job, they can conserve their creative energies to be used on their own time. There’s no right answer here. Do what’s right for you.

2. *What skills, experience, and interests do you have?* What skills would you like to develop? If you’re going to spend a significant amount of time working a day job, it probably ought to be doing something you find interesting, satisfying, or meaningful. What are you curious about? What are your hobbies? For clues, think about courses you have found interesting, organizations you belong to, the kinds of books you read, and the type of news

stories you follow. Musicians find meaningful and satisfying day jobs in all types of settings, including religious institutions, political campaigns, and grassroots community organizations. Some musicians choose day jobs in which they can gain specific skills useful to their music careers, such as positions in fund-raising, marketing, or public relations. What sort of work have you already done and found interesting? Summer and part-time school jobs can often lead to other opportunities.

Of course, some musicians prefer to find work that's stable and pays enough, but that also provides enough downtime on the job to allow for studying scores, or memorizing or writing new work. This might be a security position or receptionist work. Again, there's no right answer here, but it's important to weigh what you get out of any job (money, benefits, and more) against whether the job leaves you with time and emotional energy to work on your music.

3. *What kind of schedule, hours, and flexibility do you want?* Do you need certain nights free for rehearsals and performances? Do you need early mornings for practicing? Many musicians seek work with maximum flexibility, and this leads some to start their own services and side businesses. These can range from dog walking to recording, editing, massage therapy, catering, day care, website design, or tutoring. Other musicians find jobs that dovetail their music schedules. And depending on the work involved, a company or organization may be able to offer flextime as a benefit. But whatever the situation, in order to balance a day job with a music career, excellent time management skills are required (see [chapter 10](#)).

4. *What about health insurance?* The main reason most American freelance musicians take day jobs is for the health insurance. Some part-time jobs offer prorated benefits, which can turn a not-so-hot salary into a very good deal. If your spouse or partner can cover you on her or his health plan, that's great. If not, you need to get your own coverage. Without it, even a minor hospital visit or unexpected health issue can mean a debt of tens of thousands of dollars. Everyone needs ongoing preventive health care, but especially musicians, whose bodies need to be working well in order to perform at their best.

Freelance musicians often try to make do without health insurance, relying on "free care" programs at local hospitals and clinics. But many musicians are unaware that by law hospitals have to provide the uninsured only the most basic emergency care, not ongoing rehabilitation. This means that without insurance, the hospital will stabilize you, treat you until you are out of immediate danger, but that's it, even if you have a serious, life-threatening illness.

For freelance musicians, there are various associations that offer members preferred group rate health insurance. Some of the music service organizations that offer health insurance rates are Chamber Music America (<http://www.chamber-music.org>), ASCAP (<http://www.ascap.com>), Early Music America (<http://www.earlymusic.org>), and the Music Teachers National Association (<http://www.mtna.org>). For additional ideas, check the Artists' Health Insurance Resource Center (<http://www.actorsfund.org/ahirc>), the Freelancer's Union (<http://www.freelancersunion.org>), and eHealthInsurance (<http://www.ehealthinsurance.com>).

5. *What about the money?* How much income do you actually need each month? To make

good choices about work, you need to know how much you actually spend each month (not how much you *think* you spend). If you haven't written out your detailed monthly expenses, it's not too late (see [chapter 10](#)). Track your spending for at least three months to calculate a reliable monthly average.

Thinking through the questions above should help you explore and consider your work options. Consider your priorities to find a day job that works for you. The rest of this chapter details the two most popular categories of musicians' day jobs—teaching and arts administration / music industry work.

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### ***Tips on Shopping for Health Insurance***

Jack Garrity is an insurance broker who specializes in working with musicians and other independent contractors. The musicians' union in Boston regularly refers their members to Jack, and here's what he recommends for people who're looking for insurance on their own:

Shopping (and that's the key word—*shopping*) for health insurance isn't brain surgery but does require some patience and organization. Listed below you'll find what I (try to) do with everyone who contacts me.

Do your homework. Get prices from three companies (if possible). You might start with major national insurers—Aetna, Cigna, and United. Or get quotes through any of the musicians' service organizations or associations. Compare the following nine items:

1. Primary Care Physician (PCP) Visits—how much per visit? What about for a specialist? Referrals needed?
2. Emergency Room (ER)—how much per admission?
3. Prescriptions (Rx)—co-pay for generics/name brands/rare name brands?
4. Outpatient Surgery (OPS)—covered 100%? Or must a deductible be paid first?
5. Hospitalization—see OPS.
6. Maximum Payout—is there a limit or cap per accident or policy? Massachusetts HMOs, for example, are unlimited.
7. Coverage Area—worldwide for emergencies and crisis care? What happens if you are injured outside of your resident state?
8. Network—are the doctors and hospitals offered in the network acceptable to you?
9. Monthly premium—and of course, and how long is the rate fixed for?

See if you can reduce the monthly premium by dropping the Rx, if not needed, and taking a deductible and co-pay on the OPS/hospitalization coverages. Please note that health insurance is regulated on a state-by-state basis, and so the procedures, coverage, prices, and applications can vary widely. In Massachusetts, being a small business gets you “business/commercial/ group” rates that are much better than non-business rates. Ask if this is true in your state, too.

Jack Garrity, Diamond Benefits

1-888-635-4402 (Mass. only)

1-781-477-9048 (outside Mass.)

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## **Teaching Opportunities** ◆

For many musicians, teaching is a satisfying and rewarding complement to their performing or composition work. Musicians often report that teaching helps make them better performers. At its best, teaching is challenging and creative.

Annie Fullard, violinist of the Cavani Quartet, relates how her group balances performing and teaching. She describes Cavani as “equally committed to performing and teaching chamber music, as we feel one directly enhances and influences the other.” In an article in *American String Teacher* (November 1998), Fullard says, “Teaching is one of the world’s oldest art forms. The more you teach the more you learn—it’s a very simple thing.”

There is a range of possible teaching opportunities available. These are private studios, public and private schools, community music schools, colleges, conservatories, plus teaching artist work in a variety of settings. Some musicians find they work particularly well with certain age groups or in teaching master classes, group lessons, or in the classroom. Part of exploring to find your niche may involve sampling a variety of teaching experiences. Below are suggestions for either starting or expanding your teaching options.

## **Private Studio Teaching: Attracting Students through Referrals**

The most efficient way to recruit students is through referrals. These can come from local schools’ band, orchestra, or choral directors, and from other teachers—and especially from your satisfied students and their parents. If you don’t already have such contacts and you’re interested in teaching children, research the schools in your area. Find the ones with strong music programs. Ask your colleagues, and call the schools: get the names and telephone numbers of the music directors. Then call the directors and introduce yourself with something like this:

Hello, my name is Janet Smith. I’m a local flutist and I perform regularly with the ABC Chamber Orchestra and have a master’s degree from XYZ School of Music. I’m looking to add more private students to my teaching studio. I’ve heard very good things about your program from parents in the neighborhood. I was hoping to set up a time to come in and meet you. It would be great to hear your students in rehearsal. I’d be happy to offer a sectional or coach an ensemble and for you to get to know my teaching a bit, too!

School music directors are far more likely to refer students to you if they have actually met you, observed your teaching, and like what they see. Beyond referrals, there are other smart ways to attract students. Mimi Butler is the author of a series of recommended books, including *The Complete Guide to Running a Private Music Studio* and *The Complete Guide to Making More Money in the Private Music Studio* (see <http://www.privatemusicstudio.com>). She advises carrying and using business cards, and sending letters each May to local school music teachers about your summer studio. It’s also wise to get involved in local music camps and youth music ensembles, to join professional music organizations, and to advertise strategically. See the companion website <http://www.oup.com/us/beyondtalent> for more resources.

## **Home Studio or Not?**

If you plan to teach out of your home or apartment, consider whether your teaching space is

appropriately comfortable and professional. Is your place in a safe neighborhood, and is parking or public transportation an issue? If you do use a portion of your home strictly for rehearsing and teaching, note that you can claim a portion of your rent and related costs as a deductible business expense. Consult a musicians' tax specialist to make sure you take all the appropriate deductions (see [chapter 10](#)).

An alternative to teaching out of your home or apartment is to travel to your students' homes. But travel time and scheduling complications usually make this a last-resort option. Instead, there may be a local religious, community, or civic organization open to your using the facilities for a teaching studio. Many public schools organize after-school lesson programs and hire local instructors. Check out your neighborhood, and ask everyone in your network.

A mezzo-soprano with a regular church job, Beatrice H. needed a place to teach but could not afford to rent a studio. She was friendly with the church choir director and asked whether it would be possible to use the church basement rehearsal room two afternoons a week to teach voice. It worked out well. Beatrice bartered for the use of the space, agreeing to handle some of the choir's performance library and scheduling duties. Because of the good relationship she built, Beatrice is now also co-presenting a recital series at the church and starting a children's choir as well.

## Have a Studio Policy

As a trained musician with performance and teaching experience, you are a professional. If you want to be treated as such, you need to represent your teaching as a *business*. To avoid frequent cancellations of lessons and late payment, you need a written studio policy.

Having a studio policy that clearly details a payment schedule and cancellation guidelines will save you many headaches. Private teachers often use monthly or six-week "semester" systems, with students paying in advance for each new block of lessons. A typical cancellation policy requires two weeks' notice in order to have a lesson rescheduled. The teacher may schedule an extra week of make-up lessons every three months or so, with one makeup lesson offered to each student. When a parent and student come to meet you initially to discuss private study, that's the time to explain your studio policy and hand the parent a copy.

## How Much Should You Charge?

Find out the going rate for lessons in your area. Ask other musicians and call local community music schools to find out their rates. You should charge an amount that's appropriate to the local rates and to your level of experience. In the Boston area, excellent young musicians with little teaching experience may charge \$40 per hour, whereas some members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra charge more than \$150 per lesson.

## How to Develop and Expand Your Teaching Skills

Most performers learn to teach on the job, with little or no formal training in pedagogy, music education, or developmental psychology. Typically, performers simply repeat the way *they*

were taught. But not all of your students will be like you were as a youngster. A narrow repertoire of teaching methods limits your ability to meet the needs of your students. You can do better! It's important to develop a variety of tools and strategies for teaching students with various learning styles. Below are four ways to expand your skills.

1. *Observe.* Find the most experienced, creative, and successful teachers in your area. Call to introduce yourself, and explain that you're a new teacher hoping to develop your skills by observing excellent teaching in action. Ask if you can observe them teach for an afternoon. People are generally flattered and willing to help. It's good to observe experienced educators working with a range of ages and abilities, and to observe teaching in a variety of situations—in lessons, coachings, and master classes.

Look to see what a teacher focuses on with each student and how this instructor tailors her remarks to each student's personality and stage of development. Most likely, the educators you observe will spend some time with you afterward, answering your questions and discussing their approaches. And ask for recommendations of teaching books and videos.

2. *Find a mentor.* If you hit it off with any of the teachers you observe, you may be on your way to having a longer-term connection—to having a mentor. If you're learning a lot, ask to continue. Later on, you might ask this person to observe *you* teaching a few of your own students, to get feedback and coaching. Mentors may refer students to you when their own schedules are full, or they may ask you to do some substitute teaching. Eventually, a mentor may take you on as her or his teaching assistant. This can lead to added experience on your résumé as well as letters of recommendation, helpful when you apply for teaching jobs.

3. *Attend master classes.* Take every opportunity to attend master classes so that you can observe a diversity of teaching methods and approaches. Is there a conference for your instrument or specialty area? Organizations such as the National Flute Association (<http://www.nfaonline.org>), the International Trombone Association (<http://www.ita-web.org>), and the annual American String Teachers Association conference (<http://www.astaweb.com>) offer master classes with world-class artist teachers. Observing great teaching is an opportunity to see how master teachers approach an array of student abilities, issues, and repertoire. When observing someone else's master class, ask yourself, what would *you* focus on with this student? What would you say? And what would you ask the student to do?

4. *Take a class.* Effective music teachers are constantly improving their skills and experimenting with new approaches. Don't get into a routine or a rut. If you stay curious about teaching, you'll continually seek out new approaches and methods, and your students will benefit.

Find out whether there are pedagogy courses for music educators in your area. Some music schools offer specialized summer courses on methodologies such as Kodaly, Orff, or Dalcroze Eurhythmics. Or take a course in developmental psychology or a general education class to find out more about how to deal with students at different ages.

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## ***Music Teacher Resources***

American Choral Director's Association, <http://www.acda.org>  
American String Teachers Association, <http://www.astaweb.com>  
College Music Society, <http://www.music.org>  
Kennedy Center's Arts Edge, <http://www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org>  
Music Educators National Conference, <http://www.menc.org>  
Music Teachers National Association, <http://www.mtna.org>  
National Association of Teachers of Singing, <http://www.nats.org>  
National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy, <http://www.francesclarkcenter.org>  
National Guild for Community Arts Education, <http://www.nationalguild.org>  
Suzuki Association of the Americas, Inc., <http://www.suzukiassociation.org>

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## **Types of Teaching Positions**

Outside of setting up your own private studio, there are teaching opportunities at various types of institutions, from community music schools to private and public schools, and colleges and universities.

### ***Community Music Schools***

These institutions offer after-school, weekend, and evening music instruction to children and adults. Community music schools hire teachers to give private lessons, coach ensembles, and teach theory, ear training, composition, and other classes. Most instructors are hired part-time and paid hourly rates with no benefits. The majority of such teachers are paid \$25–\$40 per hour. Parents pay tuition by the semester, and the school takes a portion of these tuition fees to cover overhead costs for the facility, advertising, and program management. The advantage to teaching at these schools is that the organization handles all the scheduling and billing, and provides the facilities. You can find listings of these schools at the National Guild for Community Arts Education see <http://www.nationalguild.org>.

In major metropolitan areas where teacher supply is great, community music schools often have their pick of qualified candidates, hiring only experienced teachers with proven track records. These schools often do not advertise openings, so musicians apply directly, sending a cover letter of introduction and résumé. Having good letters of recommendation from respected teachers can be a big help in getting hired.

### ***Public Schools***

Public K–12 schools hire music teachers to direct band, orchestra, and chorus, and to teach group lessons and general music classes. Teaching in the public schools demands abilities beyond musicianship skills. Public school teachers need to have effective teaching methods, an understanding of child development stages and learning styles, and classroom management skills. In addition, the work demands the ability to create and implement lesson plans that meet the school's and the state's education requirements. These are all skills that musicians can

develop through coursework, including evening and summer workshops.

Public music school teachers can earn fairly good salaries, with excellent benefits and summers off. Starting salaries in the more affluent states are in the low \$30,000s, and salary raises can be substantial with experience and additional training. Maximum salaries in some states can go to over \$70,000. Because of the recent shortage of music teachers (especially in strings), public schools hold substantial opportunities for musicians.

The experience of teaching in public schools can vary widely, depending on the size of the class, grade level, and the school's funding, facilities, and administration. To explore the possibility of teaching in the public schools, it's best to observe at least five music teachers working with a variety of grade levels in different schools. Ask people in your network for contacts. Observe classes and rehearsals and talk with the teachers to get a sense of what these jobs are actually like.

To be hired by a public school, you must have teacher certification, a license to teach in a particular state. Because of the shortage of teachers, many states have streamlined the certification process to make it easier for people to enter the profession. To find out the current specifics for certification in your locale, contact your state's department of education. For job listings, check the Music Educators National Conference, <http://www.menc.org>, and the sites for your state department of education, any specific school districts you may be targeting, as well as the best local online job listing service.

### ***Private Secondary Schools***

Unlike K–12 public schools, which are funded by tax dollars, at *private* schools, parents pay tuition fees. Private schools include college preparatory or *prep* schools, parochial, and other specialized schools. They are generally for grades 9–12, though there are K–8 programs as well. Some prep schools offer both *day* and *boarding* options. Boarding students live in dorms on campus, whereas day students commute from home.

Private secondary schools hire musicians to teach lessons, coach and conduct ensembles, and sometimes to teach music appreciation, theory, and music history classes as well. Most private school music teachers work part-time and are paid at an hourly lesson rate, generally \$30–\$60 per hour. Classroom instructors are paid on a different scale, on a per-course and semester basis. The full-time positions typically include non-music assignments as well. At boarding schools, some faculty may live on campus as resident counselors in exchange for free room and board in addition to their teaching salary. There are teacher placement companies such as Carney, Sandoe and Associates (<http://www.carneysandoe.com>) that help private school job seekers and employers connect. See also The Education Group and the National Association of Independent Schools. Note that private secondary schools do *not* require teachers to have state certification, the way public schools do.

### ***College-Level Teaching***

Teaching positions in higher education can also be extremely varied. Musicians teach at community colleges, at liberal arts schools and universities where music is an elective, as well as at colleges and conservatories where students earn degrees in music. Colleges hire

musicians to teach private lessons, to coach or conduct ensembles, and to teach courses in music appreciation, theory, history, pedagogy, and more.

These teaching positions can range from full-time, tenure-track positions (with full benefits and lifetime job security), to adjunct or part-time teaching for low pay and no benefits. Most full-time college music teaching positions involve more than private lessons. Typically, a faculty load will include ensemble coaching, master classes, and, depending on the number of studio lessons assigned, teaching one or more classroom course.

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### ***Where to Find Listings for College-Level Teaching***

Bridge: Worldwide Music Connection, the New England Conservatory's online database of over 2,800 music listings of teaching, performance, and arts administration openings, plus grants, audition, and competition info. Available by subscription:  
<http://www.necmusic.edu/bridge>

Chronicle of Higher Education, <http://www.chronicle.com/jobs>

College Music Society's music vacancy listings, <http://www.music.org>

Higher Ed Jobs, <http://www.higheredjobs.com>

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Generally, the job openings for full-time positions at universities list “doctorate required” or “doctorate preferred.” Search committees may consider candidates without the doctorate if they have extensive and successful college-level teaching experience and/or extensive professional performance experience. At conservatories and highly competitive schools of music, search committees seek artist-teachers with significant national or international reputations and the ability to recruit advanced students.

*Tenure-track* jobs at universities are full-time positions with multi-year, renewable contracts leading to tenure—guaranteed permanent employment. Candidates in these positions are typically hired as assistant professors, and if successful, they may, over a number of years, advance in salary and status to the position of associate professor, and full professor, and may be granted tenure as well. Starting full-time salaries (depending on the location and budget of the school) are often in the \$40,000–\$70,000 range, although the better funded schools sometimes compete to hire “star” faculty at much higher salaries.

College-level music teaching positions are highly competitive, with many more qualified and experienced candidates than there are openings. A posting for a desirable job can attract 100–200 applicants. The less competitive opportunities are the part-time “adjunct” and “lecturer” positions, which are often not well-paid. These positions may be filled by people without doctorates. Working part-time at a college or university is an excellent opportunity to gain valuable experience and therefore become more marketable for full-time positions elsewhere. Part-time university teaching work can also serve well to complement a portfolio career.

Violist Kenneth Martinson is an assistant professor of music at the University of Florida. Earlier in his career, as a member of the Rackham Quartet, he took part in a Chamber Music America rural residency program—living and teaching in King City, California. In “Flying

Together,” a February 2002 article he wrote for Chamber Music America’s *CMA Matters*, Martinson describes the effect of his early teaching experience on his subsequent career:

Teaching 64 string instrument beginners certainly proved to be an immensely valuable experience for me. That year of teaching provided me with enough patience to deal with any student, at any level, for the rest of my life! The experience also forced me to re-evaluate every aspect of my technique from scratch ... because of my residency experience, I have a rare combination to offer my students: highly developed performing skills and the knowledge I’ve gained in music education.

## Teaching Résumés

An effective résumé can get you in the door for an interview. It’s typical and recommended for musicians to have several versions of their résumé—one each for performance, teaching, and arts administration, or other “day” jobs. Each one should be geared specifically for that type of work.

The challenge in writing any résumé is to tailor it to the *employer’s needs*. Your résumé should highlight the qualifications, skills, and experiences *relevant to the particular job to which you are applying*. Put yourself in the employer’s shoes. Think about what he or she would want to know about you as a candidate. Use the job description to tailor a version of your résumé to the particular job.

Statistics show that employers typically spend less than ten seconds reading a résumé. So the design and format is important. It should be one page only. Longer teaching résumés and CV’s are used only for college-level teaching.

## Details

In applying for teaching jobs, the most important portion is “Teaching Experience.” So it’s a good idea to include more details here than in other areas. In listing your teaching experience, include a bulleted list underneath each job listing to detail your teaching accomplishments and convey what is distinctive about your teaching. Specify the age range and level of your students; describe any of their accomplishments, such as winning competitions, attending festivals, or winning scholarships to music schools; list the range of repertoire you teach; and describe what you emphasize in your teaching. Without these details, an employer has no way to distinguish your teaching from the other applicants. Consider including a “Professional Profile” or “Skills Summary” at the top. This works as a brief commercial for the package you have to offer the employer.

After teaching experience, your performance experience is the next most important thing an employer will want to know about. In one page, you may be able to list only selected credits—make sure you emphasize the range of your performance experience and impressive venues where you’ve performed. See the example on the next page.

Note that in some countries, it’s common to list age, marital status, and photos on résumés, but the United States is generally litigious, and employers must be careful about any potential appearance of discrimination, so it’s best to leave these items off your performance, teaching, and arts administration résumés. The exception is for classical singers, who use photos on their performance résumés (to aid in casting for roles), and sometimes also include these for

teaching résumés as well.

## Arts Administration Opportunities and Music Industry Jobs ♦

Beyond teaching, many musicians gravitate toward arts administration and music industry jobs. The term *arts administration* covers a wide range of administrative, management, and leadership roles with arts organizations. Most often the term is used in conjunction with nonprofit arts organizations such as music schools, orchestras, opera companies, festivals, and foundations. The term *music industry* typically refers to the for-profit sector, including the recording industry, music publishing, technology, and retail markets.

### John Doe, trombonist/teacher

1 Anonymous St. #2 ♦ Brighton, MA 02135 ♦ cell (617) 555-1212 ♦ johndoe@yahoo.com  
♦ [www.johndoe.com](http://www.johndoe.com)

#### Profile

Teaching experience includes private lessons, beginners to intermediate, ages 10-37; lessons emphasize ear training, applied music theory, & development of independent & critical thinking skills. Has coached mixed chamber ensembles (strings & brass), conducted choir, & arranged works for choir & instrumental chamber groups. Performance experience includes diverse musical styles from classical to funk & soul.

#### Teaching Experience

Private Trombone Studio, Salt Lake City, UT, & Boston, MA, 2006-present

- Beginners to intermediate, ages 10 to 37
- Lessons incorporate applied theory, ear training, and improvisation
- Emphasis on students' development of critical thinking skills by analyzing their own playing
- Variety of styles of music including big band, concert band, solos, & etudes

Choir Director, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Cambridge, MA, 2010

- Conduct amateur, volunteer choir, SATB, 15 voices
- Prepare for monthly performances; select & arrange music
- Emphasis on balance, blend, & diction

New England Conservatory Summer Festival Youth Orchestra, Coach, Boston, MA, 2008

- Coach brass section and chamber group daily (repertoire included Mozart's *Musical Joke*)
- Emphasis on group interaction, communication, & intonation

New England Conservatory of Music, Teaching Assistant, Music History Dept., Boston, MA, 2007-08

- Presented selected lectures on music of Stravinsky and neo-classicism to undergraduate classes
- Tutored students in Romantic & 20th century music in preparation for exams
- Students who attended review sessions increased test scores by 10-25%

University of Utah Marching Band, Field Assistant, Salt Lake City, UT, 2005-06

- Coached trombone & low brass sectionals twice weekly

## Selected Performance Experience

### *Orchestral*

Utah Symphony Orchestra  
Rhode Island Philharmonic  
New Bedford Symphony Orchestra

### *Concerto Performances*

Philharmonia, University of Utah  
Wind Symphony, University of Utah

### *Chamber Music Performances*

Casals Festival, Puerto Rico  
Boston Public Library  
Boston University  
Longy School of Music

### *Non-classical Performances, Salt Lake City area*

The Zephyr Club (Ska, Salsa)  
Utah Arts Festival (Ska)  
Green Street (Funk, Soul, Ska)  
Utah State University (Jazz)

## Education

Longy School of Music, Performance Diploma, Trombone, Cambridge, MA, anticipated 2010 New England Conservatory, Master of Music, Trombone Performance, Boston, MA, 2008 University of Utah, Bachelor of Music, Trombone Performance, Salt Lake City, UT, 2006

### **Principal Teachers**

Norman Bolter  
Russell McKinney  
Larry Zalkind

### **Conductors**

Gunther Schuller  
Stanislaw Skrowaczewski  
Keith Lockhart

### **Chamber Music Coaches**

Charles Schlueter  
Donald Palma  
Anthony Plog

Arts administrators and music industry professionals are the people who make things happen. They run concert series, performing arts organizations, music software companies, and online music businesses. They include the people who handle publicity, marketing, fund-raising, and programming. Many musicians work these part-or full-time jobs because they want to contribute to a larger effort—beyond their work as individual performers—to help the arts grow in their communities. Many musicians value the opportunity to use the full range of their skills and abilities in service of a larger cause.

## ***Types of Organizations with Music Industry and Arts Administration Jobs***

- Performing organizations (symphony orchestras, opera companies, choruses)
- Presenting organizations (concert series, jazz festivals, performance venues)
- Arts service organizations (such as ASCAP, BMI, American Music Center, Chamber Music

- America, Opera America)
- Foundations (state and regional arts councils, private and corporate foundations)
  - Arts education institutions (community music schools, conservatories, college music departments)
  - Arts research and consulting organizations (groups that work on audience development, marketing, assessment, and management issues for arts organizations)
  - Music publishing companies (such as Belwin Mills, Schirmer, Hal Leonard, and Carl Fischer)
  - Radio/TV (includes programming and research work)
  - Recording industry (major and indie labels)
  - Music technology (including music software development, online music services and distribution systems)
  - Music retail (instruments, accessories, scores)
  - Music instrument design, building, and repair
  - Artist management firms
  - Media relations companies

Typical entry-level positions are administrative assistant jobs. Employers seeking to hire for such positions generally look for candidates with communication, teamwork, computer, and organizational skills, the ability to multitask, and a knowledge of music and the arts. Entry-level, full-time position salaries can start (depending on the region) in the mid to high \$20,000s. As people develop skills and experience, better pay is available. At the high end, top executives at leading symphony orchestras, record labels, and major service organizations routinely earn six figure incomes.

To explore arts administration opportunities, check for job postings on the websites of any of the arts organizations in your area. Your state arts agency may provide lists and contacts for these organizations. You can then arrange for informational interviews (described in [chapter 2](#)) with staff members at these organizations.

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### ***Where to Find Job Listings***

ArtJob, <http://www.artjob.org>

Arts Presenters, <http://www.artpresenters.org>

*Bridge: Worldwide Music Connection*, <http://www.newenglandconservatory.edu/bridge>

League of American Orchestras, <http://www.americanorchestras.org>

New York Foundation for the Arts: <http://www.NYFA.org>

Also, check your state arts agency's website and your alma mater; many music schools offer job listing publications/online listings

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Whether you're exploring a day job to pay the rent or to gain specific skills, you need to

know your priorities, explore your options, and keep an open mind. Talk to lots of people, and gather ideas. Keep in mind that we cannot always see how the work we do today will benefit us in the future.

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### ***What Can Come from a Day Job?***

Just out of college, French hornist Jean Rife took a clerical position in the textiles department at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C. The important thing about that job was that it was down the hall from the musical instrument collection. Jean became friends with the department members, played their horns, and when they started an early music ensemble, she was right there. Thus began a career-long interest in early music and in playing the natural horn.

Jean moved to Boston, taught part-time at the Weston Public Schools, and took a part-time job at the MIT music library. There, she became friends with violist Marcus Thompson, who would stop by to talk. During one of their discussions, he mentioned that the woodwind chamber music coach he had hired couldn't come that semester after all. Jean was there to say, "I'll do it!" Marcus hired her, and she's taught at MIT ever since. These days, Jean's career package includes freelancing and teaching chamber music and horn part-time at MIT, New England Conservatory, and at the Longy School of Music.

What makes Jean's career especially interesting is that she is also a yoga instructor and has combined yoga practice with her horn teaching and coaching. Jean first found that yoga was incredibly helpful in her own playing and then as she incorporated it in her teaching, found it was also a great learning tool for other musicians.

Musicians are often multi-talented, but Jean has found a productive and creative way to connect her wide-ranging interests and skills.

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## **Opportunities**

This list below includes job titles from a range of music-related jobs. Some of these jobs require additional specialized training, whereas others are appropriate for musicians who get on-the-job training. There's a world of opportunities if you think broadly about how to use your music training and knowledge.

Architectural music consultant	Festival manager
Music software programmer	Concert series presenter
Music retail store manager/owner	Instrument builder/designer
Royalties broadcast monitor	Instrument repair specialist
Music licensing specialist	Piano tuner-technician
Copywriter/clearance administrator	Media relations coordinator
Film music editor	Fund-raiser
Lyricist	Music publicist
Record producer	Orchestra/opera company manager
Recording engineer	Ticket services director
Copyist	Director of orchestral education
Music publisher	Music librarian
Tour coordinator/road manager	Concert hall manager
Radio show host	Music therapist
Artist manager	Music journalist/critic
Booking agent	Arts researcher

Below is a sample arts administration job description and following it a cover letter and résumé used in applying for the position. Note how the cover letter and résumé specifically address the *employer's* needs as stated in the job description.

## ABC College of Music

1 Fictitious Ave.  
New York, NY 10020

Administrative Assistant wanted for the Recording and Video Conferencing Department at ABC College of Music.

9-5 M-F plus occasional evening and weekend hours as needed

### Job Description

Assist in daily running of busy office;  
Interact with students, faculty, staff;  
Schedule of special events and equipment use;  
Handle questions/customer service;  
Schedule repairs and equipment updates

### Duties

Front office work, reception duties, handle correspondence, scheduling of equipment, troubleshooting

## Qualifications

Knowledge of classical and jazz; Bachelor of Music preferred; customer service and office administrative experience; computer skills and technical abilities; organization and communication skills.

## Send materials to:

George Pinkerton, Director  
Human Resources  
ABC College of Music  
1 Fictitious Avenue  
New York, NY 10020

Jane Doe

cell (617) 555-1212 jdoe@email.com

Temporary (good until May 30, 2010): 33 Gainsborough St. 714, Boston, MA 02115

Permanent: 1 Main St., Irvington NJ 07111 (973) 555-1212

May 7, 2010

George Pinkerton, Director  
Human Resources  
ABC College of Music  
1 Fictitious Avenue  
New York, NY 10027

Dear Mr. Pinkerton:

I read with interest about the Administrative Assistant position opening for the Recording and Video Conferencing Dept. at ABC College of Music in the May 3rd Sunday edition of the *New York Times* (found on <http://www.monster.com>). Enclosed is my résumé in support of my application. I am very enthusiastic about the possibility of working at the ABC College of Music because of its fine reputation and because this position seems to be a good match with my background, interests, and experience.

My relevant computer skills include MS Word, MS Office Windows, Excel, Clarisworks, and Finale Windows. I am well acquainted with work in music school environments and have held two work-study positions at the New England Conservatory in Boston, where I will receive my bachelor's degree in Jazz Performance later this month.

Outside of the Conservatory, I work part-time as an Administrative Assistant at the Algonquin Club, an exclusive private social club where I have handled a wide variety of administrative responsibilities. Through this work I have developed excellent customer

service, organization, and communication skills, and I learn quickly. I have acquired a broad knowledge of both jazz and classical music through my studies at the Conservatory, and I am interested and motivated to learn more about distance learning, video conferencing, and audio technology.

Although I now live in Boston, I am planning to move back to the NYC area this summer. I will be traveling back and forth in the coming weeks and would be happy to meet with you to discuss the position. Thank you for considering my résumé. I will call next week to follow up.

Sincerely,



Jane Doe

Enc. résumé

## Jane Doe

cell (617) 555-1212 jdoe@email.com

Temporary (good until May 30, 2010): 33 Gainsborough St. 714, Boston, MA 02115

Permanent: 1 Main St., Irvington NJ 07111 (973) 555-1212

### **Profile**

Office experience with excellent organization, communication, and customer service skills. Computer skills: MS Word, MS Office Windows, Excel, Clarisworks, Finale. Broad knowledge of jazz, classical, popular music. Motivated team player with willingness to learn.

### **Arts Administration Experience**

Bindery Assistant, work-study position, New England Conservatory, Spaulding Library, Boston, MA, 2007-10

- Assisted in the repair of damaged books and scores
- Processed books and scores for shelving
- Organized and sorted catalogued scores and parts for processing

Audience Service Assistant, work-study position, Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, Boston, MA, 2006-07

- Assisted with ticket sales
- Fielded customer service complaints and concerns

Telemarketer, New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, Newark, NJ, summer 2006

- Sold season ticket subscriptions

### **Related Administrative Experience**

Administrative Assistant, Algonquin Club, Boston, MA, 2007-present

- Revised and updated daily and weekly function schedules
- Compiled weekly staff timecards and monthly inventories on spreadsheets
- Managed busy switchboard and all reception duties
- Handled office billing and communications

Program Assistant, Boys and Girls Club, Boston, MA, summer 2007

- Assisted in supervising 7 high school student counselors
- Taught folksongs
- Supervised 40 six-year-old children for field trips and all program activities

### **Computer Skills**

MS Word, Clarisworks, Finale

MS Office, MS Excel

### **Education**

New England Conservatory of Music, Boston, MA

Bachelor of Music in Jazz Performance, Voice, 2010

### **Honors/Awards**

Scholarship, New England Conservatory 2006-10

References available upon request

## **Long-Distance Job Search ♦**

If you are considering a move to a new city or region, the key to making an easier transition is researching and establishing contacts in the target area in advance of your move. The site <http://www.findyourspot.com> provides an online survey to help identify cities that match your needs, interest, and lifestyle preferences. The survey assesses your preferences as to cultural amenities, public transportation, climate, recreational activities, housing costs, and more, to arrive at a list of suggested cities. These are issues to research and consider no matter where or why you are moving, because your quality of life matters!

Once you have a target city, you can get lots of preliminary information about your potential

new location online. You can use the city's chamber of commerce and its travel/tourism sites, as well as Wikipedia, to find a wealth of information about the community as a whole and its arts offerings. You can find online cost-of-living comparisons and salary surveys and you can always read real estate classifieds to get a sense of housing costs. For relocating abroad, do an online search for the target country's ministry of labor, embassy, and immigration sites.

Based on your research, create an estimated monthly budget of your anticipated expenses. This information will help you make decisions about the type and amount of work to seek in your new community.

To find relevant music organizations and venues, search online for the city's arts calendars. Contact the city and state arts agencies to get a list of music organizations and performance venues. Find the local chapters of relevant national arts organizations, such as the Music Teachers National Association (<http://www.mtna.org>), Suzuki Association (<http://www.suzukiassociation.org>), or the American Composers Forum (<http://www.composersforum.org>).

Beyond the online information, make good use of your network contacts. Ask family members, colleagues, and friends for contacts and leads in your target city. Check your school's alumni office for names and e-mails of the alumni living there. You want to find out about freelance opportunities, the local rates for teaching, and the names of conductors and contractors in order to inquire about auditions.

By doing your homework in advance and establishing contacts, you can make the transition to your potential new home much less stressful.

## The Big Picture in Focus

The healthiest approach is to look at the whole of your life as a journey. Life is more than a series of achievements and accomplishments. My friend and colleague Derek Mithaug, former director of career development at the Juilliard School, has a perspective on this. He writes, "You can avoid years of frustration by focusing now on how to create a journey that will allow you to combine all of your talents and interests. People who create their own paths become the directors of their careers and lives; they are in a position to choose the types of paths they wish to travel."

Keep your values and goals front and center. Gather your courage, your persistence, and patience for the journey ahead. You are ready!

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### *Career Forward*

1. Write out the types of work you have considered doing to support your music career.
2. What other interests would you like to investigate for possible supplemental work opportunities? (Do you like to cook, garden, mentor kids, repair cars, or help with political campaigns?) Where can you get more information about these options?
3. Make a list of the skills and experience you have now that might lead to supplemental work.

4. Do you know musicians who have “portfolio” careers? Have you talked with them in detail about how they put it all together? Invite people out for lunch so you can learn from hearing their stories. It’s fascinating and inspiring to hear musicians talk about how they got started, overcame challenges, and created their own paths.

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