

MUSICIANS' SURVIVAL GUIDE

Edition 2



Your Guide on How to Survive (and Thrive) in the Music Industry

www.lcm.ac.uk/survivalguide



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This is the second addition of the Musicians' Survival Guide. Following on from the success of our debut, we hope to share more opinions, experiences and practical tools from a wide range of knowledgeable professionals to help you navigate your way through the music industry. The eclectic subject matter in this guide should prove to be a useful resource, regardless of your goals and aspirations.

In this edition we explore best practice for marketing yourself, as well as constructing press releases. We have advice and stories from performers, writers and producers, alongside tips for vocalists, aspiring business owners and those programming material for live events, and pointers on fundraising. We also feature the importance of agreeing writing splits and ensuring royalties are claimed via appropriate collection agencies.

All of what you read here will also be available on our website along with the first edition of the guide: www.lcm.ac.uk/survivalguide

We are incredibly grateful to all of the contributors who took the time and effort to help create this publication, and to you for taking the time to read it.

We hope you enjoy this second edition of the Musicians' Survival Guide and find the various perspectives and advice to be helpful.

The Enterprise Team
Leeds College of Music

Legal, Finance & Getting Paid

Doing the Splits: How to Calculate Your Songwriting Splits

Pete Bott, Music Specialist Solicitor, Swan Turton LLP

Working out songwriting splits can be a contentious issue, especially when the line between writing and production is blurred. It's therefore essential to discuss splits at the outset of any collaboration project to avoid disputes at a later date.

If you look at the writing credits for songs in any mainstream or specialist charts, you will see that we are living in an age of increasing musical collaboration. While this collaborative spirit is to be celebrated, it is not without its complications, particularly when it comes to songwriting splits and resulting income. Fundamental questions arise: if you write the main musical riff and the rest of the band add simple accompanying parts do you all still take an equal split? If you write the lyrics, are you automatically entitled to fifty percent? Where does songwriting stop and production begin? How do you resolve disputes?

Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 (CDPA)

The relevant UK law is found in the CDPA. Under the CDPA, a song will usually consist of two separate "works": i) the musical work and ii) the literary work (in relation to any lyrics). In most cases, the author of a work is the first owner of any copyright in it. A work is deemed to be jointly-authored where it is produced by the collaboration of two or more authors in which the contribution of each author is not distinct from that of the other(s).

Blurred Lines Over Ownership

This lack of clarity is exacerbated by the increasingly blurred boundary between the roles of songwriters and producers. In the past, these roles were usually well-defined. The Beatles' producer George Martin is acknowledged as making a significant contribution to the Beatles' songs, but he is not credited as the author and has no ownership of them. These days, especially in production-led genres of music, the roles are far less clear and it may be difficult to determine whether the programming of sounds or rhythms constitutes authorship and therefore ownership.

It would be logical, however, to assume that if you identified the authors of works in a song, you could determine the appropriate ownership splits. Unfortunately, it's not that straightforward. This is because:

- 1) the musical and literary works do not necessarily each constitute an equal fifty percent share of the whole of the song;
- 2) the contributions of joint authors may also be unequal. A further complication is the commercial pressure which may be operating in the background. A high-profile artist may, for example, insist on an ownership split on a song despite having little or no involvement in the writing process. Elvis Presley was well-known for this practice.

As a result, while the starting point in determining splits is usually to apportion each co-writer's contribution (musical or lyrical) to the song as a whole, an agreement is usually reached following commercial negotiation. This means that well-known writers may insist on a larger split, especially if that writer increases the chances of the song being successful. >>

Agree Your Splits and Avoid Falling Out

The solution is therefore to discuss splits and reach an agreement between all co-writers, ideally before the writing process begins and certainly before any money or other deals are on the table. Be warned: if you don't do this, disputes will almost inevitably follow! If you cannot agree exact splits in advance then you should at least establish a mechanism for calculating and recording splits once the songs are finished.

“ All of this may seem complicated and you might be tempted to put-off discussing co-writing splits, particularly when the creative process is going well. ”

You should also agree:

- Who controls the use of the songs (for example, do all co-writers need to agree to the grant of a synch licence?).
- Who will register the songs with PR.
- Who will receive income from exploitation of the songs.
- How liabilities will be dealt with (for example, a liability may arise for all co-writers if the contribution of one co-writer infringes the rights of a third party).

It is also sensible to nip any ego conflicts in the bud by setting out an agreed form of writing credit to be included in physical packaging and digital metadata – remember that these may not be the same as the splits, especially in the case of ghost writing.

Consider Publisher Arrangements

In addition, you must consider how co-writing arrangements might be affected by contracts with publishers. If any of the co-writers have signed an exclusive publishing contract then it is likely that their ownership in the songs will be automatically transferred to their publisher. You should therefore check that any such contracts will not prevent or restrict you from using the co-written songs as intended.

Get Your House in Order at the Start

All of this may seem complicated and you might be tempted to put-off discussing co-writing splits, particularly when the creative process is going well. However, you can be certain that any awkwardness in talking business at the outset will be amplified substantially if you delay and money comes into the equation. Legal costs will stack up in resolving any dispute and a window of opportunity for use of the songs could be missed.

You should therefore do all that you can to agree matters in advance, get your agreement down in writing and check how your agreement may be affected by any relevant publishing contracts. You simply cannot rely on the CDPA or “standard” arrangements to accurately reflect your own specific co-writing relationship. If you get your house in order in this way, you will minimise the risks of a dispute and be able to concentrate on enjoying the creative possibilities offered by collaboration.

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Registering Works with PRS for Music

Registering a musical work

You will need to register your musical works with PRS to ensure you receive any royalty payments for them. Below are some points to consider when registering works/songs with the PRS and MCPS database.

Always proof the spelling of your tracks

Incorrect spellings of titles will affect the PRS automation process which could result in a delay of earnings.

Whilst the 'duration' of your work isn't a mandatory field when registering, it could impact on how much you earn

PRS will automatically apply a duration of three minutes to any work that is unspecified, resulting in a loss of earnings if your work is more than three minutes long.

Register every version of your work (e.g. radio edits and remixes), as the information PRS receive from broadcasters can often be incomplete

Each iteration of a work will be assigned a different 'tunecode'. For example, if a radio edit version of your work not registered with PRS is broadcast, it may result in difficulties over the collection of royalties.

When releasing your own material sign-up to MCPS, as this is separate to PRS functions

If you don't have representation via a publisher or label you will need to look after your own PRS/MCPS administration.

If you are looking to manufacture/press your own music, you'll need an MCPS licence for this: AP2 licence. Once this is obtained you will need to contact PRS to set-up an 'exclusion' to ensure that you don't get charged for pressing your own material.

If however you are self-releasing, and a label owned by a third party is also releasing your material, then you might want to consider joining MCPS. In this instance, a member of MCPS can set-up an exclusion from MCPS for the collection of royalties from the use of their works from their own record company, and MCPS will just collect royalties from any third-party controlled label.

Submitting set lists

A new online tool is now available to report set lists to PRS. This can be done via mobile or tablet and allows you to submit set lists, track the status of those already submitted, and see when set lists have been processed by PRS. Below is some advice for when doing this.

Make sure you are reporting the duration of the live performance and not the duration of the registered recording when submitting set lists

If you have a track that is three minutes on record but you play it for five minutes live, you could be due more royalties. This doesn't apply to cases where royalties come from the Gigs, Clubs and Small Venue scheme as the royalties here would be split equally across the acts who play on the night. >>

Submit set lists for performances that took place overseas.

PRS have reciprocal agreements with more than 100 other societies around the world, meaning you can submit overseas performance set lists and receive any royalties due.

Search for licensed venues using the PRS tool.

Selecting the correct venue (and even room) that you performed in helps to ensure you receive the right amount of royalties due.

Ensure the original writer(s) is credited when performing 'cover' versions of songs.

When performing covers you don't technically need to seek permission from the originator, however it is recommended that you note the songwriter(s) on the set list, as they will be due royalties from the performance of their song.

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Glossary

Some useful terms to understand when registering works with PRS or MCPS.

Active work: An active work is a song that has generated payable mechanical or performance royalties.

Mechanical right/royalty: A mechanical royalty is a royalty that is paid by a record company for the use and exploitation of a musical work.

Performing right/royalty: A performance royalty is a royalty that is paid whenever a work is used in public. These royalties are typically paid by radio stations, cafés, restaurants, and shops who must obtain PRS licences to play music.

Tunecode: A seven digit and one letter unique quotable signifier for every work on the PRS system.

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For more help with understanding royalties or signing up to PRS and MCPS, visit their site at www.prsformusic.com.

Alternatively feel free to get in touch with the LCoM Enterprise Team at agency@lcm.ac.uk.

Funding for Musicians

Finding financial support may seem relatively complex, but there are several opportunities out there including crowdfunding, social investment and sponsorship, alongside the more traditional grant funding approach. However, it's worth considering that the vast majority of funding for musicians is project based and time sensitive.

Grant-Based and Statutory Funding

In the UK, the main providers of grant funding for musicians are:

- Arts Council England (or Creative Scotland/Arts Council of Wales/Arts Council of Northern Ireland in the rest of the UK)
- PRS for Music Foundation
- Help Musicians UK

Trusts and Foundations

Although very much dependent on the type of project you're seeking funds for, you're not limited to those aforementioned. Others include the Britten-Pears Foundation and The Michael Tippett Musical Foundation for emerging composers, and the Hinrichsen Foundation, the Fenton Arts Trust and The Radcliffe Trust for new music.

Arts Organisations

A handful of arts organisations across the country also provide grants or support musical projects directly. For example, Youth Music provide funding for sector support and developmental projects for children and Jazz North, who seek to increase the profile of contemporary jazz in the North of England, support artists through creative programmes such as Northern Line and Jazz North Introduces. Elsewhere, Music for All provide funding for musical activity in the community.

“ *Finding financial support may seem relatively complex, but there are several opportunities out there...* ”

Seven Top Tips on Writing Grant Applications

1. Consider the guidelines

Make sure your project fits within any guidelines given. Up to 60% of applications are rejected as they don't meet the eligibility criteria. Any guidance given provides insight into the aims of the funder too. The best applications are those targeted to meet the interest of the funder, but that remain artistically-led, rather than funder-led. If the guidelines do not match your project, look elsewhere.

2. Be realistic

It's always important to keep in mind that applying for any arts based funding is likely to be extremely competitive. Be realistic about the time you are able to invest in making applications and consider the relatively low success rate.

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3. Apply well in advance

Most grant bodies take three months on average to reach a decision. Make sure you factor this in to your project timeline and come up with an alternative plan for if you are unsuccessful. It may also take a lot of time to gather all the information required from different sources (e.g. references/preparing a budget) so begin the process as early as possible.

4. Read the application form carefully

If the space given has a character or word limit, write the full amount but don't ramble. You'll be up against other applicants who will be making sure they get across their musical idea or concept – the funder will expect you to do the same. Pay close attention to each question, and make sure you answer what is being asked of you.

5. Communicate your idea clearly

It's important for your musical idea or concept to be fully formed at the point of application. Always ask yourself the question – so what? Make it difficult for a funder to turn you down by ensuring your case for support is as strong as possible by demonstrating the need and importance. Explain what, how and how much. Convey the intended outcomes and impact.

6. Get someone else to proofread your application

A grant funder will look negatively on budgeting errors (they want evidence you'd spend their money wisely), poor grammar and typos (demonstrates attention to detail). Check, check, and check again! Ask a friend to read it and tell you what they 'hear'. Go through several drafts to make sure that it is a well thought-out application.

7. Demonstrate what support you currently have

A funder will look for projects or proactive artists that have a significant level of backing or a previous track record – it's less of a risk. Make sure you convey what support you've already enlisted, whether this is funding from other sources or by providing a clear indication of the strength of your fan base. The higher your profile amongst funders and peers, the more likely your chances of success. Try and get face-to-face contact with funders and sponsors wherever possible – invite them to your performances, get along to networking events. Like anything in the industry, it's all about relationships and who you know.

Crowdfunding

Many musicians and LCoM alumni are increasingly using crowdfunding platforms to finance tours, CD/vinyl releases etc. Some of the most well-known platforms include IndieGoGo and Kickstarter, although there are numerous alternatives. However, it's always worth checking to see what fees each individual service might charge and which offers the best package for your needs.

Crowdfunding is particularly effective if you already have an established fan base or loyal community of friends and family. It goes without saying, but those who are able to leverage their network to get those initial pledges coming in have much higher success rates using this funding method. >>

Five Top Tips for a Successful Crowdfunding Campaign

1. Set an achievable goal, but factor in the additional costs of any rewards given (physical costs involved, shipping, transaction fees) – work out your net income and what this allows you to achieve. Time and time again musicians forget to factor this in and eventually lose money on any crowdfunding campaign.
2. Leverage your network – ask your friends and family before asking more widely, it's easier to gain support from your fan base towards your final target total rather than at the very beginning. People want to help you get over the line, not to it.
3. Keep your campaign page updated regularly – fresh content keeps it interesting and demonstrates that you care about those who back you.
4. Offer rewards to both existing fans and potential new supporters – crowdfunding is the ideal opportunity to increase your fan base and help create a deeper relationship with existing ones.
5. Keep engaging with supporters after the project is funded – it's a relationship, not a transaction. You'll reap the benefits if you value your fans long term.

Match Funding for Musicians

Some of the best crowdfunding platforms are working in collaboration with trusts and foundations, grant bodies or statutory funders to offer additional match funding for musicians. For example, the Arts Council England is working in collaboration with Crowdfunder to inject an additional £125,000 of extra funding towards crowdfunding projects.

Individuals are therefore able to access up to £20,000 extra – learn more at www.crowdfunder.co.uk/funds/arts.

Elsewhere, PledgeMusic have teamed up with Help Musicians UK to offer the Emerging Artists Fund, which enables selected artists to access top-up funding from HMUK if their PledgeMusic campaign is successful. The EAF is subject to review each year – visit www.emergingartistsfund.com for further information.

Social Investment

If you're a community music practitioner or working on a musical project that creates social impact, you could potentially explore the social enterprise/entrepreneur model of receiving investment for your idea or project. Often this type of funding is a blend of loan and grant funding – explore providers such as Charity Bank, Key Fund or the Big Potential. Be aware that these are loans and will often be repayable but if you're a social enterprise that's going places, this could provide the capital required for growth on better terms and rate than any commercial bank.

Useful Websites:

Arts Council England: Grants for the Arts

This open access funding programme is aimed at individuals, arts organisations, and other people who use the arts in their work. The focus is on arts activity that engages people in England

- £1,000 to £15,000 – decision in six weeks
- £15,000 to £100,000 – decision in twelve weeks

www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/grants-arts >>

PRS for Music Foundation

- The Open Fund (up to £5,000 for music creators – i.e. composers/songwriters)
- Momentum Music Fund (between £5,000 to £15,000 for artists/bands to break through to the next level of their careers)
- The Composers' Fund (up to £10,000 for classical composers with strong track record)
- International Showcase Fund (up to £5,000 for artists, bands, songwriters and producers based in England and Scotland for international travel, visas, accommodation or per diems)
- Women Make Music (up to £5,000 for outstanding female songwriters and composers, including bands and performers who write their own material, of all genres and backgrounds)

www.prsformusicfoundation.com/funding/

Help Musicians UK

- Career Development Bursaries (£500 to £2,000 towards masterclasses/mentoring/research/coaching)
- Peter Whittingham Jazz Award (£5,000 award given to a jazz musician or group towards a creative project including collaboration, touring, showcasing, recording or promotion)
- Postgraduate Awards (£1,000 to £5,000 towards postgraduate study, nominations are coordinated by the receiving academic institution. HMUK do not accept direct applications for this scheme)

- Health and Welfare Funding (although not funding per se, if you are experiencing a crisis, economic hardship or a health problem, Help Musicians UK may be able to help)

www.helpmusicians.org.uk/creative-programme

Other Funding Advice

Help Musicians UK Funding Wizard
www.helpmusicians.org.uk/creative-programme/funding-wizard

Funding for Composers (Courtesy of the Paul Hamlyn Foundation)
fundingforartists.org.uk/composers/

Musicians' Union General Advice
www.musiciansunion.org.uk/Home/Advice/Your-Career/Finance/Sources-of-Funding

Sound and Music Artists Toolkit
www.soundandmusic.org/resources/artists-toolkit/funding/sources-of-funding

Contact

Development and Alumni Relations Coordinator at Leeds College of Music

+44 (0)113 222 3438

Alumni@lcm.ac.uk

Fundraising@lcm.ac.uk

Writing Your Press Release

Brace Yourself PR

What is a press release and when should one be used?

A press release is in essence you, or your PR (Public Relations) company making an announcement about you or your band, which will hopefully be picked up and run as a news story by a raft of publications. Easy! A press release should be used sparingly and when you have something genuinely interesting to shout about. You don't have to be at a certain level to send a press release out, but you should have some important news to share i.e. a new single or support tour. It's key to remember that it's likely you'll be sending your press release to people who haven't asked for it. Make sure what you're saying is at least targeted at the right demographic – if you're a scuzzy indie band, don't target pop blogs like Disco Naiveté, otherwise you'll get a ton of unsubscribers if you're using a mailing program like MailChimp, or just as bad: zero responses. Don't send the same press release twice either. Music journalists receive thousands of emails a week – sending yours twice will only increase that number by one and wind them up in the process.

How long/many words should one be?

However long it takes to get your key points across. That said, always try to be as concise as possible. Make sure the link to the music, tour news, etc. is at the heart of the press release. It's all well and good to sell your story beautifully, but if you don't make it clear how or where to listen to the music itself early in the press release, writers will lose interest and move onto the next email. And don't get verbose or use exaggerated adjectives. That's the journalist's job. >>

What's the most important thing to include on a press release?

A working link to the music. You'd be amazed at how many PRs and bands screw this up.

Is there a certain order information is normally presented in?

I would always lead with the band's photo, followed by a big heading with your/your band's name and a subheading detailing what it is you're announcing. Then a link to the music or ticket link to the tour/show you're announcing and your blurb or bio. Finally cap it off with social channels (Facebook, Instagram etc.) and your contact details. Don't underestimate the power of formatting. Get your keywords (track names, influences, bands you supported) to pop out in bold.

What tense should you use?

Email subject lines, titles and headings should be written in present tense (e.g. Wolf Alice release video for 'Freaky') but past tense could be used in the press release's body text (e.g. London four-piece Wolf Alice have just released the video for their new single 'Freaky', via NME). You can be quite flexible but don't switch every other sentence!

Is it good to include imagery?

Lead with a cool, eye-catching press shot. First impressions really are everything when it comes to getting ahead of the next email in someone's inbox. Don't use too many filters or effects. Keep it clean and natural and be unique, and don't look too stern, unless your aim is to be the next Leonard Cohen.

Does anyone still send physical press releases, or are they produced for the digital world?

Brace Yourself are aiming to go entirely digital with the way we service our music and that applies to press releases too. We use MailChimp to send our digital releases – it's easy to master and we have a template which ensures uniformity between everything we send out. It's cleaner to establish one aesthetic and run with it.

Is there a standard format that a press release should be displayed in? Does this depend on the audience/recipients?

I'd avoid sending a press release as an attachment. Especially if you're planning on sending a big file that will clog up inboxes. Use a mailing system like MailChimp to send to a list of contacts all at once, or copy your entire press release to the bottom of an individual email to a journalist. Say 'hi' and pick out the key points about your release in one or two sentences then point to the full release below your signature.

Do you have any tips to help engage people in the press releases you send?

Get your subject line right. Nothing long or cheesy. Be clear and concise, putting music at the forefront. This isn't necessarily all about the press release itself, it's about the whole package you're presenting. Have a look on Hype Machine and see who is performing well on the artists' chart. What are they doing right? If you can get your music and your look bang on, everything else will fall into place and your press release should just be a means of highlighting your phenomenally good work!

Dan Carson (dan@braceyourselfpr.com)
Music Publicist & Manager at Brace Yourself PR

How to Use Social Media as a Marketing Tool in the Music Industry

Luna Cohen-Solal, Social Media Manager at Kartel Music Group / Soundway Records, DJ and Music Journalist.

Knowledge of social media is essential to any role in the music industry and is particularly crucial if you manage projects like a band, a club night or a record label. Social media can help you build a fan base and connect with people in the industry. It's interesting to notice that social media management as a career pathway is in expansion, as more and more artists and labels realise how much skill and time is required to develop a meaningful internet presence.

A number of elements come into play when running a social media campaign of any kind. These can be grouped under five loose headings: strategy, content, tools, people and analytics.

Strategy

Define marketing objectives: what are you trying to achieve?

- Marketing objectives can be: brand awareness, traffic to a website, community building etc. Once goals are set, outline how these will be achieved and in what timeframe.

- Conduct an audit of the social media channels you're working on in their current state: see what gets likes, spot anything that needs to be deleted or edited. Make sure all accounts are on-brand with the right links, imagery, and bios.
- Spend some time thinking about who your target audience is and their interests. It will be useful when setting up Facebook ads.
- Which platforms does your audience use? Don't spend too much time on a platform that doesn't work for you or your audience demographic.
- How often/what time of day will you post? As a rule of thumb, it's generally best to post in the middle of the week/in the afternoon 3:00pm – 8:00pm. Think about when YOU use each platform.
- Decide on a tone of voice / positioning and stick to it. Will you speak in the first or third person? Will your tone be casual? Humorous? Formal?
- Start planning: create a content calendar. You can use Microsoft Excel/Word, Google Sheets. Have a look at templates online and fine-tune your process as you go. It's important to strike a balance between structure and flexibility, so don't feel like you have to stick to the plan at all times.
- Regularly go back to your objectives: are your posts working towards your main objectives?
- Be consistent in terms of brand identity and frequency. You want your brand presence to be reasonably reliable. Post once a day if possible, but if not try not to leave too long a gap between posts. >>

Content

Good content makes good social media.

- Content creation includes copywriting, taking photos, making banners and branded imagery, creating GIFs, videos...
- Quality content is a key component of good social media – be innovative, showcase your personality
- Proofread! Obvious but paramount.
- Include images in posts where possible. A user is 44% more likely to engage with a post if it contains an image. Another option would be to use a link preview.
- Be reactive to what's going on in the world/the industry. Take part in existing conversations, react to news stories, trends, hashtags... if it makes sense for your brand to do so. Mindless "newsjacking" should be avoided.
- Be a storyteller and not a salesperson. Your calls to action should be subtle not desperate, as your social media presence should bring value to your audience. Posts that are not direct sales messages get more engagement.

Tools

Harness your creativity using the tools at your disposal.

There are plenty of features, apps and websites you can use to get the most out of social media.

- Experiment with the various features that social media sites offer, try crossposting videos on Facebook, live feeds, Instagram stories, hashtags etc.
- Creating ads in Facebook, Twitter or Instagram can be meaningful but social media advertising can be hit and miss so do a lot of research before spending your money.
- Try scheduling apps like Tweetdeck, Hootsuite, If This Then That and Buffer.
- There are tons of free desktop and mobile apps that can help you create great visual content like Boomerang, VSCOcam, Snapseed, Photogrid, Canva, Pixlr, gifmaker.me.
- Stay in the loop about new features and learn skills using online resources. Social media companies like Hootsuite, Simply Measured and Buffer share invaluable information via blogs and newsletters. Social media online courses are widely available – have a look at Wearedotdotdot and Buffer's Social Media Academy. >>

People

The reason we're here!

- Find your existing, real life contacts and engage with them.
- Interact with your community: tag, follow, like, comment, regram, retweet.
- Look up hashtags to discover new accounts and use hashtags in your Instagram posts to allow people with related interests to discover your posts.

Analytics

Social media analytics is the practice of evaluating data to make marketing decisions.

Scan Facebook Insights, Twitter Analytics, Instagram Insights.

Some useful definitions:

Impressions = the number of times a post is served, i.e. displayed

Reach = the number of people who received impressions of a page post

Engagements = likes, link clicks, comments, shares...

Engagement rate = number of engagements divided by impressions

- Test what works best and do more of that.
- Recognise good use of social media and learn from it: take inspiration from social media accounts you like.
- When running social media campaigns for clients, analytics are used in reports and inform strategic decisions.

Some things to remember:

Social media marketing as a promotion tool operates through "social contagion". It takes time and real people engaging.

Social media exists within a complex web and an abundantly crowded media message space, making it difficult to cut through the noise and connect with an audience. Be patient and keep working at it.

Social media activity works best in conjunction with other things happening in the real world at the same time. Social media should complement real life social interactions, not replace them.

Follow Luna on social media

Facebook / Instagram: [@moonchildluna](#)

Twitter: [@moonchildlu](#)

Concert Programming

Mark Gotham, University of Cambridge

I tend to think of concert programming as a creative practice that's analogous to composition: you choose some pieces of interesting material and try to put that material together such that it works as a whole. That's a crude simplification, of course, but I find that it neatly captures the sense that a programme needs to be cultivated and can amount to more (or less) than the sum of its parts. Incidentally, the analogy is also suggested by the etymology of the word 'composition' which comes from 'componere', to 'put together'.

Like all creative practices, programming resists any attempt to define a magic formula for success; that said, there certainly are conventions both within and even across genres that diverse artists have adopted and which might provide you with a helpful starting point for decision-making. In the most basic terms, most events show at least some sign of having selected and ordered items by reference to their length, familiarity/complexity, and sheer energy (including volume and speed).

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“ Like all creative practices, programming resists any attempt to define a magic formula for success... ”

'Energy' is a great concept by which to plan a programme. The 'energy profile' of an event might take any number of different forms, but there do seem to be two particularly ubiquitous types: programmes that work up to and away from one or more climax gradually (in the manner of a sine wave), and those in which climaxes are followed by a sudden drop, or even break (like a sawtooth wave). >>

This latter can be especially helpful if you have shorter sub-sets separated by interval(s).

In either case, you should spare a thought for the overall profile too (i.e. how those peaks compare). For a DJ working on an event lasting several hours, the highest peak is likely to fall in the middle of the night, while for an 'evening-length' classical, jazz, or rock concert, the main climax would tend to fall at the end, providing the so-called 'big finish'. In rock concerts, this big finish is often reserved for the encores: loud and crowd-pleasingly familiar items which come 'after the end' of the concert proper (which may have ended in a deliberately underwhelming fashion in order to heighten the comparative effect).

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“ *Here the analogies often take a culinary turn, with entrées, main courses, and perhaps a small, sweet encore at the end.* ”

This 'big finish' is extremely popular with diverse artists and speaks not just to the volume, but also to the length and 'substance' of the items in question. For instance, the overture-concerto-symphony format so common to modern orchestral concerts features a gradual lengthening of works from short (5-10') through medium (10-30') to long (30-60'). Presumably, the idea is that the opener is relatively undemanding and will help to set the scene such that the more epic works that follow seem all the more impressive by comparison. To reverse that order might risk making the epic, symphonic journey feel excessively daunting and inadequately prepared, and the shorter offerings feel anti-climactic. Here the analogies often take a culinary turn, with entrées, main courses, and perhaps a small, sweet encore at the end.

For programmes with a greater number of shorter works, varying the length of successive items can become a priority. Here the analogy extends into language. It's as wearing to read a prose in which the sentences are all of the same length, as it is to listen to a succession of three minute songs. If you have some longer ones then try spacing them out with shorter pieces; but conversely, if you have some really short miniatures, then consider grouping a few together so they don't get obliterated by their more substantial neighbours. Other musical parameters can also get in on this 'variety' act. For instance, you might want to make a plan for which instruments dominate when. This is perhaps clearest in the distribution of solos in a jazz set. The conventional solo order – horn player(s), piano, bass, trade 4s with the drums – is all well and good, but can be tedious even on the second time of asking. Try mixing it up: determine solos by what feels right for the song, maintain some balance (piano will usually get more solos than bass or drums), and try to surprise your audience at least some of the time.

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“ *Highlighting one piece in the order necessarily means diminishing others, and that fact is often, deliberately exploited.* ”

You may also elect to vary the relative familiarity/complexity of works. This ties in with the practice of giving pride of place to one work (such as the crowd-pleasing rock encores discussed above), and is to be found in many other contexts besides. It also cuts both ways; highlighting one piece in the order necessarily means diminishing others, and that fact is often, deliberately exploited. For instance, there is an unfortunately apologetic quality to the common practice in classical concerts of 'hiding' a piece of 'difficult' new music after the interval. You might find this distasteful, but you can at least see the rationale for slipping it in between warhorse >>

favourites (and immediately after the interval drinks)! This is just one of the many ways in which programmes betray the attitudes of those designing them (or at least of what those programmers think that their audience wants). It is not by any means unique to classical concerts; even an all-contemporary-jazz programme might well open with a more familiar standard as a relatively gentle 'way in'.

“ *I'd encourage you to bear these ideas in mind, but they certainly should not dictate what you do. You know your style and repertoire better than anyone else, so be creative,* ”

Finally, there are also many 'logical' reasons for presenting works in a certain order, and perhaps even selecting them in the first place. Chronological order of composition is a favourite in contexts such as piano recitals of common practice repertoire (though here again, the inclusion of a contemporary work will often buck that trend by failing to come last). Many programmes are also constructed in whole or part according to more or less restricted 'theme'. These themes tend to focus on some shared quality such as a similar geographical or temporal origin, or a common musical or extra-musical subject matter. Where only two items are linked in this way, they will usually be juxtaposed. This speaks to the much wider matter of juxtaposing items in order to put them in some kind of dialogue; the reasons why you might be inclined to set up that kind of relationship defy summary.

I hope this has provided you a useful introduction to some aspects of conventional practice. I'd encourage you to bear these ideas in mind, but they certainly should not dictate what you do. You know your style and repertoire better than anyone else, so be creative, try things that seem interesting to you, and when you find something that works then don't be afraid to do it again!

I hope at least to have convinced you that programming is worth thinking about. Clearly the quality of the music and performance is the main priority, but the 'packaging' can also contribute to the overall effect. If you still think this is all just a load of cheap tricks or window dressing, then try thinking of it the other way around: wouldn't it be a shame if you played well, but could have made a greater impression with no additional practice, but just a bit of planning?

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Performance Tips by CeCe Sammy

CeCe Sammy has been a leading vocal and performance coach for some of the biggest names in music. She's also known for her TV appearances and behind-the-scenes contributions as vocal coach, judge, advisor, talent scout, and troubleshooter on various music and entertainment shows such as American Idol and X Factor UK.

1. Remember the audition/performance starts the minute you walk in through the door. Be aware of your posture, expressions and attitude from the beginning to the end.

2. Don't wait until you go on stage to figure out what you're going to do. Many people come to me and say that they will wait until they are on stage, as the adrenalin will then help to give a better performance. In my experience this is not a good idea.

Whilst improvisation is important and does play a role, it is crucial to practice what you're going to do ahead of time.

Figure out how you will interpret a song and how you plan on delivering it to the audience. Improvisation is fine, but the audience will know when you're unrehearsed and floundering around on stage. Every successful artist out there has put in the time to work on their stage performance.

3. Don't walk around the stage aimlessly. Always have a reason for what you're doing. A still performance can be just as powerful as a highly energetic display.

4. Don't just perform to the people directly in front of you. Remember to push that performance out to the whole audience!

5. When you are singing a song, think of yourself as a storyteller. Singing is just like when you tell a dramatic story. You don't tell it all in a single tone. There are natural rises in the voice, and the voice falls low also. So think about the lyrics when you sing.

6. Do study your favourite artists and performers. This isn't about copying and mimicking another artist's routine, but about looking at how they work the stage and engage the audience. Look at every move and mannerism; study not just how they do it, but why they're doing it.

7. If you make a mistake, shake it off immediately and finish the performance. Don't stay in that moment. The audience will be more forgiving when they see that you carried on.

8. Do take every opportunity to perform. The more experience you have performing, the more you will improve your stage performance. If you sing in front of people enough times, you will:

- Face your fears,
- Learn from your mistakes,
- Test the waters for public feedback.

9. Singing is meant to be fun. Never lose your dream!

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Electric Guitar Maintenance & Care with D'Addario UK

Adam Ironside is the fretted specialist for D'Addario UK

Whether you are a session musician in the studio, a touring performer, or a stay at home songwriter, your guitar is your way of making money so it's imperative you keep it in tip-top condition!

Most of the tasks below are very simple to perform but, as always, if in doubt, take your guitar to a qualified technician.

Basic Cleaning

Keeping your guitar clean not only maintains your instrument's appearance but also has many functional benefits.

After each time you play, give the metal parts of your guitar (tuners, bridge, pickup pole pieces, knobs etc) a quick clean with a dry cloth. This is especially important if you are sweating a lot whilst playing, as the acidity in your sweat can eat through the finish of the metal parts and cause them to oxidise (rust) and eventually wear out.

Giving the strings a quick wipe with our Renew String Cleaner can also help to increase the life and tone of your strings, again by removing any sweat that may start to eat through the string. Lumps of grime and dirt that harden over time can also cause heavy damage to your frets, significantly reducing their life.

Recommended schedule: every day

Cleaning the Body

Planet Waves offers a very simple and complete system for cleaning your guitar's body in order to keep it looking its best. Whether just giving a quick post-gig polish to restore that luster, or putting some elbow grease into some more thorough post-tour cleaning, the simple three-step system is effective every time. Plus the pure liquid carnauba wax acts as a natural protectant and sealant against dirt and grime.

Recommended schedule: every string change

Cleaning the Fingerboard

Guitar fingerboards very quickly become dirty. This has a negative impact on the playability of the instrument. If a dry cloth isn't cutting it, you can very gently scrape away dirt and grime with the side of a pick. Just make sure you are following the grain of the fingerboard to avoid scratching. With some effort, most fingerboards can usually be restored this way, but it may be necessary to go one step further and use a very fine #0000 wire wool.

Recommended schedule: every string change

Cleaning the Frets

Arguably one of the most important jobs! If there is a buildup of grime and sweat on the tops of your frets this can interfere with the way the string vibrates over the fret, causing intonation and sustain issues. Planet Waves has a very quick and easy to use Fret Polishing System. If you do one thing every string change, make sure it is this!

Recommended schedule: every string change >>

Humidity

Humidity is the natural enemy of wood and nowhere feels this more than your fretboard. It is important that your fretboard has just the right amount of moisture in it. If it gets too dry the colour will start to fade. Leave it much longer and it will begin to slightly shrink causing fret ends to become sharp or frets to lift out of the guitar. Finally, the fretboard may crack.

Using either Lemon Oil or our Hydrate formula will help to restore moisture into your fretboard, protecting it from drying out and cracking, as well as restoring that natural luster.

N.B. Lemon Oil and Hydrate are for use on dark, unfinished fretboards only.

Recommended schedule: two to four times per year (depending on climate)

Humidity doesn't just affect the fretboard however; it can affect the whole guitar. Whenever your guitar is not in regular use it is recommended you keep it in its case alongside a humidifier. Humidifiers maintain the perfect humidity level inside the case, keeping your instrument at just the right humidity level.

If you really want to look after the humidity level of your guitar you can invest in the Humiditrak, which constantly monitors the humidity and temperature in your guitar case and delivers this information straight to your phone.

Friction

Friction is something else that can greatly affect the playability of your instrument and can lead to tuning issues and even increase the likelihood of a string breaking.

The two real areas where friction can occur are at the nut and at the saddle. Think about it, this is where the string meets the guitar. If there is friction at the nut the string can get 'stuck' in the nut after a bend or whammy dive and at best go out of tune, at worst break. Excess friction at the saddle can eat into the string and cause it to break. This is one of the most common reasons for string breakage on new strings.

Lubrikit is a lubricant you can drop onto the saddle and into the nut slots to help combat these issues.

Recommended schedule: every string change (or as needed)

String Change

D'Addario offer a startling array of different string sets. As ever, experimentation is key to find the right one for you.

How often you change your strings is a very personal decision. Some of you may play more than others, may play harder, may sweat more, have more acidic sweat or use locking tremolo systems. All of these factors go into dictating the lifespan of your strings.

Strings do unfortunately wear out (wouldn't life be much sweeter if they didn't?) and may eventually break. As a general rule of thumb if your strings have been on for a little 'while' and one breaks, it is probably time to >>

change the set. If the tonal degradation becomes very noticeable (strings lose their brightness over time) it is probably time to change your strings. Most importantly though, if the strings look dull, have kinks or lumps in them, or are full of dirt and grime, it is definitely time to change them.

If you have old or less than optimal strings on your guitar, this does not only affect your tone, but can also cause damage to the frets of your guitar. Don't let your decision to change strings be based on budget. It is an awful lot cheaper to change your strings regularly than it is to keep having your frets re-crowned or replaced due to easily preventable damage.

As a final step after a string change, many players like to lubricate their strings. There are two main benefits to doing this:

1. Reduce finger noise – Fresh sets of strings (particularly on acoustic guitars) tend to produce a lot of finger noises, squeaks and scratches. Often this can be a desirable effect but can be particularly intrusive in a recording session. It is worth carrying some lubricant such as XLR8 to a session with you and giving the engineer the option.
2. Many technical or fast players often find that adding a slight lubrication to the strings helps them to play a little more smoothly and prevents their fingers from getting 'snagged' on a string, particularly if their preferred string set is quite tactile/rough.

Professional Service

Just like your car it is important to take your guitar for a regular check. A professional luthier or repairer may be able to spot issues that you have missed during your routine cleaning and maintenance checks. If you are a regularly gigging guitarist I would recommend taking your guitar/s for a full service at least once per year. This will ensure your guitar is in the best possible condition and set-up for the best possible playability, covering a range of jobs and checks that are not listed in this basic maintenance guide, including truss rod adjustments, fret polishing/crowning and action adjustments.

D'Addario & Planet Waves Recommended Products

- Renew String Cleaner [PW-RSCS-03]
- Three-Step Polishing system:
 1. Restore Deep-Cleaning Cream Polish [PW-PL-01]
 2. Protect Pure Liquid Carnauba Wax [PW-PL-02]
 3. Shine Spray Cleaner & Maintainer [PW-PL-03]
- Fret Polishing System [PW-FRP]
- Lemon Oil [PW-LMN]
- Hydrate Conditioner [PW-FBC]
- Two-Way Humidification System [PW-HPK-01]
Humiditrak [PW-HTK-01]
- Lubrikit [PW-LBK-01]
- XLR8 String Lubricant [PW-XLR8-01]

Performing Aboard Cruise Ships

By Michael Christian Durrant

Performing aboard cruise ships presents musicians with a wonderful opportunity to travel the world, play music and earn a reliable income. Since graduating from LCoM, classical guitarist Michael Christian Durrant has developed a successful career in the music industry and continues to perform aboard cruise ships as a Guest Entertainer.

“ *If you're passionate about travelling and want to see the world then I think performing aboard cruise ships is definitely the best way to do it.* ”

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How long have you been performing aboard cruise ships?

My first contract performing aboard a cruise ship was with P&O Cruises back in April 2014, so I've been working as a Guest Entertainer now for just over three years. My first contract was aboard a P&O ship called Aurora on a Mediterranean cruise that called at some amazing ports, including Cadiz, Sicily, Corfu, Venice and Dubrovnik. It was definitely an incredible way to kick things off and I enjoyed every minute of it. Fast forward three years and I'm about to head out to the Norwegian Fjords with Holland America for my thirty-second cruise contract. I've now worked with most of the major cruise companies including P&O, Cunard, Fred Olsen, Saga, Holland America and Seabourn. It's been a rollercoaster of experiences and I've had the opportunity to travel all over the world playing music – a dream come true! >>

It sounds like a great way to see the world! What are your favourite places that you have visited so far?

There are so many great things about performing on cruise ships, but having the opportunity to travel the world and experience so many different countries and cultures is undoubtedly at the top of the list. My first contract with Cunard was a cruise around Australia and New Zealand aboard the Queen Mary 2. I have a wonderful memory of sailing out of Sydney Harbour past the famous Opera House as fireworks lit up the skyline of the city – that was a pretty special moment. Other highlights include spending Christmas in the Caribbean, sailing into San Francisco under the Golden Gate Bridge and seeing the Northern Lights in Alta, Norway – unforgettable.

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“ *It’s a great opportunity to fine-tune your repertoire and to develop your approach to performing in front of large audiences. The audiences themselves are always warm and receptive which offers you the chance to network and widen your fan base.* ”

Apart from the opportunity to travel the world, what other aspects of performing aboard cruise ships do you enjoy the most?

One of the greatest aspects for me is definitely the concerts themselves and the amazing venues that one gets to perform in. Most ships have theatres that hold over 1,000 people and it’s a real adrenaline rush walking out onto the stage and playing for audiences in such large venues. It’s a great opportunity to fine-tune your repertoire and to develop your approach to performing in front of large audiences. The audiences themselves are always warm and receptive, which offers you the chance to network and widen your fan base. This has actually been a great way for me to build up my mailing list and

it’s now pretty common for people who have heard me performing aboard a cruise ship to subsequently engage with my online content and attend a concert in the UK. As well as professional networking, I’ve been incredibly lucky to meet some great friends and connect with some amazing people from places all over the world.

Is performing aboard cruise ships a good way to earn money?

It can be very lucrative and provides a great way for a musician to build their income. Performance fees do vary between different cruise companies, so it’s worth looking into all of the different companies and discussing the different fees with your agent.

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“ *Remember, these people are on holiday and a CD or other merchandise item associated with their trip makes a great souvenir. I would recommend aiming to produce high-quality items from the outset* ”

In addition to the performance fee, musicians are presented with the chance to increase merchandise sales by selling CDs and other products to the passengers who attend their onboard concerts. Remember, these people are on holiday and a CD or other merchandise item associated with their trip makes a great souvenir. I would recommend aiming to produce high-quality items from the outset, as you’ll often need to get these verified by the head office for most companies before you can sell them onboard. Be aware that you’ll often be required to pay the onboard shop a commission of 15-20% so you may need to adjust your merchandise prices accordingly. >>

From my experience, a standard onboard sale price for a CD is £12.50, or \$20.00. Don't be afraid to be creative with your merchandise – I've encountered other acts selling T-shirts, posters and books and these are all great options for a musician to explore in order to generate an additional income stream on top of their performance fee.

You've mentioned liaising with booking agents; is working with a booking agent essential for musicians who are interested in performing aboard cruise ships?

Each cruise company employs a land based entertainment manager that liaises with their network of booking agents to fill the various opportunities onboard their fleet of ships. For this reason, it's essential to connect with a booking agent if you are interested in working aboard cruise ships. There are several large booking agents based in the UK that liaise with cruise ship companies and a quick online search will present you with many options. I would encourage checking with the Musicians' Union or a solicitor before you sign any agreements or commit to working with an agent. They will be able to check over any paperwork and advise you as to whether a booking agent is reputable.

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“ *It's a competitive market and you don't want your pitch to get lost in the hundreds of others that agents receive due to a lack of patience in getting your content in order beforehand.* ”

It's important to have first-rate content before contacting an agent and I would encourage you to have a well developed brand identity, great photographs, professionally produced HD videos and a clear, attractive website established before doing so. It's a competitive

market and you don't want your pitch to get lost in the hundreds of others that agents receive due to a lack of patience in getting your content in order beforehand. Be prepared to spend the money on this and if cash is tight then be on the lookout for career development bursaries and other sources of funding to ensure that your profile is the best and most representative of your abilities it can be before contacting agents.

Once an agent has shown an interest in working with you, it's important to establish a commission rate for the bookings that you'll be taking. It's normal for a booking agent's commission to be between 15-20% of your performance fee, so don't enter into an agreement in which you're expected to pay a booking agent more than this. Again, seek further legal advice if you have any questions about commission rates before agreeing to any terms or signing any contracts with a booking agent.

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How do you approach preparing material for your concerts and decide upon the repertoire that you're going to play when performing aboard cruise ships?

Audiences are generally enthusiastic, encouraging and friendly. It's really important to remember that they are on holiday and that their primary aim is to enjoy themselves. Considering this, I would encourage performers to be mindful of that fact that they will be a member of the 'entertainment' department when performing aboard cruise ships and that this is what you should be aiming to deliver: entertainment! The tastes of audiences do differ between the different companies and it's important to consider that the audiences aboard P&O and Fred Olsen cruise ships might welcome a more mainstream repertoire selection than those who are travelling aboard ships operated by Cunard and Seabourn, who tend to be more familiar with classical repertoire and might enjoy pieces that are a little more aurally challenging. >>

From my experience, what tends to be less successful is the somewhat formal approach to performance that a lot of 'classical' players might adopt. You need to engage with your audience and ensure that you are providing entertainment through a blend of storytelling, humour and expertly executed musical performances. Strike a balance and you'll be wonderful! Also, be aware that engaging with your audience doesn't stop when you walk off the stage. You'll be recognised around the ship and viewed as a celebrity whilst onboard, so take time to answer people's questions and be genuinely interested in the conversations that you have with them. Every contact you have with the audience is an opportunity to ensure that people like you and want to keep coming to your shows. You would be amazed at how many career enhancing conversations I've had whilst ironing my concert shirts in the onboard launderette, so get out there and network!

What do you mean by 'Guest Entertainer' and are there any different types of performance contracts for people to consider when looking into working aboard cruise ships?

There are a multitude of different performance opportunities aboard cruise ships for musicians to consider and these can be split into two categories: Guest Entertainers and Crew Members. Guest Entertainers are usually headline cabaret acts or classical artistes and generally work shorter contracts, command a higher fee and enjoy more perks through their 'passenger status'. Performers who are Crew Members are usually band members, cocktail pianists or lounge entertainers and work longer contracts with fewer onboard perks. However, working as a Crew Member also has its advantages and it's important to research all of the options thoroughly before making a decision as to what would suit you and the music that you play.

" You would be amazed at how many career enhancing conversations I've had whilst ironing my concert shirts in the onboard launderette, so get out there and network! "

What advice would you give to LCoM students and graduates who are interested in procuring work performing aboard cruise ships in the future?

- Make sure that your playing is as good as it can possibly be. Put the practice hours in, don't cut corners and always strive to improve your performances.
- Work towards developing an engaging repertoire and a strong visual identity – this is really important to help set you apart from the crowd and get the attention of booking agents and audiences alike.
- Always be professional – this means in the way you work, talk, look, act and treat everyone around you. The music industry is a small world and any examples of unprofessionalism could come back to work against you when it comes to securing long-term work and respect within the industry.
- Be social – it's important to develop an outgoing aspect to your personality even if this does not come naturally to begin with. In the main, this is a very social industry and if people are pleased to see you then it's likely that they will want to work with you too.
- Always be well prepared and make the most of your first opportunity – first impressions go a long way and will set the foundation for future opportunities to be built upon. Like all new businesses, it will take patience to set things up. You may find that you only get a few bookings to begin with and this is to be expected. You must first prove that your musical performances >>

are of the highest level and that you can operate at the top tier of professionalism.

- Most importantly, be resilient. See any setbacks as an opportunity to grow and strive to create as many opportunities as possible. All the successful people that I know share this trait. If you have a clear vision of where you want to get then it's well within your creative powers to fill in the spaces and reach your goals through a combination of hard work, positivity and dedication – be that one person from your year who has the courage to never give up.
- Oh, and get yourself a great camera – you're going to need it to take photos of all those amazing places and experiences!

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The Life of... a Session Musician and Songwriter

Interview with Dan McDougall

Briefly explain the areas of music you work in.

I'm a songwriter, producer and session musician so I guess I spend a considerable amount of my time working where there's no vitamin D!

What steps would you recommend students take to try and become a paid musician/songwriter?

This is the toughest and most commonly asked question of them all and one that I still ask myself every now and then. That question doesn't really ever go away when you are self-employed. The unfortunate circumstance that comes with studying music is that qualifications don't amount to anything more than the paper they are printed on. However, the skills that you learn, and the surrounding opportunities that come with studying music, is the absolute gold dust!

“ *Reputation is everything and if you start off by showing you don't care, you'll be shoved aside pretty quickly.* ”

I found that saying yes to everything until you have to say no was the way to do it. The power of saying no is invaluable, but you have to build to that point somehow. I guess networking is the word that people use. It's a horrible word and one which no one quite knows how to take on. However, meeting people via working with others opens up all kinds of new doors which you may not have been expecting. Just be open to anything, if you have the time. >>

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What five tips would you give to someone for working successfully in a professional environment?

I'm going to have to answer this from the areas I work in. I'm not an artist so I'm always working with the artist – but really these can apply to most scenarios:

- Be on time. Self-explanatory. There's nothing worse than someone turning up late and not apologising for it. Reputation is everything and if you start off by showing you don't care, you'll be shoved aside pretty quickly.
- Be humble. There seems to be a reputation that people in the music industry are scary or unapproachable. 90% of the people in every session I've been involved with, be it songwriting, production or recording, are really nice; that's how they got there. Nice people get used again. Of course there's the 10% of people who aren't, but you tackle that as it comes. People skills are essential.
- Be great. Be good at what you do. Whatever skill you have, just be bloody good at it.
- Be malleable. Sometimes you'll have something thrown your way which might not be your cup of tea. You might hate the genre it's in, or it's out of your comfort zone. Rather than dismiss and say you can't do it figure out your own way of approaching it. Countless times I've had these situations thrown at me and a unique approach can amount to something original, which is what most people are looking for anyway.

- Be resilient. Easily the most important thing of all is take it on the chin if something doesn't work out. Personally as a songwriter, I've written maybe 350 songs in the last five years. Around 20 have been used. Rejection is part of the game and to be able to shrug that off and start again without being emotionally effected is the greatest learning curve of all. It happens daily. It's just part of it.

“ *Having more than one skill is only going to help. Making a living from music tends to require you to be able to juggle all the eggs in all the baskets.* ”

How proficient/flexible do you need to be in composition?

I feel like the most successful songwriter/producers are the ones who can adapt to whichever scenarios they are in. Take a look at the discographies of people like Greg Kurstin, Paul Epworth, Fraser T. Smith and Greg Wells. They are so varied in genre. They move with the times, and that is how a long term career unfolds.

Is this something you can make a living from?

If I was only a songwriter, I wouldn't be making a living what so ever. It's such a long winded process and takes years to get going. The fact that I earn money from production and session work allows me to make enough money to keep the songwriting up/pay my studio rent. Without those up front paid jobs, I wouldn't survive. Having more than one skill is only going to help. Making a living from music tends to require you to be able to juggle all the eggs in all the baskets. >>

If you could look back and give yourself one piece of advice when you started out, what would it be?

I would tell myself not to get so down about someone rejecting something I'd done. I found it so disheartening when I thought I'd written something really great and it had it dismissed so easily. The industry isn't out to get you, they're not willing you to not succeed, they're just being incredibly honest and wanting the best out of you. If it's not good enough, it's just not good enough. It has to be spectacular because the competition is so fierce.

What have been the highlights so far?

I've recently been spending some time in LA, which is great place to work, most recently with Jason Mraz. I've been working with Liam Gallagher on his solo record as a 'one man band'. I'm hired in to play everything on the record, which is great fun but absolutely knacker... no breaks, no mercy. Oh, and guess what, he's really nice!

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The Life of... an Artist, Performer and Producer

Interview with Hannah V

Briefly explain the areas of music you work in.

I am an artist, record producer, songwriter, keyboard player and pianist. I write and produce records for myself as well as other artists, play piano on records, vocal produce for artists and occasionally do advert music – whatever pays the bills!

How proficient/flexible on your instrument do you need to be?

I actually need to start practicing again! Even though I trained at the Royal Academy of Music, my last ten years have been in the pop session/studio world – so not necessarily areas where my technical abilities were tested. But I am getting more and more calls to feature on records as a piano player – with artists wanting 'epic intros/outros' etc. so I need to get back to my scales! So, I need to be incredibly proficient and flexible on my instrument, as my job varies so much from day to day.

Is this something you can make a living from?

It's tough and I have sacrificed a lot to get here, but yes – with proper planning, a structured reliable business model and talent/a good work ethos to back it all up, it is possible to make a living out of this. I mean, I don't have a fancy car or anything, but I am making it work for me! >>

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What five tips would you give to someone for working successfully in a professional environment?

- Be humble. Always.
- Team work makes the dream work. Who is your team? Nurture those relationships/friendships. There is no better feeling than cutting a great record and having the opportunity to hire your homies. Shared success is double the success!
- Be punctual and polite – it goes without saying really.
- Surround yourself by people that are better than you and use this opportunity to ask questions. A lot of them!
- Make sure you take proper time off (I'm still working on this!) as it is important to have a life outside of music. Nurture your hobbies and do things that have nothing to do with music whatsoever.

“ *It's tough, and I have sacrificed a lot to get here, but yes – with proper planning, a structured reliable business model and talent/a good work ethos to back it all up, it is possible to make a living out of this.* ”

Do you have to change your attitude or approach when working with more successful artists?

No. I treat every single one of my clients with the same respect. Of course, the email chains are a lot crazier with the bigger artists and the pressure can be full on, but I am grateful for every client that comes through my studio and try my best to give them all my undivided attention – regardless of where they are in their professional journey.

What is touring life like?

Amazing, mad, exhausting and exhilarating! I was on tour for seven years and I saw the world a few times around. I have made long lasting friendships and visited places I didn't even know existed. Touring life can be deceptive though – the tour bubble is a real thing and coming back to real life is not always easy.

What is the best hospitality rider you have seen?

I once played a venue in Austria with Bugz in the Attic – we were touring as a six piece. Our rider consisted of twenty big bottles of vodka. The posh stuff. Lord have mercy!

“ *It is incredible sitting back and listening to a mastered song and thinking, 'this did not exist a month ago'.* ”

What draws you towards spending more time in the studio?

I love the whole process of creating a record from scratch. Having an idea/concept, sitting in the studio to flesh it out, getting writers/musicians/artists involved, putting in production details, running off parts for mix – I love it all. It is incredible sitting back and listening to a mastered song and thinking, 'this did not exist a month ago'.

I also really like sleeping in my own bed every night! >>

How did you get in to producing and co-writing?

I was always tinkering away on my computer, producing, writing, etc. I initially started out by just writing with a few friends and honed my skills this way. This naturally grew into what my business is today!

What advice do you have for the next generation of artists coming into the music industry, and in particular for young female producers?

My advice for any young producers – male or female – is this: be brave.

It is really tough out there, people won't always like your music and that can hurt, trust me. But if it sounds good to you, if it resonates with you and if you are doing the best you can, you just have to stick to your guns. Don't try and adapt to the trends around you. The whole point of this thing is to be true to ourselves, thereby encouraging our listeners to be true to themselves.

What have been the highlights of your career so far?

Playing Staples Centre with Rihanna and Eminem and having my grandma come to that gig in her bright orange sari! Traveling the world, making long lasting friendships, my first radio play, having people call me Hannah V now without thinking twice – even though my artist name has only existed for three years!

But the best moments I have are when I am in my studio creating with my friends. That feeling when you know you've got something special. It's spiritual! >>

If you could look back and give yourself one piece of advice when you started out, what would it be?

'You are good enough!'

The music industry can be a harsh place to live in – and so often we are pitted against each other. Looks wise, music wise – I have so many moments in my career thinking, 'there is no way I can compete with so-and-so.'

I am still trying to get to a point where I am 100% confident in who I am and what my purpose is. It is tough, but I'm getting there!

Hannah V

Music Producer/Pianist/Keyboard Player

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Starting Your Own Business: Thomas Quinn, Blueberry Hill Studios

Rehearsal Studios and Live Venue

What is your musical background?

I started out on piano (which I now regret not following up) but settled for some drums and a dabble in playing guitar. None of this started until I was 17. Before then I had no interest in music, and no one in my family before me played an instrument of any sort.

What made you set up such a business?

During college and university I frequented many rehearsal studios whilst playing in bands. The experience of the spaces was always underwhelming and I felt that it must be possible to provide a space for musicians that was much more pleasant to spend time in. I wrote a business plan, took it to the bank and they agreed to lend me the funds and I went from there. It was a long and arduous process to write a business plan, especially one that would be successful during the recession in 2012. It's really important to put one together for yourself, especially to acknowledge the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed business. You can't see into the future or predict whether you will fail or succeed, but at least you've set a good foundation to move forward and are aware of the potential risks involved.

How did you find space to set up Blueberry Hill Studios?

This was just a case of driving around the city and trawling through pages and pages of leasehold properties on the internet. It was important to see as many properties as possible, as finding out which properties wouldn't be suitable was just as important.

“ We'll have been open for five years in a few months so we must be doing something right. I feel like if you give yourself enough time and create a good product, the quality of it will eventually win the day. ”

Was there a lot of work involved to make the space usable?

Yes, a huge amount. It took us six months of twelve hour days, seven days a week to get the space usable. And this was only for two fully-furnished studios. The other four and the venue were built whilst we were open. The biggest challenge was managing the project and liaising with various trades to ensure the project ran smoothly. The landlord stopped us building for five weeks at one point due to our use of different materials to what he initially thought would be used. You think you have every eventuality covered but there will always be something that you are not prepared for. It all adds to the fun!

Do you need a high level of business acumen to get something like Blueberry Hill studios off the ground?

I feel like the answer to this should be yes! However, I had absolutely none. We'll have been open for five years in a few months so we must be doing something right. I feel like if you give yourself enough time and create a good product, the quality of it will eventually win the day.

Does community play a big role in Blueberry Hill's success?

Definitely. Repeat business from the local community is an integral part of why we have grown and developed as a business. The community showed their support for us when we flooded in 2015 by organising a fundraiser and helping us with the clean-up operation. We also try to be involved with the community as much as possible by hosting regular gigs, and sponsoring local events. >>

How often do you have to replace equipment, and does it get tiring staying on top of its maintenance?

The equipment we have the most problems with is drum hardware. People with superhuman strength tighten stands and ruin the threads. We've accepted that this is something we have to deal with and try to keep on top of. Having good equipment is part of the service so it's really important to maintain it. We try to purchase good equipment so it stands the test of time. We have regular repairers onsite or close by and these people are great to know and liaise with.

Do you ever have problems with bands misusing the space or damaging equipment?

We have the odd amp blowing up now again and we have people taking microphones more often than we'd like, but in general people are really great with the space and respect the facilities. I think if a space is nice, the people using it like to keep it that way.

How have you marketed the space?

We initially advertised on social media and in various written media. I'm not sure this worked for us. As the music industry is a real community in itself in Leeds, we hoped that word of mouth would do the trick as we really believed in the service we were providing. Thankfully for us this worked! As previously mentioned I have no business experience and still don't push the space on anyone in a sales or advertising sense. I just let the space speak for itself and that seems to have set us in good stead so far.

What has been the biggest learning curve?

The biggest learning curve for starting a new business is that you can never have enough time – there will always be something unexpected you have to deal with. Over time I've accepted that this is part of the process and enjoy the challenge of overcoming a new or unexpected situation.

Can you list five pieces of advice you would give to someone wanting to start a similar venture?

1. If you buy cheap, you buy twice.
2. Better to have tried and failed than never to have tried at all.
3. Make sure you save up enough finance to get you through your early stages, at least a year. This will be your hardest time as it may take people time to discover your business.
4. Don't take your business for granted, ensure you listen to your customers where possible. Never stand still and try to progress the business within its own means.
5. Finally...have fun with it!

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Thanks to the LCoM Events and Enterprise Department staff that helped to create this guide including James Warrender (Editor), James Wilson, Tristan Watson and Paul Abbott.



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Find the full Musicians' Survival Guide online:

www.lcm.ac.uk/survivalguide

Check back regularly as we expand our online resources with blog posts, interviews and more content for the guide.

The Alumni Network

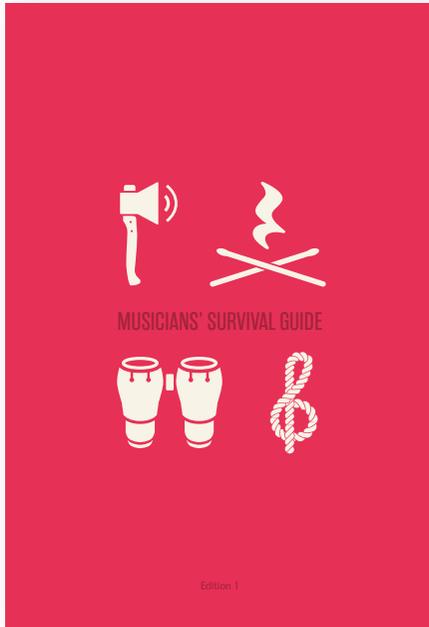
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Would you like to see a topic covered?

We need your feedback and suggestions on the content of this guide to keep it relevant and useful to you. Please get in touch if there are any topics you would like to see covered in the future by contacting: agency@lcm.ac.uk or Tweet us [@LeedsMusic](https://twitter.com/LeedsMusic).

Are you able to contribute?

We continue to build the Musician's Survival Guide throughout the year, adding more content online and preparing for future publications. If you feel you have something to offer, please do get in touch. Email: agency@lcm.ac.uk



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