

Music-related Careers

Careers in Composition, Contemporary Writing & Production, Film Scoring

Composer

Composers create instrumental pieces, either stand-alone or combined with lyrics. They may compose for a specific situation, such as film/TV composers who score/compose music to enhance videos or films, or they may compose for live performance and/or recording situations.

Arranger (Adaptor)

An arranger provides musical arrangements of a musical composition or song for an artist, band, orchestra, or other ensemble. The arranger determines the voice, instrument, harmonic structure, rhythm, tempo, and other aspects of a song or composition based on the artist, producer, or conductor's specifications. Training in music theory, orchestration, composition, and harmony is required. An arranger should have experience as a copyist, writing music, and playing one or more instruments.

Orchestrator

An orchestrator is responsible for transposing music from one instrument or voice to another in order to accommodate a particular musician or group, and writing scores for an orchestra, band, choral group, individual instrumentalist(s), or vocalist(s).

Copyist

A copyist transfers musical parts from a score onto individual parts. This person must have strong notation and transposition skills, training in music theory, and neat and accurate copy work.

Conductor

A conductor's main duty is preparing an orchestra or ensemble for the finest performance they are capable of presenting. This includes choosing the repertoire, managing rehearsals, and possibly planning an entire season of musical events, as well as handling the other business-related matters of an orchestra. A conductor must have a strong ability on an instrument (preferably piano), be able to sight read, and have a strong stage personality.

Educator/Teacher

The composition teacher usually teaches in a higher-education setting, such as in a college, conservatory, or university. A composition teacher may also teach others privately, or teach other subjects in addition to composition, such as music theory, music arranging, music history, or vocal or instrumental conducting, or they may conduct chamber groups, choruses, or orchestras.

Transcriber

A transcriber notates musical performances onto a score from a recorded performance.

Editor (Print Music Publishing)

An editor manages and develops a print music publishing company's product line, which usually includes instructional music books for people of all ages and abilities. An editor in this field should have the ability to develop products, topics, and concepts; write; compose; edit; proofread; and manage the print/production process. Prior experience in creative design layout and consumer publications is extremely helpful.

Producer

Producers work mainly with recording acts and record labels to produce records. They also work with composers and produce sound recordings for film, TV, and other forms of multimedia, as well. The producer supervises all aspects of the recording process—including contracting session players and overseeing the recording budget—and may also help the artist select songs to be recorded. Preferably, a producer should be an excellent musician with a lot of performing experience, and have a great depth of musical, acoustical, and studio technical knowledge.

Film Scorer/Composer

A film scorer/composer scores music to accompany a motion picture for film or television. This could include dramatic underscore as well as popular songwriting. The traditional role of a film composer is to provide the orchestral dramatic underscore, and only more recently has the popular soundtrack begun to stand on its own.

Jingle Writer

Jingle writers are songwriters/composers/lyricists who specialize in writing music for radio and television commercials. They are responsible for representing their client musically as directed. They must be skilled in all styles, be strong musical arrangers, and be able to compose well for a very short form.

Songwriter

A songwriter writes both lyrics and music and is either a staff writer with a publishing company or a freelance songwriter. A songwriter may also perform and/or produce his/her own songs.

Music Editor

A music editor is responsible for mixing and synchronizing the music with the film and mixing the music with the film soundtrack. The music editor must be versatile and possess a great musical sensitivity, a keen ear for balance, and an awareness of how music can make or break a dramatic scene; all combined with knowledge of the special technology used in synchronizing music tracks to film or tape.

Programmer (Sequencing)

The programmer utilizes music sequencing software and sometimes notation software to produce MIDI keyboard/synthesizer tracks for inclusion in the film score. Other times, a programmer will sequence a piece of music or a composition by this means, which will allow the composer and music editor an opportunity to hear the composition before it reaches the scoring stage. This is considerably cheaper than hiring a full orchestra and enables the composer to identify errors in the score before it gets to the scoring stage.

Music Supervisor (Theme Specialist: Film/TV)

The film producer hires the music supervisor. He/she may act as an A&R scout to find and license popular songs for inclusion as theme or background music within the film (called source music) and/or selecting songs for the soundtrack. Sometimes the music supervisor may be in charge of only the songs for the soundtrack, and other times he/she may be in charge of all the music involved with a film, including hiring and supervising the film composer for dramatic scoring.

Contractor

A film/TV music contractor is responsible for hiring the musicians and tending to all the necessary contract obligations through AFM (American Federation of Musicians). It is in the contractor's best interest to procure the best talent possible while working within his/her budget guidelines.

Copyist (Music Preparation)

In the film music industry, a copyist's job is also called music preparation. The copyist transfers musical parts from a score onto individual parts. This person must have strong notation and transposition skills, training in music theory, attention to detail, and neat and accurate copy work.

Assistant to the Composer

An assistant to the composer acts as a liaison between the composer and various other entities in the film, television, and music industry. The main responsibility for the assistant to the composer is to allow the film composer time to do what he does best, which is composing. This is usually an entry-level position and provides a unique perspective on the filmmaking process.

Sound Designer (Synthesis Specialist)

A sound designer designs synthesized music and sound effects to complement and aid the music score.

Careers in Music Business/Management

Personal Manager (or Artist Manager, Agent)

Personal managers represent one or more musical groups or artists and oversee all aspects of an act's career. They deal with and advise the act(s) on all business decisions, as well as many of the creative decisions an artist must make, and attempt to guide the artist's rise to the top.

Booking Agent (or Talent Agent)

Booking agents work to secure performance engagements for musical artists and groups. They work to find talent to book and may be involved with developing the talent toward a goal. They must possess good communication skills to sell talent and develop contacts in the music industry. They often work closely with an act's manager and may be involved in setting the fee and negotiating with promoters or clubs. A booking agent is paid a percentage of the negotiated fee for an act's performance.

Concert Promoter

The concert promoter presents, organizes, advertises, and in many cases, finances concerts at performance venues such as arenas, festivals, clubs, church buildings, auditoriums, etc. The promoter often secures money for the concert by finding others to share in the profits/expenses. However, it is often times the concert promoter who absorbs all the financial risk.

Independent Radio Promoter

The independent radio promoter (IRP) has a similar role as that of a promotional staffer at a record label, except the IRP is usually employed by an independent radio promotions company or works freelance. Often, a record label, artist/band, or manager will hire the services of an independent radio promotions company to generate airplay of a particular song or record.

The IRP contacts radio station program directors, music directors, and disc jockeys in a local, regional, national, or even an international market. They set up appointments with these station people and bring a number of new album releases as well as a supply of promotional or press material relating to the artist or band. An IRP may socialize frequently with program directors and music directors to help improve the chances that a radio station will add a song to its playlist. An IRP often will often take key radio station personnel out to lunch, dinner, or for drinks. They may also bring a program director to a club in order to listen to a group play songs live and gauge audience response.

Entrepreneur (Music Business)

A person who organizes, operates, and assumes the risk for a music business venture. Some common businesses started by music entrepreneurs are: recording studio facility, private teaching practice, performing band, booking agency, artist management, music retail, music publishing company, record label, etc.

Retail Sales Management

A retail sales manager works, runs, and operates a retail music store. Duties would include employee supervision, training, ordering, coordinating the timing and arrival of distribution shipments to the store, budgeting and financial planning, and coordinating sales promotions for specific CDs.

Entertainment Attorney

An entertainment attorney handles any contractual matters conceivable within the entertainment industry. Entertainment attorneys can be freelance, hired on retainer, or an employee of a company or business within the entertainment industry. Entertainment attorneys generally specialize in one of three separate fields within the entertainment industry: sports, film and television, and music. An attorney that specializes in the music industry usually has a solid depth of understanding with regard to copyright laws and artist/band agreements with managers, publishers, record labels, booking agents, etc. Successful completion of law school and a state bar exam are requisites for being an entertainment attorney, as well.

Business Manager

The business manager handles the financial affairs of musicians and entertainers. Most have degrees in business administration with concentrations in accounting or management. The business manager should have knowledge of negotiating, accounting skills, investments, and tax laws.

Music Supervisor (Music Licensing/Clearance)

A music supervisor may act as an A&R scout to find and license popular songs (as source music) for a film, TV soundtrack or other media format.

Music Business Consultant

The music business consultant advises his/her clients, who are generally artists, music industry professionals, or entrepreneurs, on music business strategy for their career or business.

Contractor (or Leader)

A contractor is responsible for hiring musicians or road crew staff and tending to all the necessary contract obligations through the appropriate union organizations. It is in the contractor's best interest to procure the best talent possible while working within given budget guidelines.

Careers in Music Education

Elementary/Primary School Music Teacher

Elementary school music teachers work in public, private, or parochial schools. Their duties vary depending on the school and the ages and grades they teach, but for the most part they teach a general music class in kindergarten through sixth grade, introducing students to the different aspects of music and the varying degrees of skill study. They must often follow guidelines for what they teach that are set up by the school music department heads, district music supervisors, and state music education supervisors.

Secondary School Music Teacher

Secondary school music teachers generally teach in grades seven through twelve, and they work in public, private, or parochial schools. Their duties vary depending on the type of job they are hired for. They may teach specifically on one instrument or many. They may be responsible for leading a school band, orchestra, or choir, and for putting on school concerts and competitions. They may handle rehearsals and conduct the school groups as well.

College/Conservatory/University Music Educator

College/conservatory/university music educators may be hired for a variety of different positions. They may be brought into a school as a general music educator to teach areas of music theory, music arranging, music history, or vocal or instrumental performance. Educators are also hired to coach chamber music groups or to conduct choruses or orchestras.

Private Instructor

A private instructor usually does not work through a school, but gives individual instruction to students on a regular basis. They set their own fees, unless contracted by a music store or teaching group, and develop their own teaching plans and guidelines. Private instructors may work alone out of an office or home, with a group of teachers, or at a music store that offers lessons. They may teach individual lessons or offer group lessons. Lessons generally run 45 minutes to one hour and are usually scheduled once a week. They may teach at different levels of skill, from beginner to professional.

Choir Director

A choir director provides direction and guidance to a vocal group or choir in a school, church, or elsewhere in the community. The choir director is responsible for researching and selecting material, rehearsing and conducting the choir, and preparing and presenting public performances of the choir.

Music Education Supervisor (or School Music Supervisor)

A school music supervisor is responsible for directing and coordinating activities of teaching personnel who are engaged in instructing students in vocal and instrumental music in a specific school or school system. This person may teach a few days a week and administer programs in the remaining days. The music supervisor plans and develops the music education curriculum.

Independent Primary or Secondary School Music Teacher

These teachers work specifically at private, independent, parochial, or cooperative home school programs. Usually state certification is not required to work at these schools.

Music Therapist

Primarily, a music therapist uses music as an aid in healing, relieving pain, providing emotional comfort, and even entertaining patients with various mental and physical health related ailments. A music therapist develops a treatment plan and applies various strategic techniques to accomplish goals for the patient's improvement. It is also a unique opportunity to help and contribute to improving the lives of patients who are at various stages of illness and recovery. Music therapists work either freelance or in clinical settings such as in hospitals, nursing homes, psychiatric centers, and oncology and pain management treatment centers, as well as in drug treatment programs, correctional facilities, and hospice care programs.

Music Librarian

The music librarian is responsible for cataloging scores, recordings, and song folios, and they work primarily at an educational institution such a school, college, or university. Employers in this field generally prefer a master's degree in library science.

Careers in Music Production & Engineering

Producer

The producer functions as a creative leader of any studio, film, television, or radio recording project. Producers work mainly with recording acts and record labels to produce records. They also work with composers and produce sound recordings for film, TV and other forms of multimedia, as well. The producer supervises all aspects of the recording process, including contracting session players and overseeing the recording budget. A producer may also help the artist select songs to be recorded. Preferably, a producer should be an excellent musician with a lot of performing experience and a great depth of musical, acoustical, and studio technical understanding.

Engineer

The recording engineer operates the soundboard and other electrical equipment during the recording of music. Recording engineers run the recording session with oversight from the producer. They may also be responsible for setting up equipment in the studio prior to the session, and discussing with the producer or musical act what they want the end product to sound like. It is the engineer's subsequent responsibility to craft a recording that meets the producer's, artist's, or band's desires. The engineer may also be responsible for mixing down the recorded tracks into the finished product.

Assistant Engineer

The assistant engineer works in the recording studio and is responsible for assisting the recording engineer with setup, recording tracks, and mixing. He works as directed by the recording engineer.

Production Assistant

As the producer's right-hand person, the production assistant handles details for the producer such as contracting talent (musicians/vocalists) for sessions, scheduling studio time, placing telephone calls, sending emails ensuring everyone is aware of when and where the session will be held, assisting on the session, and setting up the equipment in the studio for a session and/or returning it to its proper place after the session.

Studio Manager/Owner

The studio manager/owner is the person responsible for running the business of the recording studio and may be a sole or partial owner of the business. Studio managers are responsible for booking acts to record at the studio, scheduling engineers, marketing the studio, and budgeting and providing for all the needs of a professional recording studio. He is also the in-house diplomat, acting as the liaison between engineers and clients, ensuring client satisfaction, and handling all financial transactions with clients.

Sound Technician

Sound technicians are responsible for high-quality sound during the live performance. They usually arrive at the concert sight before the performers and are involved in unloading and setting up the equipment and instruments along with the road crew. Sound technicians supervise the placement of equipment and work with the talent during the sound check to achieve the best sound. They may even work a soundboard during the actual performance.

Acoustic Consultant

Acoustic consultants provide complete audio, video, and acoustic design services for performance spaces such as concert halls, arenas, stadiums, studios, convention facilities, clubs, churches, and synagogues. Acoustical consultants can provide an acoustical analysis of a particular venue, identify acoustical problems, and make suggestions for equipment or interior design changes for fixing any problems.

Audio Engineer for Videos

This engineer's specialty is making certain that the audio tracks are synchronized and equalized with the video.

Digital Remastering Engineer

This engineer's responsibility is to take older analog masters, which are on vinyl, 8-track, or audiocassette formats, and remaster them for release on CD or other digital mediums.

Live Sound Engineer

This engineer's primary responsibility is to operate the soundboard during a live performance. The live sound engineer is also involved in sound check and the placement of equipment in preparation for a live performance.

Recording Equipment Manufacturer's Rep/Customer Service

A recording equipment manufacturer's rep will usually work at the company's headquarters in a customer service/tech support role. They will also represent the company at trade shows or conferences and potentially serve as a product demonstrator. Usually, someone with strong playing ability as a musician is selected for this role.

Mastering Engineer (Post-Production Engineer)

This engineer is responsible for taking the final mixes of recordings that have been sent by a studio, band, or artist for finishing touches such as EQ (equalization), overall effects, and possibly compression.

Multimedia Developer (Interactive Multimedia Specialist)

Multimedia developers specialize in formatting and producing audio content for CDs and websites. They primarily combine two or more of the following formats—text, still images, video, animation, or sound—and prepare them as part of an interactive software package.

Rerecording Mixer (Film and Video)

If a film or business wants to use a particular song for a commercial or movie, they will often rerecord the song or composition again in order to avoid having to negotiate and pay a hefty master-licensing fee to a record label for use of the actual (master) recording. By rerecording the song, they will only have to pay the mechanical licensing fee, which is a rate that is established by the U.S. government (currently, 8.0¢ per song, per unit that is five minutes and under in length, and 1.55¢ for each minute above five minutes) and is much cheaper than a master-licensing fee. Therefore, a rerecording mixer for film and video rerecords a song or composition that already has been commercially released.

Record Company Staff

Many times successful producers and engineers who have a track record of working with and identifying successful artists and bands will be tapped for an executive level position at a record label, to oversee artist development, production, or A&R. These producers and engineers usually have had an exclusive agreement and history of working with the record label for several years, and the success of the producer or engineer has resulted in the success of the label.

Recording Studio Setup Worker

This person is generally charged with the responsibilities of setting up for a recording session by arriving early before the session musicians, artist, or band and setting up any necessary musical equipment, such as amplifiers, drum set, microphones, running microphone cords, music stands, etc. This person is also generally the last person to leave, since he/she is left with the responsibility of ensuring that all equipment is returned to its proper place.

Studio Designer

Studio designers provide complete audio, video, and acoustic design services for recording facilities. Studio designers can serve as consultants for designing or renovating studios for select and distinct purposes.

Studio Technician/Maintenance

The studio technician is extremely knowledgeable in the field of electrical engineering, circuitry, and audio electronics. This person may work within the audio manufacturer's headquarters and/or conduct fieldwork, such as visiting a client's studio for customer service-related issues or product repair.

Careers in Music Synthesis

Sound Designer

The sound designer is employed to develop a sound library of synthesized original sounds and effects for artists/bands, production and multimedia companies, and music equipment manufacturers. The sound designer also uses various sophisticated electronic equipment to arrive at conclusions and find sonic solutions in their work.

Film/Video Sound Designer

The film/video sound designer designs creative sounds for images. As Berklee music synthesis faculty member Chris Noyes states, "When the earth shakes in a film or video, what does it sound like? This is the job of the film/video sound designer." The film video sound designer would determine if this sound can be recorded, or if it would have to be created?

Digital Audio Editor

Most of the audio, music, sound effects, and spoken word (dialogue) that we hear in TV and film productions is edited on digital audio systems. The digital audio editor works with sound designers, composers, and directors to put all these elements together in a highly controlled environment.

Performer

A music synthesis performer utilizes music technology and MIDI for live performance.

Studio Musician/Synthesist

This person plays and often programs synthesizers and other contemporary musical instruments within a studio context.

Synthesist/Producer

The synthesist/producer has the ability to creatively produce and incorporate (his/her own) sound design into the production process. The producer functions as the creative leader of any studio, film, television, or radio recording project. Producers work mainly with recording acts and record labels to produce records. They also work with composers and produce sound recordings for film, TV, and other forms of multimedia, as well. The producer supervises all aspects of the recording process, including contracting session players and overseeing the recording budget. A producer may also help the artist select songs to be recorded. A producer should be an excellent musician with a lot of experience and have a great depth of musical, acoustical, and studio technical understanding.

Composer

The composer in the music synthesis field has a particular specialty in using computer and MIDI technology throughout the entire composing and arranging process. Composers create instrumental pieces, either to stand alone or to be combined with lyrics. They may compose for a specific situation, such as film/TV composers who score/compose music to enhance videos or films, or they may compose for live performance and/or recording situations.

Arranger

An arranger in the music synthesis field provides musical arrangements of a musical composition or song for an artist, band, orchestra, or other ensemble, using computer and MIDI technology. The arranger determines the voice, instrument, harmonic structure, rhythm, tempo, and other aspects of a song or composition, based on the artist, producer, or conductor's specifications.

MIDI Pre-Producer

Whenever a film/TV composer is trying to be hired for a film scoring project, they will attempt to convey their ideas or musical themes to the film/TV director. In order to communicate their musical ideas effectively, they will often hire a MIDI pre-producer to prepare their compositions in a MIDI studio where the orchestration can be economically realized. This is much more cost effective than hiring an entire orchestra to record your musical ideas and themes.

Jingle Writer

Jingle writers are songwriters/composers/lyricists who specialize in writing music for radio and television commercials. Synthesists in this field have the ability to creatively produce and incorporate (his/her own) sound designs into the production process. They are responsible for representing their client musically as directed. They must be skilled in all styles, be strong arrangers, and be able to compose well for a very short form.

Educator

An educator in the music synthesis field would almost always teach in a higher education, college, or university program.

Consultant (Other: Manufacturer Representative, Technical Support, or Sales Representative)

A consultant in the field of music synthesis usually is employed by companies that manufacture and design technology-based musical instruments and software. These music technology companies desire to have consultants with musical and technological backgrounds and perspectives.

Multimedia Developer (Interactive Multimedia Specialist)

Multimedia developers specialize in formatting and producing audio content for CDs and websites. They primarily combine two or more of the following formats—text, still images, video, animation, or sound—and prepare them as part of an interactive software package.

Product Representative

The product representative tours and demonstrates the latest audio/MIDI software and musical instrument technology available to musicians and producers.

Computer Music Researcher

The computer music researcher works at a graduate-level institute of higher education and researches computer languages associated with algorithmic composition and sound synthesis.

Careers in Performance

Performing Artist (Recording Artist/Group)

Performing artists specialize in the performance of music, either original or cover material. Their performing skill defines their marketability. The performing artist may work as a solo act with or without backing musicians, or be packaged as a group.

Vocal/Instrumental Soloist

A vocal/instrumental soloist is similar to a performing artist and may perform in much the same capacity. But this artist may also work as a contracted performer with a group or in a recording situation. For example, an orchestra, church group, or a recording ensemble may hire a soloist. When performing as a contracted soloist, the artist has a responsibility to rehearse and perform the selected music as directed by the group or project leader.

Session Musician

The session musician may be known as a studio musician, a session player, a sideman or woman, a freelance musician, or a backup musician. The main responsibility of the job is to back up the leader of a group in the recording studio, or possibly during a live performance, and play in a style or manner that the leader of the group or the producer desires. In addition to being a good musician, the session musician must be responsible, reliable, and easy to get along with. It is also important to know how to sight-read, be familiar with a number of different styles, and preferably be proficient on more than one instrument. Session musicians are usually hired by a contractor and paid an hourly fee set by the union (AFM). A session musician may work on various types of projects, including television and film scores, records, demos, jingles, and other music industry gigs.

General Business Musician

A general business (GB) musician may work as a freelance artist or perform with a general business group. These groups maintain a widely varying repertoire to allow them to perform in almost any situation, including weddings, bar or bat mitzvahs, private parties, corporate functions, and dance clubs. GB musicians cover material by well-known recording artists in many different styles, and tailor their repertoire to clients' expressed desires. Many general business gigs may be formal dress occasions, so tuxedos and formal dresses are a necessity. The largest amount of work can be found in performances of this type, and pay is generally very good. A general business band may work through one or more booking agencies and/or book themselves.

Orchestra/Group Member

An orchestra/group member plays a supporting role in a musical group as an instrumentalist. A vast knowledge of repertoire, musical skill, reading, and doubling ability are important qualities to develop, especially in the orchestral environment. Also important is the ability to play with a group, and to prepare and know the material before rehearsal. The responsibility of the orchestra/group member is to follow the directions of the group leader or conductor and perform prepared music, in performance and recording situations.

Background Vocalist

Background vocalists back up other singers and musicians on recordings, jingles/television commercials, or in live performances. They may work full-time or on a freelance basis, or travel with a performing act, holding responsibility for learning repertoire and attending rehearsals. Background vocalists must be versatile and flexible; those performing on recordings, jingles, or television/radio will need the ability to read music quickly and record it quickly with a minimum of errors. Harmony and improvisation abilities are a plus as well.

Floor Show Band

Floor show bands work in nightclubs, hotels, resorts, cruise ships, cafes, bars, and concert halls putting on show for patrons. They not only perform, they entertain! Show groups may perform many different types of music in their act. Show groups must have pizzazz, and usually involve extensive planning and rehearsal to appear professional at all times. Floor show groups may work in one place for a few days or even weeks before moving on to the next gig, and they travel frequently.

Theatre Musician

A theatre musician is an instrumentalist that plays in the pit orchestra of a music theatre production.

Theatre Performer

A theatre performer is a singer/actor or actress who performs in a music theatre production on stage.

Accompanist/Rehearsal Pianist

The accompanist/rehearsal pianist primarily works with vocalists and/or music theatre groups for rehearsals, live performance, or audition settings.

Cantor

A cantor is a song leader in a Reformed, Conservative, or Orthodox Jewish Synagogue/Temple Service, or Catholic or Christian Orthodox service. The cantor sings liturgical prayers and leads the worshippers in attendance to sing in a precise and measured "call and answer"-type response to his/her own sung part or line.

Church Musician: Choir Director, Worship Leader, Praise & Worship Band Member, Organist, and Soloist

A musician or vocalist that plays, sings, or conducts during the musical portion of a worship service.

Product Demonstrator

A product demonstrator is a musician that is employed by a music equipment manufacturer to demonstrate the company's product line at trade shows and conferences. Usually, someone with strong playing ability as a musician is selected for this role.

Careers in Music Therapy

What is music therapy?

A career in music therapy offers challenge, opportunity, and distinctive rewards to those interested in working with people of all ages with various disabilities. Music therapists are employed in many different settings, including general and psychiatric hospitals, community mental health agencies, rehabilitation centers, day care facilities, nursing homes, schools, and private practice. Music therapists provide services for adults and children with psychiatric disorders, mental retardation and developmental disabilities, speech and hearing impairments, physical disabilities, and neurological impairments, among others. Music therapists are usually members of an interdisciplinary team that supports the goals and objectives for each client within the context of the music therapy setting.

Is music therapy a good career possibility for me?

A music therapist should have a genuine interest in people and a desire to help others empower themselves. The essence of music therapy practice involves establishing caring and professional relationships with people of all ages and abilities. Empathy, patience, creativity, imagination, an openness to new ideas, and understanding of oneself are also important attributes. Because music therapists are musicians as well as therapists, a background in and love of music are also essential. Individuals considering a career in music therapy are advised to gain experience through volunteer opportunities or summer work in nursing homes, camps for children with disabilities, and other settings that serve the needs of people with disabilities.

What career opportunities are available for music therapists?

Opportunities for employment are available to the registered music therapist, not only in traditional clinical settings, such as agencies serving individuals with emotional, developmental, or physical disabilities, but in new and expanding areas of health care delivery. For example, music therapists are now employed in hospice care, substance abuse programs, oncology treatment centers, pain/stress management clinics, and correctional settings. Additionally, many music therapists work in special education settings, where they provide either direct services to students with disabilities or function as consultants for music educators and special educators. A recent hearing before the U.S. Senate's Special Committee on Aging and the subsequent passage of the Older Americans Act of 1992 have increased the recognition of music therapy's value, as well as employment opportunities.

Where do music therapists work?

- Inpatient psychiatric unit
- School
- Private practice
- Intermediate care facility/mental retardation
- University
- Nursing home
- State institution
- Geriatric facility
- Community mental health center
- Inpatient medical unit
- Drug/alcohol program
- Group home
- Outpatient clinic
- Correctional facility
- Hospice

Record Label Business Careers**Record Company Executive**

This person would usually be employed at a record label and be a director, vice president, or president of any of the various departments or areas therein.

A&R Coordinator

The main duty of the artist & repertoire coordinator is to find talent for the company to sign. A&R coordinators search for new talent by visiting clubs, going to showcases, listening to tapes and demo recordings, and watching recordings of acts performing. He or she is often responsible for helping find songs for the artists signed to the record label.

A&R Administrator

The artist & repertoire administrator works in the Artist & Repertoire Department along with the A&R coordinator. In large companies, the A&R administrators are responsible for clerical functions within the department, planning budgets for artists signed to the label, and working on the annual or semiannual budget for all artists' expenditures. They must analyze previous budgets and prepare a budget proposal with projected cost estimates for recording current acts. They also monitor the budget in relation to the expenses throughout the year. Staying within a budget means that the A&R administrator is doing his or her job. The individual might work exclusively with one or two studios in order to build up a great volume of studio time. With this volume, the A&R administrator can often receive discounts on time. They also keep track of all money spent for recording studio time, session musicians, talent, and miscellaneous expenses.

Director of Publicity (or Public Relations Director)

The director of publicity supervises the record label publicity department and develops and oversees publicity campaigns. As director, this person oversees all the work that is performed by the staff of the department.

Publicist (or Staff Publicist, Press Agent)

A publicist handles the publicity and press needs of acts signed to a label. Publicity helps the label sell records and produce income. A publicist must be able to get an artist's name in the news (magazines, music trades, TV, radio, etc.) as often as possible. This is accomplished by writing press releases, sending them to the correct media, talking to media about acts, and arranging interviews. The publicist often arranges a series of print interviews, radio interviews, and TV appearances in conjunction with the release of a new record. Staff publicists spend a lot of time on the telephone and are usually the first to send out promotional copies of new records and other important materials to the media. After a new record is released, a publicist may work with the A&R or promotional departments on a showcase booking of the group, and make arrangements for a press party.

Assistant Publicist

Assists the publicist, compiling press kits, writing press releases, and double-checking information for accuracy.

Artist Relations Representative (Artist Development Representative)

The artist relations representative's responsibility is to represent the label's interest to the artist/band and the artist/band's interest to the label, and maintain proper communication, cooperation, and mutual understanding between the two entities. This person's job is to make the artist feel appreciated by the label by thoughtful gestures such as buying flowers; writing letters; and arranging promotional appointments that coincide with a new tour, album release, or career milestone such as having a certified gold or platinum album. If there is a problem or concern that the label or artist have with the each other, the artist relations representative will seek to mediate the situation. The artist relations representative may also advise the artist on creative/performance-related issues, as well.

Promotional Staffer

The prime function of the promotional staffer is contacting radio station program directors to generate airplay for the label's records. Promotional staffers will work closely with program directors, music directors, and disc jockeys in these markets. They set up appointments with these station people and bring a number of the label's new album releases, as well as a supply of promotional or press material relating to the artist or band. A promotional staffer may socialize frequently with program directors and music directors to help improve the chances that a radio station will add a song to its playlist. Promotional staffers often take key radio station personnel out to lunch, dinner, or for drinks. They may also bring a program director to a club in order to listen to a group play songs live and gauge audience response.

Advertising Account Executive

An advertising account executive develops advertising campaigns for a record label's products. This person must be creative and aggressive, have good sales skills, and have a strong knowledge of music. They may also have advertising experience in another area.

Salesperson (Record Label)

A record label salesperson establishes a relationship with various accounts to sell the company's products and provide continuing service to the accounts. Accounts may include retail stores, rack jobbers, and one-stops.

Regional Sales Manager

The regional sales manager is responsible for supervising the sale of the label's records to wholesalers and/or retail outlets in a specific region, creating sales campaigns and policies, and overseeing sales staff.

Marketing Representative

The marketing representative is responsible for overseeing specific markets and reporting sales of records to radio stations and trade publications.

Field Merchandiser (or Merchandiser)

The field merchandiser is in charge of distributing and explaining merchandising promotions to record stores/departments in specific markets.

Consumer Researcher

A consumer researcher researches and analyzes consumer-buying practices for the record company. This person should have

knowledge of research and analytical methods, the ability to write reports, and knowledge of the music business and record industry.

College Representative (or Campus Representative)

College representatives are responsible for promoting a record label's products to students on campus or perhaps to music retailers. They are students working toward a degree who have an interest and/or skill in the music industry, and often are a music business major in college.

Music Publishing Business Careers

Music Publisher

Music publishers are responsible for acquiring the copyrights to songs and publishing them. They may work for a very large music publishing company and perform one or two specific duties as a music publisher. They may work for a relatively small firm and fulfill a variety of functions. Many individuals in music publishing or songwriting become independent music publishers, running their own music publishing firm. The goal of the music publisher is to find and acquire potential hit songs (copyrights) and songwriters, promote them for financial gain, and serve as copyright administrator whereby tracking, licensing, and payment collection can be done efficiently. A good music publisher has knowledge of all facets of the music business, an understanding of music industry dynamics, an ability to hear hit tunes, knowledge of copyrights laws, and contacts in the music business.

Song Plugger (Professional Manager)

Song pluggers or professional managers work for a music publisher and perform the administrative functions of music publishers. They also work to add new possible hits to the publisher's catalog and to find acts to record these songs, generating income for the publisher. Professional managers seek to have a song covered and recorded by as many artists as possible and attempt to make the tune a "standard." Song pluggers rely heavily on their contacts in the music business to accomplish their job and must have great communication skills. The song plugger may provide creative input into a band or artist's demo since they have a good understanding of what the industry is looking for.

Tour/Road Work Business Careers

Tour Coordinator

The tour coordinator is responsible for coordinating the many facets of an act's tour, including travel, lodging, arranging for services, and budgeting for expenses.

Road Manager

Road managers handle the problems that occur while an act is traveling. They supervise equipment, sound, and lighting personnel.

Tour Publicist

The tour publicist is responsible for publicizing an act's tour to both fans and the media through press releases, press conferences, and special promotions.

Advance Person

The advance person is responsible for arriving ahead of the act to prepare for a concert and assisting the tour coordinator or road manager with details prior to the show.

Sound Technician

Sound technicians are responsible for high-quality sound during the live performance. They usually arrive at the concert site before the performers and are involved in unloading and setting up the equipment and instruments along with the road crew. The sound technician supervises the placement of equipment and works with the talent during the sound check to achieve the best sound. They may even work a soundboard during the actual performance.

Careers in Songwriting

Performing Songwriter

Performing songwriters create and perform their own music. They write both lyrics and music and seek to find success as the performer of their material. Performing songwriters may work as a solo act or as a leader of a group featuring their material.

Staff Writer

Staff writers are hired by music publishers, record companies, producers, and other production or recording groups. The staff writer's services are reserved exclusively for this employer. Most staff writers receive a weekly salary, which may be treated as a recoupable advance on the writer's future royalty earnings. Or they may be contracted to write "work-for-hire" pieces that are owned and copyrighted by the employer. Early in a career a writer may have no option other than a "work-for-hire" position, but should take advantage of any opportunity to move to a more attractive long-term strategy to earning a living as a writer. Competition for staff songwriter positions is tough.

Freelance Songwriter

Freelance writers may work on their own or under a part-time contract with various companies, securing single-song agreements either under a "work-for-hire" contract or a songwriter agreement.

Jingle Writer - Radio & TV

Jingle writers are songwriters/composers/lyricists who specialize in writing music for radio and television commercials. They are responsible for representing their client musically as directed. They must be skilled in all styles, be strong arrangers, and be able to compose well for a very short form.

Songwriter/Producer

Producer/songwriters develop their own material from start to finish. They write the material, develop a concept for how they would like it arranged and recorded, hire musicians and engineers, and oversee the recording and production of the material. They have the final say on the development of their material.

Lyricist

Individuals who are talented in expressing themselves with words can develop careers writing words to songs. A pure lyricist would create only the words, and may work as a team with a music composer or may create lyrics for a previously written piece of music.

Composer

Composers create instrumental pieces, either to stand alone or to be combined with lyrics. They may compose for a specific situation such as film/TV composers who score/compose music to enhance videos or films, or they may compose for live performance and/or recording situations.

Music Supervisor (Theme Specialist: Film/TV)

The film producer hires the music supervisor. He/she may act as an A&R scout to find and license popular songs for inclusion as theme or background music within the film (called source music) and/or selecting songs for the soundtrack. Sometimes the music supervisor may be in charge of only the songs for the soundtrack, and other times he/she may be in charge of all the music involved with a film, including hiring and supervising the film composer for dramatic scoring.

Stage Musicals/Librettist

Author of words (libretto) set to music usually within the context of music theatre or opera work.

5 Essentials of Music Career Success

By Peter Spellman, Director of the Career Development Center, Berklee College of Music

This article is from his new book, *Indie Marketing Power: The Guide for Maximizing Your Music Marketing*.

Music is too big a world for a one-size-fits-all model of music career success. Musicians' career paths are as unique as their individual fingerprints. Nevertheless, there are a few guidelines that I believe apply to anyone trying to make a living career out of their love of music. Here are five:

1. **Hone your talent and realize there is a place for you.** Not everyone is a Quincy Jones, a Beatles, or a Bruce Springsteen, but if an artist like Tom Waits is a vocalist, then there is definitely room for you too. Do the work necessary to excel in your niche, whether it's writing a chart, engineering a session, providing backup vocals, or teaching kids the basics of music.

Your goal, to use marketing lingo, is to "position" yourself in your "market" as the go-to person for that particular skill or talent. Don't worry too much about industry rejection. Every record label in Britain initially passed on the Beatles *and* The Rolling Stones. The key is believing in yourself and persevering beyond others' opinions (even those of "the industry").

2. **Connect with as many people as you can because relationships drive music careers more than anything else, even talent.** Music is a "who-you-know/who-knows-you" kind of business. The quality and quantity of your relationships will be the primary engines of your progress. Try developing creative projects with fellow-musicians. Perhaps you can combine your live show with two other acts and present the package to a local promoter. There is strength in numbers. Finding the right combinations takes experimentation.

If you're interested in working in the business side of music, then interning at a music company is the best way to both learn how the biz works and connect with those who can help move your career along.

3. **Accept the new powers in your corner and take responsibility for creating your own success.** The last twenty years has given you the means to both produce and distribute your own music on a global scale. New models of business are emerging in the world of music. A "record deal" is not necessarily the goal any longer. The Internet has clearly become your "open mic" to the world, and desktop technologies provide you with ways to have the look, reach and efficiency of larger companies. Dare to be different.

Remember, new power also means new responsibilities. Global reach means a potentially far-flung audience. You need to

be ready for the incoming messages and questions from this new market. Have you created the best business structures to hold and express your work? Are you setting up effective systems to communicate with your audience? It's up to you to create your own success and not merely rely on a record company or agent to do the work of making you visible in the marketplace.

4. **Understand that every business is becoming a "music business" and so musical opportunities are multiplying.** It took a coffee company and a computer manufacturer to teach the music industry how to sell music in the digital age! Non-music businesses everywhere are seeking creative ways to add music-related services to their mix. This means that you needn't be dependent on the traditional "music industrial complex" for music career success.

Think of companies you already resonate with and try brainstorming ways you can link up. Start on a local scale. It might be a gift shop, bookstore or arts organization. It may even evolve into a full-fledged sponsorship for a tour or recording project. Find ways to add value to what these businesses are doing with what you have to offer. Forging creative alliances is key to building a multi-dimensional music career.

5. **Prepare to be versatile and to wear several hats initially, until your "brand" is established.** Most musicians I know have had to cobble together several revenue streams in the early stages of their careers in order to make enough money to support themselves. Many have also had to take on a non-music "lifeline careers" just to make ends meet, pay down debt, or supplement what they earn from music.

I tell musicians to not so much look for "a job," but to seek out the work that needs to be done. It might be arranging a song, playing a wedding gig, helping organize a concert series, doing a jingle session, offering private music instruction, or writing a review of your favorite band's new CD. Eventually, all the different experiences merge together into the roaring river that will be your music career. At that point you'll be visible, in demand and able to name your price. And that's career success.