

# **The Music Industry**

**Version 9.18**

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## **Introduction**

The music industry is certainly big business in the UK, and yet on the face of it can seem fairly impenetrable to graduates. It is worth persevering – there are opportunities!

The business tends to divide between classical and pop/rock. Roles in the music business tend to divide between recording, performing, live music, publishing and promotions. There is a considerable variety of roles within these sections of the business.

If you are planning your own career as a solo artist or band then doing your groundwork is important to your progress. As you are probably aware the landscape of the music industry has changed dramatically due to the internet. Gone are the days of a five-album record deal with a major record label and generous development funds for emerging bands. Popular social networking sites have made it easier for unsigned bands and artists to gain international exposure thereby increasing the chances of reaching untapped audiences and rousing music industry professionals.

The digital age has brought with it a plethora of opportunities but also a more competitive arena. There is still room to become a success in the music industry but the idea of success may need to be redefined to reflect the current market.

## **Make the most of opportunities while you're at university**

Talk to anyone in the music business who has been to university and chances are they gained experience alongside their studies. Check out the student union for opportunities to help with events, browse the list of student societies for any that are relevant to your interest in music, put on a club night, start up a band or join one, see if you can do a stint as a DJ at a halls of residence social, join with fellow musicians to check out

opportunities to perform, perhaps at a charity fundraising event or venues near to the University...

## **Developing contacts**

It's important to get to know people working in the music industry. Making contacts can naturally come out of getting involved in music while you're at university. However, it's also a good idea to use social media – Facebook and Twitter – to engage with others who share your passion and may be established. Twitter, in particular, has made it easier than ever to strike up a 'conversation' with people working in the industry. You could also put a profile together on LinkedIn and join music industry groups to find out what's going on. Read information on networking at [www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/networking](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/networking)

## **How do I find out about careers in the music industry?**

You need to be proactive and think laterally when looking for careers information about the music business.

The prospects website: [www.prospects.ac.uk](http://www.prospects.ac.uk) has a number of job profiles associated with music. These include musician (also discusses conductor and composer), arts administrator, community arts worker, private music teacher, music therapist and sound technician. The site also includes the overview of the creative arts sector briefing which covers the music industry.

More generally, music industry employers offer a wide range of roles. For example, you could work on the business side of things (artist manager, lawyer, accountant, human resources and marketing.) or on the music side of things (A&R, studio engineer, producer, music publisher). It is really worth giving a lot of thought to the kind of role you would like to have in the music industry. Other jobs related to music include music journalism for online, print or broadcast media. Many local and national media organisations have regular music features and reviews. There are

also many specialist music outlets such as magazines and radio/TV stations.

There are some websites and publications which have quite specialist information about music industry careers. These include:

- **Careers in music**  
[www.careersinmusic.co.uk](http://www.careersinmusic.co.uk)
- **Creative choices**  
[www.creative-choices.co.uk](http://www.creative-choices.co.uk)
- **Artist managers' information.**  
[www.themmf.net](http://www.themmf.net)
- **Careers in Music.**  
[www.careersinmusic.com](http://www.careersinmusic.com)
- **Sector Skills council**  
Creative and cultural skills  
[www.ccskills.org.uk](http://www.ccskills.org.uk)
- **UK Music**  
<https://www.ukmusic.org/skills-academy/careers-advice/>
- **The Big Music Project (this project closed in July 2018 but the website still links to helpful careers advice and organisations)**  
<http://www.thebigmusicproject.co.uk/a-big-music-big-thank-you-programme-closed/>

## Where do I find job vacancies/work experience?

Very few jobs/work experience opportunities are advertised but here are some of the places you can look:

- **Musical Chairs**  
[www.musicalchairs.info/jobs](http://www.musicalchairs.info/jobs) (classical and contemporary music)
- **Arts Jobs**  
[www.artsjobs.org.uk](http://www.artsjobs.org.uk)
- **Music Week.**  
[www.musicweek.com](http://www.musicweek.com)
- **Monday's Guardian.**  
[www.jobs.guardian.co.uk](http://www.jobs.guardian.co.uk)

- **Music Jobs.**  
A networking site for music professionals and companies, including jobs in the music industry and links.  
<http://uk.music-jobs.com>
- **Rhinegold Job site.**  
[www.rhinegold.co.uk](http://www.rhinegold.co.uk)
- **The Dots**  
[www.the-dots.com](http://www.the-dots.com)

Company websites relevant to the section of the business you are interested in. Some of the big names in the recording business are:

- **Universal Music.**  
[www.universalmusic.com/jobs](http://www.universalmusic.com/jobs)
- **Sony.**  
<https://jobs-sonymusicuk.icims.com/jobs/intro?hashed=0>
- **BMG.**  
[www.bmgchrysalis.co.uk](http://www.bmgchrysalis.co.uk)
- **Warner group.**  
[www.wmg.com](http://www.wmg.com)

Speculative approaches will form a significant part of your search for work. It's always worth trying the big names, but as you'll be amongst many who approach them it's important not to pin all your hopes on them. Research smaller companies to find out what they do, who works for them and what you might be able to offer. Look them up in Music Week directory and other relevant publications, e.g. Unsigned Guide [www.theunsignedguide.com](http://www.theunsignedguide.com) and on LinkedIn [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)

### Temping Agencies

There are a few specialist recruitment agencies which are worth checking out. They include:

- [www.handle.co.uk](http://www.handle.co.uk)
- [www.themusicmarket.co.uk](http://www.themusicmarket.co.uk)
- [www.careermovesgroup.co.uk](http://www.careermovesgroup.co.uk)
- [www.artsandmedia.org](http://www.artsandmedia.org)

## Local information

Watch out for:

- **The Unsigned Guide** has a regional edition and is the definitive music industry directory for unsigned bands and musicians. The publishers, mcr:music, regularly look for researchers to assist with updating national information (including contacts for record labels, publishing companies, venues, studios and management companies) and also research new information. For more information about The Unsigned Guide see [www.theunsignedguide.com](http://www.theunsignedguide.com)

### Short courses in Manchester

- **SSR**  
<http://manchester.s-s-r.com>
- **Manchester Midi**  
[www.midischool.com](http://www.midischool.com)
- **Band on the wall**  
<http://bandonthewall.org/education/>
- **Brighter Sound** [www.brightersound.com](http://www.brightersound.com)
- **BIMM Manchester** [www.bimm.co.uk/manchester](http://www.bimm.co.uk/manchester)

## Promoting your music

### Get your music played on the radio

- Music departments within radio networks will often be looking for good new music to play on air but they will be inundated so make sure you stand out and submit your music correctly.
- Submit any music with a release date. This is necessary as radio stations need to keep their playlist fresh and up-to-date. A release date enables the music departments to plan accordingly.
- Don't send audio files via email as this can cause problems with overloading the email server. Instead send a link or a physical copy.
- Don't overlook opportunities on student or community radio.

## **Be ubiquitous on the web**

Have a presence across a number of music websites to gain exposure but look professional.

## **Bands beware**

Be wary of some promoters – they can ask bands to pay to perform at certain events with the promise that people from the music industry will be there listening. The actuality of a music big-wig attending the event is highly unlikely. Some venues also require the artist or band members to sell a certain number of tickets or they don't get into that venue. This overall practice is known as 'Pay to Play' which many bands do not like.

## **Build brilliance**

Concentrate on being 'brilliant' rather than 'making it'. Remember there is a difference between a 'musician' and a 'performer'. The Beatles did roughly 200 gigs as groundwork to become slick performers and to secure a record deal. Concentrate your efforts locally, playing at least 3 gigs at the same venue to help develop a reputation and fan-base.

## **Industry news**

Keep up-to-date on industry developments and think about where the industry could be headed. This could affect your strategic decisions for the future.

## **Work experience**

Work experience in the creative industries is often not paid and it's important to guard against being exploitation. We recommend that you read the advice on our website and check details of our work experience bursaries which help with the cost of doing work experience

<http://www.careers.manchester.ac.uk/findjobs/paytax/unpaid/>

## Websites

### Performance careers

- **London Symphony Orchestra.**  
[www.lso.co.uk/orchestra/jobs](http://www.lso.co.uk/orchestra/jobs)
- **London Philharmonic Orchestra.**  
[www.lpo.co.uk/contact/careers.html](http://www.lpo.co.uk/contact/careers.html)
- **Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra**  
[www.liverpoolphil.com/jobs-and-opportunities](http://www.liverpoolphil.com/jobs-and-opportunities)
- **Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra**  
<http://bpo.org.uk/>
- **Halle**  
[www.halle.co.uk/employment-opportunities.aspx](http://www.halle.co.uk/employment-opportunities.aspx)
- **BBC Orchestra.**  
[www.bbc.co.uk/orchestras](http://www.bbc.co.uk/orchestras)
- **Association of British Orchestras.**  
[www.abo.org.uk/jobs/current-vacancies.aspx](http://www.abo.org.uk/jobs/current-vacancies.aspx)
- **Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM).**  
[www.ism.org](http://www.ism.org)
- **Musicians' Union.**  
[www.musiciansunion.org.uk](http://www.musiciansunion.org.uk)
- **The Gene Pool**  
Indie label and distributor that gives you a chance to sell your music  
[www.thegenepool.co.uk](http://www.thegenepool.co.uk)

### Festivals

There are many different types of music festivals and opportunities for work ranging from stewarding to full-time administration roles. Classical music festivals include Glyndebourne, Buxton and Holland Park. Contemporary Music Festivals include: Parklife (Manchester), Leeds Festival, WOMAD, Glastonbury and many more. We would recommend checking festival websites for job vacancies and work experience opportunities.

- **FE Staff Event Staffing**  
Job opportunities across different roles different festivals

[www.festaff.co.uk/jobs-at-festivals](http://www.festaff.co.uk/jobs-at-festivals)

## Recording and publishing

- **Association of Professional Recording Studios.**  
[www.aprs.co.uk](http://www.aprs.co.uk)
- **Audio Engineering Society.**  
[www.aes.org](http://www.aes.org)
- **BPI British Phonographic Industry.**  
Includes advice on careers in the music industry.  
[www.bpi.co.uk](http://www.bpi.co.uk)
- **Music Producers' Guild.**  
Represents all individuals involved in music production and recording.  
[www.mpg.org.uk](http://www.mpg.org.uk)
- **PRS For Music** (Now the PRS-MCPS Alliance)  
Serves the songwriters and publishers of music; a collection agency that collects cash (royalties) from airplay or public performances for the writers or composers of music. [www.prsformusic.com](http://www.prsformusic.com)
- **PPL**  
Serves the record companies and performers on recordings. The PPL sell licences for the public broadcast of music.  
[www.ppluk.com](http://www.ppluk.com)

## Community Music

- [www.youthmusic.org.uk](http://www.youthmusic.org.uk)
- [www.soundsense.org](http://www.soundsense.org)

## Other

- **Music Week Directory** [www.musicweek.com/](http://www.musicweek.com/)
- **The Showcase Directory.**  
Lists almost every organisation in the UK music industry & many abroad.  
[www.showcase-music.com](http://www.showcase-music.com)
- **BPI**  
The British Recorded Music Industry  
<https://www.bpi.co.uk/>

- **The British Academy of Composers and Songwriters.**  
[www.basca.org.uk](http://www.basca.org.uk)
- **The National Federation of Music Societies.**  
[www.makingmusic.org.uk/](http://www.makingmusic.org.uk/)
- **HMV Graduate Retail Training Scheme.**  
[www.hmv.co.uk](http://www.hmv.co.uk)
- **Unconvention**  
[www.unconventionhub.org](http://www.unconventionhub.org)
- **Association of Independent Music**  
Supporting UK independent music companies including information, resources and events  
[www.musicindie.com/resources/members-directory](http://www.musicindie.com/resources/members-directory)

## Resources

### Resources in the Careers Library

- Careers in Music
- The Music Management Bible
- How to make it in the Music Business – Virgin Publishing

For a full list of available resources use the online careers library  
[www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/library](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/careers/library)

### Other reference sources

British & International Music Yearbook - the most comprehensive and accurate directory of the classical music industry - essential for all music professionals.

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