

# How to Teach WHAT DO YOU DO?

From the backstage to the back office, this column shows students music-related careers outside the spotlight. **BY KATE KOENIG**

**T**HE SUBJECT of this month's "How to Teach" is perhaps the most obvious choice out of the entire magazine—What Do You Do. *In Tune's* sister publication, *Music Alive!*, has had almost the same column, under the name Cool Careers, for the past 35 years.

What Do You Do offers students a piece of the blueprint in their own career paths. For most, it takes until you've graduated college and even been a part of the working world for a few years to realize that, unless you've followed a specific track from the time you were an undergraduate, career paths are as diverse as people, filled with unexpected twists and turns—especially in the music industry. Rather than fuel the false notion that there's one right way to do things, we offer students the best advice we can, by illustrating countless individual paths in the hopes that it will highlight some common values in how students can best go about finding their passion.

From freelancers to small business owners to employees at national corporations, here are a few examples from the past season of What Do You Do.

## FEBRUARY 2018: DAVE COOL

Dave Cool didn't really start with one career path in mind. A musician from the age of 5, his young life was made up of what feels like

a grab-bag of entertainment industry jobs: playing in bands, running a record label, booking, public relations, working for non-profit music associations, intern- ing for studios and record labels, making a documentary, freelance writing. Cool is the quintessential example of someone who never really had a focus, but was always doing something, to the point where it led to him eventually landing a multiple-hat-wearing full-time job with Bandzoogle.

Cool's life illustrates the path that many music students may end up taking in their professional lives, which is that of a freelancer. In other words, for him, there was no path. He simply applied himself passionately to everything that came along, expanded his network, and prioritized his dream—even if that dream shapeshifted over time—over the idea of rising up steadily in one corporation, or in the ranks of one specific field in the music industry.

The path of a freelancer may appeal especially to students who are multi-talented in the arts while being somewhat administratively savvy, are naturally drawn to pursuing a variety of independent passion projects, and are self-sufficient when it comes to attaining their personal goals. While the lack of rules in putting together a freelancing



career can make it seem a bit harder to do, students can learn by reading more examples of successful freelancers, and how they've managed to make a living out of working for themselves. It may not be cookie cutter, but that happens to also be what makes it so advantageous to those it appeals to.

## DECEMBER 2017: DAVID MALEKPOUR

The subject of the December 2017 edition of What Do You Do, David Malekpour, is an example of someone who's carved a unique path for themselves, but with more of an individual focus. Like Cool, Malekpour started out as a musician, but eventually discovered a second passion: working with audio technology. After learning how to build audio equipment like speakers as a kid, Malekpour went on to work in a recording studio, then for an audio tech company, before starting his own company, Professional Audio Design (PAD). More of a consulting company than a retailer, PAD

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equips different spaces with audio systems that are customized to both the space and the client’s demands.

In Malekpour’s case, he had a passion for music, but chose to make a career out of his passion for audio technology. He stayed in the same field throughout his career, eventually starting a company that both aligned with that passion, and offers a unique service. His experience provides a few examples for students. 1) Of the satisfaction of running a successful small company that serves a special purpose and 2) Where following one specific passion can lead.

Students who have discovered their passion at a young age have an advantage over their peers, but it doesn’t necessarily yield all the answers. They might know what they like to do, but not how to turn it into a profit or a career. It does, at least, set the stage for a number of things. They could devote themselves to honing their skill and become an independent expert in the field; they could hone their skill and continue to work for different companies until they find one at which they feel satisfied; or, they could do as Malekpour did, and eventually use their skill to spearhead a company, that offers more than just the skill itself.

**OCTOBER 2017: PAULINE FRANCE**

From the October 2017 issue, Pauline France provides the perfect example of someone who took a lot of time, study, and at first,

the wrong path in order to find her ideal career. France is yet another example of a music industry professional who started out as a musician, inspired by flamenco group the Gipsy Kings to study classical guitar as a young teenager. Through her guitar study, France discovered a passion for teaching—but as an undergraduate music education major, fell out of love with the idea of becoming a music teacher. Instead, she managed to discover an interest in public relations, which led to her current position at Fender.

Now working with the title of employee communications specialist, France is responsible for communicating with employees throughout Fender’s global locations, and uses her bilingualism to connect with English and Spanish employees. She’s an example of someone who thought she knew what she wanted to do, and when facing a crossroads in her undergraduate career, allowed it to lead her to an even better alternative. Also, unlike Cool and Malekpour, France works at a large corporation, which makes her job, though important, a smaller part of a much larger team.

France’s career path is an incredibly common one: She felt passionately about some-

thing early in her life, but when she started studying it, she realized that its real-world, practical application was separate from what made her enjoy it. At that point, she accepted the sudden change in plans, and kept an open mind, which is when she found that something that had been entirely unfamiliar to her—public relations—was an even better choice. And because she spent six years in college—prioritizing her career satisfaction over meeting societal expectations—she got the education she needed to eventually land a job with one of the world’s biggest guitar manufacturers.

**THE HARD PART**

“Finding one’s passion” is difficult in that everyone must do it for themselves—no matter how many career fairs they go to, aptitude tests they take, or guidance counselors they visit. But there’s a lot students can learn in the career paths of others, and after a while, they might just stumble upon something that teaches them about themselves in a way they wouldn’t expect. **T**

