

# PLAYING FOR THE

**E**LSEWHERE IN THIS ISSUE of *In Tune*, there’s an article called “Finding Your Path,” which encourages middle and high school students to put time and effort into identifying possible career paths in music-related fields. Doing this requires students to, among other things, gain early experience in several different areas of endeavor and seek guidance from professionals. We music educators are just the kind of professionals to provide such guidance, and we should make a point of providing it.

We need no reminders of the tremendous benefits that come from studying

music. Creative problem solving, developing emotional intelligence, and achieving goals through teamwork are just a few of music education’s positive outcomes. It’s particularly exciting when a student develops the passion, drive, and talent that indicate he or she could become a professional musician. In a typical class, however, only a small number of students will actually go on to pursue a career in music. Still, in a changing economic landscape, music education has the potential to play a significant role in developing skills that will prepare them for almost *any* career they wish to pursue. Music educators can have

a deep and lasting impact on students by making concrete connections, in a lesson format, between the transferrable skills developed in music and the skill sets they’ll need in the workforce. Deliberately making these connections might also provide an additional advocacy point when we are called on to speak about the value of our programs.

The big question is: How can you weave these lessons into an already hectic teaching schedule in a way that doesn’t interfere with the activities of your class? After all, you still have to prepare for all those performances and festivals! My experience sug-

ALL PHOTOS: DARIO GRIFFIN



This page and next: USC music students take to the streets of Los Angeles, demonstrating the importance of practice.



# FUTURE

Music teachers can help students think about developing their careers not just *in* music but *through* music.

BY CHRIS SAMPSON

gests that it's not as hard as it may seem; the best case scenario is that the lessons can even support and enhance your regular activities. Before we start talking about ways to incorporate career information into your teaching, though, let's take a closer look at changing working conditions and how they relate to music.

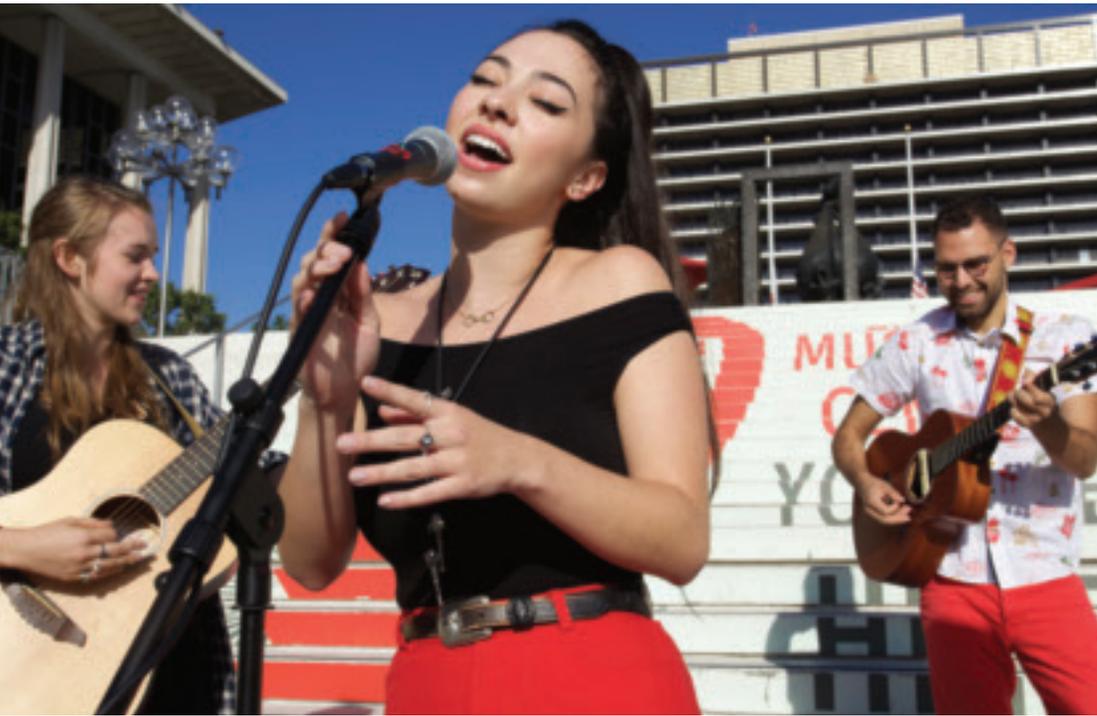
## THE GIG ECONOMY

In my work with young people, I've noticed a recent shift in their general attitude toward work and careers. Students appear to be moving away from the idea of a traditional "9 to 5" job and gravitating more

toward jobs that call upon their entrepreneurship, flexibility, and creativity. Instead of a single job, many are becoming comfortable with engaging in multiple activities to generate multiple revenue streams. This work environment has come to be known as the "gig economy." In his *Huffington Post* article "The Changing Shape of the Gig Economy," Adi Gaskell presents data from the job-search website Indeed that suggests this type of career activity, perhaps best exemplified by the drivers of Uber, has increased sixfold since 2014. Whether the emergence of this new economic system is a positive or negative thing is a matter for

serious debate, but in any case it's clearly on the rise.

Although such a work environment might be new to some, having multiple career activities and revenue streams has always been part of the working life of a musician. And so it's not surprising that the term "gig" was co-opted from the musician's lexicon to describe the new economic landscape. A musician's career—which can combine teaching, recording, performing, arranging, composing, and more to create a total income—is in fact a textbook example of what has become known as a "portfolio career." The Future of Music



Coalition (*futureofmusic.org*) has conducted a thorough research project on artist revenue streams and created multiple case studies demonstrating the portfolio careers of musicians. Introducing and reviewing these case studies with your students could give them a deeper understanding of the job market they may encounter, regardless of their career path.

To get a broader sense of what's possible in the adult world for someone with an

interest in music, students ought to take a look at *In Tune Monthly's* long-running "What Do You Do" column, which profiles a diverse range of individuals who have music-related jobs. Jeffrey Rabhan's book *Cool Jobs in the Music Business* (In Tune Books) may also be a worthwhile investment.

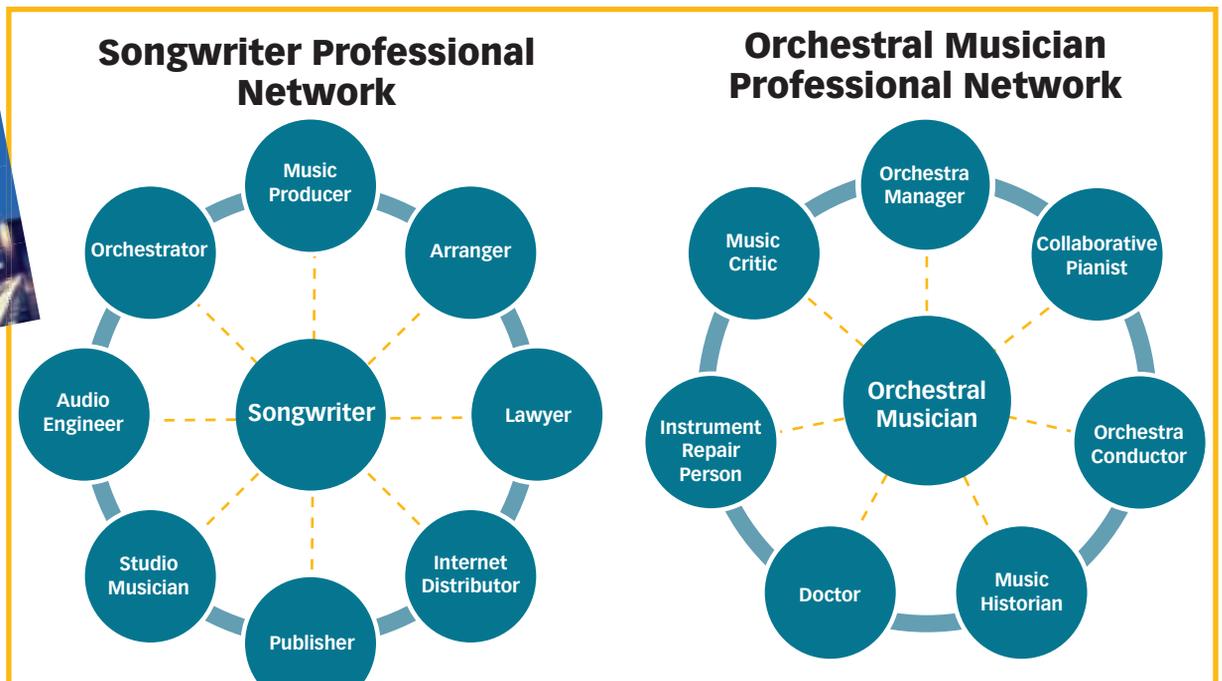
**HOW DO YOU GET TO CARNEGIE HALL?**

Practice is one of the most important parts

of music making. But, as we know, it involves much more than just mindless running of scales or playing through pieces we've already learned. Deliberate practice involves focused concentration on the things we don't do well and stretching ourselves toward consistent improvement. That's the sort of activity that can be central to any career. In his book *So Good They Can't Ignore You*, career advisor Cal Newport advocates adopting a "craftsman



GRAMMY in the Schools' Careers In and Through Music lesson plans provide useful resources like these graphs representing professional networks.





mindset” to refine personal skills; as he puts it, “Deliberate practice might provide the key to quickly becoming so good they can’t ignore you.” In other words, to riff on the old musician’s joke, practicing won’t just get you to Carnegie Hall—it’ll get you *anywhere*.

Find opportunities to make students aware that establishing great practice habits will have tremendous benefits well beyond their instrument. If they already keep practice logs, encourage them to start similar logs for all of their academic subjects or for any pursuits outside of music. Just as in their music practice logs, students should set daily, weekly and monthly goals, break down problems, and consistently challenge themselves to work on areas in which they don’t do well. The industrious students who take your advice will bloom before your eyes! Furthermore, they’ll be better prepared to adopt that “craftsman mindset” as they enter the workforce.

## WORK IN CONCERT

While encouraging good practice habits is one natural way of connecting music with other career activities, it’s not the only one. Some other tactics can also directly benefit your program. For example, select a goal that your music class is working toward, such as a public concert. Have your students identify all of the non-

musical tasks that need to be done to make the concert a success. This could include developing artwork for publicity, communicating with school administration, promoting the concert within the community, and coordinating with the venue and technical staff. Once the tasks have been identified, organize students into teams to carry out these activities in preparation for the concert.

Below are a few suggestions for these student teams:

- Collaborate with the art department to develop promotional materials
- Interface with local businesses and the community to spread the word about your concert
- Coordinate with the venue to make sure the stage plot, ushers, and ticket booth personnel are organized
- Work with the technical staff or volunteers to coordinate audio and/or video recording of the concert



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Of course, these activities will vary greatly depending on your needs and your program. Once the concert is over, have your students reflect on what they got out of the experience musically as well as non-musically. Have them identify what they learned about teamwork, collaboration, networking, and communication. Explain how these skills are needed in almost all professional environments.

Ask them to articulate what went well and what challenges they had to overcome. Discuss how a network of individuals was necessary to get the total job done (you may even want to use something similar to the professional network graphs on pg. 16). There are plenty of ways to make your students' concert experiences more than just a matter of playing the right notes.

## MAKING A PLAN

For those who wish to take a more clearly structured approach, GRAMMY in the Schools is currently developing a series of lesson plans to promote career development skills through music classes. These lessons—grouped together under the title *Careers In and Through Music*—are designed to take up minimal class time and be used in any music class environment. You can download a free lesson plan at [intunemonthly.com/careers-lesson](http://intunemonthly.com/careers-lesson). If you'd like to create your own lesson plans, the Roadtrip Nation website ([roadtripnation.com](http://roadtripnation.com)) is an excellent resource. This site has a tremendous archive of video interviews with leaders from virtually every industry. In each video, these professionals explain what skill sets and experiences were vital to their success. Common themes such as perseverance, the value of a positive attitude, cooperation, and creativity consistently appear throughout the interviews. You can develop lesson plans that make a direct connection between these themes and studying music. Consider showing your students the videos and having them discuss the relationships between these successful professionals and the activities in your music class.

With any luck, this article has sparked some ideas that you can use to make concrete connections between your music class and the development of skills that will benefit your students as they enter the workforce. Music is an art worth studying in and of itself, and every student should have access to and participate in a robust music education. By taking the extra step to demonstrate for your students the transferrable skills that come from music education, you will undoubtedly help guide their future careers—whatever they may be. **T**

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### Chris Sampson

is Vice Dean and Professor of Songwriting at the USC Thornton School of Music. He is also the songwriting instructor for the GRAMMY Foundation.