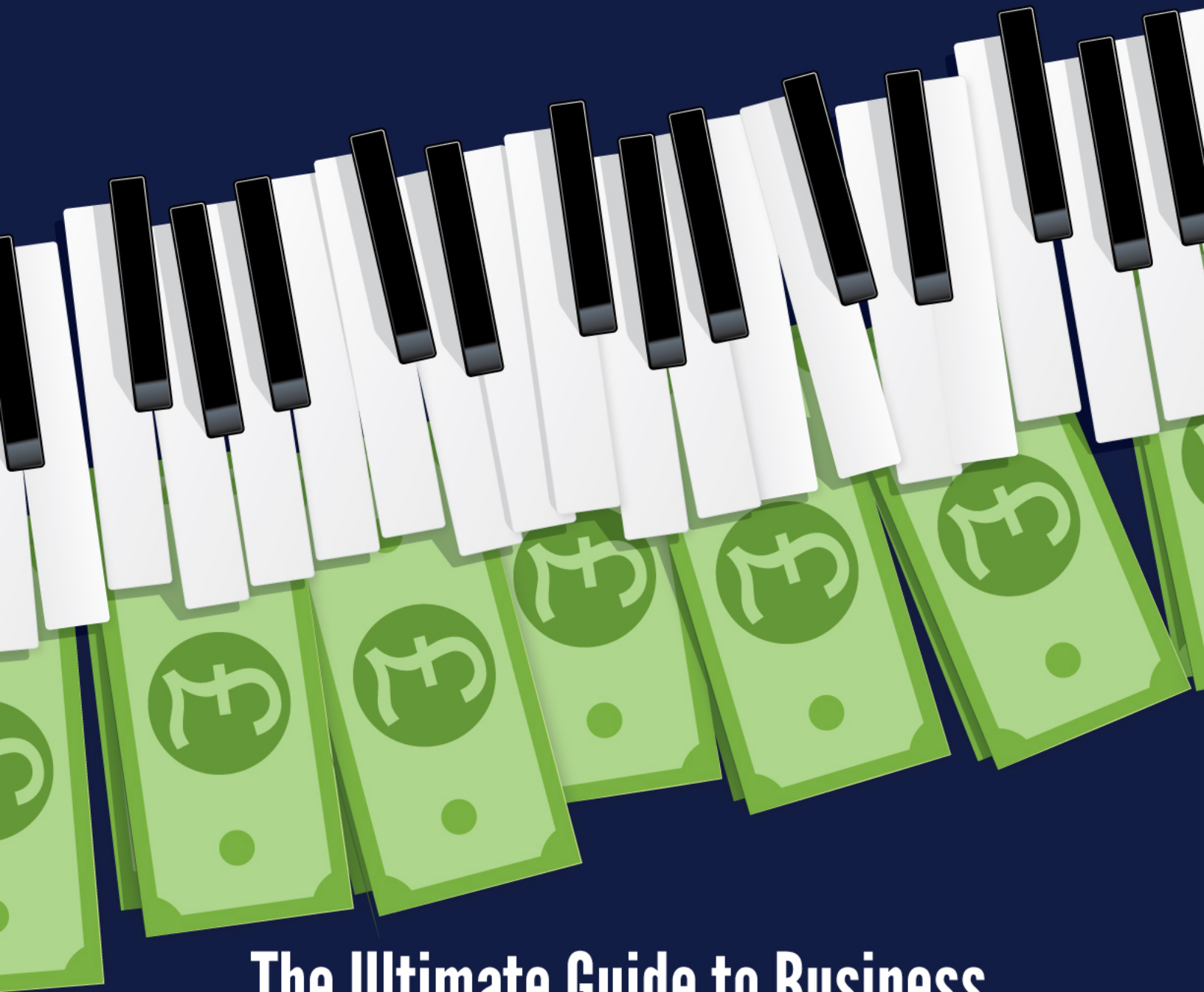


NOTES TO NOTES



**The Ultimate Guide to Business
in Film & TV Music**

TRISTAN NOON

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IT IS PRIMARILY AIMED AT COMPOSERS, ORCHESTRATORS AND MUSIC COPYISTS IN THE UK, BUT WILL BE useful to anybody, anywhere around the globe. The music industry is now more competitive than it has ever been before, and there are new skills that you need to utilise to survive in the modern-day business.

Specifically, this eBook is for:

NEWCOMERS TO THE INDUSTRY

Specifically, those of you who are hoping to become self-employed in the music business.

You may be studying music at university, or have already graduated and are looking for strategies and techniques to get started in the industry. Alternatively, you may not have studied music at higher education, and are wondering how to get your foot in the door. This eBook will help you to understand and utilise tried and tested methods to help you make a living from the music industry.

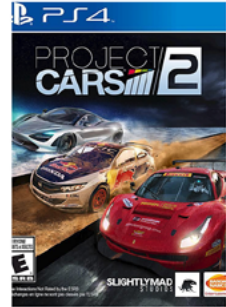
EXPERIENCED PROFESSIONALS

Most professional musicians are generally extremely busy, and therefore don't have the time to read lengthy books about various music topics. This eBook breaks down numerous areas of the industry into manageable chunks of information that can be referred back to at any time. If you would like to brush up on information about the business, composing workflows or orchestration, as well as much more, then this eBook will be beneficial to you.



CREDITS





BBC Proms



INTRODUCTION



I T ISN'T EASY TO MAKE MONEY FROM THE MUSIC BUSINESS, AND THERE'S LITTLE INFORMATION OUT THERE regarding how you should go about starting a business, and earning an income from either composition, orchestration or music copying.

I aim to share my own experiences, enabling you to apply them to your career. Whether you're learning these skills for the first time, or just brushing up on them, I want to ensure that you're more confident, efficient and knowledgeable when you finish this eBook. I hope that you'll not only understand how to start and run a business, but how to get work for the rest of your career by adapting to whatever the music industry throws your way.

DO I NEED TO HAVE A MUSICAL TRAINING TO BE SUCCESSFUL?

There's a lot to love about this job, and the myriad of musical backgrounds that people have is one of them. You can begin as a classically trained pianist, or be in a heavy metal band and have equally as many opportunities as the classically trained individual. The key is to understand your skillset - don't be afraid to get help/delegate to fill in the gaps where your skills lack, and don't let lack of training make you think that you cannot do the job.

I have a good friend who used to work in an office job, completely unrelated to music. He got made redundant and decided to enter the world of production music. Years later, he is making a good living from production music and has been working with some of the best production music companies in the world. I love these kinds of stories because it shows that with hard work and determination, along with some luck along the way, you can make your musical background work for you. He had no previous musical training apart from being in a band and cannot read music. However, this hasn't stopped him from achieving his goals and working with an orchestral palette.

Getting a degree from a university is good, but it doesn't mean much in the world of media music. Nobody has ever asked me for any qualifications, and if they did, I'd imagine that they wouldn't be the sort of clients that I'd want to work with anyway. Experience is everything and more in this game, and you'll want to make sure that you're getting as much experience under your belt as humanly possible. This will put you in good stead for when you start getting more high-profile jobs. It means that you won't panic or get flustered when something inevitably goes wrong. You'll respond calmly because you'll have likely seen this happen to somebody else, and replicate what they did to handle the situation.

At first, when you enter the media music business, you may feel swamped, outcasted and out of your depth. There are people in this field who are incredibly well-educated and have worked a lifetime to improve their craft. However, you may have something they don't, and that is to see things from beyond a theoretical perspective. It is critical to find your unique path, and don't be afraid of sticking to one musical genre and being the best at that.

"It's ok not to be good at everything! I often worried about the areas I was weaker in, and it's good to aim to improve obviously, but instead, think about your strengths and focus on making these your 'thing!'"

- Steve Tait (Composer)



RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS



RUNNING A SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS REQUIRES GRIT, PERSEVERANCE, PASSION, PROACTIVITY, AND SO much more. It is crucial to keep up to speed with market changes and the way the industry evolves. Failure to do so will leave you feeling like a dinosaur in a meteor strike.

MY TOP BUSINESS TIPS

PLAN YOUR FINANCES

Put time aside to think about how you're going to earn money. You need to be strict with cash forecasting, but be wary that it can change month to month when jobs may fall through. When jobs appear in the future, note them down in a spreadsheet to see how much it will add to your revenue.

FIGURE OUT YOUR WEAKNESSES

If you have the foresight to figure out the weak links in your business, you're already one step ahead of most other people. It is vital to assess the progress of your business continually. After every job, you should write down what you were slow or inefficient at, and then aim to work on those in the future.

TAKE RISKS

Plough copious amounts of money into lab-grown meat? Well, you could, I suppose, but what I mean is that it's essential to run your business with a healthy amount of risk. Putting 75% of your efforts and resources into writing production music would be a calculated risk, and one that would likely serve you well in the long term. You might spot industry trends earlier than most people and decide to run with them. This would be a gamble, but one that could turn out to make your business stronger and more powerful than ever before. Always trust your gut instinct.

RESEARCH, RESEARCH, RESEARCH

Even when I'm not working at the computer, I'm still working in other ways - reading, listening to music, learning about new orchestration and production or mixing techniques. If you allow your downtime to be work-related in these ways, you'll likely be working without feeling like you're working. Your brain is processing continuously learning by utilising this method. It means that you never entirely switch off, but it means that you can make business gains in what your brain perceives as downtime.

SELL WITHOUT SELLING

If you act like a travelling salesperson, it will instantly turn off the client. This business is all about forming relationships, and so it's important to be personable and decent. You could offer a director a free track to use in their film, with the hope that they will get you to write the whole score. This relates to the risk technique. These are the kind of risks that can pay off with little time involved in the big scheme of things.

PLAN YOUR TIME

Planning your time meticulously is almost guaranteed to make you more productive and more efficient than ever before. I plan out my day using Google calendar to ensure that I'm not multitasking and wasting time. It's too easy to get distracted in modern life, and so you need to stick to your schedule.

Here is what an average day might look like for me, when I have multiple jobs to juggle. It is imperative to structure the day correctly so that you're focussing on one thing at a time. Multitasking has been proven to be inefficient, and you want to avoid this as much as possible.

| TIME | ACTION |
|---------------|----------------------------|
| 7:30 - 8:30 | Lane Swimming |
| 8:30 - 9:00 | Breakfast |
| 9:00 - 12:00 | Production music composing |
| 12:00 - 12:30 | Lunch |
| 12:30 - 13:00 | Phone call with client |
| 13:00 - 18:00 | TV show orchestration |

DELEGATE

As much as you might like to think it, you don't know everything. Nobody does. Employ people who can do the things that you can't. If you're slow at programming percussion, ask to do a co-write with somebody who can. If you aren't good at mixing, hire someone who is. It is imperative that you figure out your weaknesses, and don't be afraid to offload these onto other people. Delegation is power. If you're worried about not having the cash to pay someone for their services, offer to provide a service for them that they cannot refuse. You'll likely have a skill that they can utilise in their work.

HOW TO GET WORK



IRONICALLY, THE MOST STRAIGHTFORWARD PART OF BECOMING A FREELANCE MUSICIAN IS THE CREATIVE aspect of the job. The most daunting facet is finding work, and making enough money to live comfortably on. At first, it is unlikely that you'll be earning more than a few thousand pounds per year, so keep your overheads low for as long as possible.

One key thing to remember is that not everybody's journey to success is the same. You have to find your trajectory naturally, and when you find what works for you, it's imperative to run with it, as this is your formula, so to speak. In the following paragraphs, I will walk you through various important topics, enabling you to apply them to your career.

HOW TO WORK OUT YOUR VALUE

What to charge when you're first starting your career seems to be one of the most unanswered, but most asked questions there is amongst people who are trying to kickstart their career. It's one of those things that has no definitive answer, but makes sense after a while.

To work out your worth, you must first compare it with other jobs that, without sounding crass or blunt, require less skill than composing, orchestrating or copying music. While I have nothing against supermarket checkout staff (I used to be one myself), I would say that scanning a lettuce is easier than writing music. I say this as a matter of fact and using it as an example, rather than taking a swipe at people - that isn't at all what I intend to do here.

Let's say that somebody who works on the checkout at a supermarket earns roughly £9 an hour. I think that it is realistic and not unreasonable to charge double that figure. When I first started working as an assistant, I charged £20 an hour to assist, which I would say is a decent starting rate as an assistant. You'd be looking to charge around £200 for a full day's work. This is a skilled job, and you should be rewarded fairly and correctly.

If you don't abide by that logic, it becomes a race to the bottom, meaning that everybody is trying to low-ball and undercut each other to get work. This results in only the elite and privileged having a shot at doing the job because they don't need to worry about earning money to survive.

HOW TO GET EXPERIENCE IN THE INDUSTRY

You might be concerned that nobody will pay you £20 an hour when you have no experience, and you're probably right. This is where it is critical to acquire as much knowledge as you can, as early as you can. If you're at university, don't wait until you finish your degree to gain experience - you

should be doing this alongside your course. This will give you a massive head start on your competitors when you complete your degree. If you're not at university, the same applies. Get as much experience as you can while you're still young and living costs are probably low.

You might have found that people have told you not to work for free, and while I agree with this, there are exceptions. When you're trying to get experience, this is different to doing it as a living, and at this stage, you're just trying to understand how everything works, rather than earn vast amounts of money from it. I would recommend getting to know as many people as you can. If you're a composer and want to write music for films, get talking to local filmmakers or people studying film at university. If you're going to become an orchestrator, offer to orchestrate your friend's work. They could send you the MIDI file, and then you send back a PDF of the score. I guarantee that you'll learn a lot by doing this.

When the time comes where you might get offered your first job, whether that be as an assistant or a commissioned gig, you'll have enough experience under your belt to not make silly mistakes. It is up to you to decide when you're prepared and skilled enough to start warranting payment. It's tough to determine when that moment is, but it's like anything in life. Something is worth as much as someone is willing to pay for it.

From personal experience, being an assistant is the best way to learn. You also get paid while you're learning, which is very handy, and it will give you the confidence and self-affirmation that you'll need to progress and grow. The best way to do this is to send emails to people whose work you respect and admire, and offer them something that they can't refuse. You may be able to provide a particular skill that they don't have, for example, being able to prepare Pro Tools sessions, do music editing for them, or a whole range of other skills.

When you send out emails, only a few will likely reply. However, you should always send a follow-up email even if you don't hear back. I would give it two or three weeks between sending your first email and the follow-up email. In your second email, say something along the following lines:

Hi, (musician name)

I hope you don't mind me emailing for a second time; I just wondered if you'd had a chance to read the email that I sent across a few weeks ago?

I'd love to meet up for a chat over a drink in the future when you have some time. I appreciate that you're very busy, so I understand if that isn't possible.

Let me know your thoughts.

Thank you!

(your name)

Professionals are busy people, and sending paragraph after paragraph as to why you should work for them is not going to impress them. At this stage, they don't know you, so they're probably not going to take a considerable interest in you at this stage. The crucial part of this is to meet them in the flesh. This is the only way for them to assess whether they can get along with you, and whether they want to work with you. After all, you want to work with people you like, especially when it's 3 am and you're tired and stressed, right?

Don't give up, send lots of emails, expect very few replies, but jump on the one or two people that reply out of the few hundred emails that you send. It is imperative to make the most of these potential opportunities. I also can't stress enough how important it is to meet people in real life. Emailing somebody will only get you so far, you need to meet people to gauge whether you like each other and can work with each other.

DO I NEED TO LIVE IN LONDON TO GET WORK?

With the age of technology and computers, it has made it entirely possible to work from most locations on earth and still get enough work. It is a common misconception that you need to live in London where the living costs and overheads can be astronomical. I'm not saying that it isn't a benefit to live in London, but it's certainly not a deal-breaker. As far as I'm aware, I've never lost a job from not living in London, but that said, I'm less than an hour away on the train.

"When I started copying back in the early '80s, we did everything by hand with pencil, pen and paper - there would be a group of orchestrators and a larger team of copyists on any project - film, musical etc. Also, you had to be close to where the work was happening, and be prepared to spend the night scribbling away on someone's dining room table. Once we moved onto computers in the mid-late '90s, the numbers being used dwindled, and once email took off, numbers dwindled still more. You could live wherever, though!"

- Jill Streater from Global Music Services

CODA

XXXXXXXXXX

SO, WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO NOW? NOW IS THE TIME TO PUT THIS BOOK DOWN AND PUT THE SKILLS that you've learned to the test. This should mean finding out the contact details of those you admire most, and contacting them to try and get some advice, or maybe even try and get a job as their assistant. It's vital to be completely proactive and not let the incredibly slow process of finding work deplete your motivation levels. Try and imagine yourself in five years' time, and how far you will have come when you put all of the advice from this eBook into practise.

Nobody is going to hand you anything on a plate, and it's tougher than ever to make a living from music, but this should definitely not stop you. If anything, it should make you want it even more. You need to find the best ways to maximise your stream of income by experimenting with different varieties of work. Be realistic about the future and where you can foresee various revenue streams increasing or dying out.

You have learned about how to manage your finances, but please note that these figures (especially the tax bands) may change from year to year in the government budget. It is up to you as a business owner to keep up to date with these financial changes.

So, what are you waiting for? Get out there and start your business.

If you have found this eBook beneficial, I'd be hugely appreciative if you could give it a shout out on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and any other socials. If you'd like to see more tips and tricks, why not check out my Twitter and Instagram at @NoonWithATune, as well as my YouTube channel where I will be adding much more insightful and in-depth content.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCv3MVGmJjiD3Giz4mzrcf8A>

If you'd like to get in touch for one-to-one tuition, please get in touch at:

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