

INSTITUTE FOR MUSIC LEADERSHIP



EASTMAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC
UNIVERSITY of ROCHESTER

Careers and Professional Development

“SUCCESSFUL GIGGING AND FREELANCING”

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GIGGING AND FREELANCING

Gigging is an effective way to supplement your income, to earn a living and to get paid to perform. On one level, it can help to simply pay the bills, but when done well, it can significantly supplement other income streams. When it is done professionally and run as a business, it can become a way to make a living. Gigging or freelancing is not for everyone. It can be a challenging, demanding and under-appreciated business; but it can also be a satisfying one if you are committed to your success as a freelancer.

Gigging involves interaction with a customer who will be paying you for your services, but is also paying for services that they want. It's important to remember that the customer has the right to expect your best services, just as you have the right and obligation to be duly compensated for the service. Typically, musicians are paid on a contract or hourly basis. The music may be background (i.e. cocktail party), inclusive (i.e. wedding) or the featured entertainment. In other words, from the client's perspective, the music may be the occasion, or may be part of a wider experience for their guests. Make sure you understand the parameters of what the client expects so that you are fully prepared for all eventualities. Start developing your networking skills; develop relationships with fellow musicians with whom you would feel comfortable working, and on whom you can rely.

Be prepared to be somewhat flexible when working with a client who may or may not be a musician. You will be providing a service to them for their occasion. Know what types of gigs are going to be suitable for your experience and interests. Think about the repertoire you have. It should be suitable for the sorts of gigs you are looking to play. You should have enough repertoire. You should own or invest in enough repertoire so that you could play additional music for a specified time commitment. You should be able and prepared to invest time in learning new repertoire so that you can make other opportunities available to you. Different events require different approaches and skills. If a gig isn't suitable for you for whatever reason, don't take it; refer it out. It will generally be a better result for everyone involved. It is OK not to accept a gig before a firm agreement (either written or aural) is made; *it is unacceptable to agree to work for a gig, and not show up for it.*

Getting gigs is all about self-promotion and networking, in one form or another. Very often, you may get a gig through a referral of some sort, but at some point, you have to sell yourself and your abilities to a potential customer. Not only do you have to convince them that you are a good fit for their event, you may have to sell your services better than other musicians who are also interested in the gig.

Contracting Gigs

It's also possible to make money by serving as a contractor for services, whereby you don't necessarily play the gig yourself, but you sub-contract the gig out to other players. Develop a targeted list of musicians in town. Go to concerts; introduce yourself to organizations, contact students and teachers at local music schools and departments. Introduce yourself at music stores. Assuming that you can create musical opportunities for yourself and other musicians develop a roster of musicians that you can work with. Contact your own alumni office and see which other alumni may be in town with whom you might work.

Typically, a contractor takes 10-20% of the total contract price for the gig, but 100% of the responsibility if anything goes wrong. Get firm commitments from your players; use people you trust for the highest level of professionalism (not just your friends). Make sure your players understand exactly what you expect of them, particularly for matters of professionalism and punctuality. Make it clear that anything less will mean getting dropped from your list. This is not unreasonable, as long as you use these on a regular basis, and pay them their due for the work performed.

If you contract out a gig, make sure that you take care of every possible detail so that *nothing* can go wrong. This is where you earn your money. Keep in touch with the client, especially in advance of the gig. Communicate all requests to the players in a timely manner. If you contract out a gig that you yourself do not play, always follow up with the client to check on the professionalism of *your employees* and the quality of their performance. Make sure you check on the satisfaction of the customer, the quality of the music and repertoire, and issues like timeliness of the musicians, appropriateness of attire and repertoire, business manner, etc. You'll need this information for future hiring choices.

Invest in your future by developing professional marketing materials. With even a small budget, it should be possible to produce a variety of materials that will help you in your marketing efforts. Think about your target market, and where you might advertise. If you are interested in weddings, contact local churches and organists, contact wedding coordinators, florists, and bridal stores (You can negotiate a referral fee based on work sent your way). Advertise in local wedding publications. Check the Yellow Pages for related, pre-existing businesses. Know your market, and sell your skills.

At the gig, play your best – you never know who is going to be there – other musicians, a hotel manager, guests that may book you for their next social event....You can't afford not to give 110%.

Marketing Tools and Necessities

The following section identifies many items that you should develop to help sell yourself and your services.

CONTRACT: A gig is a business arrangement. It's important that you get it in writing. A contract validates your professionalism. Always use a contract to get the details of the gig in writing to protect you and to assist the client in shaping the entertainment for the occasion. A written contract seals a verbal agreement. See the contract samples at the end of this handout to get ideas about designing your own contract with the specific details you want to have in writing. Send an original and a copy of an unsigned contract to the client; the client should sign both and return them to you in an appropriate amount of time; then, you sign both, keeping a copy for your records, and sending a copy to the client for their records. *International students must be authorized for off campus work permission before accepting any gig.*

BUSINESS CARDS: Business cards are an absolute necessity for freelancers. You should bring them to every performance or professional opportunity (conferences, initial meetings with potential clients, managers, etc). Carry them in your instrument case, your wallet and in the pocket of your business clothes. If you are performing regularly, audience members may be interested in hiring you for similar future opportunities; a business card is a simple, professional means to give them your contact information. They can also be used to post in a variety of places where potential clients can see your services (e.g. music store and church bulletin boards). Professionally printed business cards start at about \$50 for 250, or \$60 for 500, or \$65 for 1000.

REPERTOIRE LISTS: Rep lists are useful to have not only for your own information, but they are also particularly helpful if the client needs assistance in choosing repertoire. When meeting with clients, you should be prepared to play samples from any piece of repertoire you have listed. Develop different repertoire lists for different types of performance opportunities – don't just develop one mega-list of everything you've ever done – it won't help the client (remember: most clients aren't musicians). If a specific piece that a client requests is not in your repertoire, make sure you can get a copy or an arrangement suitable for your instrument or ensemble.

DEMO CD: Very important. Although not every potential client will ask for a sample of your abilities, they may (particularly if they have more than one group or soloist to choose from). A short CD of suitable material is sufficient, but make sure that both the performance quality and the recording quality represents you well. The material on the tape should be a sample of the music that will be heard at the gig event – NOT your latest concert recital. The CD should be clearly labeled with your contact information. The CD should look and sound as professional as possible. Decide if this CD will be a throwaway / souvenir for the client, or if you need it returned.

BUSINESS LETTERHEAD: Your written contact, and any correspondence with a client or potential client, should be on your own letterhead. Make sure that your contact information is clearly laid out. Spend the time to develop suitable stationary that reflects your professionalism. Think about developing a logo and a name for your business. Don't forget to sign all of your documents!

PHOTO: You'll need a good quality photo or set of photos that you'll be able to use in a variety of situations: flyers, brochures, press releases, posters, press kits, etc. Quality photos can easily be scanned onto a computer and used with a number of software packages to produce professional looking materials. Use a qualified, recommended photographer. Keep within a budget, bearing in mind that you generally get what you pay for.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Develop a small number of *satisfied* customers who would be happy to serve as a referral for you either by letter to you (a copy of which you can send in your initial marketing materials package) or by phone. Remember: not all clients are necessarily the types of person that you would want to speak on your behalf. Make sure that your referent is comfortable being approached (by phone) by potential future clients. Be sensitive to their wishes and keep this list current. Save any particularly good quotes for possible use in other materials, such as your brochure or flyer. This recommendation can often be the clincher in securing a gig.

BIO: A bio is a short, easy-to-read text description of your professional accomplishments, and may contain information on a variety of topics including musical niche, training, education, instrumental abilities, former performance venues, client list of organizations, etc. Bios are written in the third person (he/she/Mr./Ms., not I).

ENGAGEMENT LIST: As you develop your experience with gigs, you should build a list of venues where you have performed, clients with whom you have worked, etc. This helps educate a potential client about the quality and professionalism of your experience.

BROCHURE / FLYER: This 'throwaway' item can have certain information including a photo shot, a bio, quotes, etc. It is used not only for posting in various venues, but as a marketing tool when talking with clients or managers of booking locations like hotels, clubs and resorts.

Getting the Gig

Professionalism in everything that you do is the key. From your first contact with a potential client, or their first contact with you, your chances of securing the gig and of keeping the client happy will depend on your attitude about your presentation and interaction. You will often have to initiate contact with organizations or locations to create a performance opportunity for yourself – you should develop a targeted list of local opportunities. Don't do a mass mailing – it's very expensive, and usually is not worth the effort and expense. Instead, you should think about your local area, and who you might convince to hire you. Start with an initial contact, such as a brochure, flyer or card; then follow up with a phone call and an appointment if possible. Be prepared! – Bring all your promotional materials, in case they are needed. Think about the following issues:

PHONE MATTERS: Think about your business message on your home answering machine. How professional does it sound? Is the name of your group on the message? If you have roommates, do you have separate phone-mail boxes for the caller? If not, can you rely on your roommates to act professionally on your behalf if a client calls in your absence? Consider putting suitable background music on your message (have your demo tape playing in the background). This may be the first contact a potential client has; you don't want it to be the last. Check for messages at least once a day (don't forget to check any e-mail account associated with your business). Return or respond to all messages promptly, and send any necessary materials in a timely manner. Think about your phone manner, and how you are going to sell yourself on the phone, as opposed to a meeting in person. Have your materials to hand, and make sure you have repertoire suggestions ready to talk about, if necessary.

MEETING THE CLIENT: If you need to meet with a client in advance of contracting the gig, dress professionally, and bring your marketing materials; establish in advance if you are to bring your instrument in case they would like to hear you perform. Be courteous, listen to them and to their needs and wishes; use a good handshake, pay attention, and maintain good eye contact! Work with the client – be flexible, and sensitive to their knowledge of music (or lack thereof).

Types of events

Anniversaries
Funerals
Weddings
Cocktail parties
Corporate parties
Holiday / Religious Parties
Bat / Bar Mitzvahs
Christmas parties
Receptions
Memorial services
Proms

Places to advertise

Newspapers (dailies and weeklies)
Local music stores
Wedding magazines
Churches
Yellow Pages
Community and local magazines
Chamber of Commerce
Radio
Internet
Community TV (often free to advertise)

Places to network

Local musicians
Local music teachers
Churches / Justices of the Peace
Local music schools and departments

Places to seek gigs

Convention centers
Hotels
Churches / Synagogues
Museums and galleries
Hospitals
Nightclubs
Coffee houses
Restaurants
Malls
Local corporations
University and College activity programs
Student organizations
K-12 schools (public and private)
Holiday resorts
Local places of public interest
Wineries
Street performances
Country clubs
Cruise ships
Political organizations
Private clubs
Summer programs
Bookstores
Farmers markets
Supermarkets
Public libraries
Local organizations
Expositions
Conferences
Local fairs and festivals (Park Avenue / East End / Cornhill /
Greek / Clothesline (Memorial Art Gallery) / Canal Days
(Fairport) / City of Rochester, etc.
Any place where there will be an audience!

Contract Details

You should *always* use a contract when setting up a gig. It speaks to your professionalism and it protects you in the event of any dispute about the details of the gig. But, by the same token, once both parties sign the contract, you are also bound by its terms. It is really important to be as specific as possible concerning the details that you need to get in writing. It is also important to be flexible and to work with the client in coming to an agreement that suits both parties. Educate the client when necessary – they may not understand the common practices of a gigging musician. Always be professional. If the client is asking for services that you can't provide (certain repertoire, style, etc.), it is better to refer the gig to one of your professional contacts. Adapt the following essential details as needed when you design your contract for services:

DATE AND TIME: Make sure you are available at this time, that it doesn't conflict with anything, and that all members of your group can arrive on time. Don't plan gigs back to back on the same day without a comfortable amount of time to travel from one gig to another. Always arrive early to the gig to set-up and to start at the negotiated time. Let your clients know in advance of your arrival time so that you are not something else for them to worry about. Establish the start and end times, and if there are to be any breaks during the gig for the musicians.

CONTACT INFO: Only one player from an ensemble should be the contact person. More than that creates the possibilities of miscommunications. All contact information about you and your client should be clear on the contract. Wherever possible, mail or fax the contract in plenty of time to get the contract back (with a deposit) in advance of the gig. If you list contact information on your contract such as voicemail or email, make sure that you check for messages at least once a day. Let the client know the best way to get in touch with you, and find out the best way to contact them (particularly in the days and hours before the gig, if necessary). Unless there are details to work out, there should be no unforeseen emergencies on your part that would necessitate a call. However, a courtesy call a couple of days before the gig is often a good idea, just to confirm any last minute issues. You should consider getting a pager, a cell phone, and/or voice mail for use associated with your business.

CONTRACT PRICE: Know your worth and know the market. Set your price accordingly, bearing in mind issues like the length of the gig, distance to travel to the gig, if extra equipment is needed, any special requests, etc. Be flexible when negotiating price, but make sure that you have a price beneath which you don't go – if you go too low, you'll be doing yourself a disservice, and a disservice to musicians. Remember that the general public often doesn't know what the cost of hiring musicians for their event may be – make sure that they know they are getting good value for their money, and that the quality of the performance will be worth the price they are paying. The more professional you are, the more likely you are to get your price. If necessary, negotiate overtime details, should they become necessary. Factor in costs for travel beyond a certain distance. If you need to do extra work, such as the purchase or arrangement of a non-standard piece of event repertoire, adjust your price accordingly.

It's a good practice to secure a deposit in advance of the gig. 30-50% is not unreasonable (as long as it is specified in the contract). The security deposit secures your services. The balance should typically be paid promptly upon completion of the gig. Don't bother to ask for a deposit if you don't have a contract. Specify if the payment is to be in the form of cash, check or money order. One person should be designated for receiving payment, and is then responsible for ensuring that the other members of the group get paid. Keep good records of all payment transactions. You'll need this when tax time comes around. Give a receipt for any payment received drafted on your letterhead, or by using a standard 'Receipt Book'. Negotiate a cancellation schedule in the event that your services are not needed after they have been booked – approach this from the perspective of 'lost opportunity'; you may have to turn down other gigs once you formally agree to accept a gig. Make sure that the client understands these issues.

LOCATION: Make sure that this detail of the gig is on the contract, and that you have clear directions. Equip yourself with a detailed map of the area. Leave plenty of time to get there; allow for traffic, rush hour, weather, road works, etc.

REPERTOIRE: Be clear on the type(s) of music you are expected to play, or have specific pieces of music requested by the client listed on the contract. Make sure you have plenty of music to perform for whatever reason. Make sure your music is appropriate for your event (you should consult with the client in advance where necessary). Don't forget about the possibility of having to play overtime. Don't ever be in a position where you are sight reading your music, no matter how adept at that you may be. You should also develop your improvising abilities so that you can add 'filler' music, or cut short a piece of music depending on event circumstances.

PERFORMANCE: Arrive early for set-up. Ultimately, you are going to have to take on the responsibility of ensuring that all of your details are taken care of. It doesn't help you if you can't play at a specified time because of an oversight on somebody else's part. Make sure your space is relatively well defined, so that you don't have to worry about guests bumping into you by mistake. Bring music stands, pins to clip the music on to the stand (for outdoor performances), clip-on lights for your music stands and extension cords just in case they are needed. Decide in advance the order of the music, and how 'repeats' are going to be handled. Make sure that all members of the groups have copies of all the music (binders are a good idea) in the same order – this will save having to rummage through it later when you least have time. Bring extra strings and reeds for your instruments if needed. If necessary, have extra sheet music on hand for emergencies.

SIGNATURES: Both you and the client should sign the contract. After the details of the gig have been verbally agreed, fill out a contract with as many of the details as possible. Send the client the original and a copy of this *unsigned* contract. Have them sign and return BOTH to you *in advance* of the gig with whatever security deposit has been agreed upon, in a timeframe that is OK with you. Then you sign both, sending the client a final copy, and keeping one for your records.

SPECIAL TERMS: If there is anything that the client is specifically requesting, it is best to have this formalized in the contract. This is the place where the client can make specific requests. If either you or the client has specific needs, those terms should be in the main body of the contract, not a last minute request when you arrive at the gig.

ATTIRE: Understand what the client is requesting, and what is appropriate for the event. Err on the side of being too formal if you are unsure. Establish what the client expects, and specify it in the contract. Look the part – if you do, chances are that the audience will feel that you sound better, and the client will feel better about paying your fee!

INSIDE/OUTSIDE: If the gig is inside, make sure that the main issues like seating and lighting will be taken care of by the event or location staff (if possible). If the gig is outside, make sure that you develop a “Plan B” with the client in the event of inclement weather; this is for your protection and for the protection of your instruments (too hot / cold / wet / windy / humid / not shady etc.). If you need a tent or canopy, you’ll need to discuss this and come to an agreement in advance. It should be very clear at which point an event’s music should be moved indoors or cancelled, and that the decision is yours to make (be sensitive about how you relay this - don’t expect a client to care or know as much about you and your instruments as you do,).

SEATING: Arrive early enough to ensure that you have seating (!) and that it is comfortable. Your chairs should be armless to facilitate performance. As a backup, you may want to bring a stool with you when travelling to a gig, even if it’s not needed. Make sure you have enough space and that you’re not in the way so that the guests won’t be crashing into you or into your instruments. If any amplification is needed, you will have to be located near some electrical outlets.

LIGHTING: When possible, make sure you position yourself where you have adequate lighting. If outdoors, don’t play facing the sun, if possible. For evening or indoor performances, bring clip-on lights in case of emergencies.

CONTRACT: Always bring the final copy of the contract with you to the event in case you need to refer to it, or in case you need to refer the client to it.

BREAKS: If breaks are to be taken during a performance, this should be specified within the contract. During a break, don’t assume that you can mingle with the guests or help yourself to any of the food and refreshments for the evening. If you need some refreshments (especially for a long gig), arrange this in advance with the client, specifying this in the contract. Don’t drink alcohol during the gig, even at the invitation of the client. Wait until you are finished performing if you feel you need to! A 10-minute break per hour (not at the beginning) is standard practice. Communicate this to the client and agree on this in advance.

PIANO: If a piano is to be used for the event, make sure that the event location or the client is responsible for arranging to have it moved to the correct location and for it to be tuned in advance. If an electric keyboard is being used, make sure you have access to electrical sockets (bring your own extension cords, and bring duct tape to ensure that nobody trips over any wires).

AMPLIFICATION: If any of the music needs to be amplified, the contract should state whether the client or the performers will be responsible for this. If the client is a hotel or club, they may provide the amplification. If amplification is to be provided for the client by a hotel or club, there will usually be a charge (to the client) for this; make sure this responsibility is specified in the contract.

CHECK: Always make a copy of the deposit check. You may have to take the client to small claims court in the event that he/she doesn’t pay you the balance upon the completion of the gig, or if their final check bounces. In this scenario, a contract will protect your case, as long as the services were provided according to the details of the contract. Having a copy of the initial deposit check provides the name of the bank with which the client does business, and his or her account number. If you have to go to court, the judge may be able to use this to facilitate payment of the balance to you.

INSURANCE: If you plan on doing a lot of freelancing, you should consider taking out liability insurance to protect yourself in a variety of ways; consider issues including damage to your instrument when travelling, possible injury ‘on-the-job’, workers’ insurance, health insurance, etc. It is not unusual for location venues like concert halls to ask that renting groups provide proof of insurance for themselves and their equipment.

Getting to the Gig

Plan ahead. Have directions and the address in your contract. Allow time for setting up, warming up and meeting with the client, so that you are ready to go in advance of the scheduled start time. Have a good local map (AAA maps come free with membership). Have a reliable car, or a reliable friend. Think about alternatives (bus / subway / taxi / back-up plan). Make sure you know how to get there. Leave time for error. Find out about parking, and make sure that lack of parking is not going to make you late. Factor in enough time to get lost at least twice. If you are late, it's your fault and it's unacceptable – end of story.

Things to bring to the Gig

MUSIC: Bring extra, including sheet music. If you have an ensemble, organize the music in 3-ring binders, with the music *in the same order*. The binders should not be falling apart, should be clearly labeled, and if possible should not have awkward page turns. Either order the music, or label it so that it can be opened quickly and easily. Review the order of the music with your ensemble *before* you start, particularly discussing repeats.

EQUIPMENT: If there is a lot required, make a check list in advance: Instruments (!), music stands, clips (for wind and air conditioning systems), clip-on lights (for evening or indoor performances), extension cords, plug adaptors, amps, and microphones. Don't forget about emergency items: a music stool, a set of extra strings, reeds, valve oil, mutes, duct tape and scissors (for securing electrical wires).

OTHER ITEMS: Cell phone / pager (give the number to the client in advance, and turn it off before playing), a copy of the signed contract with the phone number of the client), directions to the gig, map, tuning metronome, a receipt for payment. Bring a notebook and a pencil to track your mileage or travel & parking costs – keep them in your car or instrument case, and document the details every time. Don't forget your business cards.

Follow-Up

After the gig, don't forget to follow up with the client, the host or the guest of honor. This is not only a matter of professional courtesy, but is a good business practice. If the timing of this is not completely appropriate, make sure you send a thank you letter – even if it doesn't get you another gig from that client, there may be a chance that they will give your name to someone else. Make sure you leave your business card. If you are playing with other musicians that you are meeting for the first time, give *them* your business card. Talk to the owner or manager of the building where similar functions may be held and give them your card.

Expenses and Taxes

RECORD KEEPING: Keep track of ALL operating costs and expenses associated with your gigging business and the cost of being a musician. This includes all of your marketing materials, postage, recording costs if any, your music, your music supplies, your travel, your voicemail, etc. Keep these costs in mind as a factor when setting your fees, bearing in mind that you'll need to stay competitive with market rates or you may not get the gig in the first place. You should spread the costs of these materials over a fixed amount of time, and over a fixed number of gigs. The primary goal is not primarily to directly pass these costs on to the customer, but to track these costs and use them to offset your income, which will lower your taxes.

When it comes to tax time, your expenses can be deducted from your income as a business expense on your Schedule C, *which will save you money*. Keep all your receipts. Develop a system to file expenses in a manner that will make sense when it comes to tax time next year. Educate yourself on tax issues, and depending on the amount of money you generate with your business, you could consider consulting with an accountant. There are also a variety of excellent tax software products on the market (Turbotax) that are well worth the time and money. Make sure you keep impeccable records (and accurate ones for tax purposes). Impeccable records make an audit much easier.

If you are contracting gigs or functioning as the contact person for your ensemble, payments made to your musicians must be reported to the IRS (inquire with your local tax office for details). You'll need to issue a 1099-MISC to each of your payees by January 31 of the year following payment for their tax reporting. Make a note of any conversations you have regarding a gig, noting the time, date and with whom you have spoken. Keep any correspondence related to the gig. Save the contract, record the payment made to you, and record any payments made by you to other players. Develop a mailing list of clients for whom you have worked so that you can notify them of upcoming performances, your new CD, etc. Develop a mailing list of players with whom you work. Develop a mailing list of players with whom you would like to work.

Set up a self-directed IRA or retirement account from a percentage of the proceeds of your business. Not only could you pay less tax the following year, but you'll also be putting money away for your future. Start this when you get your first check. Do it.

FREELANCING ISSUES:

Most musicians moonlight, or freelance from time to time, and many make their living exclusively from freelancing, especially in bigger cities. Freelancing is all about networking and self-marketing. It takes time, hustle and commitment. If you don't have these qualities, you are going to spend a lot of time waiting for the phone to ring. Find out who else in town is involved in music making; introduce yourself. Find out who is hiring. Consider paying for a lesson with a local contractor; spend time establishing your performance abilities, and discussing performance and freelance opportunities in town. One of the most important things is to try to get on their call list. Assuming that your performance chops are up to par, you will typically initially be put down at the bottom of their list, but in time, you'll get the call, and will gradually make your way up the list – especially if you do a great job. Don't expect the contractor to give you any special preference just because you have made contact; they will generally prioritize their calls based on whom they have hired in the past; getting that first call takes time. You'll need patience and perseverance. When you get that first call, do whatever it takes to make it happen. If you have a conflict, do whatever you can to re-arrange your schedule. If it involves travelling, work out some way to get there that you can rely on. Subsequent gigs will pay for the expense or inconvenience of that first gig. Don't rely on one contractor for work. Take as much local work as you can; pretty soon, your name will get around town. Whenever you are performing or talking to other musicians, be professional and friendly – don't be pushy, inflexible or condescending – people won't want to hire you.

Find out about performance ensembles around town, both professional and semi-professional. Find out when they hold auditions for their substitute list. Consider doing a few 'freebies' so that you can meet other local players. Bring all your promo materials so that you can market yourself as needed.

Refer quality work to contractors or other musicians when the opportunity arises. If you get a call to do a gig for somebody, do the best job you possibly can. Anything less means that you probably won't get another call; if there's anything unprofessional about how you interact with the contractor, or with the other musicians on the gig, you won't get another call from the contractor, and your reputation will precede you around town.

Develop your sight-reading and improvisation skills. These are fundamental, required abilities for any freelancer. Think about developing your performance abilities in similar instruments. If you are a pianist, learn your way around an electronic keyboard. If you are a violinist, think about trying the viola. If you are a clarinetist, try your hand at a variety of other double reed instruments, or other wind instruments – the more proficient you become on a variety of instruments, the more work you'll get. As you develop your proficiencies, make sure that the contractors in town know your new skills.

Develop your repertoire. Experiment with different styles or arrangements. Invest in a variety of music that you can quickly learn that you would be comfortable playing at a moment's notice. Always plan on arriving 30 minutes before curtain call (you can always use this time for networking).

If it's absolutely impossible for you to take a gig, offer names of players that you can rely on; they'll appreciate it, and in time, they'll call you to 'return' the referral. Keep a file or address book of all your local musical contacts; keep in touch with them, attend any concerts they might give, send them announcements and invitations to any of your performances, and send them thank you notes when appropriate. But also be careful about being overbearing or pushy – that will undo all your good intentions.

Never criticize other musicians (especially when they aren't around!). The musical world is surprisingly small – instead, focus on the positive and the constructive.

Join the local musician's union (AFM) – this will automatically give you access to a large number of local musicians. Union membership is usually required for any of the larger, contracted gigs in town. Union membership gets you union rates for certain gigs. You'll become part of the local membership and may get calls because of it. Use the membership to your advantage. The membership dues are a good investment.

Work out a series of goals to be achieved within a certain timeframe – be pragmatic, but aim high. These goals don't have to be 'make-or-break', but should be used to achieve certain milestones. Self-assessment at regular intervals is a useful exercise in setting priorities and achieving goals. Stay focussed on your long-term goals. If your current approach isn't working, try a completely fresh approach. Re-assess your commitment to your ideals, and be realistic about your professional strengths and weaknesses.

Reserve time each day to craft your art. Don't let this slide, no matter what. And never, ever be late to a gig.

On the following pages are three sample contracts. These can be adapted in a variety of ways to suit your own circumstances. Contracts will assist you in securing gigs, will protect you and will strengthen your case in court should non-payment occur. Take the time and effort to develop a professional looking contract using quality paper.

GUD VYBES ENTERTAINMENT, INC

46 Gibbs Street, Rochester, NY 14605

Phone: (716) 274 2278

Fax: (716) 275 6111

imapercussionist@esmgig.com

<http://www.gudvybes.com>

In consideration of the sum of \$_____, agreement was made on

(DATE)	_____	between
(ARTIST)	_____	and
(CLIENT)	_____	

Artist will provide **MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT** for service detailed below.

TYPE OF SERVICE: _____

DATE: _____

TIME ON DUTY: _____

LOCATION: _____

CLIENT agrees to engage ARTIST for the services detailed above, and to make payment as follows:

TOTAL FEE:

METHOD OF PAYMENT:

DUE:

Any additional time on duty to be compensated at the rate of
\$_____ per each half-hour unit.

SPECIAL TERMS OF THIS AGREEMENT:

Signatures below indicate understanding and acceptance of the terms of this AGREEMENT.

CLIENT

DATE

ADDRESS

PHONE:

FAX:

E-MAIL:

ARTIST

DATE

ADDRESS

PHONE:

FAX:

E-MAIL:

Neda Diva Performance & Associates

1812 Eastman Place, Rochester, NY 14605

Phone / Fax: (716) 274 8367 1234; e-mail: beautifulmusic@yourplace.com

CONTRACT FOR SERVICES

Neda Diva, herein referred to as "the provider" agrees to provide musical entertainment for

NAME: _____

(Herein referred to as "the client")

ADDRESS: _____

ON: _____ DATE: _____

AT: _____ AM/PM _____

VENUE: _____

FEE: \$ _____

Cash, check or money order made payable to: Neda Diva,

DUE: A Deposit of \$ _____ or _____% is required _____ Days in advance.
Balance is due on the day of performance upon completion of services.

SIGNED: (Client) _____

(Date) _____

(Provider) _____

(Date) _____

On behalf of the client, the provider will distribute the amount received to other members of the artist's group as necessary. The persons executing this contract have the authority to enter into this agreement. Should they not have such authority, they fully and personally assume full responsibility and liability under the terms of this legally binding contract to perform. This contract is subject to legitimate conditions beyond the provider's control, including, but not limited to, acts of God, riots, strikes, epidemics, accidents, or other legitimate conditions.

The BeauxZo Trio

Ima BeauxZo, (spike fiddle and manager), Ura BeauxZo (sackbut), Gazzy Beaux (bagpipes)
16453 Symphony Terrace, Rochester, NY 14605; (716) 555 1234 (ph/fax); thebeauxzotrio@yahoo.com

This is an agreement for personal services of musicians on the engagement described below made by and between TheBeauxZoTrio (hereafter called "The Artists") and the undersigned Purchaser of Performance (hereafter called "Client") this _____ day of _____ 20____,

Client: _____
Address: _____
Phone: (Home) _____ Phone: (Work) _____
E-mail: _____
Contact Person (If different from Client) _____

I, (We), the client, agree to hire The Artists for musical services and entertainment

On: _____ (Performance Date)
At: _____ (Performance Location)

(Address)
From: _____ AM/PM until _____ AM/PM (Performance Time)
With: a break of _____ minutes per hour of performance

The Artists will provide the following music:

CLASSICAL JAZZ POPULAR MIXED PUNK OTHER (SPECIFY) _____

Contract Price: \$ _____
(A signed contract with a NON-REFUNDABLE deposit of 50% must be received by _____ (date) in order to secure the services of The Artists).

Deposit: \$ _____ due at signing of contract, of which
\$ _____ is NON-REFUNDABLE
(The client may elect to pay a larger amount in advance of the performance).

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS:

- 1) The Artists' attire will be: (indicate one)
 FORMAL SEMI-FORMAL BLACKTIE CASUAL OTHER _____
- 2) Purchaser WILL WILL NOT provide The Artists with refreshments (there is no obligation to do so).
- 3) Outdoor Performance? YES NO
- 4) Adequate and appropriate lighting and seating in the stage or performance area shall be provided or arranged by the client. The Artists will provide music stands and other necessary equipment, props and transportation. If any additional equipment (amplification, etc.) is to be provided by the Artists (at an additional charge to be agreed upon), please specify.

Equipment: _____

Equipment Charge: \$ _____ (if applicable)

Final Balance: \$ _____ due upon completion of performance, (unless arrangements have been agreed upon in advance by the client and The Artists).

(OVER)

CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT:

- 1) Services and payments are contracted, scheduled and guaranteed based on the receipt of valid, completed contracts.
- 2) Payment must be made by cash, check or money order, payable to The Artists. There is a \$30 fee for all returned checks, in which event, The Artists will require payment in full immediately. A late payment of the final balance will incur an automatic late fee of \$50, plus 1% per day not compounding, on the total balance due.
- 3) If requested, The Artists may be available to perform longer than the contracted time, although this cannot be guaranteed. Subject to their availability, the client agrees to pay an additional \$_____ per each 15 minutes of overtime requested, also due in full at the end of the performance.
- 4) Cancellation: in the event of a cancellation for any reason, the client is responsible for immediately contacting The Artists at (716) 555 1234. The Artists guarantee the contracted musical services and must turn down other further requests for the contracted time; consequently, cancellation fees are as follows:

50% deposit at time of submission of contract:	Non-refundable
30 or more days notice:	Additional 25% of total contract price
Less than 30 days notice:	Additional 50% of total contract price
No notice given:	Balance due
- 5) The Artists will arrive at the specified location with ample time to set up and start at the time scheduled. If The Artists are unable to set up due to the location not being available at the said time, the finishing time will remain as stated in the contract unless the client agrees to the overtime clause above (item #3).
- 6) If the performance is outdoors, the client shall provide suitable protections for the Artists and their equipment (tent/canopy, etc.) OR make arrangements for an alternative indoor location in the event of inclement weather. The Artists reserve the right to move to said location at their discretion due to unsuitable weather (too hot, too cold, too wet, too windy, etc...). In the event of a cancellation due to unsuitable weather, if an alternative indoor location has not been arranged, the client is still responsible for the total contract price to be paid in full to The Artists.
- 7) The client is responsible for providing detailed directions to the performance location with the signed, completed contract.
- 7) The Artists must receive any changes in time, location or ensemble type in writing. Such changes will be accepted and approved at the discretion of The Artists.
- 8) The Artist(s)' performance at this engagement shall not be recorded for reproduction or transmission in any form without a written agreement from the Artists.

Specific Repertoire requested by the client should be listed below:

- a) _____
- b) _____
- c) _____
- d) _____
- e) _____

Directions to the event (attach separately if insufficient space here):

CHECK ALL DETAILS OF THIS LEGALLY BINDING CONTRACT, INCLUDING LOCATIONS, DATES, TIME, ENSEMBLE TYPE, PRICE AND THE OTHER TERMS OF THIS CONTRACT. NOTIFY TheBeauxZoTrio IMMEDIATELY OF ANY ERROR, OR IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS.

Client's Signature Date:

Ima BeauxZo, manager of TheBeauxZoTrio Date: