

Music Industry



Banana Row Studios:

I am a musician and I have worked in the music industry for 35 years. When I grew up, everyone wanted to be in a band, but at first I thought I had to have a “real job” so I worked on offshore rigs. My instrument was drums, and I had always played music as an amateur part-time, then I went to a concert and decided I wanted to enter the music industry.

There was not much information at the time on music courses. They were usually for classical music, not pop or rock. I looked through the music magazines, and saw an advertisement for a specialist music school in London (which is now Called BIM, the British Institute of Music). I applied for “Drum Tech”, and got a place, and learnt how to enter the industry. I did lots of auditions, and lots of networking - watching gigs, talking to people etc.

I have since been on tour with major artists and stayed at hotels, or tiny artists and stayed in tents or the back of a van.

I moved to Edinburgh, and I became a freelance musician, and I also taught others. I realised I needed a place to practise (neighbours don't like drums), so I found a premises in Leith docks, which was nicknamed Banana Row by the fruit merchants as it was where the dockers used to unload imported fruit off the boats. I started a studio there, and moved to a premises in Eyre Place, and kept the name Banana Row.

We provide a music service to support the music industry, for instance, if Cold Play were doing a one-off gig and needed rehearsal facilities, any instruments, extra musicians, we could help them. We also provide services for a lot of music at festivals, T in the Park, Edinburgh Festival etc.

Sound Engineer:

I have a friend who was a miner in Nottingham and when the pits closed, he got a job in a music shop as he had always played bass. He started to hire equipment to customers, and then learnt how to be a sound engineer at festivals. One tour manager was looking for a sound engineer to go on tour with a new band, Girls Aloud, so he became their sound engineer for their career.

In Glasgow, another tour manager was looking for a sound engineer as there had been a visa problem with the person he usually used. Cheryl Crow recommended my friend and he became the sound engineer for Mariah Carey's tours.

As you can see the industry is not just performers, they all need support services.

Digital Music:

There is also work in digital music, there is a company called FUGO who monitor Spotify to make sure musicians get their income stream.

Now 54% of the total income in music is through streaming digital music, as both CD sales and downloads have gone down.

How to make a living in the music industry:

The Music industry is The UK's fourth biggest business, and is worth 5 billion pounds. There are 150,000 jobs on the X factor alone.

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It is very competitive, you have to be very good. I practice every day for an hour a day. It is a fantastic industry to be in. I also set up and tune drums on tour for performers like James Brown, Bruno Mars, Cypress Hill. I also perform as a drummer, I have learnt all styles, folk, jazz, blues, rock etc.

To become a recording artist, the odds are 6000 to 1.

However it is attainable. One of my drum students worked with us, supporting event bands, learnt to sing and play guitar, and got through the auditions for Let it Shine. He made it to the final, and then went to Nashville on holiday. He played in venues there, and is now on tour around America as one of the band members of King Calaway, one of the biggest country and western bands currently. A pupil who came to this school, got a job with us as an assistant - helping with recording and sound engineering. He has recently worked on a huge gospel concert in Nigeria.

Income:

If you want to be a musician, you have to be prepared to earn nothing initially, but after a while you should be able to earn

£100 - £200 a night performing

£500 a day if you tour with a major artist (they also get % of gate sales and merchandise sales)

£200 a day if you tour with a medium artist.

You will also be paid "per diems" - a daily budget for food etc £20 to £30 a day.

However you are unlikely to tour more than 150 days in a year.

Jobs in the Music Industry include:

Performers and private tutors, and a huge support industry of engineers, producers, lighting, venues, stylists, videographers, photographers, caterers, choreographers, hairdressers, booking agents etc. Also marketing and promotions. My son is a music lawyer - he works in the British Virgin Islands.

Our bible is **Showcase International** which lists all the British music industry agents, and providers of services to the music industry.

Courses in Scotland:

There are great courses like the performance music course at Napier and the courses at Edinburgh College and the Glasgow Conservatoire.

Remember:

Attitude and personality play a huge part, be amiable and personable, and make contacts.

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