

## **Business and Portfolio Materials**

**Personal Website.** Designing and maintaining a personal site has quickly become the most effective way to organize and share your information with others. Many inexpensive web template software programs are available to help you design your own site.

**Portfolio folder.** Purchase glossy portfolio. You can include your logo in black ink 3-4" from the top if you wish. On the right side place your photo. On the left side place the cover letter, resume, reviews, programs, articles, etc. This format is great because it's fluid and you can keep things current. Email it or postal mail it in 11.5x14.5 envelope. First class. Label "Don't bend - photo enclosed".

### **Business card**

You should always have your business card in your wallet. I would also recommend you carry a small pen in your wallet to take notes anytime.

### **Résumé**

A résumé must clearly convey your experiences in the highest professional manner. There can be no mistakes, poor grammar, illegible photocopies, confusing layouts, etc.

The first section contains your name and contact info: centered on the top of page one. List your name in bold large font-circa 18 point. Below this is your mailing address, phone numbers, email, website in perhaps 12 point font.

The remaining sections describe your experience. They should be arranged in an order that you believe is pertinent for the position you are seeking. It is standard

practice to list section entries in reverse-chronological order.

Section headings (listed in larger bold font-circa 14-16 point) may include:

Current Activities

Education

Performance Experience

Teaching Experience

Awards and Honors

Professional Affiliations

References

Do not include a section entitled "Career Objectives". If you are sending someone a résumé, it should be because you are responding to a specific vacancy so your objective should be clear from your application. Including "career objectives" implies you are sending out many résumés and are hoping to receive some position that you know little about. This is not the best message to send a prospective employer. You can address how their vacancy relates to your long-term career goals in your cover letter.

### **Bio**

You should prepare bios that contain highlights from your career that are pertinent to whom will be reading them. Sometimes only a sentence or two is required, sometimes a paragraph, and sometimes more. I maintain three different bios - short, medium, and long. This practice saves other people time editing your bio and the end result will usually be more to your liking.

### **Recommendations and References**

Most searches for teaching positions will require you to submit 2-4 recommendations

letters. Alternatively, they may request a reference list to call as desired. In either case, be certain that your references will cast you in a positive light. Ask your colleagues if you can use them as a reference. If they are at all hesitant, look elsewhere.

References should include a variety of colleagues - long time friends and recent ones. Include colleagues from a variety of disciplines who will be able to speak from different perspectives about your work and personality.

References are usually compiled two ways. One, is in a university placement office, where they maintain a file on you and you send them a request for each position you are applying for. They send a copy of your portfolio to prospective employers. Placement offices are often separate from a university records office whom are responsible for sending official copies of your academic transcripts to potential employers as requested. The other method is to maintain your own portfolio and send materials yourself.

The advantage of a placement office is supposedly that it is easier to send numerous applications. If you are applying for many positions this might be the way to go. The disadvantage is that your materials may appear less personalized to a prospective employer. I have used both methods and prefer to maintain my own portfolio. I can tailor it for each individual position and it is easier to update my materials. Further, I have control of when materials are sent, and further, placement offices do not send recordings or supplementary materials.

A reference list should include 3-6 names and use the following format.

**References for "John Doe"**

Name

Title/Position

Institution/Organization

Email Address

Business phone

If you are sending letters you should ask your references if they would write you a personalized letter for each vacancy. You will need to provide them a copy of the job notice and the contact info of the director of the search committee. It is common practice that after they write the letter they will send you a copy of it. Be sure there are no mistakes in the letter. If you are applying for numerous positions and don't want to become an imposition on your friends you should request they write you a general recommendation letter so that you can copy it and distribute as necessary.

Phone recommendations are a large part of a successful job search. This is where your networking database pays dividends. If you know someone who knows somebody on the search committee or at the institution you should request that they call on your behalf. Such calls may determine who will or will not be interviewed.

It is also a good idea to call the employer and learn as much about the position before you write your cover letter. Be sure to ask specific written questions that are not addressed in the vacancy notice. Often one page published vacancy notices do not contain all the information that would help you tailor your cover letter and portfolio to the employer's expectations. You must do your homework on a position/institution/organization if you really hope to secure an interview. Before you send materials find out who teaches there, why they are leaving, what the employers are looking for, the salary, etc.

## **Cover Letter**

Fundamentals:

- Typed, error free, use excellent writing skills and no slang.
- Use professional stationary and envelopes if possible. Stationary should contain your name, address, phone, and logo.
- Get the name of the person to whom it should be addressed. Dear Sir/Madam is a turn-off.
- State what you offer, what you want, and what action you would like the reader to take.

Letter format:

Date

Addressed to:

Dear....,

Paragraph 1. Describe the position you are seeking and your objectives.

Paragraph 2. Highlight your qualifications for this position.

Closing paragraph. Thank them for their time and consideration. Invite them to call you. Request an interview in your final sentence.

Sincerely,

Signature

Name typed.

Encl.....

## **Photos**

You will need 8x10" hard copy photos and digital format photos for publicity. Headshots work best for this purpose. Convey an attitude other than "cheese". Consider

one series of shots in concert attire and bring a change or two of cloths. Choose the best photographer you can afford, look at their portfolios, and bring along photos you like. Focus your eyes straight into the lens. Minimal jewelry. Clothing colors - solids look best. Many people look best in black. Natural light is always more flattering.

### **Public Service Announcement**

Read Janice Papolos - The Performing Artists Handbook Chapter Nine for more information. The following is taken directly from her excellent book. PSA's are of two types. One, is free commercial spots. Second, is public interest programs, which you are eligible for if you are non-profit. Call and ask for the public affairs director, community relations director, or community development director. Ask for the stations requirements for submitting public service spots. Radio may require lead time of over four weeks. Television may require lead time of over 6-8 weeks. PSA'S are aired during commercial breaks and are ten, twenty, thirty, or sixty seconds long. A radio PSA is submitted as a typed script to be read by an announcer or you may submit a professionally produced tape. Television PSA's can also be sent in script form.

PSA should contain:

- Your organization's name and address. Letterhead stationary would do.
- Name and telephone number of the publicity contact.
- Dates you want the commercial to start and stop.
- Copy in ten, twenty, thirty, and sixty second versions.

Copy should include:

- Typed.
- Spell out numbers under ten and type dates with ordinal suffixes (March 25th, April

1st.

- Include phonetic spellings for foreign words and names.

- Time your copy in normal conversational voice. Word counts will be

10 seconds = 10-15 words

20 seconds = 25-40 words

30 seconds = 55-65 words

60 seconds = 120-125 words

- Ticket prices may not be mentioned in a PSA. Just state the phone number to call for information.

- Include a cover letter with the PSA. This should be brief and include a description of your organization. Also, certify your nonprofit status.

### **Press Release**

A press release is a typed description of an event that may be several paragraphs to a page long. A listing release is a brief reduction of a press release suitable for calendar listings in print media.

### **Listing Release:**

Most newspapers and magazines print listings of daily cultural events and these calendars are important publicity. Find out who the calendar editor is and send them a release prepared specifically for that kind of listing. Do not expect them to edit your press release. Instead, send a condensed version of your press release which includes: what, when, where, why, ticket info, and phone number. Many newspapers prefer a photo, so send one, as they are more likely to cover your event.

### **Networking**

I highly recommend you compile a computer database of business acquaintances.

You might organize this by instrument, type of interest, geographically (city, state, or region), alphabetically by last name, etc.. Say you have a gig tomorrow in Fargo, North Dakota and it only pays \$75. The hotel costs \$65 so it would be nice to have a friend in the Fargo area. All your opportunities will arise from the network you construct, so be a good friend to as many people as possible.

### **Scrapbook**

Maintain a chronological collection of your musical activities housed in sheet protectors in 3-ring notebooks. For example, performance programs, teaching experiences, clinics, workshops, photos, publicity you've received, letters of thanks, etc. If you teach in academia this will be a required part of your evaluation process. When you apply for college teaching positions they will often request sample programs.

### **Contracts**

You will find it beneficial to create two contracts. One, an Engagement Contract for booking gigs. Look at the AFM contracts as a starting point. Two, an Instrument Rental Contract, is particularly valuable to percussionists as it allows you to earn income.

### **Job Interviews**

Bring a copy of your portfolio for the committee's perusal. Include other materials you think might be helpful such as sample programs, instructional materials such as syllabi, etc. You must do your homework on a position/institution/organization if you really hope to have a successful interview. Before you send materials find out who teaches there, why they are leaving, what the employers are looking for, the salary, etc.

Have prepared questions.

Take notes on their responses.

Try to relate past experiences to the skills you'll need on the new job.

Before you leave know what happens next. When will you learn the results?

Be prepared to briefly answer tough questions such as:

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

What are the three greatest things you have done?

What do you want to be doing five years from now?

Summarize your philosophy of education in a paragraph or two.

Send the committee an interview follow-up letter thanking them for the opportunity to interview and learn more about their position. Your competition may not think to do this.

### **Demo Recordings**

1. Tailor your demo recording to the specific position. Ten to fifteen minutes may be fine. Careful not to make them too long. Demonstrate versatility.
2. Include both excerpts and full pieces.
3. Use high quality digital media. Include a stamped self-addressed envelope if you want it returned. Only send videotapes, DVD's if requested to do so. If you use video try to use a multi-camera set-up and edit as needed. A poor quality videotape can do more harm than good.
4. Include a complete program list with your tape. This should include: composition, composer/arranger, composition date, instruments played, personnel.
5. The rule is usually that it requires about one hour of studio time for one minute of music. This includes the set-up, recording, and editing.

6. Take examples of recordings with you of the sound you want.
7. Take a tuning fork, metronome, an extra copy of your music for the producer.
8. Recording. Divide music into sections and do one at a time, re-doing as you go. Producers often marks a minus above each measure with an error. Have the engineer run a demo for you take home.

### **Answering Services**

Be sure that the outgoing messages on your home answering machine and mobile phone are of a professional quality. Messages that are immature, too long, lewd, inside jokes to your buddies, funny voices, etc. are, at best, irritating and likely a serious turn-off to employers. I can't tell you how many times I've recommended a student for a gig to one of my colleagues, and later discovered that had I called the student's answering machine I would have hung-up and called someone else for the gig.

### **Appearance and Personality**

We live in a casual society in terms of behavior and dress. I can't tell you how many times, when I least expect it, that I've been in a situation to do a television interview or meet a business executive who might be a potential employer, collaborator, etc. Consider what impression you want people to form of you as you dress each day and as you interact with society. When we turn people off because of offensive behavior and sloppy attire we seldom realize the lost opportunities.

### **Instrument Insurance**

Insure anything you cannot afford to immediately replace in case of theft or other loss. Contact the American Federation of Musicians or your local insurance agent to set-up a personal articles policy. Most renters or homeowner policies only cover

losses from the premises and these will not suffice for a professional musician. Next to health insurance and auto insurance, this is the most important coverage you should maintain, as these items are your income earning tools. You will need to provide your insurance agent an itemized list of articles, serial numbers (if available), and the replacement cost. Keep a database of these on your computer. I insure instruments, microphones, cables, mixer, music, metronome, cases, etc,

### **Taxes**

Ahh yes...the IRS! Find an accountant that can give you advice about filing your return. Musicians' tax returns are often more complicated than those who work for a single employer and seeking professional assistance is the safest and cheapest way to go. I think of the years where I've had income from 6-7 states, dozens of W2's and 1099 forms, and hundred's of deductions. Sometimes I've spent over \$700 to have tax returns prepared in a particular year, but have always received refunds that exceed the cost.

I maintain a file box with receipts organized in the following categories for each annual tax return. If you follow this method, you should be able to tabulate all receipts in several hours. If not, you'll pay mucho taxes. Keep such records for a minimum of three years after your tax return is filed. If you cannot document each deduction, you may be subject to an audit and severe tax penalties. Many deductions are legally permitted as business expenses and these significantly reduce your taxable income. Common examples include:

Total annual vehicle mileage. Record beginning and ending mileage. Itemize business miles. Keep a small notepad in your car and enter business miles after each gig. All keep receipts for tolls and parking.

Receipts for instruments and related business supplies such as music software,

moleskin patches for your snare drum, felt to dampen your bass drum, your drumset carpet, your gig towel, business cards, resumes, demo recordings, etc. In short, anything you use to make money.

Receipts for educational expenses. Tuition, lesson fees, books, recordings, mileage to conferences, masterclasses, lessons, concerts, etc.

Receipts for concerts attended.

Receipts for dry cleaning and clothing (uniform) purchased that is expressly for your job, such as a tuxedo, suit, shoes, etc.

Business phone receipts.

Business meal expenses while traveling.

Business travel expenses – air, rental car, lodging, taxi, tips, etc.

Business postage.

Business office expenses – computer, paper, lights, desk, etc.

Professional affiliations dues and fees – PAS, OMEA, AFM, MENC, Journals such as Modern Drummer, Triad, etc.

Keep all income records, W2's, 1099's. Also keep a record of all income you received even if you do not claim it on your tax return. If your expenses/deductions increase significantly but your declared taxable income does not, you are a prime candidate for an audit.