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The logo for Canada, featuring the word "Canada" in a serif font with a small Canadian flag icon above the letter 'a'.

## I. YOU – THE PRODUCT

### First, the Bad News, or, the Introduction

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Like it or not, the old-school Canadian music industry is in a tailspin. The major labels and big retail outlets which dominated the business for decades are now hanging on by their fingernails. Radio has consolidated into a handful of players, and the number of agents and promoters has shrunk. If your career goal was to get signed to a major-label deal, you are probably out of luck. The Anglophone Canadian labels sign and support barely a handful of artists a year, and promotional budgets have been cut to the bone. MuchMusic hardly even plays any music videos anymore, and does little to support new artists.

CD sales decline every year, and while downloading has taken off, the Internet has not been so successful at putting money into artists' pockets. While the French scene is a little healthier, it too has seen many label cutbacks and retrenchments.

Still, do not succumb to despair. The digital revolution has handed a tremendous amount of power and choice back to consumers and musicians alike. It is up to you to take advantage of this new environment. More than ever before, you can manage yourself quite effectively from the comfort of your own computer. Of course, the savvier you are, the more successful you will be. You need to learn a lot, and quickly, but if you are reading this than you have already made a big commitment to yourself and your career as an artist.

### Are You Ready?

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Just about everyone who plays an instrument or sings along with the car radio has thought about giving up their livelihood, and pursuing the dream of musical success. Before you quit school or tell your boss what you really think of them, you need to ask yourself a couple of hard questions. The very first should be: are you ready? And before you respond with an eager 'yes', how are you going to determine whether you are really ready?

You should already know that the approval and applause are not good indicators. Instead, ask yourself, have you ever been paid for your performance? Are you in demand as a player, writer or composer? Can you see a need in the market for the type of 'thing' that you do? Do you have something new and different to share with the world?

If the answer to these questions is 'yes', then maybe it is time to think about creating a product and vehicle for your new career. This decision will thrust you into a different level of musicianship. While it will be a rigorous and difficult journey, it can offer many rewards.

This guide will answer some of the more basic questions about the inner workings, as well as some of the quirks and peculiarities of the music business in Canada. The rest is up to you.

### Defining Your Genre and Style

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Defining who you are as a musician or performer is notoriously difficult. Some musicians fall into a style or genre with great ease. It may be music they grew up with, or it may be cultural references that you relate to. While critics admire being eclectic, it is not particularly encouraged by the business itself. Promoters, labels, radio programmers, and the media, all want you to have a label: i.e. country, jazz, adult contemporary, folk, classical, hip-hop, and dozens more. If you already have a clearly defined sound and style, embrace it with glee. You are already one step along the road. If you are not sure, it might be useful to convene an informal focus group. Gather a few friends, play them your stuff, and ask them what they think. What radio stations would they envision you being played on? What types of people would listen to and or buy your product if you had one? You might find yourself surprised by their answers. That said, instinct is just as important as

opinion. Every artist needs to believe in the quality of their own material, or they will never have the courage to bring it to the world.

Remember, you are now going to be earning your living through your art. If you are asking for people to buy into what you are, or what you sell, you need to be really clear about what that is. This can be hard, and many artists struggle with self-definition. In the digital world, there is some advantage to being hard to pin down. The disadvantage is the music business's reluctance to break out of its old models. You will have to decide which way is best for you.

Think about all the successful advertisements you see on TV. The companies who advertise their products know exactly what they are selling, and usually have a one liner, or positioning statement to clearly define what they are selling, and in turn why you should buy it. Whether it is a brand of car or a soft drink you know what they stand for — 'a fast ride', 'a good time', 'stability', 'excitement'...or whatever.

Try and write a one-line sentence about your product or style. This positioning statement should be something you can come back to forever, and its simplicity will be what you build your career on. You cannot be everything to everyone, and there is no point trying. In the real world, there are very few artists who are 'a little bit country, a little bit rock and roll'. Determining what your product is will also help you nail down an audience and your market. Here are a few examples to get you thinking:

*"Susan Smith is a Saskatchewan bluegrass breeze rippling through a prairie landscape, one banjo solo after another."*

*"The Hateful makes political noise with screaming guitars that leave anarchy itself in confusion."*

*"Bill McGillvary evokes the ancient clans of Scotland with his traditional bagpipes."*

Don't make people guess who and what you are. Make it obvious, and easy.

So, now you know who you are, and hopefully you have some idea of what your audience is. Now your new audience needs to hear you. A lot. And for this you will need a product.

## Creating a Product/Branding

Once you figure out your style, you need to define what your best material is. Do not get worried if your material does not live up to the standards of your musical heroes. It just has to appeal to those you intend to sell it to. To get a start on this process, you need to record a demo. Every business person needs a calling card, and first step is to find the means to produce your demo, which is a simple two or three song CD showing off your best singing, writing and/or playing. It needs to become your calling card for what your music is capable of.

A demo need not be elaborate or expensive. It just needs to show off your most flattering musical aspects. For instance, if you are a children's performer you may not need to re-work the drum solo 100 times, but you will need to make sure the little tykes can sing that hooky chorus over and over and over and over again. A singer needs to choose songs that show off vocal strengths. It could be as simple as one instrument and a vocal. What is important is that the average listener quickly hears your talent.

At this stage, your priority should be to just make an appealing recording. Don't worry about writing hit songs. Just make the music you want, and get it finished in some fashion. Once you've picked three or four songs to work with do just that.

Work with them. Then work with them again. Explore all the possibilities of tempo and instrumentation; change the style, experiment with different sounds, styles, and different eras. Play them for people, gather opinions, record rough mixes and listen to them in your car, MP3 player, at clubs, at a party. Try them out every chance you get. If nothing else, think of it as a way to develop the necessary thick skin any artist needs. Anyway, if you get sick of your material too easily, chances are

everyone else will be too. Be honest about your work, and be your own worst critic.

Once you've fixed all the glitches, you need to get a somewhat professional recording of them. There are many ways to record a demo. Really good studios can cost thousands of dollars a day, but to make a good demo you should not spend more than \$1000 in total. It is a learning experience first and foremost. From Garage Band (the simple Apple recording software) to a real live studio the options are endless. Get a lot of price quotes, and find out what other local artists are doing. You'll quickly find out who can make good (and cheap) demos in your area.

Some studios will charge based on songs, or the length of the session. Others will charge by the week. Recording technology has gotten remarkably cheap. Anyone with a good laptop and some microphones can now make recordings at home of a quality that used to cost hundreds of thousands. Studios want your business, and everything is negotiable. Set your budget, and stick to it.

## Demo Grants

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If you do not have any money, look to your provincial Music Industry Association. All provinces have them, and for a small membership fee you are now able to access grant money for demo and eventually full length recording projects. While this may seem very overwhelming, take it one step at a time.

In Canada, the CRTC (Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission) regulates the television and radio airwaves. In order to receive a broadcast license for a new radio station, commercial stations have to contribute back to the community. These days, new stations usually have to devote some small percentage of their profits to musical recordings. Find out how your local radio stations are honouring this commitment, where the money is being distributed and to whom. Ask lots of questions. Government money is public knowledge.

Grant money is non-repayable in most cases. You put together the required information, and you submit an application. It is then submitted to a jury of experts, and if they believe in your project you will be given funds to make your demo, or longer recording. In some cases it may be the entire amount and in others half of what you need. Every province has different programs.

The applications can sometimes be overwhelming. Do not be intimidated. All Canadians have the right to apply and so do you. Call the office and ask for help. Their job is to support you in your music career. Take the help and learn from it.

In order to get a grant you will most likely have to have a marketing plan or a business plan. You can certainly do this for yourself but it is also advisable to ask if there is a professional in your area to help you, or a seasoned musician who may be able to work with you.

Remember it may take several tries before you achieve a grant. This is normal. If you are a new and un-established artist you generally have to have a track record of live performances to justify getting the money which, in turn, leads to the next point in your career.

## The Importance of a Show

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In the increasingly post-CD world, nothing will be as important to your career as your ability to perform. Many performers, some quite famous, enjoy long and lucrative careers despite not having hit songs, because of their great performing abilities. Your show, no matter what your musical genre, should provide entertainment value, and must also communicate not only your music, but your personality and beliefs to an audience.

There are some other obvious benefits of a good show as well; the more you play, and the more people see you, the better

you get at it. Every time you step onstage in front of a crowd, no matter how small, you need to remember that you are building a fan base — people who will buy your records and t-shirts, and hopefully come see you gain.

Some things to take into consideration are dynamics, instrumentation, sound quality, venues, your dialogue with the audience, rapport, originals vs. covers and so on.

There are many ways to work up a good show. You do need a plan. Start a stage journal and keep track of concerts or artists you really enjoy live and try and decide what makes their live shows great. Are there common themes? Performers that tour constantly over decades, such as the Rolling Stones, know exactly what their audiences want to see from their performances, and the band delivers it. The longevity of their career is no accident.

In your own shows, keep track of useful bits, songs, segues and intros that work well and use them again. All of this is important; no matter how good your songs, no audience will tolerate nervous shuffling or mumbled intros in-between numbers. Try and keep energy moving and growing on stage. Avoid dead air between songs. Even if it is a very subtle bass line in the background, you don't want a dead stop in the middle of the show. Keep your audience captive at all times.

A good show is hard to perfect, but invaluable. Despite what happens on Canadian Idol, practically no one is a natural performer. It takes time and lots of practice. Start now, and be ready when the spotlight hits you.

## II. RECORDING, CDS, STUDIOS AND OTHER FUN STUFF

So, let us assume everyone loves your demo, and your new fans are dying for a full length CD.

Recording can be very complex, and there is a limit to how much information we can squeeze in here. To keep things straightforward, our discussion will focus on some general rules, and some easily avoided pitfalls.

Good recordings are not so much a function of months of work or expensive studios, as they are the outcome of good preparation. The Beatles recorded most of their classic albums on 4-track recorders we would find laughable today. They had none of the fancy effects and electronic aids we can use. Instead, they made up for it by being extremely tight, and very well rehearsed. Acts had to be organized in a world where overdubbing barely existed, and tricks like digital editing and auto-tune were unheard of. Whatever the level of electronic mastery you have achieved, you would still be well advised to follow their example. The more rehearsed you are, the tighter your arrangements, the more confident your musicians, the more work you do before you sit down in the studio, then the more time you will spend making great music, and the less time spent trying to disguise errors, poor playing, and bad ideas.

Remember, with studios, everything is negotiable. Do not believe anyone's printed rates, and try to get the best deal you can. Studio staff are notorious in the business for their negative attitude. If you are recording for the first time, do not work with anyone who acts like they are doing you a favour. Due to the rise of home studios, new technology and the shift away from the traditional recording industry, the big pro studios have had to drop their rates considerably. They need your business, and should act that way. If you do get attitude, go somewhere else.

The younger self-managed musician should even wonder whether they should even be recording a CD at all. If your market-base is 30-plus, or you are working in a non-pop genre, than you are probably safe recording a CD. If your market is younger, dance-club oriented, or very alternative, you may want to think about putting your music out song by song, maybe via the Internet. Chances are your audience buys very little music in the CD format. If that is the case, why bother making CDs? Maybe cell phone ring tones are the best way to get your material out. Hip-hop MCs often put songs out on cheaply compiled mix-tapes. Either way, the time and expense of a full CD may not be for you.

Remember, it takes many people, all skilled in various areas of the recording process, to help you make a good recording, and you'll need to budget accordingly. Unless you are a virtuoso in all areas then you may need a producer, an engineer, session musicians, a mixing studio, a mastering studio, a photographer, a graphic designer, and a company to negotiate and or complete the pressing and the actual printing of your CD on disc format. All the folks you work with in the studio will have established pay rates, either per day, per song, per week or for the project. Sometimes they may charge by the hour, but this is fairly rare in the music business.

It is easy to figure out how much this will all cost by looking at your total budget for each song. Construct small-scale budgets and add them together.

As a very, very rough rule of thumb, it usually takes at least two hours to record each part, so a song with one piano part, bass, guitar, drums and a lead vocal will take at least 10 hours, with another hour or two for a rough mix and monitor adjustments. If you base your budget on these numbers (and your musicians know what they are doing), you should be fairly safe.

It is incredibly important to keep a studio log when you are recording. Studio time can pass very quickly — musicians generally run out of money before they run out of cool ideas. In the unfortunate situation the studio time logs are different from yours, and if you had players and producers sign in or clock in, than a potentially contentious situation can be easily defused. No one wants to end their recording session with an argument. Studios generally expect to get paid before they release a master tape; fight them at your recording's peril.

Your life will also be much easier if you learn some vocabulary. We discuss the importance of touring vocabulary later on.

It is also useful to know some studio jargon. Recording studio staff speak their own dialect, and a little knowledge will go a long way. For example:

**Engineer** – The person at the mixing console who fixes mics, records sounds, sets monitors, etc.

**Producer** – An outside director, who helps with the arrangements, directs the band, coaches the vocalist, oversees the audio quality, and otherwise ensures that the end product is as good as possible.

**Cans** – headphones

**EQ** – Technically, this means ‘equalization’. This is studio talk for adjusting inputs, microphones, various pre-amps etc. in order to get the best possible instrument or vocal sound on tape.

**Tape** – Practically no studio in Canada still uses actual tape recorders, although the term ‘tape’ is still commonly used to refer to the actual recording process. Almost all studios these days record using digital software, recording directly onto massive computer hard-drives. Popular digital recording programs include Pro Tools, Nuendo and CUBase.

**Listening** – The universal studio command which means “stop playing, tuning, talking, etc., and wait while I listen back to the last take”.

**Rough Mix/Final Mix** – The rough mix is a simple mix of the recorded tracks, with everything recorded simply turned enough so you can hear it. The final mix is a more listener friendly version, with elaborate EQ, reverb, limiting, etc. It generally takes longer, and might require a more expensive engineer.

**Auto-tune** – The musician’s friend, auto-tune is a software program that analyses a piece of recorded music, and then subtly alters it so it is perfectly in key or tune. It can make the most wobbly singer sound like Mariah Carey.

**Mastering** – Mastering is a post-mixing process, where a specially trained engineer runs your recording through special software. The masterer fixes any EQ problems, eliminates unnatural noises, etc., sequences the numbers, and makes sure that all music on the CD has the same volume.

Again, there is much to review when discussing studios but the short hand is:

- Know exactly what budget you have and stick to it
- Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse...and rehearse
- Review, research and compare all personnel and studios
- Negotiate for the best rates
- Keep logs and journals not to mention cleared cheques and receipts
- Do detailed budgets and planning for each song
- Sign contracts that work for you
- Set deadlines and timelines for completion
- Only pay deposits, and never full amounts in advance

One final word of warning; when the recording day comes, make sure that you go to the studio armed with instruments properly set-up, amps working, tuners in hand, along with spare batteries, drum-heads, strings, rosin and anything else you can think of. Never assume the studio has any of these items. If you have to run to the music store in the middle of the session, the clock will still be ticking, and you will pay for everyone to sit around and wait.

## Finished Product

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Many self-managed artists surprisingly lose interest in their product when they get the master in their hand. After spending months, and thousands of dollars on their music, they choose the cheapest cover possible. This is a mistake.

It will cost maybe \$500-\$1000 to get a decent cover, tray-card, etc. done up by a low-cost graphic artist (and there are almost as many starving graphic artists out there as starving musicians). Make sure you have a good photo somewhere in the package. New fans want to know what you look like – don't make it too hard on them. List the songs on the back with their run times. Many radio stations still use real CDs, and want that info. Make sure you have a bar code on your cover. There are many ways to obtain one, but either way it is a necessity if you want stores to stock your CD.

Generally, you will save very little money at the manufacturer stage, anyway, by going with a cheap one sheet black and white cover. Most CD manufacturers in Canada include basic colour cover printing in all their prices. Do yourself a favour; if you don't have the money now to do a decent cover, wait until you do. Even the best tunes in the world will fail to move off the shelf if they are wrapped up in something that looks like an old flyer.

## CD Distribution

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One of the self-managed musicians' greatest sources of frustration is likely to be CD distribution. In a tough retail climate, distributors often get squeezed off shrinking shelves by the major labels. On-line distribution is confusing and complicated, with lots of options. Where does the self-managed musician start?

As with everything else, the first job is to get a handle on your local market. If there is a small independent store in your area, see if they will take a few CDs. Generally it will be a straight consignment deal – they pay you when the CDs sell. Some of the bigger chain stores will work consignment deals too, as will smaller book and gift stores. It all depends on your specific market and genre.

There are still a handful of independent distributors working in Canada. We'll provide links to some of their websites later. As a rule, they will only become useful when you have a firm touring schedule, one that is wide enough to make smaller retail consignment deals impractical. Generally, distributors offer a much lower return to the artist (\$3.00 to \$4.00 a CD, due to their high expenses) than you're used to getting, and you may have to wait 6 months (or longer) to get paid for a shipment. On the positive side, they can get you into stores like Wal-Mart and other big-box stores which generally ignore independent artists. If they are big enough, they can even help you get preferred rack space, instead of being buried in an 'indie' bin somewhere in a dusty corner. Many distributors have farm-team deals with the bigger labels; they may even be able to use the major labels' staff and warehousing. If you are in a position to take advantage of this, the up front money sacrifice may be worth it to you if you have a breakout hit. In that case, you will be well positioned to attract the interest (and promotional muscle) of a major label.

If you want to skip retail distribution altogether, and just sell on-line, there are many, many options. We will provide you with a few in the links section. Just remember, selling an album as a whole unit will likely net you significantly more profit than selling individual songs. And depending on your genre, your CD sales may potentially be very healthy. It all depends on what you are trying to achieve. Know your market, and make a suitably informed decision.

## The Product Cycle

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It is safe to say that most self-managed musicians will either have never heard of the product cycle, or would not have been interested even if they had.

Such willful disregard might be ignoring an important element of the music business. Like every other seller of dry goods,

the larger music business (i.e. retailers and labels) firmly believes in the product cycle. According to their conventional wisdom, there are really two retail opportunities a year, i.e. good times to release an album. One is the early to mid-autumn, when students are back in school, and listening to the radio again. The other is in the early spring, after Xmas, and before the summer, when the same conditions apply.

Therefore, there is no point releasing an album in the summer — too many people are on holiday, and no one reads print media, watches TV, etc. It is also useless putting an album out after Halloween. Consumers are focused on buying Xmas presents, not new music. Conversely, after Xmas, they have no money left, so you are better waiting a month or two.

These rules may seem absurd, but they are based on decades of research about how and when consumers buy music. If nothing else, they are worth remembering when the time comes to release your own work.

## Labels

Record labels are really beyond the scope of this piece. After all, not many self-managed musicians go that road anyway. For the curious, however, here is a quick thumbnail sketch of how they work in Canada.

All the major labels, which at the time of writing include Warner, Universal, EMI, and BMG/Sony are branch operations of multi-national companies. They all, however, see value in developing Canadian artists for both our own domestic markets and their larger international operations. There are several big independent companies, like Distribution Select, which aim almost entirely at the French market, and there are also a few larger independents operating in English Canada. There are hundreds of smaller operations, some very successful in their own right. The Toronto based Arts & Crafts label has had great success with underground acts worldwide, while another Toronto label, Maple Music, has been a big supporter of Canadian music. The Vancouver based independent label Nettwerk features acts like Sarah McLachlan and the Bare Naked Ladies, world class artists by any measure. Many record labels are genre-specific, like Stony Plain, which focuses on western blues and singer songwriters, Justin Time, which handles jazz, or Sonic Unyon, which features punk and other alternative music.

Most of the independent labels have strong ties to one of the majors, using the majors' large promotional and distribution networks. A few go it alone, use independent distributors, or focus on Internet and mail order sales.

Whether big or small, however, all labels offer three main functions. First, they provide financing. Making good records can be expensive, depending on what you record, and where you do it. Labels provide up-front financing, for a big cut of the hoped-for profits. Think of it them as venture capitalists, investing in your musical business, in return for a big chunk of the action. Second, they distribute your products. As an independent artist, it will be almost impossible to get your CDs into preferred retail positioning, score high initial orders, or into most big-box stores. Even some smaller labels have the muscle and volume to make this happen. Third, they offer the sort of experienced and expensive publicity and marketing services that the self-managed musician can only dream of. Videos, TV specials, full-page print ads and the like are way beyond the means of most musicians, but a daily event for bigger labels.

Of course there is the big negative — loss of control — financial, artistic and otherwise. In return for their money, labels want to see your music sell. They will expect you to be career minded, eager to tour, perform, and otherwise work to sell your discs — and they will assume lasting rights to the release of your work. This is a powerful disincentive to signing with a label. Many artists do not work well under the direction of a powerful label, while others thrive with that sort of structure.

If a label does come knocking, even a small one, you need to ask yourself, 'what will this label do that I cannot do myself?'. If the answer is 'not much', than you should walk away. If the answer is 'everything', than you need to sit down with a good lawyer. Label deals, even supposedly simple ones, can be very complicated, and full of obscure legal twists and turns. Leave it to an expert.

### III. THE MARKET

#### Who Is, or Could Be, Your Audience?

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Every musician wants fans. Whether this is thousands of screaming people at a big rock show, or a carefully nurtured email list, the first step is the same. First, you need to know what your market is; in fact, you need to know what your primary, secondary and even your tertiary markets are.

At any time these classifications can change. As your material changes, and you get older, make more recordings or change collaborators, so does your market. In the 1980s, Madonna's first fans were teenagers. Many of those people are now middle aged, with families and children. These days she is selling her music to people who were not even born when she began her career.

Your primary market consists of the people who are most inclined to buy your products and see your shows. You can quantify them by examining some of the things associated with your audience. For instance, what types of venues you play at, or where would you like to play. Where is your music, (or something similar) in demand? What sort of radio stations play music like yours, and who listens to them? Generally, your primary market is usually close to the same as the venues where you like to (or would like to) perform.

For example, ask your favorite club owner who his customers are. You might discover that 90% of the clientele consists of working people between the ages of 35 and 50. Now if you can play there and pack the place, chances are good that older working people are your primary audience, and therefore should represent your target market. If you like to DJ parties, and find a ready reception among young dance-club kids, then this is your audience. Much of your time should be spent finding ways to sell your music in the spaces they inhabit: find out where they play, and what they want to do, and make your music available accordingly. Don't waste your time and limited resources chasing people who are not pre-disposed to like you anyway.

Your secondary market may account for 30 – 40% of your revenue, so it can still be fairly important. A secondary market would be one outside of your normal performing or recording circle, but one that has great income potential. Perhaps you do work in the summer playing for tourists, you have an unplugged acoustic version of your band aimed at house concerts, or you have a breakout fad song which pre-schoolers are going crazy for. Whatever your secondary market may be, try and give it as much attention as your primary market, because it can easily become your primary market. The key to success is realizing when your targets shift, and adapting your business to these changes.

Your tertiary market can be as low as 5% to 20% of your client base or income. Still important, but carefully monitor the amount of time spent here. Examples might be the once-a-year sales of a Xmas album you recorded ages ago, or the two or three corporate parties you play a year. Such markets can be a financial lifesaver, but they are not worth the time required by your primary and secondary markets. Save and develop these opportunities for dry periods, or when you have holes in your schedule.

#### How Do You Reach Them?

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You talk to them. Figure out who the people in your audience are, and talk to them through any and all networks they are using.

Today, this is a lot easier than it used to be. People belong to musical communities on-line, you can send e-newsletters, use radio (commercial and public), advertise on TV, create pod-casts, put ads and releases in entertainment publications, join music contests, and more.

Find out what your primary market's entertainment habits are, (and where their entertainment dollars are being spent), and

become part of their routine. Most Canadians are eager to support local talent. They are not, however, going to go out of their way to do so. You need to use every means at your disposal to reach out to them, and make it easy to see your shows or buy your music.

Let's say you are a sultry blues singer, and you've identified that your audience is 35 years old and up, and most are middle-class working people with families. They only listen to radio while driving their kids to school; they work late, spend very little time online, and rarely go see live shows. They do, however, still buy lots of CDs from local retailers.

So what do you do? Step one might be to try and get a song on the adult contemporary station in your area. Most radio stations do not really embrace independent or self-managed artists, but this does not mean it is impossible to get a spin. Good songs are good songs, and if yours are decent, you will have a shot. Target the weakest station in your area first; they will be more eager to try something new, and it will be easier to get someone on the phone. Many stations have a legal mandate to play some local music. It might be buried on a Sunday night show, but at least your music is being played on the radio.

The CBC and community stations are more open-minded, and should be your first stop. Give each station a CD and a package, addressed to the music director, and follow it up one or twice. Try to walk the line between persistence and turning into a nuisance. Send your music to internet stations or satellite stations that play similar music, or have a local audience. You need to poster your local record retailer like crazy, as well as any coffee or other shops where your audience likely visits. Book a family festival in your town or try and play a benefit show where they can bring the kids. Organize a promotion at a record store, where you give away a sample CD to everyone who purchases music by other well-known blues artists.

The key is to match your promotional efforts to your potential audiences' lives. You need to make it easy for them to get to know you. If your audience is older, don't start your live shows at 11 PM on a week night. Conversely, if you are a hip-hop artist, do not pester your local modern rock radio station to give you some spins. They are not going to play your music, no matter what. Get your songs to local DJs and clubs, who like to mix original songs in with classics. Keep an eye out for MC contests and the like. Find out where fans of your kind of music live and play, and get your material to them in any way you can.

## What Tools Do You Need?

Most self-managed musicians own a computer. If not, you need to buy one, equipped with a high-speed Internet connection and a good CD/DVD burner.

You will need other technology. You need email, a decent CD ripping program (for your own material), a fax machine, an efficient printer, a cheap long distance calling plan, a credit card, a post office box and a space to work in. Cell phones can be expensive, but have become another necessity. As a self-managed musician, you cannot afford to miss a call. Besides, (eventually, we hope), you are going to tour. Establishing a relationship with a cell provider now will make it easier to nail a good long distance package when you start traveling.

Some more bohemian types may wish to reject all these tools. The reality is, however, that if you are trying to carve out a real career, (i.e. one that produces a living income), you are going to have to work very hard indeed. No successful artists can afford to ignore the mechanics of business. This does not mean you turn into a raging capitalist. It does mean that you learn the tools of marketing, and use them to create and enhance your own career. Keep in mind this has nothing to do with your image. Image is image, something one dimensional, a surface projection of the real thing. What you wear, what you say, and what you play are just part of the package that is you the artist. You the business-person need to be a separate entity, one just as focused and intense as the artist.

Become very good at data management. If you've worked in other business structures, employ some of their methods of filing. You are only as marketable as the data you collect and manage for your music. The more you know about your audience, and the more ways you have of reaching them, the stronger your career. And once you have learned these lessons, you can take them elsewhere: to the next town...and so on...

## The Pitch

Another imperative marketing tool is your 'angle'. With your positioning statement you've established who you are and what you are doing; now you need to establish why your market needs to 'buy' into it. How is their life going to be better by becoming part of your inner circle? Are you going to provide insight, let them live vicariously through your music, create the best soundtrack for every party they have?

You will need to have a web presence. This can operate through a variety of forms, which may include a website, an electronic press kit, a blog or through social networking groups such as myspace.com, facebook.com and others of that sort. There are many music networking sites too, such as sonicbids.com. Some are free, some are not. You will have to judge which seem most likely to enhance your career and judge accordingly. The picture is constantly changing, so some effort needs to go into keeping up. Ideally you will do all of these. See what others in your musical genre are doing, and carefully note what is successful. Don't try and reinvent the wheel. Go with what works.

After all of this, you still need to actively communicate. Although it feels like a cliché, it really is who you know. We're not talking about big record executives, so much as knowing people in your community. At its simplest level the music business is a numbers game, and the more people you reach the more sales you will have. Surprisingly, it works much the same the higher the ladder you climb. Very few Canadian rock stars and other popular musicians are mega-rich. Most have worked very hard at the indie level at some point in their careers, as has everyone else in the business. The end result is that most industry figures in Canada are sympathetic to newcomers. Be polite, and when you get the chance you will be surprised how helpful they can be.

The usual estimated return on a marketing effort is about two to three percent, (and that would be considered really good). In other words, if you are hosting an intimate coffee shop performance, and looking for 30 people to attend, you need to invite or reach 1,500 people. It sounds like a lot and it is but it is not impossible.

Radio stations reach thousands everyday. Even campus radio stations reach a lot of ears. Even the crappiest street rag has a massive potential readership. Find out the stats on the media in your area or where you are marketing your music, and apply your time, (and money if you have it), accordingly. Remember that media works with reach and frequency. The average human needs to hear and see your message a few times before it goes into long term memory. Repetition is key.

## Offbeat Marketing

There is a lot of talk in the business now about viral, guerilla and other forms of unusual marketing. The self-managed musician needs to explore these ideas, as they are often much cheaper and more practical for the independent musician.

For example, viral marketing uses the Internet to spread word about your product in a virus-like fashion, spread from individual to individual at an amazing speed. Some artists have created cheap homemade mini-videos which have become huge hits on video hosting sites. Others have been successful at getting their music used behind small but visually exciting mini-movies, and on-line shows. Video games are another huge opportunity for music placement, one way under the radar of most conventional music business workers. There are tons of gamers working away in tiny independent game companies. See what they need, and offer it. A lot of independent performers develop street teams, via their own web sites. These teams work on a local basis, postering, handing out flyers and CDs at gigs, pestering radios stations, etc., on your

behalf. In return, they expect discount tickets, preferred access, signed paraphernalia, etc. Hip-hop and punk bands spend millions assisting these teams, and have reaped the rewards. The concept works for other genres too, however, so take a look at who logs into your website, and try and enlist their aid in your own marketing efforts.

The key is to always be open to the marketing possibilities available to you, and to pursue them all. You never know who you are reaching – they could be the one who brings ten friends to a show, or the secretary who gets you on Letterman.

## Which Associations Are Useful?

Any musical association is useful if it has a proven track record, and has actively assisted musicians. None of them are really free, however, so only you can evaluate their worth.

Most provinces have Music Industry Associations, groups that operate as non-profit organizations funded by members and various government programs. These associations work actively to increase the size and penetration of the local musical community, both provincially and nationally. At the end of this piece you can find links to their sites.

These are a good place to start. They often offer funding, workshops and regional conferences. All are very useful for networking, and being seen and heard. Step one should always be to seek the advice of other artists in your area, anyway. Chances are excellent that whatever you are trying to do has been attempted before, and you can learn a lot from others' successes (and their failures).

On the East Coast, on the prairies, and in Quebec there are regional conferences and awards shows which can be excellent places for showcase opportunities and networking. There are National Songwriters Associations, and in turn associations for genres. The Ontario Council of Folk Festivals, The Canadian Country Music Association, and a number of smaller events are all valuable, depending on your genre.

Start with your backyard and go from there. Pick up the phone, tell them what you are trying to do, and ask for some leads. A gentle reminder – almost all associations require a fee. Some will be more valuable than others. Take a hard look at what they offer, and what you really need, before you shell out. Unfortunately, many showcase events in Canada have become very large. Be wary of any event which expects you to pay a hefty registration fee, and then offers you a twenty minute slot, on the bottom of a bill, in an unknown club in a distant suburb. Ask yourself, is anyone worthwhile really going to see you play? You probably already know the answer. Save your money, and play that town when you have a chance to build a real fan base.

## The Francophone Music Scene

Although it is not widely known to Anglo performers, and vice-versa, Canada has a Francophone music industry. If you are a Francophone musician or composer you have access to all the funding organizations and tools of English Canada, but in addition to that you can benefit greatly from an additional set of resources and industry professionals dedicated solely to the creation and preservation of French language culture. From on-line communities to festivals, there is a separate and distinct musical community for French-speaking Canada.

If you are a Francophone musician, your first point of contact should be your provincial music industry association. If you do not live in New Brunswick or Quebec it would serve you well to contact those provincial organizations also, as the bulk of French language festivals, record labels, distributors, and other buyers work from those two provinces.

Artists who are either native French speakers, or confident in their second language, should know that the CD retail business is a little healthier in Francophone areas than in others. Strong independent CD distributors, a great independent

media scene, and a population eager for homegrown stars have all combined to make the French music scene a lot more viable than its Anglophone equivalent. There is a wealth of information on both provincial websites (see our links section), which is a good place to start.

Canadian artists are networking with other French Language cultures more than ever. International partnerships are occurring between Louisiana, (USA), Haiti, Africa, Belgium, Switzerland and France, as well as other countries with strong French-speaking communities.

Many Canadian artists have had great success in these markets, and have established wide touring opportunities and radio play unavailable at home or in English markets.

Canadian Anglophone festivals with folk or world beat mandates also welcome Francophone musicians. You need not stick to strictly French-speaking markets — explore opportunities across Canada. Many Francophone artists focus on Quebec and New Brunswick to the exclusion of the rest of Canada. Remember that there are significant French-speaking minorities in most Canadian cities of any size, with cities like Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver hosting Francophone artists on a regular basis.

Remember their key holidays when you are booking shows. All provinces have Francophone associations and would likely welcome a Francophone artist on Acadian Day (August 15) or St. Jean-Baptiste Day (June 24). Also remember all Canadian cities have French Immersion school programs, which look for musicians to provide cultural enrichment, touring opportunities funded by granting programs. Contact school districts in the areas in which you wish to tour to get specific information.

Theatre shows are also a diverse and educated audience that does not necessarily have to understand the language to embrace your music and performance. Each province has a performing arts organization that works with theatre buyers to present showcase opportunities for Canada's theatres to book their seasons. Many offer Francophone artists in English communities to expand cultural awareness and appreciation of identity. Again, see our links section for more information.

A note of caution, particularly for Anglophone artists who wish to try and break into the French Quebec and New Brunswick markets: Grammar and linguistic nuance mean a lot to fans of French songs, and as a rule, these things are taken way more seriously than they are in the Anglophone pop music world. Translating your songs via Bablefish.com, and singing in your own accent will not cut it. It is nothing personal — Francophones expect the same critical awareness of the language from their own artists. Stylistically, Francophone tastes also tend to be a little different from that of Anglophone Canada. It would be a good idea to do your research — watch the Francophone video channel, Musique Plus, or listen to Francophone radio. See what the market is listening to, and where you might fit in, before you try and break this market.

## IV. FIRST MANAGEMENT STEPS

### Starting a Business

The basic assumption of this project is that you wish to treat your musical aspirations like a business. This is no small step — many musicians never make this leap of logic, and spend their careers wondering why their bank balance never seems to equal their talent.

There are many ways to handle your career. A good first step is to make the legal effort to become incorporated. You can choose to be a sole proprietor, which is basically you operating as you, you can form a partnership with one or more collaborators, or you can start a limited company. Each of these has certain advantages and disadvantages, and may or may not be appropriate for your situation.

A sole proprietor is great for the self-managed musician, as your personal taxes are essentially the same as your business taxes, making life way less complicated than the other options. However as your business grows, you will most likely have to change the nature of your company and become incorporated anyway.

We go into some of the tax issues of these options later, and how you actually perform the legal steps necessary. *'The Art of Managing Your Career'* has a lot of hard information on this topic as well. What is important now is that you start a company.

Creating a business is relatively easy. It is the growing of the business that takes more work and time. With a name which is legally registered, a tax number and a bank account you are basically in business. Congratulations on the first step.

## Amateur vs. Pro

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Strictly speaking, a professional musician is someone who gets paid for his or her work. An amateur does not. Of course, we all realize there is a lot of grey area here — what about the music teacher, for example, who moonlights in a weekend jazz band? Let us say that for our purposes, a professional is someone whose career is their art, someone who devotes every non-playing moment to and the marketing and selling of their art.

It can be a difficult choice to leave any job to become self-employed, but to do so as a musician adds a few layers of complication.

The set of skills required to become a successful business professional are only loosely related to those required by a successful performer. Being hyper-organized, personable, keeping strict hours, working to deadlines and planning months ahead are not normally attributes favoured by the average musicians. This lifestyle change may require some getting used to.

Make the switch gradually. Try and build a nest egg for the uncomfortable period between employment and self-employment. Very few musicians make much money in the first year or two after they turn pro.

You need to have some savings before you make the leap of faith. A good credit record will not hurt, either. Once you make the move, be committed to your new career. Put in a 40-hour work week and you will see the return.

Try and keep planning six months ahead. This will allow you to see dry periods coming from a long way away — use these times to write, rehearse and record. This will keep your career moving forward, instead of constantly playing catch up.

The music industry professional will immediately start networking, to build a client base. Find out who is buying what you have to sell, and start calling or emailing. Remember the rate of return in marketing is 2 – 3 %, so that means a lot of doors need to be knocked on. Isolating yourself in your new home based office is a bad idea; get out and go to shows, meet other musicians, learn your local retail market, and use any government and institutional resources you can access.

Set realistic goals, and create a timeline for revenue generation. Perhaps it is a tour, writing for a film project or marketing your music to television commercials — whatever you are doing, be precise, and measure your activities against your marketing, business plan and goals.

## Making It Pay

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Most new businesses operate at break-even or even at a loss for two to three years. These are cold and unpleasant facts. Can you afford to make zero money, and in fact go into serious debt for two years? If the answer is no, think hard before you turn pro. Maybe you can still work part-time, while you build playing and performing opportunities. Maybe you have generous friends; either way, you need to be realistic about income possibilities, particularly at your career's beginning.

It will be difficult to measure which area of your business is the most profitable for almost a full year, if not two. You need to see all the seasons and the fluctuations of a calendar year to properly evaluate your strategy, and change your focus if need be. Prepare financially for this. Apply for grants (see grant section) and contract out services to other musicians. Charge for what you've learned up to this point. Chances are there are others still a few steps behind in starting their careers. Maybe you can help them, and both of you profit by your experience.

It is important to document your first year very carefully as it will be the business foundation to your career. If you do not document and monitor, you will ultimately impede your growth by not clearly knowing the revenue opportunities in your business. Keep in mind, too, that granting organizations, the banks, etc., will expect good records. If you ever want to access outside funding, a healthy attitude towards record keeping may be your saviour.

Keep operating costs as low as possible. You will need a fax machine, but you do not need a brand new one? Ask yourself this question every time you make a purchase for your company. Do I want that, or do I really need that? Can I beg or borrow it from someone else? This brief exercise alone should save you thousands.

The work you receive compensation for, while managing your own career, may fall under one of these subheadings: performance revenue, publishing revenue, session player revenue, producing revenue, songwriting royalties or commissions, or contract work of various means are all revenue opportunities in the music industry to explore. There are many more.

The first type of 'system' or infrastructure you should set up for your business is some sort of database that allows you to keep your contacts organized and call on them in a regular fashion. There are lots of software methods which will help you set up this sort of data-base. If you are too lazy to figure them out, write the information in an exercise book. Either way, make it a priority. One successful independent musician we know operates way below the industry radar, yet his healthy attitude towards organization has helped make him a millionaire. He boasts that "I have never lost a phone number". Good advice for any self-managed musician.

Making it easy for a buyer to purchase your music or show is key to repeat business; it is much easier to nourish a contact than go find another one. Cherish your customers, the people who give you an opportunity to sell your music just as much as you cherish your fans. If you think about these contacts as long-term relationships, they will be there for you for years to come.

## Do I Need a Real Manager?

Many musicians crave the benefits of a professional manager, preferring to operate in the belief that they should ignore business, and instead focus on art.

Obviously, if you believed this fallacy, you would not be reading this piece. That said, the question has some validity.

In the simplest terms, you need a manager when you have exhausted all the time and opportunities you have available. In other words, when you find yourself at a career plateau, (and need extra help), or the amount of paper-work, computer time and general hustling has overwhelmed your artistic efforts.

Before you make this leap, keep a few things in mind.

First of all, in the Canadian business, there is a clear distinction between managers, agents, and tour managers, although many beginning musicians do not know it. Managers usually define their work as the maintenance and expansion of their artists' careers. This means label deals, publishing deals, touring opportunities, advertising, booking studios — anything that brings you revenue, or costs you money. They handle the paper flow, and do the hustling that you can't or won't.

Unlike the popular movie image, few managers get involved in song arranging, or organizing their artists' personal lives.

Agents book performances. That is it. They don't usually get involved in strategy, recording, or anything else. Tour managers arrange touring schedules, hire and supervise road crews, book hotels, buses and flights, wrangle fans and the media, and generally look after the day-to-day needs of touring musicians.

Here's the bad news — managers and agents almost always work on commission. And generally that commission is calculated on your gross, not your net. The gross is the sum a given activity makes, while the net is the sum you retain after expenses. For example, say you play a big festival, for a price of \$1000. This is your gross. Out of this amount, however, you had to pay two side musicians at \$100 apiece, plus you had a \$200 van rental. What you actually made then, was \$600, i.e. the net. Your manager, however, would commission his 20% on the gross, so before you do anything, his \$200 comes off the top. Add that to the musicians and the van rent and you are now making \$400. Oops, we forgot your agent — she commissions 20% on the gross too, separately from your manager. Take another \$200 off the gate. Now your net is down to \$200. If you need some bass strings, or spring for dinner, you will be in the red.

If you were still self-managed, you would have made \$600. It would have been more work, but....well, you can see the problem.

And here is some worse news: the top managers make a lot more than 20%. Those who can provide label deals or command top opening slots may want up to 50% of your gross. If you apply this math to the above example, you'll find that you would have lost \$100 just by showing up for the gig! This is how artists like TLC and the Backstreet Boys ended up in lawsuits against their managers. Thanks to such one-sided deals, both acts found themselves playing sold-out stadiums, selling millions of records, and losing money the whole way.

Fortunately, there are alternatives. Many busy musicians combine some aspects of self-management with outside help, i.e. hiring accountants, publicists and tour managers as need be. This removes some critical work from your own desk, while keeping most of the proceeds from your artistic efforts firmly in your own hands.

## V. IMAGE AND PUBLICITY

### Defining Your Image

Whether you know it or not, you already have an image. What you wear, how you cut your hair, whether you are a dedicated follower of fashion, or whether your mother buys your clothes, you already present a visual picture to the world. It may not be the way you want to define yourself, but the people around you already label you as soon as you walk into a room: 'alternative', 'hippy', 'rapper', 'nerd', etc.

If you are choosing to be an entertainer in the commercial world, image is vital. That being the case, think about it for a while, and choose a look that you are comfortable with; remember, you may have to live with it for years. Remember that you are a public figure, if not now, than hopefully soon. Your audience will both want and expect you to look the part, depending on your genre. And even if you make a bad call, don't worry too much. Some artists have successfully changed their image many times. Stars like Madonna have reinvented themselves dozens of times. Still, it helps to choose carefully: as every good salesperson knows, it takes 6 seconds to make a first impression and 6 months to change it.

This doesn't mean you need to invest thousands in wardrobe, hair and/or make-up. Still, your professional look for your new 'office' should be different from what you wear to go grocery shopping. Whether you are bohemian or a player, you need to look appropriate for the gig. Folk audiences like their heroes to look like them, low key and relaxed. Classical and jazz performers often maintain a very classy and formal appearance. Hip-hop styles are very flamboyant, and change constantly. You know what will ultimately work for you. It is human nature to form instant opinions. Make sure the opinions formed about you are in your control and to your advantage.

## EPKs and Other Tools

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As a self-managed musician, technology is your friend. One big benefit of this new age is the virtual elimination of the old school press kit. A decade ago, aspiring musicians had to spend thousands of dollars on black & white photos, folders, fancy business cards, and hundreds of photo-copies of every press article they had ever received. A daily (and expensive) trip to the post office &/or photo-copy store was part of every independent musician's day. While a few dinosaurs still want a hard press kit, and you should keep a few basic ones on hand, these days most media and buyers prefer the Electronic Press Kit (EPK).

Effectively, building an EPK is like creating a website. You upload everything — MP3s, videos, biography, scanned press articles, touring dates, reviews and more — to a friendly computer, and then you can email it to whomever you want.

Sonicbids.com is an EPK site that (like it or not) has a virtual monopoly on EPK hosting. They are actually based in Boston, and for a membership fee your EPK and other material will be hosted on a popular and user-friendly site. This site has been enormously popular with festivals and other buyers, who have managed to dispense with the thousands of press kits they used to attract. For example, many Canadian festivals and industry events only accept applicants from sonicbids.com.

There is a nasty little secret here: events that use sonicbids.com's exclusive services receive a small payback. In other words, as an unknown you actually pay to get someone at an event or festival to listen to your music, or look at your package. Unfortunately, this turn of events has made life a little harder for the self-managed musician. The trade-off is the elimination of the dreaded press kit. At the end of the day, sending out hundreds of press kits cost self-managed musicians a fortune, so you are probably better off.

## Photo Issues

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A good photo is a necessity for any artist. If at all possible hire a professional, someone who shoots commercial advertising and/or models. Your photo should be clear and well lit, with either yourself and/or the other musicians looking as good as they can. It would help if your photographer had some experience photographing entertainers. It does not have to be lame or cheesy. Also, there is no point using a photo that is dark, moody, too abstract, or built around an obscure in-joke, no matter how cool everyone looks. This will just annoy media people, and ensure that your photo never gets used. Digital photography makes things easy, but it does not always make things good. Wasting hours while your buddies shoot away is probably not going to work. Just because you have an ear for music does not mean you have an eye for a good photo. Know your limits and let other experts do their job.

A good photo requires some patience. Your average pro may shoot off 500-1000 images before capturing a great and versatile shot. When you do get one you like, make sure you have it on disc, and in .jpg & .tiff formats for maximum use.

Photos are copyrighted, just like music, so when you pay a photographer make sure you have a contract saying you own the copyright or that it has been transferred to you. Work-for-hire law in this area can be vague - if you have a contract you are protected and you own the image. This also applies to CD graphics, T-shirt designs and any other graphic image you utilize.

## Biography, or the 'Bio'

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Are you at a loss for words?

It is very difficult to write something about yourself, so don't be too intimidated if you can't manage this seemingly unimportant job. A professional can help. Copywriters exist in television stations, radio stations and newspapers. Chances are you already know someone willing to freelance something for you for a small fee.

If you feel confident about doing it yourself, do your research. Almost every artist has a bio posted somewhere on their web pages. Seek out those with a similar style to your own, and start reading. The bad ones will really jump out, and you can avoid the same mistakes. Skip the in-jokes, slang and fiction – no one reading your bio will find it charming or funny.

Write 250 words, (one page single spaced), and have a shorter 50 word bio available as well. Remember your positioning statement? This is a good place to use it. The bio should talk about the direction of your career, some highlights of note and describe your musical style. Make it local or regional if that is your current target. Talk about what you know and add some personal flavour.

Do not talk about your award for 4H Club in 1982 or your desire to marry and settle down. This is about your music and your music career. It is definitely not your resume, nor should it be that bland. You are trying to make your music and style sound interesting, not get a job at a library.

With a bio, photo and (hopefully) some press articles in hand, you are well on your way to a press kit or EPK.

## The Publicity Blitz

Sometimes your promotional efforts are focused on one specific event or other point of interest. For many artists this is a CD release but for others it could be a concert, radio promotion, etc.

When you are trying to create a focused and intense campaign you need to increase frequency and fine-tune your target. This means you have to hit the bull's eye hard and many times to create the desired effect. Focus on a two to three week campaign for special events like this as opposed to the softer sell you normally do.

You'll need to set up a lot of interviews and television appearances on a local or regional station. Make sure the message is changed slightly every week so viewers or subscribers don't turn off your message. You can over saturate the market so content is every thing.

For instance, a new rising mezzo-soprano called Sarah has a coveted recital with the Vancouver Symphony. Three weeks out she may appear on CBC Radio for an interview, and later as a guest chef at a charity cook off where she can talk about her show. She also meets with her fans and explains personally how they can help promote the show. Week two she is on TV on Vancouver's nightly news and also appears as a celebrity judge on the televised Miss BC Pageant, week three she does a rash of interviews, is front page on the Arts section of the Vancouver Province, allows 'ET Canada' to visit the closed rehearsals and so on...

Press releases and announcements should be sent via email or fax to all major media with a changed message once a week for three weeks leading up to the event. The way news stories appear is based on what else is going on in the world. If you only send it once, and something more important happens that day, than you are decreasing your chance of getting air-time. By the same token the message needs to change every week and be current leading up to your event. Follow up with a phone call to the news and arts department of that media. A press release should take no more than 30 seconds to read.

Sample music should be sent to the media in advance of a show or release. Many radio programs have 'kick it or keep it' programs where the fans judge, or artist spotlight shows, or just general local support programs. Do your research and get the program producer's name, email address and phone number.

Offer free CDs for a contest call or mail in. This can lengthen your campaign value considerably. Newspapers often have an event listing page as well as CD review sections. Find out and contact these journalists directly in addition to the Arts and Entertainment editor. You often have to contact 3 – 4 different people at a newspaper to cover off the bases. Want to seem really big? Get a billboard. They are not that expensive and if you can find a partner, it is even better. Bus billboards are great too. They have great visibility and give your whole event bigger buzz literally.

Finally, word of mouth is still the best advertising money can't buy. Talk about what you are doing a lot, and pass it on in an interesting and enthusiastic (but not annoying) fashion. Good stories and bad both spread like wildfire. Keep your story on message.

## VI. TOURING

### Get the Party Started

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Almost every musician dreams of touring — the romance of the open road, the anticipation of packed houses in famous cities, luxurious hotels and exciting foreign countries... At the same time, even the most optimistic knows how different the reality is likely to be. Every professional musician, at every level, has had this soul searing experience at least once — traveling for hours to some far off town, anticipating a great show in front of a new audience, only to find yourself playing a monumental stinker to an empty house, your only audience a bored bartender or a frustrated security guard. Instead of first-class accommodations, it's bunking down in a cold van, with a hot-dog for supper and a stack of dirty laundry for a pillow.

Developing a thick skin and low expectations should be “Rule One” of any touring manual. That said, how do you do it, anyway? How do you go about heading down the Trans-Canada, and into music history?

### Get Out There

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Before you even begin to think about touring, you need to ask yourself some hard questions, the first being: what sort of audience have you developed in your own back yard? If the answer is ‘none’, you are not ready to tour.

Before they book your act, no matter what your genre, any promoter, club owner, festival organizer, etc., (who for our purposes here we are going to call buyers), is going to want to know that you are a serious, committed and professional artist. You need to have developed your chops, have an original sound, be able to provide a solid publicity package, send out some decent posters, get them a recording of some sort, (even if it is not a full CD), own some decent gear, and create a website. Most important, the buyers need to get a sense that someone will show up to watch you play. Developing a solid local following is the best way to create all these tools, and also the best way to get the experience necessary, if you are going to start trying your stuff in front of total strangers.

Your ability to provide all of the above is going to determine how successful your touring efforts are going to be. No one is going to risk money on an unknown quantity. Before anyone outside your backyard hires you, they are going to need some proof, however meager, that you are going to be worth it.

The best way to begin touring is to remove some of the economic risk for the buyer. If you are a pop or country performer, try and score opening acts, (even for acts just a rung or two above you on the ladder), or get on multi-band bills. Hip hop acts need to do the same, and try and get involved in MC contests in nearby markets. Jazz and folk artists need to seek opening slots as well, and try and get in on open-mic nights, free festivals, and other low-pressure performance situations. Even house parties and busking are sometimes worth something. The idea is to develop some following in other markets, and at the same time give buyers the opportunity to see you perform.

Then, when you go to them seeking a real paying gig, you are no longer an unknown quantity. They will be able to put a name and a reputation to your face. If you have done your homework, the rest should flow logically.

## Finding The Buyer

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Most self-managed musicians operate well below the radar of established agents and bookers. Just finding out who the buyers are in another market can be a struggle in itself.

Again, our best advice here is to become an expert and enthusiastic networker. While there are lots of guidebooks and magazines out there that print lists of venues and buyers, they are almost always out-of-date and inaccurate. The best source of information, by far, is going to be your fellow musicians. Get to know, and talk to, every other touring artist in your area. If there aren't any likely allies in your area, try touring websites and band chat rooms, or talk to musicians at your level who are coming to your town. Being shy is not going to work — if you can't buttonhole strangers and ask them where they are playing, how are you going to stand up and perform in front of them?

Other musicians already know who is booking entertainment, how much they are paying, and what kind of crowd might show up. This information is gold. This do-it-yourself approach was pioneered by punk bands in the early 1980s, but there are networks for every genre now, even classical musicians. In your career's early stages you can use these networks to book small brief tours, maybe a weekend or two. Once you establish yourself in another market, you can use this as a basis for a couple more. In this way you can spread out gradually, keeping costs and expectations well in line.

## How to Get Noticed

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We discussed publicity elsewhere in this piece, but all the lessons from there apply doubly when it comes to touring. No one goes to see an act they have never heard of. There has to be some reason for your potential new audience to come see your show. The best tool you have at your disposal is publicity.

It is surprising how many acts do not bother to do their own publicity. This makes no sense. Circulating a press release about your show, sending out posters and photos, etc. takes time, but it does not cost a lot of money. And it practically guarantees some publicity.

Even if you do not get an article in the daily newspaper, your efforts should not be wasted. Send your package to local student newspapers, community newspapers and street rags. Find campus radio stations and community stations that reflect your style, and hit them up. The CBC often favours quirky newcomers — get all the local shows a package and someone might bite.

Just getting a few lines in an entertainment round-up is worth something. Your name in print, no matter where, is useful. Even if you can attract just a handful of patrons to your show, if you are good enough, next time they'll bring friends. And so on....

## Pricing

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A lot of self-managed musicians agonize over the question of what to charge, but in truth pricing is pretty simple, especially in your early days. During your first forays into touring, rock, pop, hip-hop artists, djs, country artists, etc., (and especially those who are aiming at bars), can pretty much expect to earn nothing. Opening acts in Canada, especially those low on the bill, are often paid very poorly, if at all.

Only when you demonstrate some value in a given marketplace can you expect to receive the holy grail of touring musicians — a guarantee. A guarantee is a fixed sum, an amount which the buyer agrees to pay you for the show, whether anyone comes to see you or not. Chances are this amount will be based almost entirely on how many people turned up the last time you worked for a given buyer. In other words, if you had 100 people in your audience, and they paid \$5 apiece cover, you are now worth \$400; \$500, minus the buyer's 20% profit and expenses. The same general rule applies whether you are playing

the corner pub or the Bell Centre. Most reputable buyers will provide a deposit, usually 50% of the guarantee, to be held in trust until the gig is done. This is useful for both parties. For you, it is a reassurance that if you show up you'll get paid. For the buyer, who already has money on the line, it is a healthy incentive to work hard promoting the concert.

After you have demonstrated the ability to sell tickets, and/or a substantial number of CDs in a certain market-place, you can expect your price to rise with your value as an attraction. It tends to be very simple — promoters and other buyers take as few risks as possible. If you can sell out rooms, your price will reflect it. Therefore, it is well worth your while to work as hard as you can at making sure there is an audience there when you go on the road.

Pricing can get a little more complicated for non-pop performers, like folk artists and classical musicians. Many classical musicians participate in theatre 'series'. In this situation, a given buyer presents a series of shows over a year, shows which are sold to the audience as a total package. Therefore, the buyer is not necessarily dependent on your particular show to sell a given amount of tickets. The result is that the artists will usually receive a set fee, one that will be fairly standard for the whole series. This set fee is likely to be a lot better than the one your own demand in the area might produce. The sad truth, however, is that there is a lot of competition among artists for these series, and unless you have already toured a lot, or won a prestigious contest, getting these dates is going to be a serious challenge.

Folk, blues and jazz artists often receive much of their income from festivals. Again, the amounts paid for these events tend to be fixed, depending on one's place on the bill, the necessity of your traveling, etc. While few folk, blues and jazz festivals in Canada pay large fees, there are lots of them, and during the spring and summer they can represent a significant income source, one well worth pursuing. These days, in fact, many pop artists develop an acoustic show specifically for such festivals, so they can take advantage of this potentially lucrative market.

It is one thing to decide what you are worth. Actually getting your hands on the money can be a battle in itself. Canada abounds with shady promoters, fly-by-night bar owners, under-financed festivals, and other touring hazards.

There are two ways to get paid for a concert; the first (and by far the safest) is the guarantee, which we discussed above. Unfortunately, new artists in particular will find themselves presented with the much-maligned door deal. There is nothing complex about door deals; essentially, someone stands at the auditorium door, and charges patrons a set amount. At the end of the night, the money is counted, and based on some pre-agreed formula; the buyer and the artists split the cash.

These deals are extremely common. From the artist's point-of-view, however, door deals are far from ideal. For one thing, you have no way of predicting how much you will get paid. Therefore, you cannot budget anything, and just have to hope for the best. Second, you are now depending on the honesty of strangers to make sure you receive your fair share of the take. Door deals do have one advantage, however; when you take a guarantee, and the venue does better business than expected, you might come away with less than you deserved. In an honest door deal, you receive what you are worth tonight, not what you were worth on the last tour. If your act is building momentum, or getting hot, you want to make the maximum cash possible, not an average based on last year's gig.

By far the best scenario is a 'guarantee against the door' structure. These deals offer the best of both worlds. In theory, when you have a guarantee against the door, your deal offers a basic guarantee. After this amount and other expenses have been covered by ticket sales, the buyer agrees to split anything else above and beyond with the artist. Most major concerts deals are structured this way. Even huge stadium shows by acts like U2 and the Rolling Stones are essentially guarantees against the door, and most buyers in Canada operate under this structure.

## Avoiding Rip-offs

There is really only one way to make sure you will never be ripped off — get the buyer to sign a contract.

If you have a contract, signed by both parties, and if you held up your end of the bargain, you have a powerful legal tool if

there is any trouble getting paid. The threat of legal action should spur even the most recalcitrant buyer.

Becoming a member of the musicians' union, (which we'll discuss more later), will also give you a lot more negotiating strength. The union exists to enforce musicians' deals — their legal experience and reach is considerable. The union's default contracts are iron clad, and if your buyer signs it, they know they will have to come through with their end of the deal. The union also proscribes certain minimum pay scales, minimums which are far from punitive. If your potential buyer cannot manage these minimums, getting paid may ultimately be the least of your problems.

If at the end of the show, the buyer refuses to pay up, you are not powerless. Do not succumb to the temptation to start a fight, or make off with the contents of the bar in lieu of your money. If you have a union contract, contact them immediately, and get the legal process going. If you don't, walk away with as much dignity as you can muster. If the promoter was dishonest, take them to small-claims court, or speak to his other associates. The more legitimate your case, and the more sensible your approach, the more seriously people will take you. Robbing the pool table will not work; chances are you will just be charged with theft, and your tour will end on the spot.

## Making It Pay

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We discuss finance for musicians elsewhere, but one serious point needs underlining in this section.

Probably the biggest mistake self-managed musicians make is to allow the costs of keeping an act on the road to become disconnected from the revenue. Before you even think about going on the road, you need to get an accurate picture of what a tour will really cost you. This means estimating everything — everything — gas, hotels, food, strings, PA, insurance, car rental, salaries, beer, crew...every single expense you can imagine. Then you need to estimate how much money you will actually make. Both sides of this equation demand brutal realism. If you are doing a week of door deals, then you should estimate practically no revenue at all, as this is a decided possibility. At the end of this exercise, everyone should know exactly what they are getting into. If the tour finances require the band to share a tent, and live off cans of beans cooked on an engine manifold, then so be it. Unless you are independently financed in some fashion, losing money is not an option.

A healthy and realistic approach will help you to tour sensibly, and hopefully keep going long enough to actually make money at it.

## Stay Healthy

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It might seem self-evident, but staying healthy on the road can be a challenge. Playing a show can be like doing two-hours of aerobics a night, and if your fitness level is poor, your body will not be up to the challenge.

You need to eat right, get as much sleep as possible, and keep smoking and drinking to a minimum. For singers, sleep is vital, so perfect the art of the nap. Try to remember that the quality of your show will help determine how many people come back and see it again. If you act like a madman offstage the show will eventually suffer, and your career along with it.

## The Black Art of Live Sound

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Bad sound must be the biggest complaint of musicians. Whether you are playing garages or stadiums, nothing makes a gig more painful than ear-splitting feedback, terrible vocals, or drums that would churn your stomach. Not many musicians have come offstage without at least once crying "the sound sucked".

Live sound is an art in itself, and there are whole books devoted to it. Not many musicians, even self-managed ones, easily come to grips with the intricacies of PA placement, digital compression or a big mixing console. That does not mean

you can afford to ignore it. There are a couple of useful rules and strategies that might ensure that sound is not your enemy.

1) **Keep it simple** — Whether you have a good mixing engineer, or you are trying to do it yourself with a console shoved onto the back of the stage, the best rule of thumb for live sound is to keep it simple. This means get everything working, get any vocals nice and clear, and minimize feedback as best you can. If this means all your cool effects don't work, or the guitar player can't use all nine instruments he brought, live with it. The less mics, amps and other outputs you have running, the less you need to worry about things going wrong. Until you can afford a pro crew, simplicity is your friend.

2) **Do not take it too seriously** — Obviously, you should strive for the best sound possible. Do not make the mistake, however, of believing that the audience cares about it as much as you do. While the perfect kick-drum impact may be a life or death issue for your drummer, no one in the crowd cares at all. Also, eventually you will find yourself on a stage where you have had little or no time to soundcheck. For most festivals, this is the normal state of affairs. Say you have a 45 slot at Festival X; you can spend 36 of them getting a perfect saxophone sound, or you can get everything running, and let your performance do the talking. Audiences will forgive imperfect sound; they will not enjoy sitting through a tedious half-hour drum-check just to hear two numbers.

3) **Get in-ear monitors** — In-ear monitors are special headphones which connect the PA's monitor system directly to a personal wireless pack; essentially, you get a personal mix of the concert beamed to your own phones, at a very sensible volume. We realize that personally molded phones are an expensive luxury. However, it will be money well spent. If you are playing the sort of music that requires a lot of time spent in front of high volume speakers, guitar amps, loud drums, etc., in-ear monitors can spare your career, if not your sanity. These days basic in-ear bud system can run less than \$1000 a player. They will allow you to hear yourself clearly no matter how loud the stage or room is. And never again will you have to stand in front of a crappy wedge, complaining that you can't hear the vocal, guitar, snare drum, etc.

4) **Learn the vocabulary** — The self-managed musician cannot always afford a soundperson or monitor engineer. Therefore, you need to know the vocabulary, so you can quickly and effectively communicate with whoever the venue provides. Learn what an 'ac drop' is, or a 'DI', or what compressors actually do. For example, there is no point telling a sound engineer to 'turn up the treble'. They will just stare at you in confusion, or worse, turn up something you don't want. Learn the kilohertz scale, and how it applies to your voice or instrument. To a sound engineer 'Turn down 2k!', means eliminate a troubling frequency in the high-mid range of the pa (and your hearing). This will result in the desired action, rather than an unexpected blast of feedback blowing your head off.

5) **Carry a stage-plot** — A stage plot is a one-page map that shows where your gear and/or musicians are supposed to set-up on a typical stage, and also includes any required ac plugs, microphones, drum risers, music stands, direct boxes, etc. It will tell a crew where and how to set-up your gear for a show, and will save hours of frustration. In a festival situation, it will allow a strange crew to get you onstage quickly and accurately, with no time wasted.

## International Touring

Many self-managed musicians ignore the prospect of international touring, imagining it is way beyond their level. This is not always the case. Many niche artists, such as folk and jazz artists, tour all over the world, even though they rarely see limos and five-star hotels. Many Canadian punk bands, metal bands and rap artists also book and carry out serious international tours, despite being less than household names in their own country.

Again, this is a whole book in itself. There are, however, a couple of factors which can help you get started. First, if you want to tour internationally without the benefits of a big agent or label, you need to be an aggressive networker. You need to find venues, buyers and other opportunities geared specifically towards your type of music. The internet and other musicians are your best source of info. Obviously, you need to find performance situations where you will receive some payment, even if it just food and accommodations.

International tours, even for major artists, are rarely particularly lucrative. Overseas plane tickets, hotels, and expensive vehicle rentals can quickly eat up any profits. However, while financing these tours can be difficult, many artists find the satisfaction of playing festivals in, say, Berlin and Paris, can more than make up for coming home with empty pockets. There are also many grants for international touring, and they tend to be easier to come by than similar domestic grants. Canadian consulates abroad often have arts personnel that can help you find festival and media contacts, and help you find opportunities in their countries. Check our links section for more info.

## Showcasing, 'Contests' and Free Gigs

Just about every musician, no matter what their genre, finds themselves wondering what to do about these 'grey' performance areas. Music business showcases, benefits, and the various music contests can be very tempting. In your early career, they are vital. They give you a chance to perform, and sometimes tour, without the pressure of having to sell tickets. All of these events promise lots of publicity, and they are often ideal networking situations.

They also, however, have a few negative aspects. The truth is, no band was ever signed to a major deal because of a hot showcase. Such things can help, but in this era no one risks big money based on a single great performance. You are always better off building a fan base the hard way, and winning industry respect (and, hopefully, investment) based on your superior track record. And, as one veteran musician put it, 'you can starve to death from good publicity'. In other words, the audience is only going to pay to see you once in a while. If that occasion happens to be a 'battle of the bands', or an environmental benefit, the difference between that and a paying gig may not be clear to your fans. They have paid to see you — end of the story. The fact that you played for free, and now have no money for rent, is your problem. Balance your free and paid performances, and in the long run both your fan base and your bank balance will be a lot healthier.

## VII. DIGITAL ISSUES

### The Internet – Saviour or Boogeyman?

Music business wisdom about the internet falls into two camps. The enthusiastic camp sees the internet as a positive and revolutionary force, one which is changing the music business in ways we cannot yet even imagine. The trading of MP3s, Myspace.com, downloading, the iTunes phenomena — all these are revolutionizing the way people find, hear and enjoy music. The other camp sees the world through a less rosy perspective. They believe that the Internet has ruined the old music business model, replacing it with false hopes, a bewildering new set of rules, and leaving musicians with no way to profit from their own work.

To a degree, both camps are correct. It is true that the Internet has changed the business irrevocably. As of our publication, more people are downloading songs than buying albums. And the proliferation of social networking and video posting sites has given ambitious musicians an amazing new way of reaching their audience. And whether we like it or not, free music sharing and downloading sites continue to grow. For the music consumer, it is a golden age.

Unfortunately, for the average musician results have been mixed. The dirty little secret of iTunes and other such sites is that artists probably stand to make less money selling downloads than if they had been selling CDs. Generally speaking, consumers visit sites like iTunes to find specific songs. They usually do not buy whole albums. The result is a serious financial blow to the artist. Even an artist with a terrible record contract would stand to make at least \$3.00 a CD. Independent and self-managed artists often make a lot more. Downloading a song will generally cost a dollar or less. From that \$1, the artist will be lucky to make fifteen cents. Let's do the math, comparing 1000 CDs sold vs. 1000 songs downloaded:

- 1000 CDs @ \$3.00 = \$3000
- 1000 downloads @ \$.15 = \$150.

Scary, huh? Worse, the spread of downloading has decimated music retailers. As fewer and fewer people buy actual CDs, record companies, retailers and distributors have all seen their businesses reduced, in some cases to virtually nothing. This means fewer places to sell your music, less competition for your product, and a lot less people willing to invest in marketing, cross promotion, recordings, etc. There is even some doubt that the downloading companies are really making money; it is an open secret in the business that iTunes exists more to help sell iPods than music.

So, what do you do? The record companies are wringing their hands in despair, watching their businesses shrink around them. You do not want to jump on that sinking ship.

## Making the Internet Work for You

As we said in the opening paragraph, the internet can be a very powerful tool in your arsenal. The key to web-based success is to ignore the old music business model. Making CDs and selling them in record stores is no longer the main way that music gets to consumers. It will be a valid means of distribution for a while yet, but you should not build your career on this model.

Instead, you need to focus on what you already have (or should have), the one thing the internet needs more than anything else: content. The internet is amazing at spreading information at superhuman speeds. As a creative force, however, it is useless. The internet desperately needs creative people, like the self-managed musician, to provide something that people want to see, read about, listen to, and ultimately pay for.

The trick here is getting your music to the people that might be interested in it. You can approach iTunes, or other downloading sites, and getting your songs placed on these pay-to-play sites is relatively easy. However, once posted, who is going to download your song? There are millions of songs on a site like iTunes, not to mention the dozens of other pay-to-download sites. How do you get people to buy yours?

This is where your own efforts can pay off. The first and most important step in the internet savvy musician's career is to begin building a community of listeners and fans. You need to host your own website, and create pages on as many social networking sites as you can. If you have video footage, put it up on video hosting sites, and do your best to attract attention to them. List your music with internet radio stations like Pandora.com. They are probably not going to pay you, but they can awaken interest in your work. You also have to seek out sites where fans of music similar to yours gather. Invite potential fans to visit your own site. And when they get there, make sure there is plenty for them to see and do. New fans need to feel they are making a real connection with the artist. Paradoxically, as the digital world has made some interactions more impersonal, it has narrowed the gap between performer and audience.

Your site needs to have lots of music samples, and an easy way for people to purchase your music if they want to. Good clear graphics are a necessity, along with frequently updated news and tour dates. Anything else you can think of that would enhance the potential fan experience is a good idea. One band hosts a sports pool on their site, where fans can compete against the band members. Others hold regular chat sessions with their listeners. Many musicians post diaries and blogs, and encourage fans to comment and interact. It's all good — the point is to create a community of people, wherever they are, who take a personal and proprietary interest in your music.

Hopefully, when the time comes to release new work, or tour, this community will become a fan base which can fill rooms and buy music. Once created, a community can grow exponentially, spreading in a viral fashion.

The more content you can provide potential customers (whether it be electronic or otherwise), the better you are. A conventional retailer needs to sell a certain number of hard products to keep ahead of expenses. Creating a digital 'store'

and community is relatively inexpensive. Selling a song here and there can quickly add up into serious revenue. As you do not have manufacturing and shipping costs, it can be very profitable and almost as good as selling CDs. Remember, though, to take some care of your DRM, or Digital Rights Management. Just because you post songs on YouTube or MySpace does not mean you have surrendered the copyright. Be very wary of uploading your music to sites which do not guarantee your rights. No one can sell your music without your permission — unless you failed to read the red tape.

It is a good idea to wrap your tracks with an International Standard Recording or ISRC code. This digital code marks your music in a permanent fashion, and allows it to be digitally traced for any royalties you are owed. The Canadian Recording Industry Association, (see the links), manages these codes for Canadian artists.

In a post-CD world, performing is still likely to be your chief source of income, despite all the efforts needed to create a digital presence. The internet, however, is the key to creating a touring audience. Think of the internet as your chance to grow roots and spread them out into the wider world. Nurture these roots, and they will help your career grow.

Of course, this is all a lot of hard work. If you are going to use the internet as an asset, (instead of an enemy) there is no way around it. Every musician, no matter what the genre, needs ‘buzz’ — the critical approval of fans approval which spreads like wildfire, creating huge business opportunities overnight. Nothing is better than the Internet at spreading buzz. Lighting and stoking the fire, however, is going to be your job. Do it well, and you will prosper.

### A Word of Warning...

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There is a school of music business thought right now that suggests expecting to get paid for songs, whether downloaded or on a more permanent format, is a waste of time. Put your stuff out there, and let your songs build up momentum for your real business — performing.

There is still a lot of opposition to this idea, so you do not need to upload your whole catalogue to Gnutella.com, and hope for the best. Not just yet, anyway. Still, as a self-managed musician, you need to stay ahead of the curve. You cannot afford to play catch-up. The internet changes this business constantly. Stay on top of it, and you will be well-placed when the next revolution begins.

## VIII. FINANCIAL ISSUES

### Realism

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The best advice we can give any self-managed musician is the necessity of realism.

Long before you quit your job, leave school, or take up music full time, you need to take a long, hard, cold look at your financial situation. Becoming self-managed usually means becoming self-employed. This also means leaving the cozy world of insurance, pensions, and all the other protections that regular jobs and school provide.

You will need to learn some rudimentary bookkeeping, and gain at least some understanding as to how businesses are taxed. You will need to establish some credit — your parents are not going on tour with you to pay your bills. And most of all, you will need to be honest about your income and expenses.

None of this is difficult. Unfortunately, it is boring, and all too easy to put off. No one goes into music because they enjoy paper work. However, if a long and successful career is your goal, wrestling your finances into good shape will ultimately be as important as a good tunes.

## Basic Bookkeeping

Not many self-managed musicians can afford serious accounting assistance, particularly at the beginning of one's career.

This does not mean you should put your head in the sand and hope that your tax and credit problems go away. There is no excuse for not learning a little simple bookkeeping. At best, you'll save money. And in the worse case scenario, you will keep yourself out of court.

The computer you use now probably has a decent spreadsheet program. Get someone knowledgeable to explain how it works, and set up a simple four-column bookkeeping spreadsheet. If that seems too hard, buy a cheap four-column ledger. Column one will be your receivables, i.e. what you get paid. Column two should be your payables, i.e. your bills, etc. Column three should be any tax owing. Column four is your running total. At the end of the month, reconcile all these numbers with your bank balance. If you have deposited your receivables, and paid your taxes and bills, the number in your bank and your ledger should be the same.

## Taxes

Self-managed musicians often find themselves with terrible tax problems. The main reason is almost always the same — they did not pay what they were supposed to. Musicians often have the bad habit of treating their business as if it existed in some fantasy world, where they leave no paper trail, and all the taxes they owe will just evaporate over time.

Of course, this is ridiculous. And avoiding trouble is relatively easy.

There are two types of tax the self-managed musician needs to focus on. The first is income tax. As soon as you get paid for a gig, even if it is \$200 that's been split five ways after a door gig at the local club, you need to label this money 'income'. Take 20% aside, and send it to the government. Do this religiously, and you never need be afraid to answer your phone, terrified that an appraiser has finally caught up with you.

Obviously, this is simplistic, but the basic principal is sound. Promoters, concert organizers, bookers, and club owners practically never withhold income tax. No one is going to collect and pay it on your behalf, as your old boss used to. Four times a year, as a self-employed musician, you will be expected to send the government a payment based on your tax bracket. The simplest way to do this is to become your own bookkeeper. You should already have a ledger, but if you don't, start one now. You should also open a bank account for your company, or if you are a sole proprietor, open one just for your music income. In one column of your new ledger make a note every time you receive a payment. Make another note in a new column next to it with the appropriate tax amount owing. No matter what, keep the tax money you owe in the bank, and you will not have to panic when payment time comes around. At the end of the year, file your tax return, and if you have kept your records correctly, you should be ok.

The same is true if you have incorporated. Just like individuals, companies pay income taxes, make quarterly payments and file returns. The rates structure is different, but if you have gone this route, you will need to establish a tax paying relationship with the government.

If you make quarterly payments, and you have kept on top of things, you will likely avoid any supplementary payments or interest.

GST and sales taxes are a more complicated proposition. GST is the goods and services tax, which all business and other providers of income generating services in Canada have to both charge and collect. In Atlantic Canada, the four provinces have combined their provincial sales tax with the federal GST, in what is known as the HST, or harmonized goods and sales tax. Whether you are incorporated or not, you will still have to collect and pay it.

This can be an intimidating proposition. However, if you are organized, (and the self-managed musician needs to be very organized), HST/GST need not be too burdensome. The biggest mistake many musicians make is to collect HST/GST from a venue, promoter, etc., and then not pay it to the government. Say you are getting \$1000 to play a festival. Many organizations automatically pay HST/GST; you get your cheque, and to your surprise, it includes an extra \$140 in HST/GST. Bonus! That is, until six months later when you get a bill from Revenue Canada, and the money is long gone. Oops.

Again, the easiest way to stay out of trouble is to be ruthless about your record keeping. As a self-employed musician, every time you receive a payment, you should be collecting HST/GST. Every time you make a payment, you should note the HST/GST you paid. At the end of every quarter, add the two columns up, and subtract the tax you paid from the tax you collected. The difference is what you owe Revenue Canada. You will need a HST/GST number from the government to start this process (addresses for both Revenue Canada and Revenu Québec are found in the links section). This can be done online. Then you will have an account with the government, and you are in business.

If this seems like an enormous pain, keep one thing in mind: in some months, you are going to pay a lot more HST/GST than you collect. If your records are accurate, the government will refund you the difference. If you do not register and keep your records clean, you will never see this money. Also, the cut-off minimum for HST/GST collection is \$30,000. a year. If you make more than this as a service provider, you are legally obligated to collect and pay the tax. Better to figure it all out now, then try and reconstruct your finances years later, when you get caught.

Sales tax, or PST, only applies when you sell a good, i.e. a CD. Some provinces require you to remit these directly to the respective government. In Atlantic Canada they are folded into the HST. Lucky Albertans do not have any sales tax. Either way, you will need to figure out your particular situation, and if necessary register with your provincial tax authority. The officers there will help you get set up, and ensure you understand what your paper burden will be. Again, if you keep good records, it will be easy. See *The Art of Managing Your Career* for more detailed information about how to manage personal and corporate taxes.

## The Big ‘Write-off’

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There are a lot of treasured myths out there among musicians about ‘write-offs’. Write-offs are expenses you can claim against your income. They commonly include things like instrument purchase, transportation to gigs, etc.

Like everything to do with the taxes, it is not as simple a process as many musicians believe. You can in theory deduct the cost of a new guitar from your income, and then just lower your taxes accordingly. However, you would be better off if you deduct its depreciation - the difference between what you paid, and what it is worth, a number that decreases over time. The same is true of equipment like vans, computers, etc. You can write-off most business expenses, and even interest payment on business loans. You cannot, however, write-off every meal you buy for someone else, haircuts, music magazines and any other vaguely plausible expense.

The tax law is extremely specific about deductions. Before you convince yourself that becoming a musician has freed your spending, get a simple tax guide, and read up. The rules change constantly, so you need to stay informed. Self-employed musicians get audited with frightening regularity. If your receipts are bogus, you will have to pay the difference, plus interest. And declaring bankruptcy will not save you. Tax liabilities never go away.

## Credit

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Establishing good credit is vital for anyone who is self-employed. It can also be very difficult. Banks and credit card companies are very suspicious of those who lack a regular salary, even if their income is quite high.

Unfortunately, for a touring musician, a credit card has also become a necessity. Renting vehicles, buying plane tickets, and paying for hotel rooms is going to be next to impossible without one. Even if you have large amounts of cash, you will only attract unwanted attention trying to spend it for travel.

There are two solutions. We suggest that you establish credit before you become a self-sufficient musician. Apply for a couple of cards, and use them wisely. If you pay off the balances regularly, you will quickly establish yourself as a safe credit risk. The credit card companies will likely be only too happy to extend you greater credit as your needs grow. If it is already too late for that strategy, apply for a pre-paid card. These are special cards, which allow you to deposit a certain amount on a card, which can be used in lieu of real credit, much like a debit card. As far as the world is concerned, it is a real credit card, and it will allow you to rent cars, etc., without having to bring your mother along as a co-signer.

Whichever route you go, remember the golden rule of credit cards: pay the balance off every month. If you cannot afford to pay the balance, pay as much as you can. Regular payments are the key to establishing good credit. That way, when you go looking for a mortgage or a car loan, the bank will welcome your business, even if you are a self-employed Klezmer clarinetist.

## Unions

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It is almost inevitable that you will be at some time asked to join the Musicians' Union, the American Federation of Musicians, AFM. Many larger organizations like orchestras require it, as do some bigger festivals and venues. Any paid work for the CBC will also necessitate a Union card.

Many semi-pro musicians do not bother joining; they are making a mistake. As an independent operator you need all the allies you can get, and the Union can be an important one. The Union local sets payment minimums for its members, and the larger body also offers many other protections. They have contracts with many orchestras, venues and broadcasters, and offer group insurance programs for its members. The locals monitor clubs and other promoters, and ensure that those who buy live music and make records treat musicians with respect. The Union has a strong agreement with record companies that provide supplemental payments and other rights for recording sessions run under union contracts. For a small sum a year, you will be able to take advantage of strength in numbers. If you file your contracts with them, they can even help you with legal assistance when things go wrong.

The Union also offers enhanced reciprocal visa programs for members wishing to perform in the USA. Touring in the United States can be very lucrative, but unfortunately, the paper work needed can be expensive or difficult to obtain. The Union's assistance is invaluable. They also offer group health and equipment insurance, insurance which is often difficult to come by for an independent musician.

A lot of clubs will ask, and probably expect, you to play or perform for less money than the Union demands. Be very wary of such offers; at the end of the day, your services are only as valuable as you make them. We all know that beginning artists often end up playing for nothing, or next to nothing. However, if you make a habit of working for less than Union minimums, you drag everyone down.

## Contracts

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We could write an entire book about music business contracts. Contracts for major label record deals can run to the hundreds of pages, and really belong in the hands of a lawyer, not the self-managed musician.

However, almost as soon as you begin performing, you will encounter live performance contracts. These are usually only a page or two, and are fairly straightforward. Again, we could write a whole book on this topic, but there are some useful

pieces of advice.

A contract is a legal document. It obligates you, as the performer, to show up and play. In return, if you fulfill your half of the deal, the contract obligates the promoter to pay you. If you don't have a contract, and things go wrong, it will be your word against theirs. And your chances of successful payment will go way down.

The Musicians' Union provides excellent contracts, which spell out in clear and simple terms what is expected of both parties. Even if you don't belong to the Union, the template should be the same. Your contract should contain an explanation of who is going to play, what they are playing, how long the performance is going to be, what the payment terms are, and whatever else is included in the deal, i.e. food, hotel rooms, equipment rental, etc. Make sure PA and any other outside rentals are covered. If you have to rent a PA and set it up, your payment is going to look very different.

If the venue won't sign a Union contract, (and realistically, many won't) use the Union contract as a model, and write one up your-self. If the promoter or venue won't sign a contract, you need to ask why.

Many promoters and concert organizers will issue their own contracts. Again, read them very, very carefully. It is too late once you've signed the contract to complain that you did not notice that the gig included five sets and a tuxedo rental.

## Provincial Differences

Every province has a few financial quirks. Provincial tax rates vary, as do allowable deductions and other tax subtleties. If you are just working in your own province, you should already be aware of your own jurisdictions' particular laws, and plan accordingly.

If you are touring nationally, it can get more complicated. Say you are based in Alberta, where you pay no sales tax. However, if you play a gig in Moncton, and get paid by the venue there, you will have to collect and pay HST. It comes down to your record keeping. The better your records are kept the less confusion and aggravation with the government when it comes time to settle up.

If you are touring internationally, the complexities can become massive. Some countries require various withholding taxes. Others demand that you file an income tax return. The Canadian government will treat foreign income just like any other income. Do not try to hide it. Most countries where you are likely to tour have reciprocal tax agreements with Canada. You will get caught if you try and wing it, and the consequences will not be pleasing. If your foreign income is more than a few thousand \$\$\$ a year, it will be in your best interest to engage the services of an accountant.

## When the Band Breaks Up

Although few musical collectives think about this when they are practicing in the basement, every act needs to create a legal process for a partition. In other words, you need to have a way to divide profits (or losses), and decide who gets to keep the band name when someone quits, gets fired, or the whole unit collapses.

These agreements need not be complicated, but they do need to be very specific. The biggest pitfall many musicians have fallen into is with regards to what is known as 'sunset' issues. While the law is not clear, there are many, many precedents. Effectively, if a musician has helped to develop the value of a band, then even after they leave they are entitled to receive some recompense for their work. This can be a very heavy burden for the remaining members, who now have to pay regular percentages of their profit to someone who has left the act, sometimes for many years. Like a sunset, these payments decline over time, but they can be very onerous, not too mention annoying. A band name, even that of a band with a mid-level career, can be very valuable. You want to make sure now, while everyone is still friends, that who owns what is clearly outlined in a legal agreement.

## Grants and Funding

Fortunately for all Canadians, federal, provincial and sometimes municipal governments value cultural contributions, and recognize that it is difficult to make a living through the arts.

In response to the importance of Canadian cultural identity, municipal, provincial and federal governments have set aside money for the arts in the form of grants.

A grant is generally a non-repayable source of funding that requires an application and proof of accomplishment in your field. There are many grants available to musicians but it requires dedication and often times much paperwork. If you are prepared to present your music in such a professional fashion and show a genuine need for the funding it is certainly available to you.

Let's look at what you need before you apply.

Some grants are available to non-profit groups only. This is useful if you are representing a choir, or music that is of interest to heritage groups. It is also useful for music involving children, or children's entertainers.

Most of the grants fall under the commercial viability area and actively assist in making the music industry healthy in Canada. There are grants for demos, full sound recordings, touring, marketing, video, websites, project development and songwriting just to name a few. Music for film is also another category gaining wider acceptance in Canada.

Before you begin you should have most of your own material in order. You will need a marketing plan, a biography and/or resume, as well as the history of your touring and performance work if relevant to your genre. Reference letters from those established in the industry will be helpful, if you can get them.

A marketing plan usually consists of 5-10 pages identifying your genre, your target market, some pros and cons regarding the nature of what you do, the growth opportunities you've identified, market trends that are useful for your genre, your recording plans and history, your touring past, and CD distribution. A biography is usually 250 words as previously discussed.

Once you have all your material in order you can look at the applications. There will be a budgeting section required for all applications, a section which is extremely important to understand. Some applications fund only the money you will lose on your venture, and some only require that you show a need for funding. Some may fund the project 100%, but that is rare. Most require you to demonstrate that you can pay at least half your expenses.

Make sure you have reliable quotes for each area of the budget before you complete it. Call all the suppliers you intend to use, be it for recording or car rentals, and get their real price. Grant staff have seen it all before, and know what stuff costs in Canada — inflating fictional numbers will not get you anywhere.

Once you complete the grant it is important to keep a full copy before you mail it off; if you are lucky enough to achieve the grant, you will need this to reference your budget. The budget you submit, and is the one that is approved and therefore the one you work with. This is why it is so important to use real numbers.

As you move into actually completing your project, with grant assurance in hand, make sure you pay by cheque or credit card. Many grants require you to submit 'cleared cheques' to prove payment of suppliers, or your credit card statements. Without a chequing account this is hard to do. Keep meticulous records of your accounts.

When you received word you have obtained a grant you will most likely get some money upfront and the rest when you've completed the project or paid all the bills on the project. If this is the case than your bank statements, which arrive every month with your cleared cheques, will become very important documents.

## Copyright and Publishing

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Copyright and Publishing are probably the two most mysterious part of the music business. Everyone has heard the whispered warning — “you should never sell your publishing” — or has heard rumours of best-selling artists left without a penny. How do you avoid this? And what exactly are people talking about, anyway?

Strictly speaking, as soon as you create an original piece of work, you now have the legal protection known as copyright. This protection prevents anyone else from using your work for their own profit without paying you or giving you credit. Your copyright is the most valuable thing you own. Although the war over music ownership caused by the Internet is on-going, do not succumb to the myth that all music should be free — your copyrights still have tremendous value.

While the formal legal process of establishing copyright is rather complicated, in practice it is quite simple. You just have to be able to prove that you created a piece of work, and fix this in time by some means. Releasing a CD is more than sufficient, or posting it online with a clear copyright label attached. (And there is a way to do this electronically — see the links section for more info.).

Of course, it has to be original. Claiming that you sent Beyonce a tape of your music and that her latest hit is a rip off of your song, is not going to work. As a rule, famous artists and big labels do not listen to unsolicited music. If they do, they are scrupulous about copyright. They have to be — millions of dollars can be at stake.

Publishing is the source of most of these millions. Confusingly, the term music publishing is a bit of an anachronism. The name comes from the days when sheet music was the only means by which songs were distributed. These days the term refers to the business of collecting and monitoring the various royalties and payments which can be garnered from selling music. Music publishers do not actually print sheet music — this is another business entirely.

One should also not confuse music publishing with record companies — record companies sell CDs and DVDs; music publishers sell the rights to play and use music. For example, if an ad company wants a hit song for their new jeans' advertisements, the ad company will approach the songwriter's music publisher. The publisher then makes the deal for the rights to use the song.

## Rights and Royalties

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There are many types of music royalties collected by a music publisher. The two most important for the self-managed artist are radio and other airplay royalties, and synchronization royalties.

Legally, every time a radio station, internet site, clothing store, restaurant or TV station plays a piece of your music, they owe you some money, albeit a very small amount. Obviously, no individual artist could keep track of this, or collect their own money. In answer to this problem, there has evolved an organization called the Society Of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada, or SOCAN as it is better known. It costs a nominal sum to join, and four times a year they will send you any royalties that are due to come your way. They also have relationships with other such organizations around the world, so if you suddenly become big in Japan, your financial back will be looked after. In Quebec, the SPACQ is a collective organization for authors and composers, protecting their rights, and negotiating deals with producers and other buyers.

Synchronization rights are another anachronistic term; the term dates from the days when sound had to be 'synched' with moving pictures. Simply put, it is the royalty you receive when your work becomes a part of a moving picture, whether that

is a TV show, film, computer game or other video project. If someone else uses your song, they legally have to pay this right. Synch royalties are not set in stone, unfortunately, and these days artists often waive any rights in return for anticipated exposure. However, there is a legal requirement for a musician to receive them, and if an opportunity comes along to sell your material, you need to be aware of the subtleties involved. SOCAN is the best source of info for the self-managed musician. Talk to a representative, and find out what you should be getting. Remember, no one is allowed to use your music without your permission.

## Protection

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The best way you can protect yourself from publishing rip-offs is to become a music publisher yourself. First, you need to start a publishing company. If you have already incorporated, or have a partnership, etc., you can use this company. If you do not, you need to start one. This has to be done in a formal & legal fashion, filing the necessary papers with your province. A lawyer or accountant can do it for you, but it is not very hard, and doing it yourself will save some money. In most provinces, it costs around \$250 to register a new company. Make yourself or your collaborators the shareholders. Decide on a name, i.e. Massive Hits Ltd. Then get on the phone to your local Registry of Companies, and they will walk you through the process.

Once you have your new publishing company in hand, apply to SOCAN to become a publisher member. You then have to assign the publishing rights to your music to your own company. This seems complex, but the SOCAN staff is very helpful. And there is a bonus — half the airplay rights SOCAN collects can only be paid to an official music publisher. If you are not a music publisher, or do not have one looking after you, the money stays in the bank.

If you have figured all this out, and your music is getting played somewhere outside your bedroom, then once every three months or so, SOCAN will send you a cheque. It might not be large, but it is a start.

## Trouble

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If you do have reason to believe your music is being used without your permission, there are several things you can do. If you are a SOCAN member (and you should be) the place to start is with their staff. They have the legal know-how and resources to chase people. They can also afford to make some enemies — as a self-managed artist, this is something you are going to be very reluctant to do.

A more common problem is arguments within bands and between collaborators, when songs become popular long after they are written. Many famous bands have come unglued because of disputes about who wrote what, and more important, who is getting paid for it.

Even if you are just jamming in the garage, it is a very good idea to establish who is responsible for what when it comes to music creation. Egos and memories can both be a problem here, so get this process over as soon as the composition is finished. It can be an uncomfortable conversation, and pretty boring, but is a lot safer if you can solve any problems early on. Divide the piece into a hundred, and assign points for the lyrics, music, and arrangement. Many bands and writers decide to split everything equally. Others have much more complex relationships. Either way, even if you just list who did what on a scrap of paper, make some permanent record of the conversation, and get everyone to sign it. You will be glad later when some megastar covers your tune, or Pepsi wants to use it for an ad campaign. Do you really want to share the rewards with the drummer who did not even turn up for the rehearsal?

## Publishing Deals

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If you are really lucky, you may be offered a deal with a music publisher. There are quite a few operating in Canada, and

signing with one can have some big advantages. Publishers have the contacts to get your music into TV shows, movies, games and ad work, and they can often help get your work out to other musicians who do not write their own stuff. Having someone else in your corner marketing your work can be a tremendous asset. Publishers usually provide advances on the revenue they expect to make from you, which can be a huge help in an artist's early days, when income is a struggle. They often provide money for demos, showcases and other promotional opportunities. Of course, you will ultimately have to pay this back in some fashion (generally from whatever songwriting royalties you make), but a publisher may be able to kick-start a career.

In the 50s and 60s, music publishers were notorious for making horrible deals with their clients. This is how the Beatles ended up losing the rights to most of their own songs. Chances are such a deal would never happen today. There are legal protections in place that prevent one-sided deals. Publishers generally buy a portion of your rights for a limited time period, not the whole lot in perpetuity. Even so, if a music publisher comes knocking, it is time to contact a lawyer. Get some names from your local AFM local or musicians' association, and call them. Chances are, your Dad's lawyer does not know anything about music publishing. Hire a pro, and make sure your future is fully protected. Long after you are finished performing, royalties can keep rolling in, and you need to ensure that you will get your fair share.

## Using Other Artists' Material the Right Way

There are really two issues here. The first is known as the 'cover'. Pretty much every musician alive starts by 'covering' someone else's songs. Legally, this is fine. It only becomes an issue when you go to make a record.

The legal protections built into Canada's copyright act say that you have to do two things before you record someone else's material; first of all, you need written permission from the original songwriter or composer. And then, when you actually print some CDs or DVDs, you need to pay them a mechanical royalty.

We did not discuss mechanical royalties before, because most self-managed musicians do not encounter them. Again, it is an old-fashioned term; it refers to the actual mechanical process involved in manufacturing vinyl records. Nowadays, it is a royalty that every manufacturer, i.e. record company, has to pay the authors of every song on an album.

Most self-managed artists, who make and sell their own CDs, never bother paying themselves mechanicals. Why divide your own income into little piles, for no apparent reason? However, if you are using someone else's material, then legally you have to pay.

In practice, a lot of independent artists do not do this. Folk & jazz artists in particular, who often record others' material, are often guilty of not paying mechanical royalties. However, if you do not pay, you are taking a huge chance. When the ripped-off writer finds out that you are making money from their songs, you are going to get sued. At the least, you will have to take your CD off the market, and it could get a lot worse. The Canadian Musical Reproduction Rights Agency Ltd., or the CMRRA, is an organization set up by larger music publishers to collect mechanicals for their member artists. The current rate is 7.7 cents a song, per album printed. It is worth your while to contact the CMRRA and make arrangements to pay the mechanicals you owe, and stay out of potentially damaging trouble.

The question of permission is a little murkier. In practice, almost no one goes through the trouble of getting written permission to record a particular song, especially if you are covering a well-known song by a big artist. As a rule of thumb, if you list the appropriate credits, and pay your mechanicals, (and do not do something horrible with the material) you will stay out of trouble. Creating mash-ups, or remixing others' records without permission, is illegal. If you get caught, you are on your own.

## Sampling

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The issue of sampling is more complex. A ‘sample’ is a piece of a previously recorded copyright work, by another artist, that you include in your own recording. While rare in jazz, country, classical and folk, samples are very popular in pop music, and a mainstay of hip-hop recordings.

There is no murkiness here — you need to get written permission from the writer, performer, publisher and label, before you use a sample. This is known as ‘clearing’ a sample and it can get expensive. In return for ‘clearing’ the sample you want to utilize, the original artists and label may require a piece of your song-writing credit, or a piece of the mechanical royalty. They may even require an advance on your future royalties.

The use of illegal samples is common, but seriously frowned upon. If you get caught you will get sued — and you will lose. The consequences can be nasty. In one famous case, the band the Verve lost all rights and royalties to their mega-hit Bittersweet Symphony after it was discovered they had illegally used a sample from a Rolling Stones record. It cost the Verve millions, and though the song still gets played on radio stations around the world everyday, they make nothing.

## And Finally...

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Publishing and copyright are very confusing, and even experts often have out-of-date information. If you have serious questions about this topic, we recommend that you consult the Department of Canadian Heritage’s music and recording industry site, [www.music.gc.ca](http://www.music.gc.ca). This site carries a wealth of up-to-date information about the topic, including some useful flow-charts, which explain how the money from the various rights and royalties makes its way to the artist.

## IX. LINKS

### *Provincial and Regional Music Associations & Funding*

[www.amia.ca/cms](http://www.amia.ca/cms)

Alberta Music Industry Association

[www.bccountry.com](http://www.bccountry.com)

BC Country Music Association

[www.manitobamusic.com](http://www.manitobamusic.com)

Manitoba Audio Recording Industry

[www.scma.sk.ca](http://www.scma.sk.ca)

Saskatchewan Country Music Association

[www.musicbc.org](http://www.musicbc.org)

Music BC Industry Association

[www.musicpei.com](http://www.musicpei.com)

Music Prince Edward Island

[www.mians.ca](http://www.mians.ca)

Music Industry Association of Nova Scotia

[www.musicnl.ca](http://www.musicnl.ca)

Music Association of Newfoundland and Labrador

[www.music Yukon.com](http://www.music Yukon.com)

Music Association of The Yukon

[www.guilledesmusiciens.com](http://www.guilledesmusiciens.com)

Quebec Musicians' Guild

[www.artsnb.ca](http://www.artsnb.ca)

New Brunswick Arts Board

[www.musicnb.org](http://www.musicnb.org)

Music New Brunswick

[www.nlac.nf.ca](http://www.nlac.nf.ca)

Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council

[www.arts.on.ca](http://www.arts.on.ca)

Ontario Arts Council

[www.peiartscouncil.com](http://www.peiartscouncil.com)

Prince Edward Island Council for the Arts

[www.artsboard.sk.ca](http://www.artsboard.sk.ca)

Saskatchewan Arts Board

*Showcasing Events and Conferences*

[www.ecma.com](http://www.ecma.com)

Atlantic Conference, Awards and Showcasing Event

[www.westerncanadianmusicawards.ca](http://www.westerncanadianmusicawards.ca)

Western Canadian Music Awards

[www.osac.sk.ca](http://www.osac.sk.ca)

Saskatchewan Showcase of the Arts

[www.ccafcfb.com/arts\\_culture\\_cb/R%E9seau%20Pacifique%20menu.dwt.php](http://www.ccafcfb.com/arts_culture_cb/R%E9seau%20Pacifique%20menu.dwt.php)

Reseau Pacifique

[www.cmw.net](http://www.cmw.net)

Canadian Music Week

[www.nxne.com](http://www.nxne.com)

North By NorthEast

[www.ccma.org](http://www.ccma.org)

Canadian Country Music Week

[www.ocff.ca](http://www.ocff.ca)

Ontario Council of Folk Festivals

[www.folkalliance.org](http://www.folkalliance.org)

International Folk Alliance

<http://canadianfolkmusicawards.ca/awards-night/>

Canadian Folk Music Awards and Conference

[www.capacoa.ca](http://www.capacoa.ca)

Canadian Arts Presenting Association

*Funding Information (see Provincial as well)*

[www.factor.ca](http://www.factor.ca)

Funding for touring, demos, full recordings and showcasing

[www.muchmusic.com/music/videofact/](http://www.muchmusic.com/music/videofact/)

Funding through Much Music for video creation

[www.canadacouncil.ca](http://www.canadacouncil.ca)

Multi-disciplinary Arts Government Funding and Support

[www.starmaker.ca](http://www.starmaker.ca)

Radio Star Maker Fund is investment in artists with significant track records

[www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/arts/menu-en.asp](http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/arts/menu-en.asp)

Support for International Activities in Culture

### *Touring Information*

[www.tourfilter.com](http://www.tourfilter.com)

Useful site to find out about tours on a city by city basis

[www.festivalfinder.com](http://www.festivalfinder.com)

North American Festivals

[www.greatfestivals.com](http://www.greatfestivals.com)

More North American Festivals

[www.acousticroof.ca](http://www.acousticroof.ca)

A Canadian guide to House Concerts (new trend)

[www.cruiseshipentertainment.com](http://www.cruiseshipentertainment.com)

Travel and gig at the same time on the same stage

[www.pact.ca](http://www.pact.ca)

Canadian Association of Theatres

[www.ratsound.com](http://www.ratsound.com)

Indie live audio advice

### *Musicians' Union*

[www.afm.org](http://www.afm.org)

American Federation of Musicians – The Union

[www.gopromusic.com](http://www.gopromusic.com)

The AF of M clearing house for Union Members

[www.uniondesartistes.com](http://www.uniondesartistes.com)

Union des artistes

### *Graphics, Logos, Fonts and More*

[www.dafont.com](http://www.dafont.com)

DaFont free fonts

[www.dreamstime.com](http://www.dreamstime.com)

Cheap stock photography

[www.istockphoto.com](http://www.istockphoto.com)

Istock cheap stock photography

[www.bluevertigo.com.ar](http://www.bluevertigo.com.ar)

Web design resources (fonts, photos, etc)

[www.veer.com](http://www.veer.com)

Photography, fonts, illustration, video

### *Francophone Links*

[www.snacadie.org](http://www.snacadie.org)

Société Nationale de l'Acadie

[www.musicaction.ca](http://www.musicaction.ca)

National funding for French touring, recording and showcasing

[www.apem.ca](http://www.apem.ca)

Defending French Music Publishing Interests

[www.acadiemania.com](http://www.acadiemania.com)

French cultural news and view on-line

### *Songwriting Associations and Links*

[www.socan.ca](http://www.socan.ca)

Society of Composers Authors and Music Publishers of Canada

[www.songwriters.ca](http://www.songwriters.ca)

Song Writers Association of Canada

[www.spacq.qc.ca](http://www.spacq.qc.ca)

The Société professionnelle des auteurs et des compositeurs du Québec

[www.gfc.ca](http://www.gfc.ca)

Guild of Canadian Film Composers

[www.musesmuse.com](http://www.musesmuse.com)

Songwriting Resources Galore

### *Copyright, Licensing and Publishing Information*

[www.cmrra.ca](http://www.cmrra.ca)

Canadian Musical Reproduction Rights Agency

[www.musiccreators.ca](http://www.musiccreators.ca)

Artists Speaking out about Copyright Issues

[www.musicpublishercanada.ca](http://www.musicpublishercanada.ca)

Advocates for publishing and copyright issues

[www.cb-cda.gc.ca](http://www.cb-cda.gc.ca)

Copyright Board of Canada

### *Recording Information*

[www.homerecording.com](http://www.homerecording.com)

Advice for anyone at any level

[www.crmav.com](http://www.crmav.com)

Audio info for the professional

[www.roxio.com](http://www.roxio.com)

Relevant software for purchase

[www.audacity.sourceforge.net](http://www.audacity.sourceforge.net)

Converts tapes to CD

[www.propellerheads.se](http://www.propellerheads.se)

Software and “Reason” sound loops

### *Canadian Business and Taxation Information*

[www.cra-arc.gc.ca](http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca)

Revenue Canada

[www.canadaone.com/tools/startingabusiness.html](http://www.canadaone.com/tools/startingabusiness.html)

Small Business Set Up info

### *Distributors*

[www.plages.net](http://www.plages.net)

Acadian Distributor

[www.festival.bc.ca](http://www.festival.bc.ca)

Festival Distribution

[www.musicbymailcanada.com](http://www.musicbymailcanada.com)

Indie Distributor

[www.attackrecords.com](http://www.attackrecords.com)

Indie Distributor

[www.distributionselect.ca](http://www.distributionselect.ca)

Massive French label/distributor

[www.cdbaby.com](http://www.cdbaby.com)

On-line Distributor and Sales

[www.atlanticcanadianmusic.com](http://www.atlanticcanadianmusic.com)

Atlantic Canadian on-line Distributor

[www.sonymusic.ca](http://www.sonymusic.ca)

Sony Music Canada

[www.sonybmg.com](http://www.sonybmg.com)

Sony BMG Music Entertainment

[www.emimusic.ca](http://www.emimusic.ca)

EMI Music Canada

[new.umusic.com](http://new.umusic.com)

Universal Music

[www.warnermusic.ca](http://www.warnermusic.ca)

Warner Music Canada

[www.unidisc.com](http://www.unidisc.com)

Unidisc Music Inc

[www.sunshinerecords.com](http://www.sunshinerecords.com)

Sunshine Records

[www.sonicunyon.com](http://www.sonicunyon.com)

Sonic Unyon

[cdn.scratchrecords.com](http://cdn.scratchrecords.com)

Scratch Records

[www.sricanada.com](http://www.sricanada.com)

S.R.I./YDGS Imports

[www.royaltyrecords.ca](http://www.royaltyrecords.ca)

Royalty Records

[www.bros.ca](http://www.bros.ca)

Production Bros. Inc.

[www.indiepool.com](http://www.indiepool.com)

Cataloguing & special order service to over 700 Canadian CD retailers

[www.outside.on.ca](http://www.outside.on.ca)

Outside Music

[www.nuff-ent.com](http://www.nuff-ent.com)

'Nuff Entertainment

[www.linusentertainment.com](http://www.linusentertainment.com)

Linus Entertainment

[www.kochcan.com](http://www.kochcan.com)

Koch International (Zine Distribution)

[www.arkade.com](http://www.arkade.com)

Buy and sell music online

### *Canadian Music and Culture*

[www.canadianheritage.gc.ca](http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca)

National Cultural Policies and Programs

[www.carasonline.ca](http://www.carasonline.ca)

National Music interest group which presents The Juno Awards

[www.pch.gc.ca](http://www.pch.gc.ca)

Department of Canadian Heritage

[www.maplemusic.com](http://www.maplemusic.com)

Promoting and Selling Canadian Music

[www.purevolume.com](http://www.purevolume.com)

Bands, Links

### *Media*

[www.chartattack.com](http://www.chartattack.com)

Canadian alternative and other non top-40 music news

[www.exclaim.ca](http://www.exclaim.ca)

Alternative publication

[www.musicmoz.org](http://www.musicmoz.org)

Music Business links and articles

[www.realbluesmagazine.com](http://www.realbluesmagazine.com)

National Blues Magazine

[www.thecoast.ca](http://www.thecoast.ca)

Halifax Alternative

[www.currentmag.ca](http://www.currentmag.ca)

The Current, Newfoundland Alternative

<http://herenb.canadaeast.com/>

Here Magazine, New Brunswick Alternative

[www.thescope.ca](http://www.thescope.ca)

Newfoundland alternative

[www.nowtoronto.com](http://www.nowtoronto.com)

Toronto Alternative

[www.canadianmusician.com](http://www.canadianmusician.com)

Canadian music news

[www.eye.net](http://www.eye.net)

Toronto Alternative

[www.viewmag.com](http://www.viewmag.com)

Hamilton

[www.ottawapress.ca](http://www.ottawapress.ca)

Ottawa Alternative

[www.voir.ca](http://www.voir.ca)

Ottawa/Montreal Francophone

[www.hour.ca](http://www.hour.ca)

Montréal English

[www.vueweekly.com](http://www.vueweekly.com)

Calgary/Edmonton

[www.uptownmag.com](http://www.uptownmag.com)

Winnipeg

[www.abyznewslinks.com/canad.htm](http://www.abyznewslinks.com/canad.htm)

Links to many Canadian newspapers and publications

[www.dirtylinen.com](http://www.dirtylinen.com)

International Music Magazine – reviews

[www.penguineggs.ab.ca](http://www.penguineggs.ab.ca)

Canadian Music Magazine – reviews

### *Development, Promotional and Marketing (EPKs, etc.)*

[www.sonicbids.com](http://www.sonicbids.com)

Electronic press kit development and hosting

[www.iodalliance.com](http://www.iodalliance.com)

Indie aggregator, which will get your songs on iTunes for a fee

[www.puretracks.com](http://www.puretracks.com)

Indie friendly Itunes competitor

[www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com)

Smart blogging

[www.rhapsody.com](http://www.rhapsody.com)

News, blogs, videos, MP3, etc...

### *Essential Music Business*

[www.billboard.com](http://www.billboard.com)

The industry bible

[www.pollstar.com](http://www.pollstar.com)

The industry bible for who is playing where, when, number of patrons

[www.jam.canoe.ca/Music/Charts/](http://www.jam.canoe.ca/Music/Charts/)

Who sells what in Canada, also Canadian music news

### *New Digital Radio Trend*

[www.last.fm](http://www.last.fm)

Programmable Internet radio

*Online Communities*

[www.myspace.com](http://www.myspace.com)

[www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)

[www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)