

Musicianship 101

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WHAT DOES A MUSICIAN DO?

A professional musician plays his or her instrument, sings, or both to entertain their audience, or support their band. A skilled musician can invoke many different emotions from the listener as they alter their performance and mood from song to song.

WHERE DO YOU PLAY?

Professional musicians work in a variety of places. Colt got his start learning the guitar by ear when he was 13. In high school he began playing at a coffee house on the weekends with a band. Those smaller gigs are perfect “on the job” preparation for a young musician. Building experience in front of an audience is invaluable. As you progress in your career, those smaller gigs lead to bigger gigs. Learning to play to different crowds and in different venues is also ideal as it trains you to be more diverse in your capabilities. There are some musicians that work solely in recording studios as contracted members of different bands. Some musicians only play weddings or private events. The possibilities are endless and depend heavily on the musician's preference.

WHAT ABOUT THE \$\$\$?

One of the great things about being a professional musician is setting your own schedule. You can work as much or as little as you want. The money you earn is totally dependent on how much you'd like to work. Before the pandemic Colt was playing five nights a week from around 6-10pm and in the afternoon on weekends at the most beautiful and exclusive hotels and restaurants in central Florida. He also plays many private and corporate events. Colt is able to support his family of five on that schedule, including his wife, Aubree, who stays home and homeschools their three children. The best part is he is able to be at home to help with homeschooling, and spend a lot of time with his family.

ANY PERKS?

One of Colt's favorite things about his career is all of the travel opportunities it has afforded his family. Their homeschool schedule has given his wife and children the freedom to accompany him on gigs in Hawaii, New York City, Los Angeles, Toronto, Miami, Las Vegas, and many other fun places. Being able to set your own schedule is also an amazing part of the job. You can schedule your own vacations for as long as you'd like or take off a weekend here and there if you want. It's also a rarity to have to wake up before 9am.

BUT THERE HAS GOT TO BE A DOWNSIDE, RIGHT?

Becoming a professional musician takes discipline. It is important to practice and strive to improve your performances. It is also very important to build a reputation of talent, reliability and professionalism. Being a musician can be a highly competitive job. You must learn to market yourself and your talents whether through actual marketing materials or encouraging word of mouth. Another possible negative could be that most musicians don't have normal 9am-5pm work hours. A musician's schedule may not align with that of friends and family.

HOW DO I GET STARTED?

Like any good thing in life, the greatest endeavors are propelled by passion. If you're considering this career, chances are you are already learning an instrument or building on the skills you already have. If you have a passion for music, no one will ever have to tell you to practice. Build up a repertoire of songs that you can perform for a live audience. Play for friends, family and anyone that will listen. Start playing a few small gigs and build your audience and experience. Remain professional and market yourself through word of mouth and an exemplary reputation. Most importantly, have fun, and realize that this is a dream job for so many!