

# PRACTICAL ASSESSMENTS FOR YOUNG PERFORMERS

An Outline by  
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## I. PERSONAL ASSESSMENT

### A. YOU, YOUR RELATIONS AND YOUR MUSIC?

1. YOUR LIFE SPAN AND LENGTH OF CAREER
  - a. HOW OLD ARE YOU NOW?
    - i. Your age creates limitation and freedom
    - ii. Past, present, future: Don't get stuck in one of these, incorporate all three into your "living" vision
  - b. HOW LONG WILL YOU LIVE?
    - i. Average life span
    - ii. Family experiences
    - iii. Your personal best estimate of the time you have?
  - c. YOUR CAREER (IS LIMITED)
    - i. Plan for the end and the beginning
    - ii. Develop contingencies
  - d. SELF-CARE AND MAINTENANCE: DEVELOPING YOUR PHILOSOPHY
    - i. Assess your tolerance for risk and need for safety
    - ii. Exercise, diet, interaction: Practice, listening, socialization
    - iii. Health and Physical needs, Education, Morality, Security, Family, Community
2. YOU AND YOUR MUSIC
  - a. How does music affect you?
    - i. emotional, spiritual, rational
  - b. What kind of music do you like and dislike?
    - i. style, tempo, instrumentation
  - c. What challenges will this bring you as a performer?
    - i. social, economic, geographic, intellectual
  - d. What sacrifices will you make for your music?
    - i. time, money, relations, location
  - e. What place does music serve in your life?
    - i. central, recreational, therapeutic
3. KEEPING THE MUSIC CENTRAL
  - a. SERVING THE MUSIC OR USING THE MUSIC
    - i. The music and your ego: which is more important?
    - ii. Work ethic: life style or hobby
      - aa. Professional
      - bb. Dilletente
    - iii. Music as a process, a product, an art form
4. YOUR FAMILY AND/OR SUPPORT NETWORK
  - a. RELATIONSHIPS TAKE TIME/SAVE TIME
    - i. Does your family support you in your musical endeavors?
    - ii. How does this affect theirs and your 'family' time?
    - iii. Does your family provide money and time for your musical training?
    - iv. Does your family make or incorporate music?

## 5. YOUR TEAM AND YOUR MUSIC

- a. Band Members
  - i. Comrades in Arms – Like Minded
    - aa. Is your clique as dedicated as you?
    - bb. Do they share your vision?
    - cc. Are they good for you and your career?
  - ii. Needs of the Many . .
    - aa. What compromises must you make in the group?
    - bb. When do your personal needs take precedent?
    - cc. Democracy and diplomacy?
    - dd. Is this worth your limited time?

## 6. OTHER PLAYERS ON YOUR INSTRUMENT

- a. Whom are the best performers in your sphere?
- b. Do they give lessons or advice?
- c. Are they aware of you?

## 7. HIRED GUNS

- a. Your Professional Team
  - i. Mentors
    - aa. Experienced, wise, accessible
  - ii. Teachers
    - aa. Skills, Pedagogues, Connected?
  - iii. Managers/Agents
    - aa. Band, Solo
  - iv. Promoters
    - aa. Cheer Leaders
  - v. Lawyers
    - aa. Business
    - bb. Defense
  - vi. Accountants/Financial Planners
    - aa. taking stock
  - vii. Bankers

## **B. WHAT DO YOU HAVE? WHAT DO YOU WANT? WHERE ARE YOU GOING? WHERE DO YOU NEED TO BE?**

### 1. CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS: REFINING YOUR AWARENESS (YOU BECOME WHAT YOU THINK ABOUT)

- a. Think for Yourself
  - i. It takes courage to be independent?
- b. Intellectual Humility
  - i. It takes courage to admit inadequacy.
- c. INTELLECTUAL COURAGE
  - i. Don't let fear cloud your judgment
- d. Intellectual Empathy
  - i. Let your heart help guide your understanding
- e. Intellectual Integrity
  - i. Beware of self-delusion
- f. Intellectual Perseverance
  - i. Keep searching despite set-backs and frustration
- g. Faith in Reasoning
  - i. The truth will set you free more consistently than faith alone
- h. Develop Your Memory
  - i. Knowledge and power ultimately rely on what you can remember

### 2. GOAL SETTING – ASPIRATIONS (Make lists)

- a. Short Term
  - i. hourly/daily
- b. Medium Term
  - i. weekly/monthly/semester
- c. Long Term
  - i. yearly/career/lifetime

3. ROLE MODELS AND SELF-IMAGE
  - a. Pretending First/ Imitation
    - i. To whom do you aspire? Why are you inspired?
    - ii. Put yourself in their shoes
    - iii. Imagination: How would it feel to...?
  - b. Modeling Methodologies
    - i. Learn their history
    - ii. What mistakes have they made?
    - iii. What setbacks did they overcome?
    - iv. How can you adapt their path to your own?
    - v. What will you do the same or differently? Should you?
4. GETTING THE TRAINING
  - a. Schooling
    - i. Public school-Technical Schools
    - ii. Educational materials
    - iii. Libraries
  - b. Private Study
    - i. Lessons in performance, theory, history, style
    - ii. Self-study
  - c. On the Job
    - i. Apprenticeship
    - ii. Journeyman
    - iii. The Blue collar approach
    - iv. Jam sessions
5. YOUR RESUME
  - a. You already have a resume
  - b. It's never too early to begin and it never ends
  - c. The musical portfolio
    - i. Resume/Vitae
    - ii. Recordings
    - iii. Bio/Photo
  - d. Regular updates

### **C. WHERE DO YOU FIT?**

(YOU BECOME LIKE THOSE YOU ARE SURROUNDED BY)

1. SOCIO/CULTURAL FIT
  - a. By whom are you surrounded?
  - b. Conformists and renegades
  - c. Are you happy with your social circle?
  - d. Understanding the Network
2. STYLISTIC CONSIDERATIONS (PREFERENCE)
  - a. Attitude verses Aptitude
  - b. Different styles require different abilities and techniques
3. EXPERIENCE VS. EXPERTISE
  - a. Experience: the test before the lesson
  - b. Expertise gained over time
    - i. Awareness of subtlety, timing, finesse
4. YOUR AUDIENCE/ YOUR FRIENDS?
  - a. The difference between friends and audience
  - b. Intentions for both
5. NICHE MARKETING - FINDING YOUR NETWORK
  - a. Casting a wide net.
  - b. Narrowing your focus.
  - c. Identify your strengths

## D. UNDERSTANDING MUSIC

1. MUSIC THEORY
  - a. Melody
  - b. Harmony
  - c. Form
  - d. Rhythm
  - e. Dynamics, Texture, Expression
  - f. Transcription and Analysis
2. MUSIC HISTORY
  - a. Western Music
    - i. Middle Ages
    - ii. Renaissance
    - iii. Baroque
    - iv. Classical
    - v. Romantic
    - vi. Modern
    - vii. Jazz
    - viii. American Popular Music
    - ix. Regional Styles
    - x. World Music
2. MUSIC PERFORMANCE
  - a. Reading Music
  - b. Ear Training and Sight-Singing
  - c. Memorization
  - d. Scales and Etudes, Keys
  - e. Standard Methods and Repertoire
  - f. Solo, Chamber Groups and Large Ensembles
  - g. Styles
  - h. The Audition/Interview Process

## II. GEOGRAPHICAL ASSESSMENT

### A. WHERE ARE YOU? WHERE DO YOU NEED TO BE?

1. PRIMARY - MUSIC BUSINESS CENTERS-LARGE
  - a. New York
  - b. Nashville
  - c. Toronto
  - d. Los Angeles
2. SECONDARY - REGIONAL HOTSPOTS-LARGE
  - a. Atlanta
  - b. Austin
  - c. Chicago
  - d. Dallas/Fort Worth
  - e. Memphis
  - f. Miami
  - g. Minneapolis/St. Paul
  - h. Montreal
  - i. Philadelphia
  - j. Portland
  - k. San Francisco
  - l. Vancouver
  - m. New Orleans

### 3. TERTIARY - UNIQUELY SITUATED CITIES-MEDIUM

- a. Athens, GA
- b. Calgary
- c. Denver
- d. Muscle Shoals
- e. Phoenix
- f. Seattle
- g. Kansas City
- h. Cincinnati/Cleveland

### 4. OTHER - ISOLATED CITIES, SUB-URBAN, RURAL

- a. Music is made here too!

### 5. GEOGRAPHIC CONSIDERATIONS

- a. Cities Equal Work – All Roads Lead to Rome  
(500,000 is about the magic number)
- b. How Close Are You to a Metropolitan Area?
  - i. Travel Expense Vs, Time
- c. Being There Vs. Living There  
(Lifestyle)
  - i. Making connections vs. making friends
- d. ROUTING OPTIONS
  - i. Commuting
    - aa. In and Out
  - ii. Weekending
    - bb. Weekend Warrior
- e. Communication
  - i. Internet
    - aa. Social Media
    - bb. Email
    - cc. Web Traffic
  - ii. Phone
    - aa. Text Messaging
    - bb. Fax transfer
    - cc. live dialogue
  - iii. Mail
    - aa. USPS
    - bb. FedX, UPS

## **B. NETWORKING: WHO AND WHERE ARE THE 'POWER PEOPLE?'**

### 1. IDENTIFICATION/LISTINGS

- a. Free Publications
- b. Magazine Subscription
- c. Phone Hotlines
- d. Phone Books
- e. Newspapers
- f. Newsletters
- g. Web sites

### 2. PLAYERS – BANDS

- a. Live Performances
- b. Websites
- c. From Fan to Comrade

### 3. CONTRACTORS/PROMOTERS

- a. Contractors hire musicians for events
- b. Promoters produce events

### 4. AGENCIES

- a. Contract talent

5. CLUB OWNERS
  - a. Hire bands to provide a service
  - b. Advertise events
  - c. Occupy particular niche
6. SUPPORT PEOPLE AND GROUPS
  - a. Non-profit organizations
  - b. Societies by type "Jazz," "Blues," etc.
  - c. Government Agencies
7. ORGANIZATIONS/COOPERATIVES
  - a. Musicians Union
  - b. Cooperative ventures
  - c. Grant and Scholarship providers
8. SCHOOLS, UNIVERSITIES, INSTITUTIONS
  - a. College, University, & Community College
  - b. Music Academy
  - c. Music Institute
  - d. Summer Camps/Retreats
9. LOCATION/MEETING THEM/KEEPING TRACK
  - a. Learn to get around quickly
  - b. Shake hands, exchange contact information, follow-up
  - c. Don't forget names
  - d. Periodic contact
  - e. Invitations and Thank-you cards
  - f. Cold Calls

### III. BUSINESS AND PHILOSOPHICAL ASSESSMENTS

#### A. THE RENT IS DUE

DON PASSMAN'S LIST-ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE MUSIC BUSINESS (NOT REALLY ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW)

1. YOU ARE A BUSINESS
  - a. The starving artist/stupid artists
  - b. Income/expenses, assets/liabilities
  - c. Work Ethic and the Power of Intention
  - d. What can you offer?
2. MOST ARTISTS DON'T LIKE BUSINESS
  - a. Emotional vs. Rational
  - b. Organization vs. Impulsivity
  - c. Perspective and Experience
3. SUCCESS HIDES A MULTITUDE OF SINS
  - a. Famous Failures
  - b. Appearance vs. Substance
4. YOUR CAREER WILL HAVE A LIMITED RUN
  - a. The long haul
    - i. Entering the work force
    - ii. Your Professional Career
    - iii. Retirement – How and When?

## 5. PLAY TO YOUR STRENGTHS, WORK ON YOUR WEAKNESSES

- a. Your competitive edge
  - i. Assets
    - aa. Playing ability
    - bb. Personality/people skills
    - cc. Looks
    - dd. Stylistic sensibilities
- b. Developing other competitive assets
  - i. Money
  - ii. Equipment
  - iv. Improving weakness
  - v. Secondary income streams

## 6. MANAGE YOUR MONEY/TIME IS MONEY

- a. Consistent saving should start early and continue throughout
  - i. Emergency fund
  - ii. Dollar cost averaging
  - iii. Compound interest
    - aa. Save one penny out of ten
    - bb. Putting money to “work” for you
- b. Accounting/Budgeting
  - i. Tracking and sticking
- c. Investing
  - i. Tax deferral advantages
- d. Credit
  - i. Borrowing
  - ii. Credit record
  - iii. Interest and principle
    - aa. Pay off interest bearing debts first
- e. Insurance
  - i. Life (Why?)
  - ii. Vehicle, Residence and Equipment
    - aa. Riders for musical equipment
  - iii. Health
  - iv. Income
  - v Long term care
  - vi. Liability Umbrella
- f. Taxes: You're in Business with your Government
  - i. Exemptions
  - ii. Brackets
  - iii. Income
  - iv. Local, State, Federal

## B. PICKING OTHER PEOPLE'S BRAINS

### 1. GET REFERENCES

- a. Ask around
- b. Avoid the phone book approach

### 2. PERSONAL MANAGER

- a. This could/should be you first
- b. Temperament and chemistry
- c. Are they connected to the industry?
- d. Qualifications and trust

### 3. LAWYER

- a. Contract Lawyers

### 4. BUSINESS MANAGER /C.P.A.

- a. Handles your economic schedule

5. AGENTS
  - a. MUSIC
    - i. Usually represent groups
    - ii. Book gigs and develop performing schedules
  - b. INSURANCE
    - i. Get an independent representative
  - c. BANKER
    - i. Credit Unions
    - ii. Savings and Loans
    - ii. Big Banks
  - d. FINANCIAL PLANNER
    - i. Tax deferred savings plans
    - ii. Investment vehicles
    - iii. Strategy: risk, balance, change
    - iv. Fiduciaries

### **C. USING OTHER PEOPLE'S MONEY**

1. TAXPAYERS
  - a. Grants
  - b. Scholarships
2. INVESTORS
  - a. Speculative Profit Sharing
3. LENDERS
  - a. Student Loans
  - b. Conventional Loans
4. EMPLOYERS - CREATIVE ADVERTISING
  - a. Earnings
  - b. Internships/Sabbaticals
  - c. Development Funds
5. PARTNERSHIPS
  - A. Incorporation
  - B. Informal
6. DONATIONS - PASS THE HAT
7. BARTER - YOU SCRATCH MY BACK?

### **D. 'ILITIES: KEYS TO LONGEVITY**

1. VERSATILITY
  - a. Doubling (The Standard Doubles)
  - b. Utility Doubling
  - c. Non-standard Doubling  
(Outside your speciality)
2. DEPENDABILITY- RELIABILITY
  - a. Be On Time (30-60 Minutes Early)
  - b. Communicate Immediately and Get a Qualified Sub
3. FLEXIBILITY
  - a. Deal with Change – Non Emotionally!
    - i. Gigs Fall Through
    - ii. Money Changes or Gets Hung Up
    - iii. Problem-solving and Adapting



4. RESPONSIBILITY
  - a. Prepare to Accept More
  - b. Step Up: Front the Group
5. IRREPLACEABILITY
  - a. Make Yourself Irreplaceable
6. INSTABILITY
  - a. Will you know for sure?
7. SENILITY (IT'S TIME TO QUIT!)
  - a. Embracing the Youth in Others
8. VIABILITY
  - a. The continuing process of assessment

#### **IV. MUSICAL 'SOCIAL' WORK (COMMUNITY AND COMMUNICATION)**

##### **A. GATHERING INFORMATION:**

1. KNOWLEDGE IS POWER
2. IT'S WHO YOU KNOW . . . SO, SAY "HELLO"
3. LOCAL AND REGIONAL PUBLICATIONS
4. KEEP LISTS, DOCUMENT DATES OF COMMUNICATION

##### **B. EXPOSURE: NOW AND LATER**

1. INFORMAL JAM SESSIONS
2. SITTING – IN
3. SUBBING
4. TAKING LESSONS
5. DO FAVORS BEFORE ASKING FOR THEM
6. OVEREXPOSURE RISK

##### **C. BEING HEARD**

1. SOCIETY AS YOUR AUDIENCE
  - a. QUALITY - WHO REALLY KNOWS?
2. CONSIDERING YOUR AUDIENCE (OR NOT)

##### **D. REMEMBERING AND BEING REMEMBERED:**

1. FAMILIARITY
  - a. SOCIAL 'GLUE'
  - b. BREEDS CONTEMPT AND LOVE
2. WORD-OF-MOUTH:
  - a. BEWARE OF "TRUST ME"
  - b. THE ONLY REAL ADVERTISING
  - c. TALK CAN BE EXPENSIVE - BE POSITIVE AT ALL COSTS
  - d. DO THE WALK

3. PUBLIC IMAGE
  - a. THEY HEAR YOU WITH THEIR EYES FIRST!
  - b. HUMOR IS AGREEABLE (FUN)
  - c. PEOPLE LOVE TO HEAR THEIR OWN NAME
  - d. SENSE OF THANKFULNESS – CALM KINDNESS
  - e. BE PREPARED – Carry a pen, a pocket knife, a lighter
4. ANSWERING TECHNOLOGY
  - a. A MUSICIANS' FISHING POLE
  - b. CHECK OFTEN
  - c. RETURN CALLS/TEXTS PROMPTLY
  - d. DOCUMENT CALLS
  - e. ALWAYS CARRY CALENDAR AND CELL PHONE
5. REMEMBERING PEOPLE
  - a. EXCHANGE BUSINESS CARDS
  - b. MAKE PHONE/CONTACTS LISTS
  - c. DEVELOP MAILING LIST
  - d. THANK-YOU CARDS AND CALLS
  - e. REMEMBER NAMES
6. HANDLING CONFLICT
  - a. ALWAYS COMMUNICATE
  - b. COUNT TO TEN/CUT AND RUN
  - c. WHAT CAN I LEARN FROM THIS?
  - d. KNOW WHEN TO RUN OR STAND YOUR GROUND
  - e. COMPASSION

## **V. GIGS AND WORKING OPTIONS**

### **A. DAY JOBS: PART-TIME PARACHUTE**

1. DELIVERY JOBS IN A NEW LOCATION
  - a. Flexible Hours
2. RETAIL MUSIC
3. ANCILLARY SUPPORT WORK

### **B. VOLUNTEERING**

1. CHARITY/ BENEFITS
2. TAX-DEDUCTIBLE DONATIONS OF TIME
3. HIGH SCHOOL HELPERS
4. NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS AND SOCIETIES

### **C. GIGS - NOT ANOTHER LIST!**

1. CLUB DATES
2. PRIVATE STUDIO INSTRUCTION
3. PUBLIC TEACHING
4. PRIVATE SCHOOLS
5. ARRANGING/ COMPOSING

6. INDUSTRIAL PERFORMANCES - RECORDING
7. CASUALS - JOBBING – WEDDINGS - PARTIES
8. RESORTS/CRUISE LINES
9. CHURCH MUSIC
10. BANDS – DANCE AND ETHNIC SERVICE MUSIC
11. ART MUSIC GROUPS
12. CREATING NEW VENUES
  - a. Restaurants
  - b. Private Music Parties
14. ORCHESTRAL
  - a. Local orchestras and civic bands
15. LARGE HOTEL BANQUETS
16. MILITARY MUSIC
17. CONDUCTING/DIRECTING
18. ACCOMPANYING
19. MUSIC THERAPY
20. ALLIED WORK
21. RESEARCH – HISTORY – THEORY
22. SOUND REINFORCEMENT – RECORDING ENGINEER – VIDEO
23. ACOUSTICAL ENGINEER
24. INSTRUMENT REPAIR

#### **D. EQUIPMENT**

1. GET THE BEST AT THE BEST PRICE
  - a. Mail-order Vs. Local Retail
  - b. Used
2. DO YOU NEED A P.A. OR RECORDING EQUIPMENT?
  - a. It can generate work
3. HOW ABOUT A BASS FLUTE? NON-STANDARD DOUBLES  
(B-3, Bari/Bass Sax, Accordion)
4. SUPPLIES AND REPAIRS
  - a. Have Instant Access
  - b. Carry Extra
  - c. A Real Tuxedo and Concert Black!
  - d. A Music Stand and Stand Light
  - e. Fake Books - iReal
  - f. Repair Technician
  - g. Amplifiers – Large and Small
5. RELIABLE and VERSATILE TRANSPORTAION
6. DOCUMENTATION ON PURCHASES AND EXPENSES – TAX DEDUCTIONS