

Career Planning Tool

A Workshop Activity to Guide Planning for A Career in Music

By Eric Salazar



(Your Name)

arranged some of my favorite pop tunes for classical ensembles.)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

WHAT ARE FIVE NON-MUSICAL SKILLS THAT I AM PROUD TO HAVE?

*(List the skill, and provide a brief definition of that skill. EX: **Writing**. I have off and on written short stories my whole life. I even won an award in High School for a short story I wrote.)*

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

WHAT ARE MY THREE BIGGEST MUSICAL PASSIONS?

*(List three great musical passions of yours, and provide a brief definition of each one. The more specific you can be, the better. EX: **Sight Reading**. I actually get a twisted adrenaline high from sight reading, and I love just sitting down and learning a part as quickly as I*

can.)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

WHAT THREE THINGS AM I MOST PASSIONATE ABOUT (OTHER THAN MUSIC)?

*(List three non-music-related things you are passionate about, and provide a brief definition of that thing. The more specific you can be, the better. EX: **Video Games**. I love playing computer games on Steam. Or **Tea**. I love tea so much that I memorized the exact water temperatures of each type of tea, and have mastered how to prepare tea whether it is with tea leaves or tea bags.)*

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

HOW ARE ALL OF THESE RELATED?

Now that you have brainstormed your skillset, and thought about what you are passionate about, it's time to see how it can all connect together in the form of a portfolio career!

Ask yourself the following questions:

1. *What music jobs use this skills that I'm proud to have? What non-music jobs use them?*

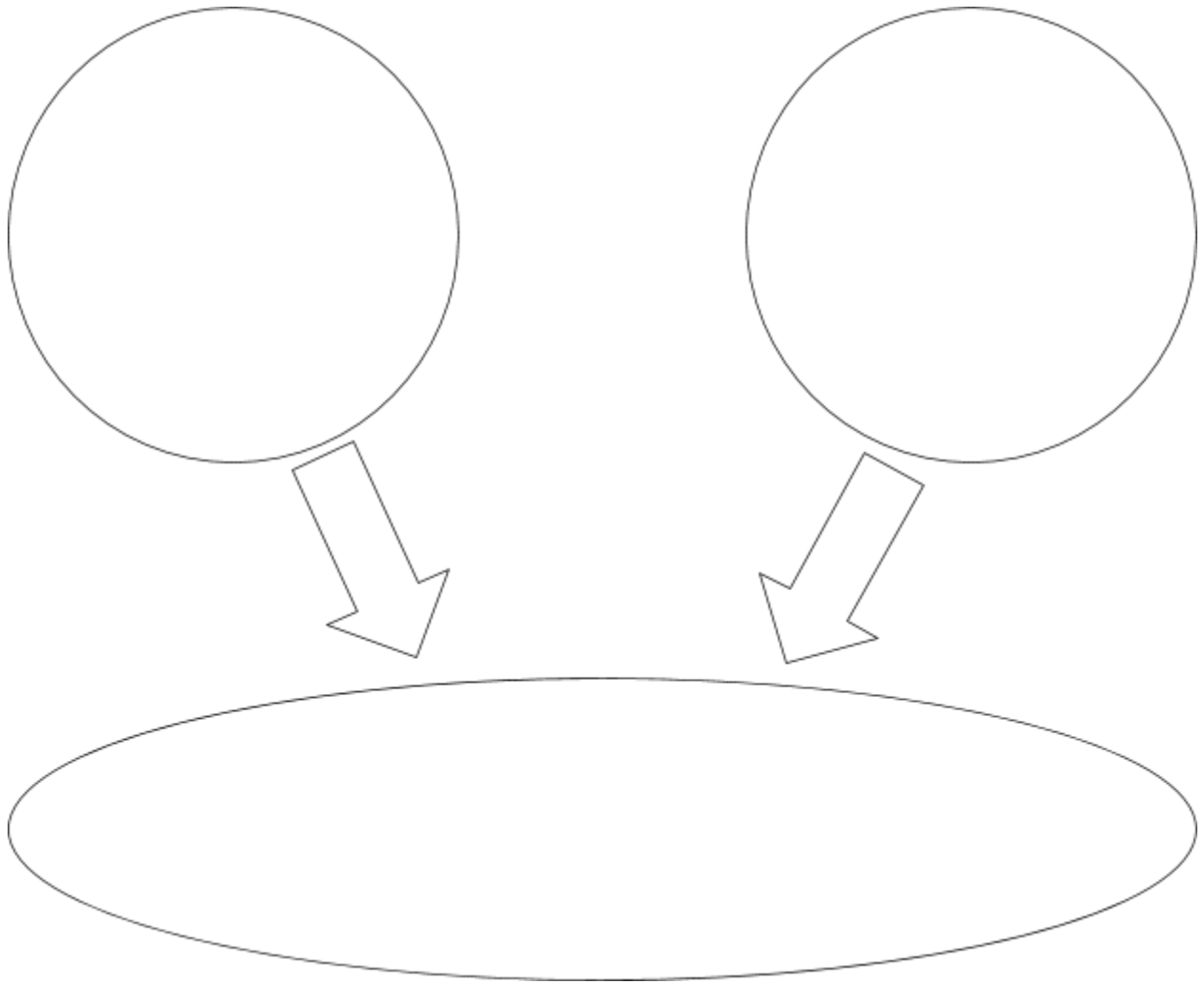
2. *What non-music jobs revolve around my passions?*

3. *How can I add a musical element to a non-music job to create a project that I would want to participate in?*

4. *What non-music tasks am I willing to do? What non-music tasks am I NOT willing to do?*

5. *Do I know anyone who is willing to do those non-music tasks I am NOT willing to do? Or: What kind of person will I need to help me with those tasks?*

Now, in the left circle, list your skills from above. In the right circle, list your passions from above. Then, in the bottom area brainstorm how these can be combined in the form of a music project that earns income.



Ask yourself: Do these potential projects align with why I'm a musician in the first place?

SMART Goals

SMART Goals are Specific (S), Measurable (M), Achievable (A), Relevant (R), and Timed (T). They outline a clear outcome, have a definite end that shows when you have

achieved the goal, are feasible within your timeframe, are important to your career aims, and have a deadline for completion.

Use the concept of SMART Goals to outline a SMART plan for one aspect of your career (or, one branch of your portfolio career) from above. To make a SMART plan, outline all of the steps along the way towards your big picture goal. The more detailed you can be now, the more likely you are to achieve the big picture goal in the future.

Example Below

BIG PICTURE GOAL: To have a solo career where I perform original compositions twelve times a year.

What is the Outcome?	What will I Do?	When will it be Completed?	Anticipated Barriers	Potential Solutions to Barriers?
Learn how to write music.	I will analyze music that I like, and make a list of 10 compositional techniques I notice.	November 2018	I've never done this before, and I am scared. I think I will make excuses to not actively listen (i.e. "oh I can listen while I do laundry" or "I'm not in the mood to think.").	
Write my first piece.	I will write one 3 minute piece of music that uses at least 2 of the compositional techniques I liked from above.	December 2018	I don't think what I have to say is valuable, so I anticipate having second thoughts when I go to start, and feeling like what I'm writing isn't good.	
Play my first show where I perform original music.	I will conduct internet research to locate 6 open mic nights that	January - February 2018	I will be very scared to actually do this. What if people don't like my	

	work with my schedule to perform in, and perform at 1 open mic night.		music?	
Play more shows where I perform original music.	I will conduct internet research to locate 20 venues that might allow me to perform at, and contact them asking for performance opportunities so that I am either playing at an open mic night or a multi-act show at a local venue once per month.	March 2018 - November 2018	I will probably use the open mic nights as a crutch, and say “oh, I don’t need to reach out to that venue [because I’m too scared], because I can just play open mics and still achieve my goal!”	
Perform an entire show of just original compositions.	I will write an hour’s worth of original music as I continue to perform, and plan to play a show at the end of the year where I perform only original works for one hour.	March 2018 - November 2018; December 2018	I will probably use the excuse of knowing repertoire to hinder me from writing more music. In the back of my mind I’ll probably say “it’s puttin on the show that’s important. Why don’t you just perform a couple compositions and let Mozart do the rest?”	

BIG PICTURE GOAL:

What is the Outcome?	What will I Do?	When will it be Completed?	Anticipated Barriers

CONCLUSION

Now that you have a SMART Plan for one aspect of your portfolio career, it is time to go back and think about making plans for several aspects of your portfolio career! Never be afraid to go back to the very beginning, and think about why you are an artist in the first

place to help you decide your paths. The artist inside of us is always either implicitly or explicitly driving our careers.

The steps in this tool are designed to be reused again and again over the course of your career. It's never a bad idea to take a step back, think about where you are now, and plan for the future. Good luck!