

Evaluating your Skills

Savvy musicians are known for designing diverse, entrepreneurial career profiles that incorporate their full range of abilities. *Every skill you possess can contribute to your professional life.* Take a moment to brainstorm your full range of aptitudes.

- **PRIMARY MUSICAL SKILL.** Obviously important. Many musicians, however, limit their work largely to this category, failing to take full advantage of other aptitudes.
- **SECONDARY MUSICAL SKILLS.** Do you play a second instrument? Arrange a little? Have a good ear? All of these competencies can help earn income. You may not think you are “good enough,” but others may see it differently. Believe it or not, secondary skills often morph into primary ones over time.
- **NON-MUSICAL SKILLS.** Outside of music, what aptitudes do you possess? Consider artistic, physical, cognitive, specialized, and business-oriented directions. With creativity, there are probably many ways to use these abilities to enhance your career in music.
- **UNIQUE SKILLS.** A challenge for musicians is that so many people doing the same thing compete for the same work: twenty-three teachers vie for piano students, 250 violinists audition for one orchestral spot, etc. Consider which unique skills you possess. Perhaps this individuality emerges when combining a number of areas. For example, suppose you are a pretty good pianist who also sings well. Individually, neither talent can win international competitions, but combining them unlocks fascinating possibilities.

Musical Skills		Non-Musical Skills	
Analyzing	Orchestrating	Accounting	Photography
Arranging	Performing	Art	Problem Solving
Composing	Primary Instrument	Bookkeeping	Psychology
Conducting	Producing	Communication	Public Speaking
Digital Audio	Synth Programming	Computers Skills	Sales
Engineering	Recording	Dancing	Schmoozing
Improvising	Score Reading	Fixing Things	Supervising
Interpreting	Secondary Instrument	Graphic Design	Teaching
Hearing	Sequencing	Leading	Video
Music Business	Sight Reading	Marketing	Web Design
Music History	Singing	Money	Working with Adults
Music Literature	Transcription	Management	Working with Kids
Notating		Networking	Writing
		Organization	

Multiplicity

Caleb Burhans (www.calebburhans.com) employs a wide range of skills in his professional life. While the bulk of his income is generated through singing with church choirs, he also composes chamber music commissions, plays electric violin in an improvisational “ambient, post-rock, minimalist” duo, and does studio work on violin and viola. Additionally, Caleb has gigged on an array of other instruments: piano, guitar, electric bass, mandolin, banjo, slide whistle, harmonica, and percussion. Every aptitude he possesses has literally been put to work.

Mapping Your Goals

Unlike non-entrepreneurs, who see few possibilities for themselves, savvy musicians seem to continually produce ideas for meaningful, profitable projects. In fact, after granting yourself permission to be creative with your future, the problem may be that too many possibilities compete for attention. Where do you even begin?

Study after study has shown that people who map goals in writing are much more likely to accomplish them than those who don't. Although it is possible to organize these thoughts mentally, writing down aspirations somehow makes them feel more real and urgent, greatly increasing the odds they will be realized.