

PERFORMING

WORKBOOK 4

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 Chapters that are essential to this workbook.
 Chapters that are optional to this workbook.

Please note

Any details or photographs of equipment, software, manufacturers or suppliers do not constitute a recommendation or endorsement by DWP, but are intended to provide typical reference examples only.

A man with dark hair, wearing a grey t-shirt with pink trim on the sleeves, blue jeans, and white sneakers, is seated on a black chair and playing a wooden upright piano. He is positioned in profile, facing right. The piano is a light brown wood with sheet music on the stand. The background features a white brick wall and a blue door with four glass panes. The floor is a solid teal color. In the bottom left corner, the text "IMPROVING YOUR SKILLS" is written in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

IMPROVING
YOUR
SKILLS

WHAT IS IT?

Your instrumental and technical skills are the cornerstone of your work as a performer, whether you are a singer, instrumentalist or DJ. These skills reflect your competence in the areas of technical skill, knowledge of different styles and genres, musical interpretation and the art of communicating your message to your audience – or performing!


WHY DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS?

So you want to be a working musician? Where do you start in the minefield of earning money as a musician? Let's start with the first basic question – am I any good? Can I play my instrument well? How good do I have to be? When will I know I'm good enough?


In order to survive as a working musician or DJ (i.e. primarily earning your living based on your instrumental ability – performing, writing, teaching) you will need a good level of competence on your chosen instrument.

YOU MUST HAND IN YOUR WORK BY


TO

**HOW LONG**

should this assignment take?

**HOW**

will I be assessed?

**WHAT**

do I do now?

Every person works at his / her own pace. As a guide, this should take you 7 hours to read and research and another 3 hours to write your answers and discuss them with your tutor.

Your tutor will assess your work. He / she will give you feedback on how you have done. If you have not completed the work, you will be given the chance to do further work to bring it "up to scratch". For more details, please refer to your MOLP's own guidance.

Read the TASKS section below.
Then read the NOTES AND GUIDANCE section.
Carry out the TASKS.

TASKS

Read 'notes and guidance' to answer these questions

1 Read the following questions and give your skills a rating out of 10

SKILL	RATE / 10
Can you play in time? Can you play to a click track?	/ 10
Do you know major and minor chords from your altered dominants? Or do you know what a baby scratch and baby cut are?	/ 10
Can you tell the difference between an Eb Major scale and an F Dorian mode? Or how good are your advanced mixing skills – flare scratching, crab scratching?	/ 10
Can you read music? (Including drum notation if you are a drummer)	/ 10
Do you understand music theory?	/ 10
Can you work with other musicians?	/ 10
Can you play in different styles?	/ 10
How good are you at sightreading?	/ 10
How good are your aural skills? Can you work out solos / chord progressions / complex rhythms by ear?	/ 10

2 Look at the following instruments and see what you know – go your instrument to assess your skills. Tick each box as appropriate.

GUITAR	YES	NO
Do you know...		
Open chords, barre chords, power chords	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7, 9, 11, 13 chords	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Altered chords	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Legato, sweep picking and tapping techniques	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scales and modes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improvise / solo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Riffs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Styles – funk, rock, blues, soul, punk, dub, reggae, disco... etc	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

BASS	YES	NO
Do you know...		
Notes on fingerboard, standard progressions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arpeggios – triads and extensions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ghost Notes, Hammer On, Pull Off	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Various techniques e.g. popping, slap	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scales and modes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improvise / solo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Riffs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Styles – funk, rock, blues, soul, punk, dub, reggae, disco... etc	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

DRUMS

Do you know...	YES	NO
Single and double strokes, in quavers, semiquavers and triplet quavers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Standard and inverted paradiddles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Flams, drags and ruffs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Triplets and sextuplets	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 stroke and 7 stroke rolls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improvise / solo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Riffs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Styles – funk, rock, blues, soul, punk, dub, reggae, disco... etc	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PIANO/KEYBOARDS

Do you know...	YES	NO
Scales / modes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Broken Chords / Arpeggios	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7, 9, 11, 13 chords, altered chords	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Straight / Swung Feel	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Counterpoint	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Patch Programming, sampling	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improvise / solo / riffs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Styles – funk, rock, blues, soul, jazz, dub, reggae, house... etc	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

VOCALS

Do you know...	YES	NO
Scales / modes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arpeggios, ornamentation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intervals	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dynamics / phrasing / breath control	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Chest / Head Voice	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Microphone Technique	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improvise / solo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Styles – funk, rock, blues, rap, soul, punk, dub, reggae... etc	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

WOODWIND/STRING/BRASS

Do you know...	YES	NO
Scales / modes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Arpeggios	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staccato / legato / pizzicato, separate and slurred notes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Different breathing / bowing techniques	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Articulation / ornamentation standards for your instrument e.g. vibrato, tonguing, muting techniques	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Playing by ear alone	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Improvise / solo	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Styles – funk, rock, blues, rap, soul, punk, dub, reggae... etc	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

DJ

Do you know...	YES	NO
Setting up equipment, marking records, adjusting weights	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Beat mixing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DJ techniques – stabs, slurs / drags, delay cut	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Scratching techniques	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Using samples	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working with live performers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Dynamics / tension	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Styles – house, two step, freestyle... etc	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3 Action Planning

Make a list of instrumental skills you would like to improve over the next 6 months. This could include scales and chords you wish to learn, developing your repertoire on the instrument, improving your rhythm playing or improvisation etc

It is very important that you set specific targets e.g. “learn the Major scale over two octaves in the keys of C, G, D, F and Bb” rather than “learn some scales”.

4 Practice Schedule

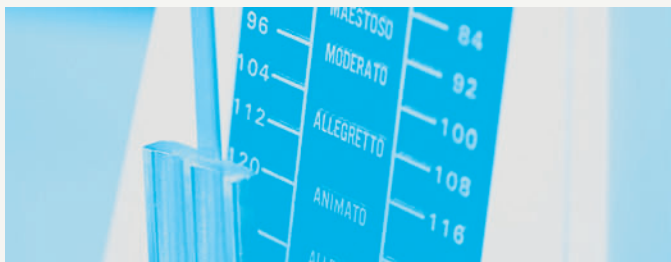
Write out a two week practice schedule (14 days) based on the example in notes and guidance. Use the areas for improvement identified in your Action Plan to get you started. The schedule does not need to be as detailed as the example, but you will still need to break each session down into bite size, timed chunks. Set yourself realistic and achievable targets!

Hand this in to your tutor on a separate sheet of paper.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

Regular, focused practice is the key to improving your instrumental skills. What you do in your practice sessions will depend on what targets you have set yourself in your action plan.

Here are some pointers to consider when taking time to practice:



SET TARGETS

Know what you want to achieve from each practice session.

WARM UP

It is advisable to wash your hands in warm water before you even start. Try some finger exercises to loosen up the joints before you start. At the start of each session, do some slow scale based work to warm the fingers / voice up.

USE A METRONOME *

When practicing scales / arpeggios and to help you stay in time generally.

TIME YOUR PRACTICE SESSION AND TAKE BREAKS

Lots of short bursts of practice are much more useful than one long session. Taking plenty of "micro breaks" (30 seconds or so) can also help avoid Repetitive Strain Injury. After 30 minutes or so, stop for five minutes – walk around the room or put the kettle on.

PRACTICE REGULARLY

Daily if possible



FIND YOUR TIME

Some musicians like to practice first thing in the day when they are awake and alert, others naturally prefer to practice later, in the evening or into the wee small hours.

SPLIT YOUR PRACTICE SESSION UP INTO DIFFERENT SECTIONS

This ensure you are practicing a variety of techniques and skills and also helps prevent the boredom from setting in.



ENJOY IT AND STAY FOCUSED

A well disciplined 1/2 hour is much more useful than a full hour without focus. This is where many musicians go wrong – there can be confusion between playing for an hour and practising for an hour. Practising is where we work on focused technique development and we track our progress. A regular and well-disciplined practice routine will result in rapid improvement.



* A metronome is a musical practice tool that can be used to track your tempo and helps to keep you in time. Basically it clicks away at regular intervals and your job is to try and lock your performance in with the clicks so you are playing in time – buy one, their importance cannot be understated.

WHERE TO GET HELP

You can improve your skills in a number of different ways. These include:

GETTING LESSONS / ATTENDING A COURSE



Private lessons can be expensive, but you might be able to share a group lesson with others and reduce the cost. Always get a recommendation or be thorough when choosing a teacher. Ask them what their experience, qualifications and range of styles are, as well as whether they follow any syllabus (such as Rock school, Associated Board etc.) and enter people for exams. You might be able to find a local course – see the links at the end.

PLAYING AND PRACTISING WITH OTHER MUSICIANS



You can share your experience, learn about styles and tips and get lots of encouragement in this way. Don't just jam though! Set similar targets as if you were practising on your own. Never be too proud to ask a superior musician to give you a few tips, or even show you some 'licks' it could improve your playing and it's free!

USE BOOKS, MAGAZINES AND INTERNET SOURCES TO HELP YOU



See the links at the end. 'Tutors' (books in improving your instrumental skills) are widely available – don't forget to look in your local library. Magazine articles can be useful and also keep you up to date with the latest techniques / style developments. The Internet contains many on-line tutorial sites to help you improve your skills, many for free. There are some good videos and DVDs as well, including some on DJ mixing techniques. Some people study towards graded exams on their own, by following the books published by the exam bodies. This can certainly be useful in helping you decide what level your skills are at.

EXAMPLE PRACTICE SCHEDULE

GUITARIST

TIMING	CONTENT
Before session	Wash hands in warm water and loosen up fingers by opening and closing hands, stretching fingers gently and shaking hands gently.
2 mins	Play chromatic scale in F over three octaves, ascending and descending in quavers at 70BPM
30 secs	Break
1 min C	Major scale ascending and descending in quavers at 70BPM. (consistently, without stopping)
20 secs	Break
1 min	C Major Scale – 70BPM
20 secs	Break
1 min	C Major Scale – 75BPM
20 secs	Break
1 min	C Major Scale naming the notes as they are played (no tempo)
30 secs	Break
10 minutes	Work through notation reading exercises in C
1 min	Break
1 min	E Blues Scale – ascending and descending (quavers) @ 75BPM
30 secs	Break
1 min	E Blues Scale – 77BPM
30 secs	Break
1 min	E Blues Scale – 80BPM
30 secs	Break
10 mins	Work on written 12 bar solo using E Blues Scale
5 mins	Break – lie down, walk around the room or put the kettle on
10 mins	Slowly strum through chords of C, G, D, A, E – naming the notes in the chord as each note is sounded
1 min	
10 mins	Break
1 min	Work on “Hey Joe” by Jimi Hendrix using these chords
5 mins	Break
End of session	Improvise a solo using the E Blues scale along with the recording of “Hey Joe” Watch Eastenders

LET’S EXAMINE THE SESSION
This practice session lasts for **one hour and five minutes**. The content is very prescriptive and detailed but the advantage in this is that every single second is accounted for.

Not all practice has to be so disciplined – if you like playing scales while you are watching telly, then great – keep doing it. Research has proven that this also helps you to develop speed techniques because there is more focus on developing your sub-conscious mind and muscle memory if you are not thinking about what you are playing all the time! However, at least one hour of focused practice ensures that you are developing specific techniques consistently and regularly.

NOTICE HOW IT IS STRUCTURED – warm up – scales – chords – note naming – developing repertoire (i.e. learning a song and using the chords that have been practiced in the song – smart move!!), the fun bit (the pay off) – jamming along with Jimi Hendrix to reward yourself and remind yourself why you are doing this!

THE SCALES ARE TO BE PLAYED CONSISTENTLY UP AND DOWN for the time allocated. In doing this we are sending constant signals to the brain and developing a “neural pathway” which will send appropriate signals to our hands to do what we want – e.g. play the C Major Scale. This will only become secure if we do it a lot. Repeating the scale constantly for a minute also helps to build strength in the fingers, quite like an athlete training for the Olympics.

MICRO BREAKS – notice how many short breaks are built in. If practicing is intense, it is important to stop for short periods of time to avoid the dreaded RSI – tension and strain are the musician’s enemy and short breaks will help to avoid this.

NOTE NAMING – this has been built into the session to help the musician develop a fuller understanding of the instrument. This is crucial and must not be overlooked!

RELEVANCE – all the technical stuff that was practiced was relevant e.g. the use of the C Major scale in the reading exercise, the E Blues scale was the basis of a written 12 bar solo, the chords learned were leading to a Hendrix tune – it’s important to reward yourself – learning a load of scales without applying them is unmusical and quite meaningless.

HAVE FUN – try to end your session with the fun bit – e.g. having a jam along with a Hendrix tune. If you want to continue this for an extra hour, that’s ok too!

CASE STUDY
JASON – GUITARIST



Jason plays in a garage rock band and also earns money from freelance performing, teaching guitar and running a course in music performance at a college.

Playing guitar from the age of 10, Jason didn’t learn the “technical stuff” until he was 25 (theory, scales, improvisation, reading the dots etc). Prior to doing this Jason was in a band, writing songs and hoping for the big time. When the band didn’t become as big as U2 (as initially intended!) Jason was left with a choice – get a “proper job” or become a “proper musician”.

Jason’s musical ability at the time was competent enough to play the role of the creative guitarist in the band, writing original material, but making a living from this alone is very difficult. He needed to develop his playing skills to a much higher technical standard and broaden his stylistic awareness and ability. He decided to take a two year National Diploma in Music Performance where he learned to read music, took theory and guitar grades and achieved a qualification.

Practising 4 hours a day for a couple of years also started to open out a range of other musical options. These now include working with house music producers as a session musician (involving playing in different styles and improvising) which has led to performances on a range of albums and singles as well as working as a qualified guitar teacher with the Registry of Guitar Teachers and gigging across Europe with a DJ / live jazz musician outfit



- Jason’s tips**
- 1 Multi tasking is the key to survival – try and dabble in as many styles as possible and keep your options open – don’t put all your eggs in the one basket.
 - 2 Practice regularly and with focus – know what you’re hoping to gain from every practice session.
 - 3 Network – get to know as many musos as you can – the vast majority of work you will get will be by word of mouth and who you know.
 - 4 Don’t give up – if you want to do music for the rest of your life you will – it just might not be as you expected it, but keep an open mind.

CASE STUDY
SARAH - FREELANCE CLASSICAL VIOLINIST



Sarah has been working as a freelance violinist for over 10 years. She followed the traditional graded examination route (achieving grade 8 piano and violin at just 14 years of age). Sarah went on to study on a 4 year degree programme at Music College and a further two years of postgraduate study.

Sarah’s job consists of a lot of large scale orchestral playing and some chamber music (smaller ensembles ranging from quartets to small orchestral groups). She also does studio sessions and features on recordings of pop hits and film scores alike.

Working as a classical violinist requires a high level of technical skill. Constant regular practice is crucial for keeping your playing and sight reading skills to the highest possible standard - she might have three hours to learn a full concert programme which will be performed in the evening.

A typical orchestra day consists of about 6 hours work, split into either (i) two separate three hour rehearsal sessions or (ii) a three hour rehearsal session followed by a concert in the evening. There is usually one 15 minute break in the middle of the rehearsal session. The concert will usually last over two hours, with a 15 minute break.

Sarah says the enjoyment of being a freelance player is the variety of work that she encounters. “I can be in the middle of an 80 piece orchestra one day and working in the studio on a pop track the next. This in itself keeps you interested.”



- Sarah’s tips**
- 1 Be reliable – if you are late more than once, you won’t get asked back.
 - 2 As with a lot of the music world, it’s about who you know so don’t make any enemies.
 - 3 Get to know the programme you are going to be performing – I often listen to recordings of pieces before I perform them – get to know them by ear.
 - 4 Always get a copy of the music before the rehearsal if possible – this helps avoid any unwanted or embarrassing surprises.
 - 5 Be enthusiastic – make sure you always make music and don’t just play the notes – play to the best of your ability and you will get noticed.
 - 6 Learn one thing from everyone you work with, be it “how to do it better” or “how not to do it!”.
 - 7 Keep healthy physically – you work such long and demanding hours an injury is possible so do everything you can to avoid this.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

LINKS

New Deal for Musicians has no responsibility for or control of the following sites. The inclusion of any site does not necessarily imply New Deal for Musicians approval of the site. To access any of the sites please type in the address into a browser or search using keywords from the name of the link.
www.dfes.gov.uk / ukonlinecentres Find Internet access that's close to you.
Also look at weblinks in workbooks 1 and 2.

EXAMS AND COURSE INFORMATION	WHERE TO FIND HELP	ONLINE TUTORIALS / HELP YOURSELF	BOOKS AND MAGAZINES
<p>Graded examinations in instrumental skills, performance and theory are offered by a range of providers. Many of these also have their own list of qualified teachers.</p> <p>Classical grades (and some popular music theory grades also) are offered by many boards, the most popular ones being London College of Music and Trinity Guildhall.</p> <div><input type="checkbox"/> www.abrsm.org Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. Classical and Jazz based exams up to Diploma standard plus theory exams.</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> www.trinitycollege.co.uk Trinity Guildhall exams</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> http://mercury.tvu.ac.uk/lcmexams/ London College of Music</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> www.rockschool.co.uk Guitar, bass, drums, keyboard and vocals.</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> www.registryofguitartutors.co.uk Alternative grade exams in guitar and bass are offered by the Registry of Guitar Tutors and these are validated by the London College of Music</div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/> www.ism.org Incorporated Society of Musicians</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> www.musiciansunion.org.uk Musicians Union</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> www.musiced.org.uk Very useful site, with links to instrumental based resources and sites and lots more</div> <p>Look at your local college / adult education classes – search here for your local authority and local education authority</p> <div><input type="checkbox"/> www.direct.gov.uk</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> www.wea.org.uk Workers’ Educational Association – provide adult education classes</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> www.learndirect.co.uk Information and advice on thousands of courses available across the UK. You can call free on 0800 100 900 seven days a week between 8am and 10pm.</div>	<p>These are only a small selection of what’s available! Search for your own using key words and look at links in workbook 3 – creating as well.</p> <div><input type="checkbox"/> www.musictheory.net</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> www.insidethemusic.co.uk Aural skills can be developed here</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> www.djps2.com Tips and tutorials for DJs</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> www.vocalist.org.uk Tips and tutorials for singers, including lists of teachers</div>	<p>Music theory books, such as those published by the ABRSM, for example, Music Theory in Practice (Various grades) by Eric Taylor</p> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Chord books</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Scale and exercise books</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Music theory books, such as those published by the ABRSM</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> The AB Guide to Music Theory Vol 1 Eric Taylor Publisher : Associated Board of the Royal School of Music ISBN : 1854724460</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Read Music from Scratch (From Scratch S.) Neil Sissons, Anthony Marks (Editor), Guy Parker-Rees (Illustrator) Publisher : Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers ISBN : 0851622682</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> Instrumental magazines These usually have tips / tutorials / lessons and often CDs as well. Look in workbooks 1 and 2 or search yourself using a search engine. Check with your local library to see which magazines they subscribe to regularly.</div>

MORE TASKS

- 1 Find one of the recommended books or magazines and read it – what tips can you find to help you improve your technique?
- 2 Test your aural ability – try to work out a solo or chord progression from a piece of music you don't know.
- 3 Learn about improvisation techniques. Find a jazz 'fake' book - find appropriate scales to play over the top.
- 4 Brush up your theory on modal scales. Find out how to play or sing the following:
D dorian
A mixolydian
- 5 Speak to other performers / DJs about setting up joint practice sessions / jam sessions / back to back sessions.
- 6 Find an on-line tutorial in your instrument and follow it.
- 7 Look at the exam boards listed in the weblinks – what is the syllabus for grade 5 in your instrument? Let this help you make your action plan.
- 8 Prepare for your own exam – buy a copy of the current or old exam pieces for your instrument and learn to play them, really well. Look at what else the syllabus requires you to do – and set your goals!



New 'set pieces' are published every year or so by the exam boards, so you can usually pick up out of date pieces for next to nothing.

- 9 Find what local courses are on offer – what are the hours, fees and qualifications offered? If you're interested in getting an instrumental teacher, read chapter 2 in workbook 9, Teaching Music first. Decide how much you can afford and exactly what you want to learn from a teacher, before researching the best teacher for you.



REHEARSING

WHAT IS IT?

The rehearsal process is the backbone of any band, orchestra or group performance. For every gig you go to see, while the band may only be on stage for an hour, many, many more hours have been put in during rehearsals to make the performance a success.

WHY DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS?

Effective rehearsal management is crucial for getting the best out of the time spent rehearsing. Inexperienced musicians and bands often waste many hours by not managing their time effectively. Planning rehearsals, setting targets for what is to be achieved out of each rehearsal and sticking to deadlines all help the rehearsal process run more smoothly.

We rehearse to
Develop songs into band compositions.
Get songs up to performance standard.
Experiment with new creative ideas.
Bond as musicians within a group.

YOU MUST HAND IN YOUR WORK BY TO



HOW LONG
should this assignment take?

Every person works at his / her own pace. As a guide, this should take you 3 hours to read and research and another 3 hours to write your answers and discuss them with your tutor.



HOW
will I be assessed?

Your tutor will assess your work. He / she will give you feedback on how you have done. If you have not completed the work, you will be given the chance to do further work to bring it "up to scratch". For more details, please refer to your MOLP's own guidance.



WHAT
do I do now?

Read the TASKS section below.
Then read the NOTES AND GUIDANCE section.
Carry out the TASKS.

TASKS

Read 'notes and guidance' to answer these questions

1 Plan a **REHEARSAL SCHEDULE**

Using the example schedule on P31 as a guide, plan your rehearsal sessions over the next 6 weeks. Discuss this with your tutor. You can use this space to plan your schedule, or use a separate sheet of paper.

REHEARSAL TIME	REHEARSAL TIME	MATERIAL YOU WILL REHEARSE
WEEK 1		
WEEK 2		
WEEK 3		
WEEK 4		
WEEK 5		
WEEK 6		

2 **STRUCTURE CHART / LEAD SHEET**

Prepare a structure chart / lead sheet for a song you want to rehearse, or use one which you have already prepared. Show it to your tutor.

3 Check the following – and make sure you read the chapter on health and safety.

Is the space you use well ventilated – to avoid you and your equipment overheating?

Do you know where the fire equipment and any emergency alarms and exits are situated?

Does it have built in circuit breakers into the electricity sockets – if not then use your own

How do you carry your equipment around? Watch out for your back – and knocking your gear.

If you are leaving your equipment overnight, is the building secure?

4 Find the names of 3 local rehearsal rooms or similar. What are their charges, availability and equipment?







- 1)
- 2)
- 3)

5 Plan a 35 minute performance set – what material will you play, in what order?

TRACK NAME	KEY / MAJOR OR MINOR FEEL	RHYTHM / TEMPO / STYLE	DURATION	ANY CHANGE OVER INSTRUCTIONS OR STANDARD INTRODUCTIONS?

WHAT MAKES A GOOD REHEARSAL?

PREPARATION

-  **Be punctual and ready to start on time**
This is absolutely crucial for successful rehearsals. If one member of your group does not turn up on time, then the work cannot begin. Any professional musician will be able to tell you about the importance of punctuality for rehearsals. If you are a freelance musician and you are late for a rehearsal you will not get asked back, your reputation will not be good and your chances of future employment will be slim – it's that simple!
-  **Know your parts**
It is important to be clear on the difference between rehearsing and personal practice. Group rehearsal time is not when you start to learn the guitar line for your song – this should have already been done at home.
-  **Be prepared**
Have the right gear – ensure you are fully equipped every time you rehearse. Run through a written or mental check list before you leave for the rehearsal – forgetting even one lead or spare strings could bring many a rehearsal to a complete standstill. Remember you will need your instrument, leads, tuner, amp, sticks etc as appropriate.
-  **Consider time to set up**
If it takes half an hour to set up the drum kit, can the drummer get there half an hour earlier?
-  **Know what the targets are for each session**
It is very beneficial if all members of the group know what you are aiming for in each rehearsal session. Having clear targets and discussing and reviewing these is immensely beneficial. Time is the golden commodity in rehearsals and if you don't know what you are working towards, much time can often be wasted noodling about or working on the working stuff.
-  **Use a rehearsal schedule**
This might seem a little formal but scheduling rehearsals and what will be covered in each is invaluable. This does not have to be a detailed list like a tightly organised practise schedule but at least sketch out what tunes you wish to cover in each rehearsal and give yourself some type of time scale. This will allow each member of the group time to plan learning their parts properly outside of rehearsals and everyone will know what is expected for each session. You will see the results quickly and rehearsal management will be much easier.
A schedule need not be set in stone, but it will help to organise your thoughts!

EXAMPLE REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Johnny’s ‘covers’ band has been booked to play a 40th birthday party covering a range of tunes from the 1960’s through to the ‘90’s. The set is to include 16 songs and they have 8 weeks to learn the songs and prepare these for performance. As each band member has other commitments, they can only rehearse twice a week so time is tight. The following is an example of how the schedule might look.



Always allow time to ‘recap’ what you have already learned, to keep it fresh.

"A song is usually rehearsed enough to gig when you are just starting to hate the sound of it, but it’s all worth it when you perform the song with total confidence at a live gig in front of an audience." Mark Singleton

WEEK 1	Session 1	Sex Pistols - God Save The Queen Rolling Stones - Satisfaction
	Session 2	Bob Marley - No Woman No Cry The Kinks - Waterloo Sunset
WEEK 2	Session 1	Run DMC / Aerosmith - Walk This Way David Bowie - Star Man
	Session 2	Review 4 tunes to date
WEEK 3	Session 1	The Beatles - Help Pink Floyd - The Wall
	Session 2	Jimi Hendrix - Purple Haze Queen - Bohemian Rhapsody
WEEK 4	Session 1	Queen - Bohemian Rhapsody
WEEK 5	Session 1	Review 8 tunes to date
	Session 2	Stevie Wonder - Superstition Led Zeppelin - Whole Lotta Love
WEEK 6	Session 1	Rage Against The Machine - Know Your Enemy The Who - My generation
	Session 2	Review 4 recent tunes
WEEK 7	Session 1	The Fugees - Ready or Not, Abba - Dancing Queen
	Session 2	Devise a set list – set run through
WEEK 8	Session 1	Run through set – tweak any weak areas – record set for objective listen before next session
	Session 2	Full set run through
WEEK 9	(2 days before gig)	Full set run through – with stage set up and lights

DURING THE REHEARSAL



- Stay focused**
Don't mentally wander off, especially during the times in the rehearsal when your bit is not needed or the musicians are working on a specific part. Know when not to play. In a nutshell, DON'T NOODLE! There is nothing as unprofessional and generally irritating as a group member noodling on their instrument while you are working on a set part. Turn off your mobile phones!
- Use a structure chart, score or lead sheet**
When learning songs in the rehearsal room, original or a cover, you all need to be able to follow what is going on. If you're using music or written notes, use a music stand set at the right height to avoid tension and strains. If you are learning songs from a recording, have a copy of the CD and a CD player with you for reference. Look at the example structure chart on P34 - 35.
- Don't play too loudly**
Pardon?! Especially if you are rehearsing a lot, playing at excess volume can be an unnecessary health hazard. If you need to rehearse at a loud volume, use ear plugs.
- Ensure the group sound balance is right**
It is very important to be able to hear everyone in the rehearsal room. Make sure you are not playing louder than the quietest instrument. Rehearsals are very much about listening to the sound as a whole and where your instrument fits into it rather than listening to yourself exclusively.
- If there is a problem address it**
This may be a group member not playing their part correctly or the feel of a part is not up to scratch. Address the problem, don't ignore it. Admittedly this can be a challenging thing to do. Addressing difficulties without offending a sensitive musician comes with practice – diplomacy and tact are paramount!
- Work on tunes in small chunks**
Don't attempt to play the whole song all the way through with everybody playing all at once. There are no set rules here, some musicians like to start with the intro and build their way through the song, piece by piece. Wherever you start, work on small sections at a time with stripped down instruments, then add in the other parts one by one.
- Practice the hard bits in isolation**
The best approach is to loop these parts until they are right then stick them in the context of the whole song. When looping a part (playing it repeatedly – e.g. repeating an eight bar section over and over again) ensure that you do it "in time".
- Don't over rehearse**
You might think that this isn't possible but it is. If you spend 8 hours just running through the same set of songs you will definitely remove any magic or energy that may have been there in the first place and you'll be sick of the material.
- Leave the room tidy at the end of rehearsal**
Your mother would be proud! Keep the space clean and tidy. The smell of mouldy pies and cigarette butts is not attractive. Do make a conscious effort to keep the room well managed, organised, clean and tidy – this is much more conducive to a healthy and happy working environment.
- Last man out, turn out the light**
Ensure that all equipment is switched off and unplugged at the end of rehearsal. It will also help your equipment to last – leaving your PA turned on for 36 hours at a time will not be good for the circuitry.
- Enjoy it!!**
Rehearsing should be an enjoyable process. Making music is a great thing to be part of and don't lose sight of that!

EXAMPLE STRUCTURE CHART

1 WORK OUT THE DIFFERENT BITS

It is useful to first of all work out how many different bits there are in the song. This can be done by listening to the song and identifying the different parts that are in the tune e.g. Intro, verse, chorus, middle 8, guitar solo, bridge, interlude. What these parts are called is almost irrelevant, the important thing is to identify how many different bits there are and how many similar bits repeat. So for this example I have labelled the verse, chorus, middle 8 etc simply as A, B, C etc

Labelling these from left to right is an easy way of getting to grips with the overall structure.

Intro	A	B	A	B	C	D	A	B	A	B	C	D	E	F	C

The parts labelled are as follows **A**=keyboard riff bit, **B**=the verse, **C**=the stabs, **D**=the chorus, **E**=the guitar break (riff part – not the solo), **F**=the guitar solo

Once you know how many bits there are, what each bit consists of, you can then see more clearly how the song hangs together.

2 COUNT THE BARS

Having worked out the order of the bits, count how many bars each one lasts for.

Intro	A	B	A	B	C	D	A	B	A	B	C	D	E	F	C
8	8	8	4	8	4	8	10	8	4	8	4	16	16	16	8

3 COMPLETE THE DETAIL IN THE CHART

The final stage is to take the above structure and lay it out vertically, filling in what detail you feel is necessary to complete the structure. If you’re learning a ‘cover’ version, note the CD time as this will enable you to go straight to the relevant section in rehearsals.

Example structure chart Online Pharmacy – The Lovers

Intro	A	B	A	B	C	D	A	B	A	B	C	D	E	F	C
8	8	8	4	8	4	8	10	8	4	8	4	16	16	16	8

Intro:	8 Bars	Stabs (Bass, drums, keys)	0:00
Keys Riff:	8 Bars	Add Guitar, Main Riff on Keys	0:10
Verse 1:	8 Bars	Vocals Enter	0:19
Keys Riff:	4 Bars	No Vox	0:29
Verse 2:	8 Bars	Vocals Enter	0:35
Stabs:	4 Bars	No Vox (tight stabs – E - D)	0:44
Chorus 1:	8 Bars	All In (A - E - G - D)	0:48
Keys Riff:	2 Bars	Keys ONLY	0:58
	8 Bars	All In (No Vox)	1:01
Verse 3:	8 Bars	Vocals Enter	1:11
Keys Riff:	4 Bars		1:20
Verse 4:	8 Bars		1:25
Stabs:	4 Bars	No Vox (tight stabs – E - D)	1:35
Chorus 2:	16 Bars	Double Chorus	1:40
Guitar Riff:	4 Bars	Guitar ONLY	1:59
	4 Bars	Vox, Keys, Hi - Hats (Snare Roll On 4th Bar)	2:05
	8 Bars	Bass, Full Kit	2:10
Guitar Solo:	8 Bars	R’n’R Solo – keys counterpoint	2:19
	8 Bars	Vocals Enter	2:28
Outro:	8 Bars	Stabs (All stop dead on last beat)	2:38

WHAT TO WORK ON?

There is more to it than the technical performance – less experienced musicians could be forgiven for believing that rehearsal is just about everybody getting the right notes in the right order at the right time together. Other areas for attention include:

THE FEEL

There are a range of components that affect the feel of a tune including whether you are playing in front of, on or behind the beat (it helps if you are all pulling in the same direction). This will come with practice but is worthy of much consideration – try to experiment with the “feel” of the performance – musicians rely heavily on what a performance feels like including simple things like the amount of energy that is put into a performance.

THE DYNAMICS

This affects the ‘louds’ and ‘softs’ in performance. You will need to spend some time working on the contrast between the loud bits and the quiet bits in your songs and the balance between the two.

CHANGEOVERS

If there are any changeovers involved in your set work on these as part of a final technical run through to ensure they are smooth and don’t affect the flow of the performance.

THE PERFORMANCE

Work on the actual “performance” – present the group as closely as you will do in the gig itself. Image the image you project to your audience. Use eye contact to communicate with other members of the group. Be aware of your body language (especially when you are not playing – don’t look bored!) Close to gig day, run it exactly as you expect the final performance to be – if you make a mistake, play on – don’t stop. If another member of the group makes a mistake, don’t look at them and draw attention to it – you may well get away with it – be professional.

SONIC CONSIDERATIONS

Spend time developing your actual sound that you produce and that the band produces. Playing around with the EQ on the bass amp can produce a whole range of different sounds – try top find the one that works best with the overall sound of the group or band that you are working with. Spend time experimenting with different tones to get the sound you want.

➤ WORKBOOK 5 – RECORDING AND PRODUCTION – CHAPTER 5

THE SET OR THE MATERIAL YOU WILL PERFORM

- Classical musicians talk in terms of “concerts” and “programmes” whereas a pop / rock / jazz musician will refer to the “gig” and the “set”.
- **Don’t just put your songs in a random order.**
The run of the set is an opportunity to manipulate the dynamic of the whole performance. There are many things to consider when devising including the dynamic of the set. For example, you could open with a gentle song and gradually build on this as the set progresses. A great example of a growing set dynamic is the “Stop Making Sense” video by Talking Heads where David Byrne starts the gig with a beat box and an acoustic guitar. As the songs unfold he is joined by more and more musicians until eventually the full band are in full swing. This results in a gradual dynamic incline as the early parts of the set develop which adds to the anticipation, energy and excitement of the performance.
The other option is to start with a full band, all guns blazing approach to “kick in” right from the off – it’s up to you and it depends on what impact you want to have and what you are hoping to create with the music you are playing. It also depends on the venue and function you are playing.
- **Consider the start, middle and end of your set.**
Can you blend the end of one song into the start of another so they are seamless? Also consider the middle of the set where it may drop a little in preparation for the end where you may want to peak and go out with a bang (saving room for the encore of course...).
- **Think about the keys of the songs.**
Do you want two songs in the same key and with a similar feel next to each other, or do you break them up?
- **Does anyone need to swap instruments or re-tune between certain songs?**
- **Have a song or two prepared for an encore** if you are lucky enough to get one (i.e. one or two songs you can play after the main set has finished).
- 💬 "Some venues specialize in specific genres of music. The venue may have a limit to a percentage of original songs they would like you to do." Mark Singleton

TIPS DJ REHEARSAL AND PREPARING A SET

TIP

- **Ensure the rehearsal set up is comfortable one.**
Crouching over decks on the floor of a bedroom doesn't do anybody any good. Avoid running over the same set every time. Try different mixes / routines and different styles of mixing.
- Be critical! If you want to improve you have to identify your weaknesses. **Observe other DJs and analyse their technical skills** comparing them with your own – you should never stop learning. Record your sets, listen back and judge. Be as objective as possible or ask your mates' opinions.
- **Get to know your music inside out.**
Don't always mix the music – listening is very important! You need to understand how the track's dynamics work and how the production sounds across the whole track.
- **Strengthen your fingers** for scratching techniques like "crabbing", wherever and whenever you can. Try using a square lighter as a substitute cross - fade knob.
- A "set" set in stone may sink like one. **Be prepared to improvise** as the audience generally pick up on excitement and spontaneity and not on over rehearsed and "tired" performances. If you do have "set pieces", (tracks that go so well together it would be a shame to separate them), treat these as landmarks in your performance, or supports from which the spans of your musical bridge can hang!
- **Have a clear idea of what the promoter and the crowd** (as this may differ!) are expecting from you musically – it's always good to know these parameters, even if you intend to ignore them!
- Once you are at the club and can **observe the crowd, decide on some strategy** for starting your set – for example, use a "landmark" set piece allowing you to settle in, gain confidence and even "sound check", or you may realise it is a crowd that will appreciate more of a warm up.

EVALUATING YOUR REHEARSALS

RECORD YOUR REHEARSAL
There is nothing like objectivity. What we think something sounds like and what it really sounds like can often be two different things. It is a great idea to record your rehearsals at various stages. This can help you identify what the band's performance really sounds like. It is also very useful if you are writing music in a group context – record it and then you can be objective about your progress.

VIDEO YOUR REHEARSAL
This is a step further than simply recording your rehearsal. If you video your rehearsal you can get a good idea of what the group looks like and how you present yourselves. This can produce some very surprising results and is worth a go!

GET YOUR MATES ROUND
Having your rehearsal room invaded by a bunch of mates can seem a little intimidating but having a dummy run through the programme (or "set") in front of some friends can help to provide focus and get you used to performing in front of others. This applies equally to all performing musicians from the classical quartet to the rock band.



CASE STUDY
PAUL HANLEY – PROFESSIONAL DRUMMER



Paul has worked as a professional drummer with internationally acclaimed indie bands since the 1980’s and has toured America, Australia, Europe, the UK and Ireland. He also recorded several albums combined with the usual promotional round of press, radio, TV etc.

photograph supplied courtesy of Paul Hanley



Paul’s tips

1 Punctuality

Nothing is more soul destroying than sitting in a rehearsal room waiting for one member of the band. This is especially frustrating if you are practising for upcoming gigs rather than writing. If it’s always the same person who is late it should be justifiably used as defence in a murder trial...

2 Motivation

Everyone should be equally committed to rehearsing. If you have no input in the song writing or arranging for the band, then rehearsing can be a nightmare. (Ringo Starr learned how to play chess to get him through the early stages of Sgt. Pepper.) If we need to practice the set (or change it around) then no time is wasted noodling riffs or half ideas. Conversely, if we are writing new material, then we don’t bother playing stuff we already know. It’s better, I think, to keep these (very different) activities separate. Everyone does a bit of homework, so others aren’t forced to wait while we practice things we could have done on our own.

3 Environment

I used to rehearse in the worst room it has ever been my misfortune to enter. The fact that we were paying for the privilege of spending time in a near - derelict death trap didn’t help. The room was accessed by either a small winding staircase or a lift which should have been pronounced unsafe by someone with a death wish. The original owners had obviously taken the sweeping brush with them when they left, as the floors were home to at least seventy years of human detritus and filth. As you can imagine for such a building, which at any time could also boast up to 7 working drummers, it didn’t smell too pretty. Most importantly, we had no storage facilities either, which meant that a large portion of the rehearsal was spent loading in, setting up, breaking down and loading out gear. It always meant that transport had to be arranged, as none of us drove.

Nowadays, we enjoy a purpose built rehearsal space. It’s bright, clean and electrically sound. It boasts a fully set-up drum kit and PA, which means we can begin rehearsing within 5 minutes of arriving. You might not be able to get all of these things, but I’d venture it’s worth spending a little more on rehearsal facilities to secure as many as you can. The luxury of running water in the toilets works wonders.

4 Time

3 hours, I would venture, is long enough for a good rehearsal. You can have at least 3 full run - throughs with time spare to iron out tricky bits. If you’re writing and haven’t got anywhere after 3 hours then it’s time to go home, I’d suggest.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

LINKS

New Deal for Musicians has no responsibility for or control of the following sites. The inclusion of any site does not necessarily imply New Deal for Musicians approval of the site. To access any of the sites please type in the address into a browser or search using keywords from the name of the link.
www.dfes.gov.uk/ukonlinecentres Find Internet access that's close to you.
Look at the weblinks in other chapters and also in workbook 1 and 2.

- ☐ www.bbc.co.uk/radio1/onemusic/performing/
Great tips on rehearsing, performing and lots more.

Find your local rehearsal rooms and venues by searching using a search engine such as Google, or by looking at networking or music directory sites, for example
- ☐ www.manchester-music.org.uk
- ☐ www.theunsignedguide.com
- ☐ www.musiciansunion.org.uk
Members have full access to advice downloads, but some documents are open to all.
- ☐ www.getsigned.com
Regular advice articles on a range of issues including rehearsing, gigging and touring.

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES

- ☐ **Art of Practicing**
Madeline Bruser
Publisher : Crown Publications
ISBN : 0609801775
- ☐ **The Athletic Musician: A Guide to Playing Without Pain**
Barbara Paull, Christine Harrison
Publisher : Scarecrow Press
ISBN : 0810833565
- ☐ **The Complete Guide to Playing Live**
Paul Charles
Omnibus Press
ISBN : 0711998353
- ☐ **The Art of Gigging**
The Essential Guide to Starting Up as a Performing Artist
Mark Addison Singleton
ISBN : 1-4120-4541-Y-05-0004
Trafford publishing

MORE TASKS

- 1 Try out different methods of rehearsing, for example:

1) Rehearse in different sub-groups – rhythm section only, vocals only etc – before putting these back together

2) Full live rehearsal – maybe even in a room at a pub where you can rehearse your full technical set before your friends

3) Halve the speed of a track – it makes you very aware of your mistakes and where you want the music to make most impact – and it's also really difficult to do!

4) Rehearse to a click track – an essential skill to have for recording purposes and very useful in developing the 'tightness' of your sound.
- 2 Think about how regularly you rehearse and whether changing this might be a good idea, for example:

1) If you rehearse on the same night at the same time every week, organise a rehearsal during the daytime at a different venue, see whether your attitudes and concentration levels improve!

2) Would a shorter rehearsal time be more effective, if everyone got there on time and didn't chat?



THE RAKES photography © Ray Chan

PERFORMING

WHAT IS IT?

Performing is about 'taking your music out' – be it playing a gig, doing a couple of songs at an open mic night or folk club, playing your DJ set at a friend's party, busking, or playing a professional concert.

You need to think about

Your stage performance skills – can you put your message across in a way that makes people want to listen?

Gigging and touring – what do you need to consider when taking your music out and about, other than simply music? No matter what style of music you are playing, whether you are in a covers band, promoting original material or working as a session musician there are a lot of common considerations when preparing for the gigging circuit.

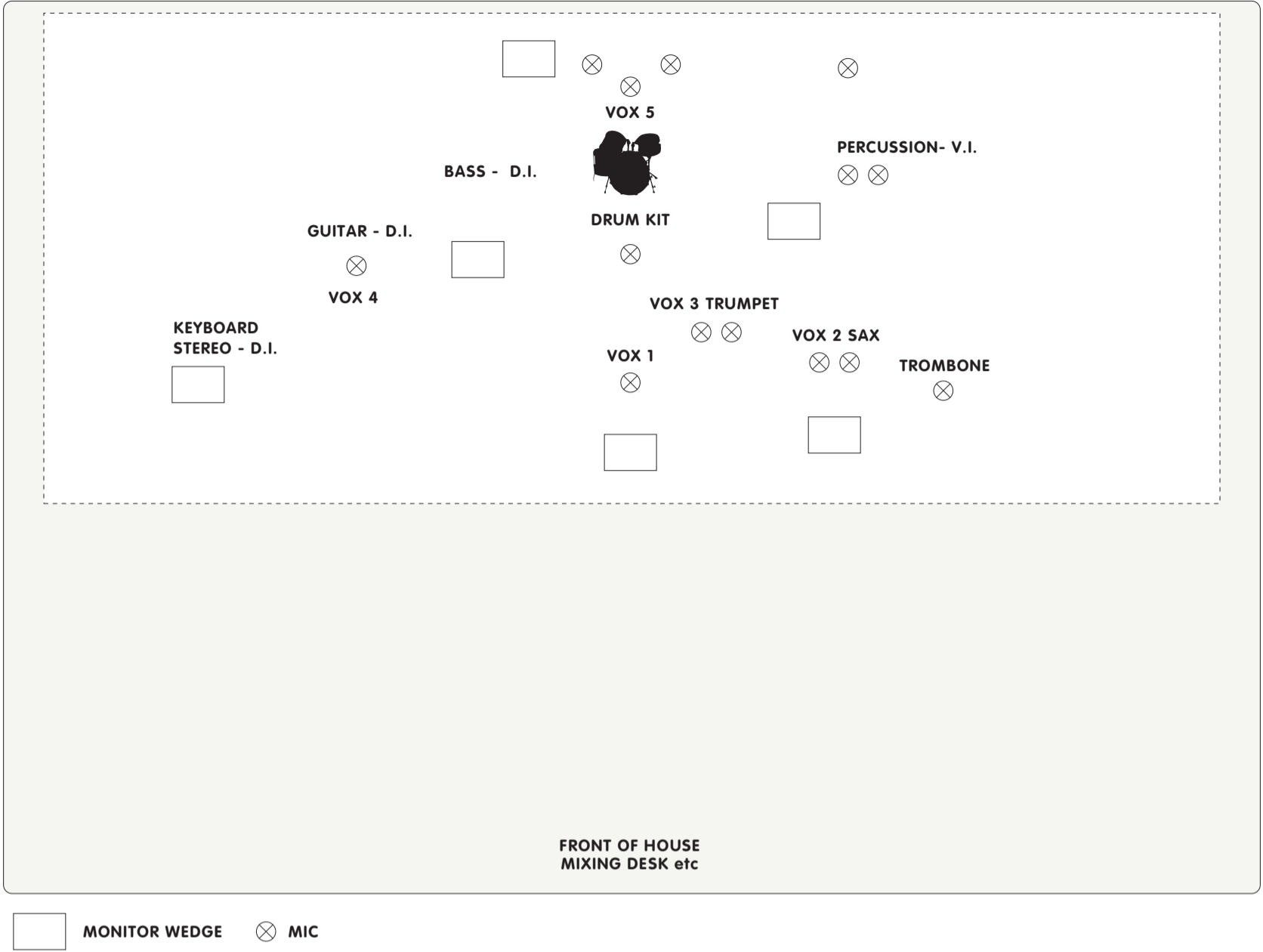
WHY DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS?

You might write great songs, or be a fantastic musician – but if your performance sends people to sleep, you'll never get the credit you deserve.

You can improve the impact of your performance by careful planning – and by watching out for common problems you're likely to face when gigging and touring.

Most musicians and DJs have to perform in order to make their name and forge a career in music.

EXAMPLE stage plan and equipment list



EQUIPMENT	OUT	IN
Vox 1		
Vox 2 Sax backing vocals		
Vox 3 Trumpet backing vocals		
Vox 4 Guitar backing vocals		
Vox 5 Drum backing vocals		
Brass mics Sax		
Brass mics Trumpet		
Brass mics Trombone		
5 monitors		
Drum kit 1 D.I. Sn. Bd. Hh. Overheads		
Percussion 1 D.I. + up to 3 mics		
Guitar 1 D.I.		
Bass 1 D.I.		
Keyboards 2 D.I. (L&R)		
A Real Piano (acoustic) is required		

WELL DONE, THAT'S THE END OF THIS ASSIGNMENT. CHECK IT AND HAND IT IN!

PREPARING TO PERFORM

OK, so you've written the material, got the set together and you feel you are ready to expose yourselves to the general public – time for a gig. Starting in your local area is probably best as it will be easier to manage, cheaper and you have more chance of building up a following. Let's assume you've secured the local gig, second band on a three band bill at a local showcase night on a Tuesday – what do you need to do to ensure this runs smoothly?

Mentally prepare

Keep calm and run through the gig in your mind in advance.

Does all the equipment work?

At your last rehearsal before gig day, ensure that all your equipment is in good, healthy working order. If there is anything that is intermittent, unreliable, buzzing unnecessarily? If so, get it fixed before the gig – technical failure will soon get in the way of your performance.

The Stage Plan

Plan who is going to stand where and where the equipment is going to go. This is something that should come out of the rehearsal process. You will then have had a dress rehearsal with this line up so you can get an idea of what it will feel like at the gig.



"Sometime before the gig, physically check out the venue as regards any problems loading your equipment. Stairs, for example, can be a nightmare as can long corridors, small doorways etc. (Remember to use wheels on heavy equipment). Can your transport be parked near the stage area? Check out access to and size of the stage. Do you need extra cable extensions for power points?" Mark Singleton

EQUIPMENT AND TRANSPORT



The “back line” is the band’s equipment
Amps, drums etc that will be mic’d up through the house PA. Monitors are speakers that allow the musicians to hear what is coming through the PA system - another common term is **foldback**.

Getting organised & packing the gear
Be organised and methodical. It is very easy to forget one crucial piece of equipment that could affect the whole gig. Get a tick list together to ensure all the right equipment leaves the rehearsal room and returns to the rehearsal room in one piece. Even if you don’t use a physical list, go through the process mentally.

EXAMPLE EQUIPMENT CHECKLIST

EQUIPMENT	OUT	IN
Kick Drum		
Snare		
Rack Toms		
Floor Tom		
Cymbals		
Traps Case (drum Stands)		
Kick Pedal		
Bass Amp		
Bass Cab		
Guitar Amp		
Guitar Cab		
2 Keyboard Amps		
Bass Guitar		
2 Guitars		
Ensonique		
Farfisa		
Production Case and gaffa tape		
Back Drop		
Merchandise Case		
Spare strings, picks, battery and fuses		
Toolbox (screwdriver, pliers)		
RCDs (circuit breakers) and extension leads		

Use **flight cases** if you can afford them. It’s also more likely you’ll get insurance if you use them. A **production case** is also really useful as this can be the central box for storing mics, leads, stands and other bits’n’bobs that are easily lost. Have a check list in this bag / case as well.



Keep like with like together and this will make managing the gear much easier e.g. start with the rhythm section and work your way through the band’s equipment – are all the drum kit parts together, amps, instruments, keyboards, leads, production case, stands etc? Is everything packed safely and securely?

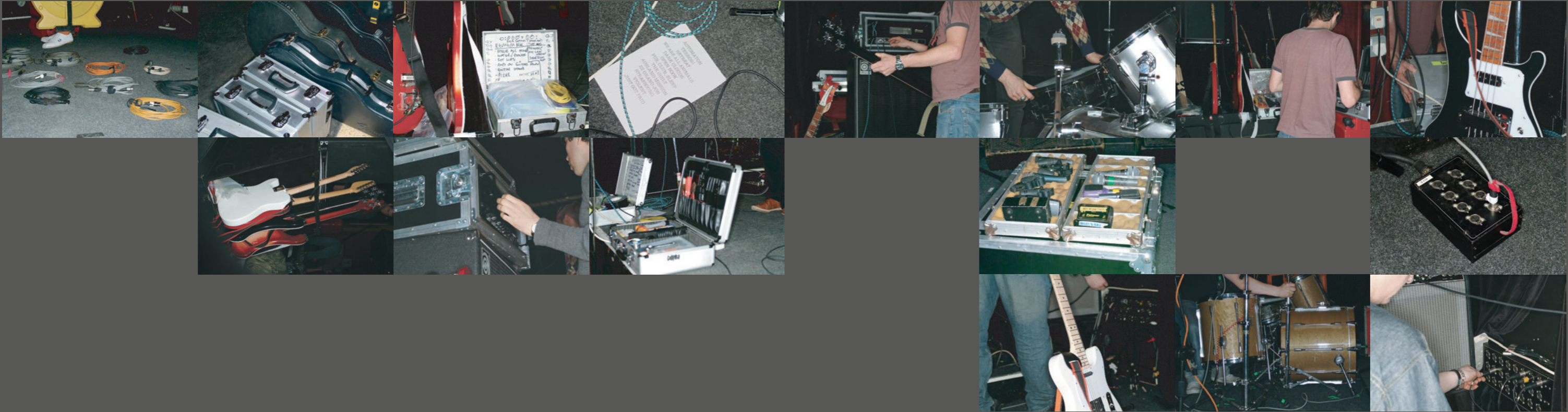
Always carry spares Leads, sticks, guitars, 4 way, power breakers, tool kit, batteries, fuses, plectrums. Things do go wrong, break, run out, snap, get lost at gigs. – it’s the very nature of live performance.



Getting to the gig. **Use a van**. This is much more professional than packing gear into your mate’s dad’s car and it also allows you to keep all the gear together. If you hire a normal Transit type van, there is room for three to sit in the front so you will need a car to get the rest of the band there unless they make their own way (which is also potentially dangerous as musicians can get lost...) Don’t be tempted to pack the musicians into the back of the van too, this is illegal and you will get pulled over by the police before you even make it to the gig.



AT THE VENUE



TIP

Set up safely and make sure you know whose equipment is whose if you're sharing a night with others.

THE SOUND CHECK

Once you have set up the gear on stage you will need to do a sound check. Unless you have your own sound engineer with you, the venue will supply a house engineer – a (wo)man whose job it is to mic up the equipment, get a balance right between all the instruments and pump it through the venue’s PA (Public Address) system.

Sound checks have a very specific order and there is a professional way to manage the sound check. They vary in time wildly depending on the engineer and band – they can usually take anything from half an hour to well over an hour. Generally they will start with the drums where the engineer will work through the kit in a methodical manner – starting with the kick (bass) drum, snare and then hi-hats. Once these have been mic’d up satisfactorily, the engineer often gets the drummer to play a simple groove using kick, snare and hats to get a general mix between the three. Next will be the rest of the kit.

The bass is often next. This can be mic’d up (stick a mic in front of the bass cabinet) or it can be DI’d (where a DI Box is used to directly input the bass into the PA). Engineers then like to have the bass and drums play together for a while to get a balance between these two instruments at the backbone of the band.

The rest of the sound check varies depending on what the line up of the band is. Typically guitar will be next, then keyboards and finally vocals. Once all the elements of the band have been sound checked individually, the band gets to play a few tunes to allow the engineer the chance to get the mix right between all the instruments. When playing through the songs in the sound check, try to choose contrasting songs so you try to cover the variety of the set.



TIP

Sound Check Tips

- Be patient, professional and don’t noodle!**
It is the kiss of death for any musician who noodles during the sound check. If the engineer is sound checking the kick drum, (s)he will not want to hear your favourite guitar lick and (s)he will not be impressed by your newly developed two handed tapping technique – engineers do this all the time and have a job to do – save it for your fans.
- Keep the back line down**
A common mistake is for musicians (especially guitarists...) to turn their amps up too loud on stage. If your amp is too loud, you will not be put through the PA and this will have an effect on the final mix. Remember what settings you leave things on.
- Can you hear what you want?**
If you can’t hear yourself, then (politely) ask the engineer to address this – don’t ignore it as it could well affect your performance.
- Don’t hog the show**
If you have managed to get the sound that you want fairly quickly, then wrap it up as there are often other bands waiting to sound check and time is precious.
- Monitors**
There will be some monitors on the stage to allow you to hear different elements of the band (often mainly just the vocals). Sometimes monitors are split which means that different monitors can have a different mix. Monitors can be split “front and back” so that the drummer can have a different mix to the rest of the band. More systems will have them split in pairs at the front of the stage or even individually, so that different musicians can hear different instruments. What each musician will hear is also going to vary on where you are situated on the stage (i.e. how close you are to your own and the rest of the band’s amps). Getting the monitor mix right is crucial – if you cannot hear what is going on it will affect your performance considerably.

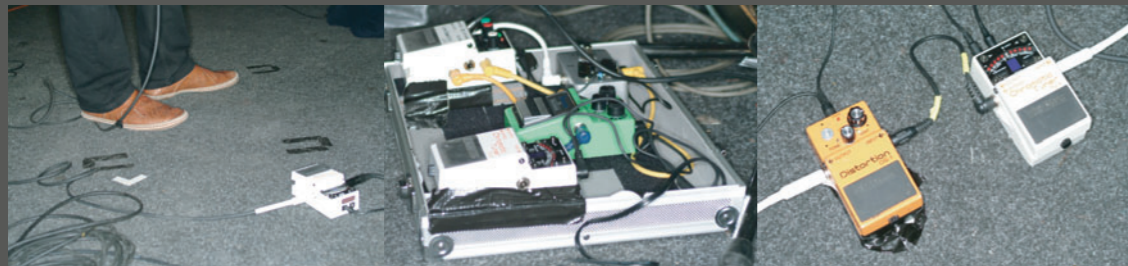
PRE GIG FOCUS

Depending on where you are on the bill, the gap between sound check and performance could be quite short (e.g. first band on who normally sound check last and go on first) or there may be quite a few hours before you go on for the performance itself.

Don't fall into the temptation of consuming copious amounts of alcohol before the gig as this will undo all your hard work in the rehearsal room. Try to relax, rest, eat and get into the right frame of mind for the gig. It is often useful to get out of the venue room for a while.

At least 10 minutes before you go on, give your instruments a final tune before you put them on the stage and ensure that all leads, effects pedals etc are secured to the floor using Gaffa Tape.

Once all the gear is set up and ready to go try to get a few minutes with your fellow musicians in the dressing room before you go on. Try to focus as a group on the performance and draw together on the group energy. Madonna, for example, is famous for praying with her musicians before they go on stage. There are many games and other devices that can be used to help get you "in the zone" for a performance – try to experiment with some of these and see if they help you.



THE PERFORMANCE

How you start your gig is crucial. From the moment you walk onto the stage the performance has begun. Some bands use an “intro tape” to help set the scene before the performance. Try to think back to performances you have seen and how the band presented themselves as they took to the stage.

Always aim to start your set as quickly as possible and get straight into it. Checking that your gear is on and works and noodling around just before the start of a set is completely unprofessional and will come across as such – don’t do it!!

When you are on stage, you are the artist and are no longer just a punter. You have to come across as if you really believe in your performance and that you mean it. How do you want your audience to perceive you?

Body language and eye contact with other musicians are a must. If there is a problem and you spend the set staring at the floor, you have little chance of knowing what’s wrong and what you can do about it (e.g. if the guitarist has broken a string and needs to change guitars between songs).

Communicate with your audience: looking out towards the audience (often above them a little) can come across well as you will be seen to be presenting the music to the audience – try not to ignore them!

Technical failure in performance – having technical spares (strings, guitar, leads, sticks) is crucial – things can and do go wrong in live performance and it is crucial that you have a back up.

Try to avoid resorting to jokes about your mother in law while the guitarist is changing his/her string – this can turn your professional show into a poor amateur effort. Try to use the music to fill the gap where possible or even use the silence to build the tension before you start the next song. In this sort of situation it may be possible to jump to a different song in the set to keep the momentum going or even get the rhythm section to play a groove or get you guitarist to repeatedly strike a chord to keep the energy in the set and build the tension until the next song can start – whatever you do, think and act like a professional.





AFTER THE GIG

OK, so the show's over and you want to meet the adoring public – what about the gear? When you walk off stage after the last encore, your work is not done! Pack up your gear as soon as possible after the show (particularly guitars and fragile equipment) and ensure that you can account for everything. Stages can be dirty places so it is worth having a packet of wet wipes in your kit bag so you can wipe the leads etc. down before packing your gear away. The sooner you pack up after a gig, the sooner you can relax and account for all your equipment, ensuring none gets stolen or lost.



“Most musicians work late and usually long hours and this can often lead to a situation where chances are taken and the most important thing is either getting to bed or stopping for a Chinese takeaway... leaving the equipment outside for ‘just a minute’ - well that’s all it takes and it’s gone.” Mark Singleton

Bands often evaluate a performance in an informal way, often in the van on the way home from a gig. Some points you might want to consider include :

How well did you all perform?
Was the set the right running order?
Did you all interact well with each other and the audience?
Did you win the audience over and did they enjoy it?
Were there any technical problems and could these have been prevented?

It is worth getting the engineer to record the gig if possible or getting a friend to video record your performance so you can see what it looks like visually – you may well be surprised at what you actually look like when you are up there...



CASE STUDY
JON – DJ

Jon is a very experienced international DJ, remixer and producer. He works in a variety of different settings, including DJing and promoting local, national and international events, working as a musician, teacher and producer.

He regards himself as a DJ, producer and writer, having built his reputation up in all of these areas over the last 15 years, after a short spell working in a local record shop when he left college.

There is no such thing as a standard day, but most days involve around 4 hours of teaching and 6-7 hours working in his home studio, catching up on E-mails, organising gigs etc. A lot of time at the weekend is taken up in travelling to and from gigs – the actual performance time in any week is relatively small.

Jon would place musical knowledge and intelligence as key skills needed to do this work, as well as high level practical skills related to the production of music. Although he’s got a degree, he doesn’t have any qualifications in music which have helped him get where he is – it’s more about getting out there and doing it yourself, have the perseverance and the love of music!



Jon’s tips

Don’t go into music for the money. Some years you’ll get paid great, others you’ll struggle to make ends meet.

CASE STUDY
COLIN – GUITAR, KEYBOARD, VOCALIST IN A FUNCTION BAND



Colin plays lead guitar, keyboards and backing vocals in a covers, function band in the NW and also earns money doing some peripatetic guitar teaching in local schools. If things become too tight he still manages to do some building work with his dad’s company.

Playing in bands since he was at school, Colin first realised there was money to be made on the covers 'cabaret' circuit, when his band got paid from a ‘whip round’ at a local working men's club. The band’s next aim was to find an agent who could put them out on a more regular basis, getting paid to do something they loved.

Gradually the cabaret and covers scene became a bit of a chore and Colin decided to try his hand at writing original songs. After a few years of near misses and some false dawns and the arrival of small feet – Colin realised that to survive he would have to revert back to the covers circuit, but continued writing songs in the hope that someday Kylie may pick up on one.

He now had more skills and experience as a musician and, having the equipment to do more up-market gigs, Colin decided to move into corporate / function work, knowing the money and conditions would be better. Training as a peripatetic teacher and having two half days work at a local school, he could afford to be a little bit more fussy as to the choice of venue.



Colin's tips

- 1 Be professional and polite to everyone you meet in the industry. You always seem to bump in to them at another time or place.
- 2 If working through an agent, be prepared to travel but set a distance you are comfortable with.
- 3 Agents don't really care how far you are travelling as they will receive the same fee whether you travel 300 miles or 10 miles.
- 4 Buy the best equipment you can afford and practice till you drop, learn as many different styles as possible.
- 5 There are thousands of guitarists out there, try and be one of the best.
- 6 Learn to sing, everyone's looking for musicians with backing vocals.
- 7 Don't despair if you are having a bad night in a rotten club, there are worse jobs.
- 8 Get anywhere you are going early.

CASE STUDY
MATT – KEYBOARD TECHNICIAN / BACKLINE TECHNICIAN



I design, build and maintain on-stage MIDI / Keyboard / Computer setups for musicians. I'm currently on tour with the Chemical Brothers, maintaining equipment and keeping the whole system running during a tour. Sometime I set up instruments such as drums and guitars. I also work during rehearsals, fixing, programming and generally running all things related to band gear. Before this, I used to be a Signaller in the Army, using and maintaining radio equipment, before doing an HND in Music Technology and working as assistant engineer/programmer in a studio.

During the rehearsal process, I'll design and build the system including making leads, programming sounds, saving patches and songs, sorting all flight-case repairs, manufacture and general problem solving. My day usually lasts about 12hrs.

On a gig day, I load band equipment into a venue at about 11am and spend the next 3-4 hours setting up that equipment on stage for the gig that night, repairing faults where I find them. Setup includes erecting stands, desks, laptops and keyboards, anything that is used during the gig, then plugging in and testing the equipment prior to sound check. The band arrives at 4-5pm and sound checks. I double check everything before the gig, pack it all away afterwards and load back onto the truck for the next show, before finally heading off backstage at about 2am for beer and sarnies!



Matt's tips

- 1 Make sure you have a good knowledge of current computer software and systems, mostly Apple Mac - you have to do general 'first aid' yourself ; MIDI, audio signal paths and devices that they run through e.g. mixing consoles, FX units, DIs etc.
- 2 You'll need basic maintenance skills, but you are not a service engineer so don't have to go too deep (you may invalidate equipment warranty).
- 3 Be able to get on with people easily and have good communication skills.
- 4 Keep teaching yourself new stuff all the time, get into the habit of learning things such as new versions of operating systems and patches. College courses can help.

MORE TASKS

- 1 Spend some time evaluating your last performance. Consider the following:

Audience reaction – what was it and how could you have improved it?
Timings / smooth running
The set / choice of material
Technical issues – equipment, sound etc.
Performance – did you get your message across?

Now decide how you can improve for next time!

- 2 Consider getting more performance experience in ANY capacity! Think about the following:

1) Offering your services as a stand in performer for other artists, or working with non-instrumentalists in a live setting, such as DJs or performance poets.

2) Busking – remember to check out any requirements of your local authority first!

3) Turning up to play at open mic / acoustic nights / folk clubs / jam sessions / karaoke nights / DJ / MC events

4) Entering for battle of the bands type events – it's very, very tough to get up to play one or two tracks maximum, but great experience.

- 3 Take photos of your performance and evaluate your image – preferably with some help from others!

Does your image come across in the dark? Is it powerful? Do you need to improve your 'brand'? Do all the members of your band project a joint image?

- 4 Watch some DVDs or other film of famous performers, such as:

Jimi Hendrix / Led Zeppelin / Pink Floyd / Aretha Franklin / Billie Holiday / Frank Sinatra / Count Basie / Pat Metheny

What worked about their performance?
How did they build excitement?
How did they communicate with the audience? (Speaking, moving, gestures as well as music!)
What impression did the 'stage show' give? (Use of special effects, choreography, lighting.)

For 'More Information' – weblinks, books, magazines, look at P42.

HEALTH
AND
SAFETY



WHAT IS IT?

This chapter tells you about things you need to do to keep yourself, the people you work with and your audience as safe as possible whilst you're working.

WHY DO I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THIS?

You need to know this for three reasons:

You need to work as safely as possible so you can have a long and successful career.

Whenever and wherever you work in music you have a legal responsibility to work within the Health and Safety laws. If you do anything that breaks these laws you could be prosecuted for a criminal offence.

Serious and life-threatening problems do happen – not only could you injure yourself, but you could also be liable for any injury caused to others, leaving you open to legal claims against you.

YOU MUST HAND IN YOUR WORK BY TO



HOW LONG
should this assignment take?

Every person works at his / her own pace. As a guide, this should take you 3 hours to read and research and another 3 hours to write your answers and discuss them with your tutor.



HOW
will I be assessed?

Your tutor will assess your work. He / she will give you feedback on how you have done. If you have not completed the work, you will be given the chance to do further work to bring it "up to scratch". For more details, please refer to your MOLP's own guidance.



WHAT
do I do now?

What do I do now?
Read the **TASKS** below.
Then read the **NOTES AND GUIDANCE** section IN THIS CHAPTER AND IN THE CHAPTER ON EQUIPMENT

TASKS HEALTH AND SAFETY SECTION

Answer these questions

1 What are the two main pieces of legislation that cover Health and Safety at work?

1)

2)

2 Which employment category (employer, employee, self-employed) best describes what you do or are aiming to do in music?

3 What are the Health & Safety responsibilities for your employment category?

4 List 2 things you can do to minimise each of these risks :

USING ELECTRICAL EQUIPMENT

LIFTING HEAVY OBJECTS

BEING EXPOSED TO LOUD NOISE

RSI

5 List the 5 steps you take when doing a risk assessment.

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

6 Now carry out a risk assessment for a workplace that you (a) actually work or study at, or (b) can see yourself working at in future, using the following form.

RISK ASSESSMENT FOR :

Company name :

Company address :

STEP 1

List significant hazards here :

ASSESSOR :

Name :

Date :

STEP 2

List the groups of people who are at risk from these hazards:

ASSESSMENT REVIEW :

Name :

Date :

STEP 3

List the existing precautions and any further action needed to minimise the risks:

TASKS **EQUIPMENT SECTION**

1 List 3 magazines which contain information about equipment you use regularly.

1)

2)

3)

2 Find the name, number and contact name for a local music shop that does repairs and maintenance for your equipment.

3 List 2 maintenance tasks you need to carry out on a regular basis to keep your instrument in good working order and 2 tasks that need to be carried out by a specialist.

MAINTENANCE TASK - SELF

1)

2)

MAINTENANCE TASK - SPECIALIST

1)

2)

4 Using magazines, books, the Internet, or someone to speak to, compare two items offered for sale. Use the following example or research a piece of equipment you need to buy yourself.

	TECHNICS TURNTABLE	ALTERNATIVE TURNTABLE
How much is it? (including any delivery cost)		
Where is it on sale?		
Is this a reliable place to buy? Is there a guarantee? What is the after sales service like if you have a problem?		
How reliable is it? (Look at reviews or ask people)		
If it's second hand, what do you know about its history? (How old is it, how long did the last person have it for, why did they sell it?)		

Now let's look at why you need this piece of equipment:

	TECHNICS TURNTABLE	ALTERNATIVE TURNTABLE
What type of use will this equipment get? e.g. regular gigs or occasional use		
Will you need any money for accessories?		

WELL DONE, THAT'S THE END OF THIS ASSIGNMENT. CHECK IT AND HAND IT IN!

HEALTH AND SAFETY

THE LAW

Being safety conscious at work is not just a matter of common sense, it is actually a legal requirement. Health and safety at work is overseen by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and there are specific laws that govern what you must – and must not – do. There are also regulations that cover specific risks such as manual handling and noise.

In simple terms these laws say that everyone – employers, employees and people who are self-employed – have to take all reasonable steps to make sure that the working environment is as safe as possible for everyone concerned.

The first step is to decide if you are an employer, an employee or are self-employed.

An **employer** is someone who has people working for them, a boss. If you run a business that employs staff such as a nightclub or record shop you are classed as an employer, and as such must make proper arrangements for the health, safety and welfare of your staff and anyone else who might be affected by your work. This means doing things like identifying hazards, assessing risks, training staff and, if you have more than five paid or unpaid staff, preparing a written health & safety policy document.

An **employee** is someone who is paid a regular wage for doing their job. Most people in regular jobs such as office work or retail are employees, but some musicians – orchestral players and holiday entertainers for example – are also classed as employees. As an employee, you have to take care of yourself and other people who might be affected by your work and co-operate with the health & safety arrangements made by your employer.

Self-employed people (sometimes called **freelancers**) are paid a fee to provide a specific service and usually work in different places or for different customers. Much of the work in the music industry is done by self-employed people doing things like playing gigs in pubs, DJ-ing in clubs, producing records or giving music lessons. If you do any freelance music work – even if it isn't your full-time job – you have to observe the health & safety laws. Like an employee, you must take care of yourself and other people who might be affected by your work, and you must also do some things that are done for employees by their employer – for example you have to make sure that you get proper training and, importantly, you have to do your own risk assessments.

RISK ASSESSMENT

What is a risk assessment?

A risk assessment is simply an examination of the things in your work that could cause harm. The aim is to make sure no one gets hurt or becomes ill, by assessing whether the existing precautions are enough or if you need to do more. If you are an employer or self-employed you must, by law, do a risk assessment for every place you work in.

How to assess the risks in your workplace

You are looking at hazards and risks.

A **hazard** is anything that can cause harm.

A **risk** is the chance, high or low, that someone will actually be harmed by the hazard.

For example, playing the electric guitar is hazardous because electricity can be harmful. As long as the equipment is set up and working properly, though, the actual risk of injury is very small.

To assess the risks in your workplace, follow the five steps in the diagram

What to do if you have an accident at work

If someone has an accident or a “near-miss” at work, you should report it straight away to someone with responsibility for safety. If someone is injured they should always see a first-aider, and fill out an accident report form. If this isn’t available, make a written statement about what happened, sign and date it, and get a witness to sign it.

ASSESSING RISKS

STEP 1

WHAT ARE THE HAZARDS?

Assessing hazards doesn’t need to be a complicated process, you just need to walk around your workplace (for example a venue, recording studio, rehearsal room or teaching room) and look for things that could cause harm. Ignore the trivial and concentrate on significant hazards that could cause serious harm or affect several people.

STEP 2

WHO MIGHT BE HARMED?

You don’t need to list people by name, just think about the different groups of people who may be affected, such as:
Yourself and your co-workers.
Your audience, students or clients.
Other people who work there, such as road crew, technicians, bar staff, etc.

STEP 3
IS MORE NEEDED TO CONTROL THE RISK?

How likely is it that someone could actually be harmed by each hazard? You must decide whether or not you need to do more to reduce the risk, or if the existing precautions are good enough. It’s usually impossible to make things a hundred percent safe and even after precautions have been taken there is usually some risk remaining, so what you have to decide for each hazard is whether the **remaining risk is high, medium or low**.

The aim is to take whatever action is necessary to make all risks **low**.

To do this you need to ask yourself these questions :

Can I get rid of the hazard altogether?
If not, how can I control the risks so that harm is unlikely?

If you can’t get rid of the hazard completely try to apply the following principles :

- 1** Try a less risky option
- 2** Prevent access to the hazard
e.g. – cordon off the area around electrical equipment.
- 3** Organise the work to reduce access to the hazard
e.g. – stay in the dressing room when not performing to reduce your exposure to loud music.
- 4** Use protective equipment
e.g. earplugs.
- 5** Provide welfare facilities
e.g. a chill-out area or washing & first-aid facilities.
- 6** Thinking about the risks in this way will also help to make you more safety conscious generally, so if something does go wrong you will be better prepared to deal with it.

STEP 4
RECORD YOUR FINDINGS

If there are more than five employees involved you must write down the main findings of your assessment. Even if there are less than five employees involved it may still be useful to write down what you’ve done.

You need to show that :

- 1** A proper check was made.
- 2** You asked who might be affected.
- 3** You dealt with the obvious main hazards and took extra precautions where necessary.
- 4** The remaining risk is low.

An example from a typical gig might be :
“Danger of trip hazard to performers due to trailing power cables in walkway from dressing room to stage. Cables taped down and covered with anti - slip mat”.

STEP 5
REVIEW YOUR ASSESSMENT AND REVISE IT IF NECESSARY

Over time your working methods and equipment will probably change, so it is important to go back and review your assessment every so often to make sure it’s still relevant.

COMMON RISKS FOR MUSICIANS

Danger of electrocution from unsafe electrical equipment.
Hearing problems from listening to loud music.
Back injuries from poor lifting technique or bad posture.
Repetitive strain injury (RSI).
Specific hazards that relate to singers and specific instruments.
Tripping up
Fire risks
Crowd control

This isn’t a complete list. You will no doubt think of other things you could add. The important thing is to stay switched-on about safety and be constantly on the lookout for thinks that could go wrong – especially if you are working with different people in lots of different venues.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Electricity is dangerous, and musicians have been injured or even killed from electric shocks whilst practising or performing. You don’t need a lot to kill you, either: a current as small as 50 milliamps is enough (a 40 watt light bulb takes about 150 milliamps) and the bigger the current, the quicker and more dangerous its effects.

It’s not all bad news, though: good quality equipment is perfectly safe if it’s set up and maintained properly. The HSE’s pamphlet Electrical safety for entertainers (www.hse.org.uk) will tell you everything you need to know, but the main points are as follows:

- ☐ Have all your equipment tested regularly by a qualified electrician.
- ☐ Regularly check all your mains plugs and cables for damage, cuts, bare wires, loose connections, etc.
- ☐ Remember that even gear that isn’t plugged directly into the mains can be dangerous. Anything connected by a cable, such as a guitar or a speaker carries a potentially lethal current, and you should avoid touching one piece of gear whilst you’re holding another.
- ☐ Always use an RCD (residual current device, or circuit breaker) on the wall-socket that feeds your plug boards; it will shut the power off if there’s a problem. They are sold in most electrical shops, and if it saves your life it will be the best £30 you’ve ever spent.
- ☐ Don’t overload plug boards by using multi-way adapter plugs. Buy more boards – they’re safer and more reliable. Never ‘daisy chain’ plug boards i.e. plug them into each other in a line.
- ☐ Always use the correct fuse for the job, and never be tempted to substitute ordinary wire or silver paper. Even with the right fuse you still need an RCD.
- ☐ Don’t assume that someone else’s gear is safe. Always have it checked before you use it, and if in you have any doubts don’t use it. If a piece of gear starts to overheat or catch fire, unplug it from the mains before you use an extinguisher on it.
- ☐ Secure leads and cables with gaffa-tape and keep drinks away from anything electrical. Finally, if someone does get a shock, shut off the power immediately – but don’t touch them without insulating yourself first – and call an ambulance.

NOISE

Working with loud noise is often seen as a natural part of a musician’s life but prolonged exposure to even relatively modest sound levels can cause irreparable hearing damage. The risk depends on two things:

- How loud the sound is.**
- How long you are exposed to it.**

Sound levels are measured in decibels (dB), and the following table shows some typical comparable levels.

140	Jet taking off from 25m
125	Rock band / club sound system
100	Chainsaw
96	Symphony orchestra
85	Hearing protection must be worn (Noise at Work Regulations 1989)
80	Heavy lorry from 5m
60	Busy street
40	Office
20	TV / radio at home
0	Faintest audible sounds



As you can see, in regular working environments, such as factories and warehouses hearing protection must be worn at levels above 85dB, but sound levels at live gigs and dance events often exceed 125dB, and rehearsals, small gigs and even orchestral concerts can reach danger levels. Hearing damage can occur if you’re repeatedly exposed to levels as low as 80dB – about the level of a wagon driving past – and the risk increases as the volume goes up.

What you need to do to reduce the risk:

- Turn it down! Rehearsals, especially, don't need to be ear-shatteringly loud. A reasonable level for a three-hour session is about 85dB. If you're not sure what this sounds like, borrow a soundmeter and check your volume.
- Use earplugs. Specially designed musician's plugs cut the volume without altering the tone.
- Don't stand too close to your speakers. If you have problems hearing your monitor when you play live, raise it closer to ear level and turn down the backline or move it back a bit. If you have the choice always use the newer type of in-ear monitors – they work at a much lower volume.
- High frequencies are particularly dangerous, so beware of feedback and raise the drum kit so the cymbal frequencies aren't right in your ears.
- If you work in a recording studio keep the monitor level as low as possible.

Finally, your ears are your livelihood so look after them. Walk away from the sound sometimes to give yourself a break. If you do have a problem, see a doctor, get some information and get protected.



For more info see the Musicians' Union information sheet NOISE AWARENESS FOR MUSICIANS www.musiciansunion.org.uk

LIFTING

Over a quarter of all injuries at work are back strains caused by poor lifting technique. Musicians are often involved in heavy lifting, so try to follow these guidelines:

- Try not to lift at all. Use a mechanical aid such as a trolley or hoist wherever possible, or better still, let someone else do the lifting.
- If you have to lift, check the weight beforehand and ask for help if you think it's too heavy.
- Bend your knees and keep your back straight.
- Grip the load securely, and keeping your back straight, lift the load letting your legs take the strain.
- Take care not to twist your body. If you need to change direction, keep your body straight and move your feet.
- Finally, lay the load down gently by bending your knees and keeping your back straight.

REPETITIVE STRAIN INJURY (RSI)

Repetitive Strain Injury is an umbrella term that covers a range of musculoskeletal conditions such as carpal tunnel syndrome, tenosynovitis, cramp and tendonitis. RSI can affect the spine and both the upper and lower limbs, causing symptoms such as numbness, tingling, sharp pain, dull ache, weakness, loss of grip and restricted movement of limbs.

These symptoms could clearly be disastrous for a working musician so it is important to treat RSI as a serious risk. The following might help:

- Each instrument has its own risks – be sure you know what yours are.
- Devise a warm-up and stretching routine, including a warm up with your instrument, and do it before you play.
- Cool down and stretch after you play.
- Vary your playing technique and posture.
- Take regular breaks during practice and rehearsal sessions.
- If you sit down to play make sure your seat is the right height and that it allows for movement and rest.

OCCUPATIONAL HAZARDS

This section contains some tips and hints on good practice.

SINGERS

Straining to be heard over loud music can cause scars called ‘nodes’ on your vocal chords, which can be permanent. To avoid this, warm up properly before gigs by doing vocal and physical exercises. Avoid, or humidify, dry centrally heated atmospheres as much as possible as they dehydrate your air-passages - a throat spray can help. Smoking and alcohol are bad for your throat. If you have repeated problems with your voice, get medical advice, there may be a more serious problem which needs looking at. Always have some water at your side and consider getting vocal training to help strengthen your voice.

KEYBOARD PLAYERS AND MUSIC TECHNOLOGISTS

The main problem is back pain from hunching over the keyboard - improved posture is the only real answer. Many suffer from strained tendons from hitting the keys too hard – better technique will help. If RSI is a problem, make sure you warm up properly before you play and take regular breaks during practice. Massage and relaxation exercises can also help. Long hours in front of a computer can be bad for your eyesight, so take regular breaks, relax, exercise and use a comfortable ‘ergonomic’ chair with a proper backrest.

GUITAR AND BASSISTS

Wear a broad strap to avoid shoulder trouble, and for wrist, tendon and RSI problems, see above. Warm up with gentle wrist and finger exercises before gigs and practice, and stretch to cool down afterwards. “There are a number of guitars on the market now that have been designed to be light and therefore aid musicians with back problems.” Mark Singleton

DRUMMERS AND PERCUSSIONISTS

As with keyboard players, bad posture can cause back problems. Get a better drum-seat, preferably with a backrest and work on keeping your back straight. Sticks can cause blisters, especially when your hands are sweaty. If you can get away with it, wear gloves, but always try to keep cool – use an electric fan if necessary. Better stick technique is the best bet, though. Wrist, tendon and RSI problems are very common so deal with these as above. The most important thing to remember is that drumming is very physical activity, and you should always warm up slowly before you play.

ORCHESTRAL PLAYERS

For orchestral and band musicians the main problems are back problems from bad posture and RSI. Long, regular rehearsals and gruelling concert schedules can take their toll, so proper warm-ups, regular breaks and relaxation and massage are more or less essential. Many find yoga or Alexander Technique particularly helpful.

DJS

RSI can be a problem, - see above. Watch your eyes – if you’re working in dark environments, try to use an overhead light. Make sure you have your phones set at an appropriate level.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

LINKS

New Deal for Musicians has no responsibility for or control of the following sites. The inclusion of any site does not necessarily imply New Deal for Musicians approval of the site. To access any of the sites please type in the address into a browser or search using keywords from the name of the link.
www.dfes.gov.uk/ukonlinecentres Find Internet access that's close to you.
Look at the weblinks in other chapters, particularly those focusing on your chosen instrument.

- ☐ **www.hse.gov.uk**
Health & Safety Executive (HSE) website, the primary source of good quality Health and Safety information
- ☐ **www.musiciansunion.org.uk**
The Musicians’ Union (MU) website also has a number of leaflets available on Health and Safety issues, free to members.
- ☐ **www.fim - health.org**
The International Federation of Musicians - health information with links to many health related sites.
- ☐ **www.businesslink.gov.uk**
Government organisation set up to help people starting up in business. Health and Safety section on the website.
- ☐ **www.parkerguitars.com**
Guitar manufacturer specialising in lightweight guitars
- ☐ **www.alexandertechnique.com**
The Alexander technique is taught at many performing arts, drama and dance centres and is a way of training your body to release unnecessary tension. It can help with conditions such as RSI and stiffness in your body or back.

- BOOKS AND MAGAZINES**
☐ Health and Safety Executive publications
tel : 01787 881 165
www.hse.gov.uk
- ☐ Most books on DJing, performing and recording and production have information about health and safety issues.

MORE TASKS

1 Safety checklist

Because you're likely to be working in lots of different places, it's a good idea to have a safety checklist to take with you. Use the following check list as an example and prepare one for a local venue / forthcoming gig.

Who is the person responsible for safety?

Are there any special risks you should know about?

Where are the fire exits?

Where do you go in an emergency? (assembly points)

Where are the fire alarm call points? (break-glass)

What does the fire alarm sound like?

Where are the fire extinguishers?

Where is the emergency power off switch?

Who is responsible for first aid and where is the first aid kit kept?

Are the electrics safe?

What are the rules about noise levels?

Who is responsible for security?

Where do you report any faults or accidents?

2 Find out more about the Alexander technique and where your local classes are.

3 Investigate standard health and safety procedures for crowd control at a small, local venue and a large national venue. What procedures do they have for ensuring:

Only the maximum number of public permitted under regulations are admitted.

Against risks of crowd surges, crowd management and security issues

Premises can be cleared quickly and safely in the event of an emergency

4 Look at entertainment licensing laws and the way that licenses are applied for and granted – what do they provide for in terms of

What electrical safety provisions a venue must put into place if it holds live music events

How many musicians are able to play / restrictions on different types of public performances

The costs and procedures involved in applying for one-off licences and permanent licences for a venue

5 Find reviews for the following items of music equipment – what are recommended as the best buys?

DJ mixer

Virtual Studio software

Beginner electric guitar package (guitar, case, practice amp)

Vocal performance microphone



EQUIPMENT

WHAT IS IT?

This chapter gives you advice on how to choose, maintain and repair your equipment for a price you can afford - musical instruments, live sound equipment and music technology equipment.

How to find up to date equipment and make sure you get good value for money.

How to keep your equipment in good working order – and do this safely.

➤ WORKBOOK 5 – RECORDING AND PRODUCTION
for more advice about pro-audio equipment.

WHY DO I
NEED TO
KNOW
ABOUT THIS?

Having access to good quality equipment is a must for any musician, DJ or technologist and can make the difference between getting work or not.

You can keep your costs down by getting good value for money and keeping things in good repair yourself.

This knowledge is useful to find a job which involves selling, maintaining and repairing equipment – such as in a music shop, or being a guitar tech for a touring band.

NOTE: Turn to the project in Chapter 4 – Health and Safety and Equipment projects are combined on P73.

HOW TO CHOOSE THE RIGHT
EQUIPMENT / INSTRUMENT

Assuming you know roughly what you want – e.g. a mixer with 8 channels so you can plug 8 microphones in – decide your budget first. Once you have a price in mind you can then start to browse the many catalogues and shops that sell music tech equipment.

If you are online, then the first port of call should be a large online retailer – see the ‘more information’ section. These websites have online catalogues of all the equipment the shops sell which will enable you to browse to find a few options for what you want. DON’T BUY ANYTHING YET!

Once you have a couple of options its time to look for reviews, on-line, in magazines and from other musicians, DJs and technologists.

Using the reviews you have found can help you to decide between pieces of equipment. Often price is a big factor as well, and it’s often a case of compromise.



If you are buying instruments, speakers or headphones you really need to hear them before you part with any money. This is generally a case of phoning around local shops and finding out what they have in stock. If you’re testing PA equipment, speakers or headphones, take some CD’s of material you know well and make sure you listen to a few different sets. If you’re buying an instrument which you will amplify, set it up so you can play it acoustically and amplified in the shop.

There are some manufacturers that are renowned for being cheap. Behringer, for example, make a wide range of music and pro audio equipment that is among the cheapest out there, yet performs fairly well. You wont often see Behringer equipment in large studios like Abbey Road, but it can easily do the job.

The Sound on Sound website has a search function into which you can type the model number of the device and see if they have reviewed it. Or just type the equipment manufacturer, model number and the word **review** into a Google search. This usually returns some useful results.



“Only buy an instrument that feels comfortable to play, no matter whether it’s cheap or expensive”
Mark Singleton

HOW GOOD AN INSTRUMENT DO YOU REALLY NEED? HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

Ask yourself what you'll be using it for – does it need to be sturdy, reliable, will standard equipment do or do you need something better and different? If you're investing in equipment, think about how important that item is to your set up.

Although a good quality instrument will always sound better, you don't necessarily need this to get on in the business.

Instruments fall broadly into three categories : beginners, semi - professional, and professional. Even a beginner's instrument will be good enough to get you started, provided it is well set up and kept in good working order, but always aim to buy the best instrument you can possibly afford.

Improve your instrument's sound with proper 'setting up'. Check the action of a guitar, the state of the skins on your drums and the positioning of the bridge on your violin, for example.

Moderate quality equipment can be improved with small changes – new strings, better quality needles on your turntables, or good quality, shielded cable for leads.

A poor internal or contact pick up on your instrument can make your instrument sound terrible. It's often worth investing in a better pick up or alternatives.

How much you should spend on your instrument depends on the type and quality of the instrument you buy.

Remember to budget for other costs e.g. insurance, cases, accessories, amplification, maintenance costs, strings, reeds, plectrums, resin etc.

Before you spend any money, get advice!



BUYING A PA Mark Singleton

There are literally hundreds of PA system combinations on offer ranging from 100 watts a side to 10,000 watts and a lot of thought and careful consideration should be taken when you are deciding on one.

- What kind of venues will you be playing as regards power / volume?
- What are you putting through the PA?
- Do you need it to be powerful yet small enough to fit in the back of a small car ?
- Do you want built in horns to enhance the top end frequency?
- Do you want a full range system in one cabinet, or prefer tops and bass bins ?
- Do you need something you can carry yourself or have you a roadie?



GETTING ADVICE AND SUPPORT

Buying and looking after musical instruments can be a daunting task, so it’s important to get good, impartial advice.



Ask people who are involved in music for advice, for example, the Musicians' Union, instrument repairers and other musicians. Don't forget to ask for the full specification of equipment, as well as about reliability and popularity.

A lot of the online retailers have a B-STOCK section on their site where they sell items that have been returned and mended, display or end of line stock at cut down prices.

If you are planning a couple of purchases then try to buy them together as this will be a good bargaining point for price reductions.

If you wish to buy from somewhere closer to home then do your research, find the best price and then phone the dealer (or go in) and ask them to match it. Most retailers will do this to get your business, although they may ask for proof. It pays to take a print out from the Internet or a cut out from a magazine showing the price with you.

MAGAZINES

Almost every category of instrument has at least one magazine dedicated to telling you more about your instrument, how to maintain it and featuring reviews on new and old equipment. They also contain lots of manufacturers’ adverts and personal ads, so you can get an idea of what’s around and for how much. See 'more information'.

MUSIC SHOPS

People who work in music shops tend to be well clued - up about the instruments and equipment they sell. Although you may not get completely impartial advice (they want to sell you something, after all), they are often highly skilled musicians themselves and can give you some inside tips and advice that you’d find it difficult to get elsewhere. Remember that many dealers also do instrument and equipment repairs.

MUSIC TEACHERS / COLLEGES

Teachers tend to have a very wide and detailed knowledge of their instrument, and as such can usually tell you the pros and cons of specific makes and models. Also, they often get to hear of good second - hand instruments coming up for sale as their students upgrade.

INSTRUMENT / EQUIPMENT MANUFACTURERS

Manufacturers are always happy to send out details of their products to prospective buyers and most major firms have a technical sales department to deal with customer enquiries.

DO YOU BUY NEW OR SECOND - HAND?

This depends on the type of instrument / equipment you’re buying. Some instruments improve with age whilst others deteriorate.



“It depends on your budget and if you are prepared to do the odd soldering job, and obviously the type of equipment needed. Take more care if it’s electrical equipment you’re buying, than for, say, speakers though its extremely important to feel confident about your gear no matter what job it does.” Mark Singleton

BUYING NEW

You get instructions and maintenance advice, reliability, a guarantee and free repairs for a fixed term. You can often end up paying more, but this can be offset by part exchanging your old instrument and haggling for money off, or free accessories. New instruments can also take quite a while to break in. New technology is usually best, but only when it’s become quite widely used.

BUYING SECOND - HAND

Is cheaper, more room to negotiate to get money off or for other things to be included in the price. Private sales are always on a ‘sold as seen’ basis, and if your gear breaks when you get it home, there’s not much you can do about it. Even if you buy from a dealer, second-hand items usually come with a much reduced guarantee.

Questions to ask about second hand items:
How long have you had it?
(Did they buy it new, are they getting rid of it very quickly?)
Have you had it repaired / maintained?
Why are you selling it?
What did you use it for (e.g. regular gigs produce wear and tear quickly)
Do you know of anything that's wrong with it?

Flight cases / hard instrument cases are good value second hand, if you can find them as they are built to last.

Buying from a friend is best – people in the music industry are often changing equipment and so therefore people often have gear to sell. If its from someone you know then you’ll be able to give it a good test and ask loads of questions before deciding.

It is not advisable to send money in the post or do a bank transfer to someone you’ve never met for some equipment they say they’ll send you.

Ebay, the online auction site, is a popular choice now for buying anything second hand. As with all second hand trading, be very careful about the descriptions people give – they can be misleading – and take an experienced musician with you to look at any equipment / instrument before you buy.

When buying microphones, speakers, mixers or something else with lots of moving parts then view them and listen to them before buying.

Generally electronic equipment with few moving parts is built to last and you can be fairly confident that it will work a few years down the line.

Watch out for shipping costs when buying on-line or on Ebay.

KEEPING YOUR INSTRUMENT IN GOOD WORKING ORDER

You will need to invest time and a bit of money to keep your instrument in good condition - this may involve buying a flight case, new strings, or just keeping it clean. Below is a list of routine maintenance tasks. For anything other than this you should seek specialist advice.

HOW OFTEN?

Every time you use your instrument you will need to think about some or all of the routine maintenance tasks listed below. If your instrument has not been used for a while, regular check-ups will ensure no decay or damage occurs.

CLEANING

All instruments will suffer in varying degrees from dirt, such as dust, grime and grease. Try to keep your instrument as dirt free as possible at all times. How you clean your instrument will depend on what it is made of and you should seek specialist advice before you do anything. As a general guide, electrical equipment and string instruments should be kept dry and dust free. Brass and wind instruments will need more thorough cleaning after each session. Clean your strings with a tissue after every gig, it removes the sweat and grease from the string and it keeps the strings sounding livelier and brighter for longer.

TUNING

Learning how to keep your instrument in tune will not only help keep it in working order, but also stop you from getting thrown out of the band. Electronic tuners vary in price, (and accuracy), from about £20 - £100 and are very useful if you're having to tune up in a noisy venue. String players usually use a tuning fork. Many instruments, including stringed, wind and brass instruments will not work well if they are not tuned to the correct pitch. Guitars and stringed instruments should be stored with strings in tune. Percussion instruments such as bongos and congas need to have their skins loosened when not being used. Pianos need to be tuned by a specialist on a regular basis.

ENVIRONMENT

Environmental influences such as climate, humidity, weather and central heating can all have an effect on the working condition of your instrument. Some people say that wood is a living, breathing material and therefore should be treated with a bit of T.L.C. A change in humidity can affect the tone of wooden instruments and the dry air caused by central heating can cause untold havoc, such as warped necks and broken bridges - you can prevent this by using a specially designed humidifier, available at most specialist shops. Temperature changes will affect the tuning of all wind, brass or stringed instruments so it's worthwhile making sure your instrument is acclimatised before you go on stage to perform. For example, the increase in heat caused by stage lighting will make these instruments go sharp.



TRANSPORT AND STORAGE

Making sure you store and transport your instrument safely can involve added expense. Good quality, hard instrument cases and flight cases for electrical gear are not cheap to come by, but help maintain the condition and value of your equipment - making them worth every penny spent. Make sure your instrument insurance covers usage outside the home and theft from a locked vehicle. Wood worm can cause irreparable damage to wooden instruments and quite willingly have your acoustic guitar for dinner. Tell-tail signs include small amounts of sawdust and minute holes in furniture and instruments, so it is worth keeping your eyes open. Don't leave your equipment in the sun, heat, or extreme cold.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY AND EFFICIENCY

Always have your electrical equipment serviced by a qualified person - don't attempt it yourself.

➤ WORKBOOK 4 – PERFORMING – CHAPTER 4

SERVICING

From time to time, wind, brass and stringed instruments will need a check-up from a specialist instrument repairer – a kind of M.O.T. which will help prolong their working lives – a good time is when you're planning to go on tour or have important performances or auditions looming. At some stage, getting your instrument re-valued for insurance purposes will probably be worth your while, and this can be a good time to send it in to a reputable repairer.

ACCESSORIES

Instrument accessories such as strings, reeds, batteries, leads, mutes etc. also need to be kept in good working order.

PRO AUDIO EQUIPMENT

Keep its exterior clean and free from dust by wiping with a damp cloth. Ensure that rack equipment has enough space around it for air to flow to keep it cool. If it does go wrong and it's out of guarantee then you will need to refer to a specialist. These sorts of people advertise in the back of magazines and often music retailers will be able to point you in the right direction. Get a quote first, as it may work out cheaper to buy a new one.

TIP

Matt's Tips
- Keyboard technician for the Chemical Brothers

- Keep a check on your stuff constantly, it rattles around in the back of a truck so check tightness of rack bolts / screws. Don't be afraid to open up a keyboard every now and again to make sure there's not a circuit board about to come loose - preventative medicine!!
- If you own older vintage gear, there's probably a book about it somewhere. Buy that book and learn about the little nuances of that particular keyboard / software.
- Always have a contingency plan for if your stuff does breakdown - should you really take your vintage keyboard on the road, or use a modern one with similar patches?
- Get a proper service engineer to overhaul or service expensive items. You spent a lot of money buying it, another couple of hundred quid on correct maintenance makes sense. Do repairs to get you through a gig by all means, but if not sure, do nothing! You can cause more damage than good.

INSURANCE

Think about insuring against theft / burglary at home, whilst in transit and at gigs – in the UK or overseas if you tour there. Also consider insurance for accidental damage to equipment (a pint over amp does it no good at all...) and public liability insurance – ask an insurance adviser for details.

There is always the possibility that someone might break into your house and steal your gear, and it won’t always be covered by house contents insurance. If your equipment never leaves your house then contact your house insurance company first and tell them you have £X000 worth of music equipment. They will ask for the highest individually priced item (say you have a guitar that cost £1000) and amend your insurance accordingly.

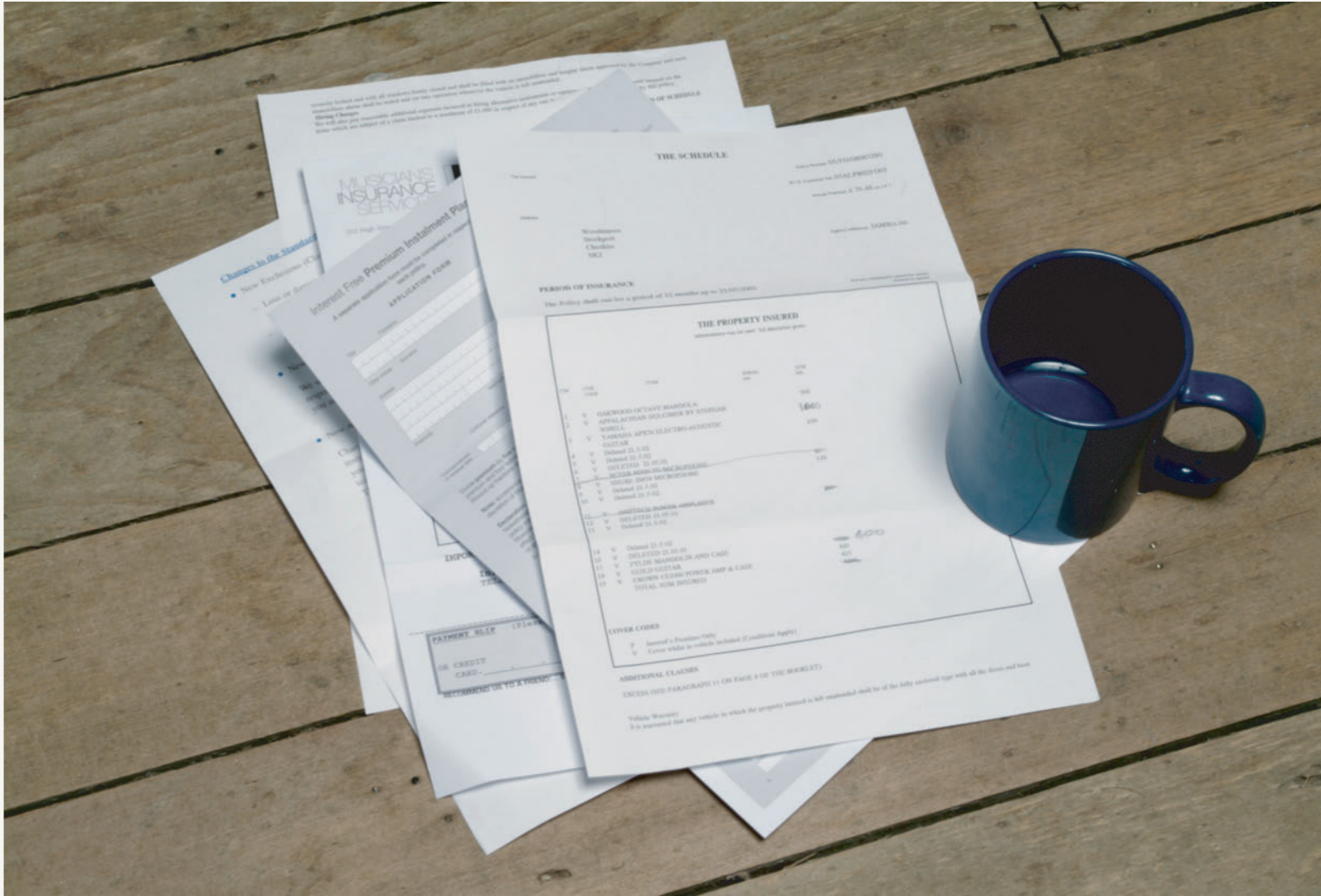
If you are planning to take your equipment out the house then you need specialist insurance. Look at the ‘want to know more’ section.

Most insurance policies will cover your equipment at home and at a gig. You will need to specify if it’s kept elsewhere (at a rehearsal room, studio etc), and also if you plan to take it abroad.

Check whether theft from cars is included. There are often little clauses that mean the only way it is covered is if you are in the car as well, or if the car has been forced open, or if you have an alarm / immobiliser fitted. Some music equipment policies also include Public Liability Insurance, which protects you if your equipment hurts or kills someone else.



The Musicians Union can help you with insurance that fits your needs. You get reduced rate membership to the MU if you are on New Deal for Musicians.



WANT TO KNOW MORE?

For more tasks, look at P90.

LINKS

New Deal for Musicians has no responsibility for or control of the following sites. The inclusion of any site does not necessarily imply New Deal for Musicians approval of the site. To access any of the sites please type in the address into a browser or search using keywords from the name of the link.
www.dfes.gov.uk/ukonlinecentres Find Internet access that's close to you.
Look at the weblinks in other chapters, particularly those focusing on your chosen instrument.

WHERE TO BUY	SECOND HAND SOURCES
<div><input type="checkbox"/> www.mia.org.uk Music Industries Association – represents businesses selling instruments and associated equipment</div> <div>Look for your local retailer, try www.yell.com. Here are some other suggestions.</div>	<div><input type="checkbox"/> www.loot.co.uk Loot</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> AdMag</div> <div>See also magazines and private ads.</div>
<div><input type="checkbox"/> www.dv247.com Digital Village</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> www.turnkey.co.uk Turnkey</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> www.netzmarkt.de/thomann/thoiw2_index.html Thomann Musikhaus</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> www.dolphinmusic.co.uk Dolphin Music</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> www.gak.co.uk Guitar, Amp & Keyboard Centre</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> www.soundcontrol.co.uk Sound Control</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> www.academyofsound.com Academy of Sound</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> www.dawsonsonline.com Dawsons</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> www.sub.co.uk Red Submarine</div>	<div>INSURANCE</div> <div>This is not an exhaustive list! Search for your own information also.</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> www.musiciansunion.org.uk Musicians Union</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> www.eandl.co.uk E&L insurance</div> <div><input type="checkbox"/> www.musicguard.co.uk Musicguard</div>

BOOKS AND MAGAZINES

- ☐ There are many magazines with equipment reviews and useful adverts in, of which the following are examples:
- Guitar

Rhythm

Keyboard Player

The Mix

Making Music

Sound on Sound – particularly good reviews for pro-audio equipment

Classical Music

The Singer

Future music

Computer Music
- [www.sospubs.co.uk](#)

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NEW DEAL FOR MUSICIANS PERFORMING

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Sound Advice

MU Musicians' Union

MPG Music Producers Guild

AIM Association of Independent Music

PRS Performing Right Society

MCPS Mechanical - Copyright Protection Society

MMF Music Managers Forum

BPI British Phonographic Industry

MPA Music Publishers Association

PPL / VPL Phonographic Performance Limited / Video Performance Limited

MIA Music Industries Association

PAMRA Performing Artists' Media Rights Association

BBC Radio 1

British Music Rights

British Academy of Composers and Songwriters

