

TAKIN' CARE OF BUSINESS

Careers for Pianists: Part One

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Editor's Note: This is the first in a series of three lists of careers in music for the pianist. The checklist below suggests academic routes to prepare for certain careers, but real-world careers, even for performers, most often include working in several capacities—teaching, church or university positions, gigging, and various types of free-lancing.

PERFORMANCE CAREERS

CLASSICAL: SOLO

Requires

- excellent musical ability and technique
- top-notch memorization and performance skills
- large repertoire, including concertos
- a lifetime of dedication
- proficiency in performance practice, music history and theory
- willingness to travel and supplement income in other music fields
- good business skills

Degrees: BM, MM, DMA in Piano

COLLABORATIVE ARTIST/COACH

Requires

All as for solo career, except memorization and concerto repertoire

Special emphasis on

- excellent rhythm
- top-notch sightreading skills
- ability to transpose at sight
- ability to realize figured bass
- language skills (especially Italian, French, German)
- coaching skills
- good business skills

Degrees: BM, MM, DMA, in Piano, Collaborative Arts, Chamber Music

www.nats.org/ National Association of Teachers of Singing

CLASSICAL: CHAMBER MUSIC

Requires

- all as for solo career, except memorization and concerto repertoire
- extensive chamber music repertoire
- excellent sightreading ability
- ability to work well within the chamber music group

www.chamber-music.org Chamber Music America promotes artistic excellence and

economic stability for performers of chamber music

Degrees: BM, MM, DMA in Piano, Chamber Music

CLASSICAL: ORCHESTRA AND OPERA

Requires

- performance requirements as for solo career
 - excellent musical ability and training
 - excellent sightreading ability
 - ability to play piano, harpsichord, celesta
- There is usually one keyboardist per orchestra. This is usually a part-time position.
- Degrees:** BM, MM, DMA in Piano
- <http://icsom.org> International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians

CHURCH MUSICIAN

Requires

- excellent organ skills
- conducting skills
- broad knowledge of sacred literature
- sightreading skills
- ability to harmonize, transpose, and improvise
- organizational skills
- willingness to perform a variety of functions: organist, choir director, hand bell director, youth music director, and director of all church music activities

Degrees: BM, MM, DMA in Sacred Music, Organ Performance, Choral Studies

www.agohq.org American Guild of Organists. Information on AGO

Certification requirements

www.gospelmusic.org Gospel Music Association

RECORDING ARTIST FOR TELEVISION, MOVIES, COMMERCIALS

Requires

- excellent musical ability and training
- willingness to live in New York or Los Angeles
- excellent sightreading ability
- reliable commitment to schedules

Degrees: BM, MM, DMA in Piano, Jazz Piano

www.rmaweb.org/Main/frmain.asp

Recording Musicians Association

www.afm.org/public/home/index.php

American Federation of Musicians

JAZZ

Requires

- ability to read jazz and chord symbols
- strong background in music theory
- ability to improvise
- ability to play in varied jazz styles
- unique, individual style
- a lifetime of dedication
- high standards for technical and musical excellence
- willingness to travel and work non-traditional hours
- good business skills

Degrees: BM, MM, DMA in Piano, Jazz Performance (arranging), Jazz Performance (Instrumental), Jazz Studies, Music Education (Jazz Emphasis)

www.iaje.org International Association for Jazz Education. Excellent links to many jazz areas.

www.apassion4jazz.net/ A Passion for Jazz covers jazz history, commentary, and education

www.artsnet.net/music.htm An arts and entertainment resource with multiple links

ROCK/POP/COUNTRY/WESTERN

Requires

- individuality and artistic vision
- ability to compose
- less rigid standard for technical keyboard excellence can be acceptable
- location (New York, Los Angeles, Nashville)
- willingness to travel and work non-traditional hours

Degrees: High level of musical skill is important, regardless of the types of degree

- A degree is often not necessary

www.reasonatorock.com Historical development of rock. Many good links.

www.scaruffi.com/music.html History of Rock Music. Multiple links

www.songwriters.org/nas2.htm National Academy of Songwriters

www.roughstock.com/history/ Historical development of country music

www.westernmusic.org/index.htm

Western Music Association

www.countrymusic.org Country Music Association