

# **AFRICAN PROFESSIONAL ARTIST HANDBOOK**



**Collin Sserunjogi**

# AFRICAN PROFESSIONAL ARTIST HANDBOOK

Subtitle:

**A practical guide with sustainable and professional best practices in music in East Africa and Africa.**

Author:

**Collin Sserunjogi**

## **Copyright Page**

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## Foreword

In the vibrant rhythm of East Africa’s music scene, navigating the path to professionalism can be as intricate as the melodies that fill the air. Collin Sserunjogi, the maestro behind Cajon Music House and the guiding force of the Academy, a music mentorship programme under CMH has penned a masterpiece – the “African Professional Artist Handbook.” As one of the fortunate souls who found their musical compass within these pages, I can attest that this guide is more than just words; it’s a harmonious journey.

I first met Collin three years ago at a charity music and poetry event in Kampala. He was playing guitar for the show and I had volunteered to sing. This meeting led to us exchanging contacts and subsequently led me to the doors of Cajon Music House. I joined The Academy that March in 2021 expecting voice or instrument classes, what ensued was not just a music class; it was a transformative experience.

During my semester at the Academy, I

**discovered more than just voice classes and instruments – I uncovered what I think is the**

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**essence of being an artist. Collin’s unconventional approach, asking us to delve into our artistic identities from the outset, set the tone for a journey of self-discovery. It was a revelation that laid the foundation for the singer songwriter you know today. These mentorship sessions have led me to my first single, set to debut on January 12, 2024, and my eagerly anticipated EP, “Mitirikpwe!”**

**The "African Professional Artist Handbook” encapsulates crucial themes – from identity and content development to branding, packaging, and the intricacies of the music business. This handbook is more than a guide; it’s a testament to the urgency of elevating the music industry in Uganda and across Africa. Collin’s vision extends beyond the pages, echoing a call for change, professionalism, and sustainability.**

**I have employed every bit of arsenal discussed in the book and continue to do so every single day. I am 10000% a product of these pages and hope that every single person who wishes to practice music but also performing arts professionally, gets a hold of this hand book.**

**As you embark on this literary journey, let the tone befriend you, and the stories within inspire your own narrative of musical evolution. We all**

**have a story to tell and it is important we know how to.**

**Mitirikpwe Patricia**

**Grateful Alumnus, The Academy Musician  
Fellowship by Cajon Music House**

**Class of 2024**

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## Prologue

This is a practical working handbook that has been developed to help an aspiring professional musician/ artist move to the next level with their craft.

By 'aspiring musician' I mean anyone that would like to practice the art of music or any performing arts professionally.

By 'professional' I mean a level or degree at which one can depend entirely on that which they do professionally, and do not have to do other things to secure a living and live a decent sustainable life.

By 'artist/musician,' I mean a person who sings or plays an instrument as an activity. It can also mean anyone in the performing arts, who creates art for the public.

Who is this book made for?

1. Anyone who uses a talent or passion to develop a skill and would like to use this to develop a professional career for themselves.
2. Teachers of the performing arts working at all levels of education.

3. Educational institutions such as Academies, fellowships, universities, and all forms of education programs in the arts.
4. Researchers on topics of art, artist development, music, and general cultural and creative industries.
5. Stakeholders in the performing arts industry who wish to involve themselves with artist development.
6. Anyone who would like to learn about the professional practice of music.
7. Music lovers

Once religiously followed, this handbook will be the savior of your career as a passionate or talented musician in Africa.

The contents of this handbook have been developed from very practical real life scenarios and experiences for developing a professional artist or musician in Africa.

Some of the content of this handbook has been developed from my own experience working on an artist development project called The Academy Musician Fellowship since 2020 and as a musician since 2016.

Through the Academy, we produce 20 to 30 new

professional artists and musicians through this program every year.

The continuous unsustainable and unprofessional practice within the music industry in Uganda where I

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come from, and from Africa as a whole has inspired the need to create this handbook as a point of reference for developing a more professional, developed and sustainable industry.

While developing this hand book, I have consulted with, researched and interviewed several successful professionals in the music industry from all over Africa.

These people include Don Jazzy, Diamond PlatinumZ, Damian Soul, Kenneth Mugabi, Patricia Mitirikpwe, Micheal Ouma, Sewa Sewa of Janzi, Julius Kyazze, Muthoni Drummer Queen and others.

## **Acknowledgements**

Special thanks to the people who gave me feedback on the book when I asked, these include artists and friends.

I would like to appreciate all the musicians and music lovers that believe in themselves and have continued to live by the dream of becoming successful. These have clearly contributed to all the contents of this book, for it is also written for them, and from their experiences and their journeys.

My friends, the Erimus, with whom I stayed while writing this book, have provided me with the infrastructure, support, resources and love to help me write this book without much trouble. I am proud of them as my family.

Musicians and work partners Patricia Mitirikpwe, Bronson Mwanje and others have encouraged me and believed in me to write this book.

## **MODULE ONE**

### **PERSONALITY IDENTITY**

In 2022, I visited the British Council in Kampala to attend a masterclass for artists in performing arts. Miss Suzan Kerunen of Pearl Rhythm Foundation in Kampala was facilitating and she tasked each of the participants to write down three words that described who they were.

This was one of those few times when I had absolutely nothing to think about or say. I had never thought about 'who I was' and 'what described me' or even what my real values were and even why and how I was doing what I was doing.

The next new quest was then to ask myself these questions;

- a) Who am I?
- b) Where do I come from?
- c) What are my real desires?
- d) What are my true fears and dreams?

Much as I did not get the answers there and then, I had started on a very important journey of discovering who I was and what drove me. My

realizations since then have been a great tool to not only justify my actions, but also inspire me to do even more with my work.

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More good news is that while I am still on my endless search of ultimate self-discovery, I am so far quite sure about the following;

- (1) I love people: I am passionate about people's activities.
- (2) I love to be busy- I am always looking to work on something.
- (3) I love creating comfort.

I recently discovered that I tend to be restless. I am always trying to do something, otherwise I will become very bored. So I will wake up and shower or do the dishes, but while doing the dishes, I think about making breakfast and go ahead to do it before even finishing the dishes. To me this satisfies my heart and enables me to hone stuff going on in my life almost all the time. I have since tended to take this on to the large scale level where at Cajon on Music House, we have several projects happening at the same time, yet they require different needs. At some time, we had to have several events on one September weekend for the first time. I have however learned to live with this and to be content with all of it, especially once I learned that it is in my

own nature to be restless.

I have therefore learnt to be more organized and be able to plan much earlier so that even when I have

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things happening at the same time, they have all been preplanned and turn out smoothly.

So at Cajon Music House, we spend a whole month (January) planning the stuff we shall be doing the entire next year. I actually have an intact five years in advance planned so that I do not get distracted.

How do you make judgments about yourself that are not biased or over generalized?

I tend to look at how I have been living my life in the past and what my priorities have always been. I also look at what I would choose or do in the future and as long as I fall more to one side than the other, I know exactly what I love.

You have to be very genuine with yourself because you do not have to do this with the intention of sharing it with anyone. It is entirely for you to understand yourself.

In fact, I don't have to share it with anyone once I find out about myself. All my findings are very personal to help me understand one person; **ME**. Once you understand YOU very well, you are able

to honestly make decisions that are in line with your own satisfaction.

However, the findings are not all entirely positive, some make the worst of us or the best of us. It is still entirely up to us to ignore the destructive parts of our

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identity and instead embrace the constructive and positive ones.

I don't believe in talent as much as I believe in humility and hard work.

Because I work in talent management and development, this is a dangerous statement for me to make. However, for me, it encourages talented people to work hard and discourages laziness and more importantly it is what I believe in whether it's true or not.

**To know who you are and what you believe in helps you easily set your priorities, goals and objectives.**

At the Academy Musician Fellowship: -

The first masterclass and workshops for our participating musicians are under the themes of identity and personality. Participants determine their personal values, missions, goals and purpose in life

through exploring their identities in both contemporary and traditional ways. They are encouraged to dig deep into their personalities and give reasons for their actions especially through participating in music.

In the 2023 Cohort, the organizational psychologist and friend of mine Micah Eiku took members through

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personality tests and also advised them to justify their so-called identities.

It gives me a lot of relief when I can justify my actions through who I think I am and what I believe in. I will always organize public events and concerts because I love people and feel so proud to see people together having fun.

I love to be busy and that is maybe why I am occupying my time with writing this book or organizing more than twenty events a year even when it is very stressful and creates gigantic financial responsibilities.

I will always make sure there are different options on things for people to choose their comfort even when it is not necessary because I love creating comfort. I am always asking if people are alright and if I can do more to make them feel comfortable in the spaces they are in.

## **Facts about identity.**

Identity encompasses the memories, experiences, relationships and values that create one's sense of self.

Even as new facets are developed and incorporated into one's identity, the above process creates a steady sense of who one is over time.

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According to Wikipedia, identity is the qualities, beliefs, personality traits, appearance and or expressions that characterize a person or a group. Wikipedia continues and states that identity emerges during childhood as children start to comprehend their self-concept, and that it remains a consistent aspect throughout different stages of life.

Nigerian web developer Ikechi Awazie published a blog post on her website named 'ten things you didn't know about your sense of identity':

Three of these were:

- 1) Your identity controls your actions.
- 2) What gives you joy and pain is related to your true sense of identity.
- 3) It is not easy to find your identity.

Find more on the website ([awazieikechi.com](http://awazieikechi.com)) Trying

to validate your identity from others will end up destroying your identity and social media can affect your sense of identity.

Having an identity can give you a sense of belonging which is important to your wellbeing and confidence.

Some people believe that everything they do – from the choices they make to the decisions they avoid – stem from how they see themselves in the world or how they choose to be involved within the environment around them.

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### **Personal identity Vs Social Identity.**

Personal identity is who we believe ourselves to be. It addresses the question, “Who Am I?” It involves our own decisions or interests and some elements we can’t control such as families and race. However, social identity is how others perceive us. People recognize us by our characteristics within our communities, career, workplace or school. Society will identify each person from these characteristics, then place the individual in a collective group with others that share these characteristics.

### **The Identity Crisis:**

This is a time when an individual experiences

uncertainty, confusion and even anxiety about their sense of self.

Learning about different identities and ways of being, interacting with many different people, considering how cultural and family norms affect a person's identity and seeking support from trusted loved ones or a therapist are some ways to overcome the identity crisis.

### **How do you form identity?**

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Society.

Our identity is influenced long before we are born. Our society has already begun shaping one's identity through years of categorization and labeling based on traits and expected behaviors.

Many of these broad traits are based on appearances such as gender and skin color. Others include ethnicities, religious, financial and social statuses. Society can act as a positive and negative force on our identity.

Family and Loved ones.

Our families and loved ones have a very significant impact on our identity formation. We consciously and subconsciously look to our parents, siblings and extended family members for the building blocks of

our identity formation. This influence is however a two-way street as we learn and develop an identity. This is because we also influence their identities as we grow together.

Through Romantic and Platonic relationships. We can gain and lose traits both positive and negative characteristics – that become hallmarks of our identities. These relationships can also positively and negatively influence important facets of our self concept, such as causing us to lose interest in things

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that we enjoy or fall out of touch with our religious or cultural attachments.

Other elements that shape our identity are;

- Ethnicity, Race & Culture.
- Location and opportunities.
- Media.
- Personal interests.
- Appearance and self-expression
- Life experiences

You can read more about these from the website {ystudios.com} by Y Studios LLC

## Questions

After reading and understanding this chapter, take time to answer these questions genuinely. While you can write short answers in this handbook in the spaces provided, it is advisable that you get a separate notebook to make detailed points and answers that you can refer to.

### (1) Who are you?

(Write three special words that describe you)

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Do you know who you really are in terms of where you come from, your ethnicity, family background, interests, life experiences, community in which you were born, where you exist now, your personal interests.

### (2) Why does practicing music matter to you?

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Do you know why you want to or already are practicing music?

Ground yourself in understanding what matters to you as a musician or as a human being. This will be the foundation for what you do, how you make decisions and what you decide.

**(3) What are your personal and professional goals?**

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You probably have a variety of goals for your practice of music

e.g.

- Diversity sources of income.
- Engage people, build experiences

- Make positive contributions.
- Form new connections
- Expand your ideas.
- Envision/build new futures in music.
- Develop Portfolio
- Share creative practice with a wider audience. • Learn new skills

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## **MODULE TWO**

### **YOUR CRAFT IDENTITY**

#### **Facts about content**

Developing your craft/music for yourself is one of the most important aspects that require close scrutiny and urgency for you as an aspiring and or professional artist/musician.

Your craft development requires a lot of work and typically involves a number of different channels. A content strategy is key to making sure that work pays off.

By committing time to the early stages of developing a content strategy with research, you can make sure all the work you put into content marketing is targeted at the right audience, addresses the things

you and your audience care about and will help you achieve the specific goals you want to get from others.

These specific steps always help to create a content strategy for you as an artist.

Once you are ready to commit to your craft development strategy, these are the main steps to follow to create a content development strategy for yourself as an artist.

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- I. Clarify your goals; you shall then know where to focus your efforts and how to measure success.

Example, if you want to build relationships and loyalty, then aiming to build a following on social media and with your email lists may take precedence.

**Question**

What do you want to accomplish with your content?

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II. Define your audience; while one may argue that they create content or write songs for everyone and all ages and gender, this is only true to a certain level.

You need to define an ideal audience for your content, which will guarantee good communication. Great content is ultimately all about communication.

Take time to look at your current customers for this step,

Ask yourself questions like;

Who are my customers?

.....

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What do they like about you?

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. What are their interests and concerns?

.....

. What do they have in common?

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Set up interviews with your fans and find out what types of content they like and learn more about their habits.

This may all come off as unnecessary or out of

context, however, knowing your audience would optimize your reach and eventually help you characterize and monetize your craft much easier.

### III. Determine your budget:

How much content you develop and the quality of its output will be dependent on your budget. Whether it is the cost of time to develop your songs and repertoires or it is how much studio time you need or session musicians, producers, video directors, you need to determine what it will cost you to anticipate the possibilities.

Whether you have the money or not, it is still important to note what it shall cost you.

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Additionally, whether you are getting the services for free or paying in kind, you may need to attach a monetary or any quantitative value to your content. This will later help you determine what price to put on your content and plan what it will cost you for your future content development.

### IV. Do your Research.

While you need to do research on your audience, it is even more important to research about the styles of your content, different artists with whom you have

similar content characteristics who exist locally, regionally and internationally. This will definitely give you insight into how they run their things.

Qn. Who are artists you identify with locally, regionally and internationally that you can pick a leaf from?

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Note that there are always artists and content that you can identify with who are more successful than you are and you can learn from them. If you still think that there is no other artist with content similar to yours, you are probably wrong.

V. Decide what resources you have and what you need. Once you have done enough research to have a good idea on what your audience responds to and what you identify yourself with, think about what you need to create/develop your content.

You might need a songwriter, producer, instrumentalist to be able to write a new song or album. You probably also need studio time and a producer to produce your song.

OR

Do you need a band to work on your new playlist? Maybe you need backup vocalists and a band room to rehearse from.

Maybe you need your own band room, studio or band to have a more consistent playlist development. Do you need a musician to write a new song with, or do you need a voice coach to match the level of vocal requirements for your style of music?

Maybe you need to learn to play the guitar to write your own songs!

**Question**

What are the most important skills, people and infrastructure you need to create your next project?

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In case you are not able to answer the above

question satisfactorily, I have dedicated another whole chapter in this handbook to address this, so read on.

## VI. Create a Calendar.

Kindly take all the ideas floating around in your head and put them into a clear organized timeline. You can call this your craft calendar.

Assigning clear dates/months for each piece of content is an important step in going from idea to execution. We all know how deadlines push us harder to achieve goals. Making calendars will help you stay consistent which is crucial for content development.

Say I shall write a complete song every month. I shall learn 3 (three) new songs every week. I shall practice a new song on guitar ever week and or I shall release my new song eg. On my birthday.

## VII. **Create a content promotion plan.**

Some people overlook how important it is to promote and update the audience or world about their

content. Sharing your craft on social media including your craft creation process will help the audience feel more connected to you. Set some of the goals

through social media and be accountable as you reach your set date.

#### VIII. Get started.

Just get to work and start creating that new album. Start writing that song now. I know about the '5 second Rule' by Mel Robbin. I sometimes close my eyes, count to five and then do whatever it is that I want to do, and it works.

It will not be easy but once you start, you will figure it out.

#### IX. Measure and Improve.

As you start and continue to develop your content, all you need to know is that it will not be the best song you write, sing or play. The only way to get better is to keep doing it by measuring, asking yourself, friends, recording and listening, practicing, consistently rehearsing, doing vocal drills, doing online lessons, and master classes while continuing to work on your content. It will greatly improve in a very short time. And everyone will notice.

#### X. Keep going.

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Once you write your first song, do your first concert performance or release your debut album, all you

need to do is keep it up. Keep inspiring others, making money and living your best life as a Professional Artist/musician.

Your craft development can be all of the above mentioned ideas and more. All you have to take from this chapter is that you have to have a plan to develop content and be committed to it.

This way you shall stay relevant and grow so much PROFESSIONALLY

## PROCRASTINATION

When it comes to creating your craft/music, I have been the biggest victim of procrastination. Since my university days, I have always wanted to write a song about my sister; simply a song about the love I had for my younger sister. Once I felt ready, I wrote my first verse with a friend within minutes. Now very excited about releasing my first song, I set out to write the second verse, bridge and chorus during the next free time I would get. It has now been nine years; I have never been able to finish up the song. I feel so bad about the fact that my sister is now even much older and might not like the song once I finish it. Additionally, I have tried to write a specific album (I won't say the details because I still want to write it and I know it is a brilliant idea) for now three

years, it is on my new year's resolution list, but it is now October of this year and I didn't write a single song for that Album.

The action of delaying or postponing something AKA procrastination is what we all must strive to avoid if we want to get something accomplished. Sometimes minding the details, or trying to achieve perfection does not matter.

Thinking about the elements I have written in the previous pages, I actually know exactly what to do to develop that content and change the world as I think of these unfinished projects.

The musician Patricia Mitirikpwe set a goal to write a full song every month for seven months. This led to her debut EP named after her name "Mitirikpwe" which actually means "I couldn't imagine" in her language. She couldn't imagine herself even writing a single song before she set the goal while attending The Academy Musician Fellowship in 2021

and now the world jams to her songs.

**Questionnaire:**

**What are your professional goals?**

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Having and keeping your goals in mind while developing your craft is an essential part of your practice. It will help you stay connected to and invested in your work.

**What does your craft bring to the audience/community?**

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It is important to understand what you have to offer to your community as it is to understand what you gain.

**What and who do you need to develop your craft?**

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**What are your timelines?**

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You should be able to determine when and in how long you will create your craft.

## MODULE THREE

### TOOLS

This chapter explores what a professional artist needs in terms of physical tools and human resources to be able to achieve those goals. So many people know what they want but do not know what they need to get what they want. At the end of this chapter, you should be in the position to get started.

With your consistent development because you will know exactly what you need and how to get around it.

So, whether you are trying to become a professional guitar player, a vocalist or a regional superstar, you need to know exactly what you need.

I will classify the tools needed to develop your professional career in music into three different categories.

- Category one will be about making you the

right kind of artist.

To be a certified professional Artiste, you need the following:

### **1) Training/Education.**

While formal education may not be required to become a professional artiste, it is advantageous to take any form of education in music. This can be just a masterclass in your desired field, private lessons, YouTube tutorials, a fellowship or residency, or just **reading this book**. Any form of acquiring knowledge that you can use is a very important tool on your journey.

When I asked the Ugandan soul singer Kenneth Mugabi about what his most important aspect of his success was, he said that one needs to know what they are doing. He mentioned that he knew exactly what he was doing because he went to school and studied a course in Music, dance and drama at Makerere University.

Knowledge is power in so many aspects, it will save you a lot of effort and time once you make it a point to seek it. While education is one of the most precious commodities, it is also one of the most affordable. Education may sometimes simply mean, consulting with someone who has done what you are trying to do, before.

## **2) Assemble a Portfolio.**

A portfolio in visual art is a sample of your artistic work. For performance art, you need to put together an EPK (Electronic Press Kit). This is a document or folder that can include your biography, discography, music links, playlists, photos, videos, social media links, technical riders and more. It is a one document that tells everything about you and your works. To put it in a simple way, gather everything that you need people to know about you as an artist.

Send me an email at [thecmhacademy@gmail.com](mailto:thecmhacademy@gmail.com) to get a free sample of the EPK.

## **3) Gain Work Experience.**

Make it a point to find places to play or practice your craft and eventually have something to put in your Electronic Press Kit (EPK). This may mean playing free shows just to get content. I have over the years got a lot of resistance from people around me, whenever I talk about playing free shows or offering free services. From my point of view, you need your experience right, you need to be worth the money first because once you are worth the money you are asking for, it will be easy. Before professionals like doctors, architects or teachers start getting paid for work, they invest in years of education, then they have to carry out internships to get professional

experiences. Most of these internships are not paid if you must know.

So just like all other professionals, you have to be ready to do an internship in the real world.

#### **4) Join an Association: -**

By joining a legitimate trade association in your industry such as Uganda Performing Rights Society for Uganda, COSOTA for Tanzania or SAMRO and SAMPRA in South Africa is another necessary tool to guarantee your professional status as an artist. You may not be actively engaged in these associations but still have existence in them.

You should note that trade associations are different from Record labels and musician collectives. You can be a part of all these especially while starting out because you will be visible and shall easily identify as a professional artist.

'Many artistes get visa recommendations from Uganda musicians association' said Mr Geoffrey Ekongot from Uganda Musicians Association when I met him in 2023 at ACCES Music in Africa in Dar Es salaam.

You can also simply join a larger group of musicians in the form of a collective or organization such as CMH Live or Kitara Nation and Ladu Poetry House for poets in Uganda, or Firebase. Remember, you

do not have to be officially signed to be a part of some of

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these cliques and collectives. You just have to hang around them.

- The second classification of the tools needed for a professional Artist is:

### **Human Resources.**

Here is a list of some of the people you will need as a professional musician.

Record Producers  
Career employees.  
Musicians  
Fellow artistes  
Influencers  
Tour  
Managers  
Investors  
Concert promoters  
Promoters  
Music lovers  
Venue Owners

**Physical things you need as a professional artiste:**

1) A band room or a personal music room. This in my opinion is the single most important physical resource for sustainable development of professional artists in East Africa.

This space can even just have a couch and a single guitar; it will help you get time to be Alone and create your craft. You shall also get time to rehearse and also co-create with your colleagues when you invite them over.

In fact, it does not have to be a music room – If you are not trying to be a producer or a band. However, you need that space where you can privately create your craft whenever you can, conveniently. .

**2) You need your instrument.**

In addition to the room, you need a guitar if you are trying to be a guitar player, a keyboard for keyboardist, band equipment for a band. It becomes so hard if you have to hire a saxophone or violin for you to practice every time. I may have captured it in the previous chapter and I won't worry about capturing this even in the subsequent chapters.

**3) You need your schedule with you.** Your

calendar/schedule can have ideas like when do you release or when you work on your things and the deadlines.

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This also reminds me of your Playlists/Repertoires which you need to keep updating as you rehearse.

## **SKILLS**

A professional artist needs every kind of skill that they can get their hands on. John Cena speaks Mandarin (Chinese) and Aliddeki Brian, a world musician from Uganda knows how to make the bow harp (Adungu)

While you may not speak Chinese or know how to construct the bow harp, you need all kinds of skills that can make you stand out with your performances or give you an advantage to trade those skills for some sort of service.

Playing an instrument as a singer is one simple thing to start with. It is not so easy to learn how to play a musical instrument, but a singer who plays an instrument has a much easier edge when it comes to their practice.

Some artists can use DAW software to produce their own music, while other artists are great at graphics design or social media marketing. You can make a list of skills you may be able to develop

overtime on top of your own already existing skills that can help you on your journey.

Towards the end of 2019, I signed a contract with one producer friend to produce an eleven track

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compilation album that I always badly wanted to create. According to the deal, I was supposed to pay a certain amount of money every month for the period the album was to be recorded. I was excited, I posted on my social media. The compilation album had the perfect name: 'My House Your House; and all the artists on the album were ready with the songs written. The source of the income was to be from my teaching job and I was excited and confident.

We recorded the first song in January of the New Year and we were very excited. However, by February 2020, I had been laid off from my job and was back home in the village doing nothing just like almost half of the rest of the world. COVID-19 had halted the dream of this compilation album. One month later, I asked myself a question, what if I had to produce this album myself.

What would I need to do this?

The compilation album was released in 2021 with all 11 tracks and 10 of them produced by myself. I

taught myself how to produce music and I was able to create the compilation album plus over one hundred other songs that I produced for young artists in Kampala during COVID times.

The compilation album “My House Your House” is available for streaming at [ugatunes.com](http://ugatunes.com)

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### **Soft skills.**

Your soft skills are perhaps the most important item you need as an artist to survive in this super competitive world.

When I typed in “*skills for a singer*” on the famous Google search engine, I was surprised to have my answers in this order as:

1. Self-confidence
2. Communication and interpersonal skills
3. Musicality.

### **Network with other musicians.**

Embrace collaboration with other artists to expand your content and reach more people. So many artists today are their emergence on the scene to their collaborations with other artists from anywhere in the world.

### **Communication**

What I want to highly encourage here is

communication and interpersonal skills. Without these, one's professional career is doomed. This applies in every aspect of life, from sports to medicine. Even with a high level of expertise and skill in everything else, without good interpersonal skills and communication, whatever you have can only take you so far.

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These soft skills have a lot to do with human behavior and appropriate ethics. Communication stands out in this case because being able to communicate effectively at all levels guarantees highly positive results. It doesn't matter what your message may be but an effort to make the message to be effectively delivered is very important. This cuts across the lyrics of your music to your social media communication and to your audience engagement during a live performance. Effective communication is required with and among fellow musicians, producers, managers and very importantly, clients/fans.

It is capital to understand the prevailing situations and conditions as you communicate with your subjects.

Note that it is not an easy task to communicate and that the right communication sometimes may require much more than being sane and having positive feedback. In some cases you may require a person

to handle your public relations on a complex level, however you need your own great communication skills with you all the time.

One of the ways you as an artist may achieve great interpersonal skills is by first being sane or in a great mental state.

Damian Soul, the Tanzanian artiste has to speak to himself in the mirror every morning to be mentally fit.

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“I speak to myself in the mirror for at least three minutes every day,” said Damian Soul when I asked him how one can maintain consistency as an artist. This was during the ACCES music in Africa conference in Dar es salaam in 2023. “I sing the song Hakuna Matata to myself” which translates ‘no worry’ Damian says he is a Christian who reads the book of Proverbs in the Bible. He found a line in which he found solace. “Life and death lie in the power of the tongue” that is why he speaks to himself to keep sane.

### **Questions:**

What skills do you need to develop in the next 12

months so that you can achieve your professional development goals?

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What skills do you hold that you think are valuable for your music career development?

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What skills do you already have that you can trade for your professional development?

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Where can you go or which people do you need to advance your next goal?

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What tools do you need to develop EPK?

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**MODULE FOUR**

**YOUR CRAFT DEVELOPMENT**

You must question yourself, (The Business of Expertise by David C. Becker)

“What are 20 things that I know that people would pay me for?”

You need to define a structure, outline different elements, research and put your content out there.

What can you do anytime, all the time as an artist?

What’s your craft strategy/plan?

A lot of such questions must come to you when you think about craft development.

What is the best song I can play anytime of the day?

If I have this one song, how am I promoting this one song everywhere and at every chance I get? Does everybody know that I can play this song so well?

How many different ways can I play this song?  
Who have I partnered with to play this song?  
Can I be the best in town at this song?

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If all of the above questions and more can be answered by yourself in a positive way, then you can move on to the next song.

Craft development is also more about how one can maximize what they know how to do well. This will usually help them become experts at that thing and most importantly get used to the process of developing content and maximizing the ways through which the craft may be consumed.

Kindly answer this question before moving on;

What the one thing I am so good at and can do any time?

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Once the above question is answered to a satisfactory altitude, move on to the next questions.

- How many great songs can I do?
- How long can I play very well?
- How many poems do I write?
- What is my original craft list like?
- What's my craft development strategy? •  
How many songs, albums, EPs do I have?

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- How can things be different in six months?

## **Connection**

Does it matter if you risk rejection for a chance of connection as an artist? It should be part of who you are to strive to achieve connection with the people and therefore, this chapter is more about being determined enough to put out whatever you have created in whichever form and to keep sharing that until you get the holy grail of artistry, "**Connection**".

According to Luther Mallory during a TEDX Conference, connection is how you make it as an

artist. Millions of cash, fame and influence are all a result of connection.

However, the work here is for you as an artist to be able put out craft that exclusively represents who you truly are:

The good news is that for whatever feeling you have to expose as an artist, there are millions of people in the world who will connect with you. How you make it as an artist is through connection, which is being understood.

To develop your craft is simply to make the decision to put out content. People write three minutes' songs and those songs go on to influence over a billion members of this planet.

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How do I really start developing my own content and tell my story if I have never done this before?

As I write this down, I just got off the phone with a colleague who asked me what I was up to and I told him that I planned to attend a music conference in the coming week but I had no cash for the trip.

He told me that all it takes is an idea, then when it is genuine. Share it with some people, ask for help and you will see it come to pass.

We all know the cliché "it all starts with an idea" phrase. However, it takes repetition and the right

timing to get sense out of these common sayings and statements.

So why not start with your own idea of what you think your content should look like, then write it down. The American artist Tom Sachs says that when you write something down, it becomes more real. So let's write that tune, or song down on paper. Write the lyrics as they come to you. Play those chords or write the story on paper. Once written, it is already a tangible piece of art even before you realize it.

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## **MODULE FIVE**

### **BRAND AND PACKAGING**

This is a special chapter, it is as special as the first chapter, in fact I believe it will mostly be re-echoing the elements of the first chapter but in a more precise way.

Just not to confuse you, I will get right into it.

This chapter is the most valuable content that an

artist needs to ensure their success.

A BRAND is simply what makes you unique as an artist, this is the single most important thing for any kind of art. While science is based on facts and numbers, your brand is exactly how you will be able to show your uniqueness. Your branding simply communicates value.

It is believed that people are either underrated and underpaid or overrated and overpaid and you might always fall to one of these sides in almost everything. If you are overrated and overpaid, good for you and congratulations.

If you feel underpaid and or underrated, it is because you do not communicate your value and this can be done through simply branding yourself.

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The next big question might be; - how do you define what your brand is? Or how do you make your brand stand out?

The answer will be simple and straight forward.

**Have a Narrative.** A Narrative is simply a story.

When you think about any musician that you like, let's say Michael Jackson. A story comes to mind immediately, we get images of this artist and their entire story. Now that's a narrative.

We think about their character, what they look like, their beliefs, family story even before we think about their music.

Now for you, is it your image or your name? Is it your fashion sense or your strong stand against corruption that people know you for? This has to be something that people can relate with and also clearly understand well. They should at least relate with your sense of fashion; your role here is to boldly communicate your brand.

I always have conversations with artists about their names and what their names mean to them. Sometimes people take it too far to explain what their names mean to them or how they can't change their names. Other artists also normally think that changing or not changing their names is all they have to do about branding themselves. I must say that the name is far too small an element of branding. Great brands have stupid names or any random names but

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we might still clearly know their values and bold character.

### **It has to be real**

While we think about branding, it is very crucial that “**Authenticity**” is attached to your brand from the

beginning. The more real you are to your brand the easier it will be to develop content and the more unique you will be. Be ready to show who you are, what you stand for, your passions, and stay true to your sound. Representing your music and making craft that you genuinely love will take you a long way as an artist.

I have worked with a very talented friend throughout my entire music involvement who is so talented that he could write a song within every fifteen minutes for twelve hours straight.

When he sings these songs, some of the songs do not come out as great as others according to the topics of the songs. He sings about love which he does not believe in and when he performs these songs, you can clearly see that he is struggling with meaning the lyrics of the songs and therefore not representing his values and brand. He ends up being disconnected from the music he performs and people who love the music he sings.

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Kevin Hart, who has become one of the most successful comedians and movie stars represents himself genuinely in most of the films he appears in when he takes on characters that are almost like himself. I approve of this because I read his book and I can see a lot of his life stories in the films he acts in. At the end of the day, he is genuinely and

authentically representing his own brand which makes it easy for us his fans to relate but even easier for him to continuously and effortlessly create content and craft.

**Build a relationship with your audience;** - make your audience understand and relate with you as part of your brand.

It is not very wise to think that one's content is made for every kind of audience. As an artist you need to strive to identify a special interest group in your content. Once you have achieved this aspect, strive to develop your brand around your audience and build a long lasting and trustworthy relationship with them.

Your audience probably likes your music because of the fusion of culture and traditional instruments in your music. Be bold about your love for culture and continue to create content consistently that serves that purpose.

For your brand, it doesn't have to only be a name or face. You might be a music producer who doesn't

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have to use your face, you may use elements such as graphics, art like comics. As long as this is consistent, you will be guaranteed of a successfully developed brand.

A really cool canvas or graphics may take your

brand a long way. It may be one of the ways people communicate with you. Spotify recently introduced Spotify canvas where artists can use the service and create great content.

Big record labels used to solicit engagement from fans on the canvas through hiding Easter eggs and offering prizes to fans who could find treasures in the canvas and this was a brilliant way to engage fans in the brand itself.

An artist for their brand must consider visuals as well. Visuals are not necessarily videos, they may be images, art, fashion or anything for eyes that can be attached to the artist alongside their music.

### **Without a brand you are replaceable.**

It is bad news but the truth we need to hear. Without a strong brand you are replaceable. You are simply like any other singer without a brand.

In live performances, so many impeccable singers are lowered down to simply vocalists because they did not have any outstanding brands. They ended up

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being known as members of a performing band, yet they could have been announced by their artist name.

Branding simply sells value.

If you do your branding before you market, you will sell ten times faster. I did not believe this the first time I heard the statement but I now believe it wholeheartedly.

Once you brand, you shall be able to hyper target an audience and market which takes your music to the right market and therefore making you sell much faster.

Some of the steps you can take to brand efficiently and effectively as an artiste are here;

- **Choose archetypes.**

Archetypes are typical examples of a certain person or thing. This will help you identify yourself for the audience you are marketing to hence classifying yourself for your brand.

Examples of archetypes you can choose for your brand include;

The Hero, magician, ruler, the mentor, the everyman, the creator and many others.

You can read more about these archetypes anywhere on the internet.

- **Choose a color/brand color.**

Your message and what you stand for may be represented with color in surprisingly interesting ways. There are also numerous color chats and

feelings that can make a lot of sense in case you want to check them out on the internet.

I will share with you what I found on the internet; this below is the color emotion guide as developed in color psychology by German poet and artist Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe in 1810.

Yellow - Optimism, Clarity, Warmth  
Orange - Friendly cheerful, confidence  
Red - Excitement, Youthful, Bold  
Purple - Creative, Imaginative, Wise  
Blue - TRUST, Dependable, Strength  
Green - Peaceful, Growth, Health.  
Grey - BALANCE, Neutral, calm.

Further and detailed information is available about color psychology which may be helpful in branding yourself especially when you identify with who you are.

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Choose your message and what you stand for. This goes back to who you are.

Branding sets you apart from everyone else, you shall simply stand out ... One of the things that turn off people the most is when they do not know anything about someone or something.

They will become very uncomfortable when they have no idea about what's happening, who is addressing them or what time it is. It is therefore very important to always brand yourself in the beginning and give people a chance to know who you are and what you are up to. Brand before you market and you shall clearly see the difference.

Branding is the first thing a record label does when they sign a new artist. Do you ever wonder why these labels with all the resources choose to brand an artist first, they care about and highlight what an artist looks like, does, stands for and everything else?

### **Your branding can change overtime.**

Be willing to rebrand yourself or go back to the drawing board. This may be because you started off on a wrong footing or you need to go to the next level, or have new content as an artist.

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There might be several stages of an artist branding, but 'Brandman Sean' on YouTube classifies artist's stages into the following four;

- **Unknown artist**
- **Known**
- **Saturated/supers for**

## • **Mysterious**

Brandman Sean suggests that any unknown artist should strive to move to known rather than saturated. He mentions that there might be a few instances where an artist may start from mysterious but these are occasions that may need to be highly scrutinized and must have big budgets. He suggests that from a superstar, one may turn mystique, which means that they can make effortless non self-announced appearances for impactful and meaningful projects.

Every artist should strive to move up the ladder and branding in this case is an extremely vital tool to ensure success and moving up the ladder. Unknown artists should always strive to become known.

## **Branding is hard work.**

Branding may sometimes feel uncalled for, however not branding is not exploiting yourself fully as an artist. The good news is that you always have an artist brand within yourself.

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Your craft that is available and what is waiting to be brought to life has a character that you can build on.

You simply have to identify your audience, identify your brand, communicate your brand and remain

consistent.

It is important to identify your audience because, if your music is not suited for anybody, then that's not right. Knowing your audience will help you not try to appeal to other people who may not be your audience. You cannot communicate without knowing both your brand and your audience, so consider how you behave in relation to your audience and your brand.

This list below identifies some of the things you can start working on once you are ready to develop your brand;

**Values;** 3 things you believe.

**Biography:** This can be your background. **Audience description.**

It is important to identify some characteristics of your audience; are they social media people, what is their main type of social media and so forth.

**Fashion brands.** This may be the simplest or most complex feature about your branding, it has to be determined however.

**Logos:** These can include typography and more.

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**Colors:** Referring to color psychology.

**Taglines:** These can be representative of your values or just for fun.

**Ask yourself and answer the questions below:**

(1) How do I describe myself in 3 words or sentences?

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. (2) Why do I make music?

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(3) Where do I want to be in 5 years?

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(4) What do I want people to feel when they listen to my music?

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## **MODULE SIX**

### **THE MUSIC BUSINESS**

#### **How to develop money making strategies?**

How does an artist achieve sustainability from their practice of music?

The answer to this is a mystery among several musicians and artists, an artist may spend all their music career without ever realizing something; something that everyone must keep in mind as long as they are in the professional music practice.

This is the one thing that will create a big change in your perspective on music, it will open your eyes and help you exhaust the opportunities that lie within your practice.

This one truth will make your practice much smoother and will save you a lot of time. It will help you become more effective and ensure that your impact can be wide and effective.

This one truth shall set you free from a lot of your anxiety, myths about the practice and even get your family and friends to like you. You will have much more free time and shall be able to support and hangout with your friends and family.

The truth is; **'Music can be a business.** Note that I have not said what I wanted to actually say, **'Music is a Business'** While the latter may not be entirely true according to some people, the first statement is 110% true and must be stamped on to the hearts of those that are practicing music.

My elder brother Nicholas keeps telling me that whenever I get some money, I should invest it in buying a plot of land, that since he is in the real estate business himself, he will ensure I get the best deals and make profit shortly afterwards.

He keeps calling me 'silly' whenever he learns that I got money and didn't invest in his safe and lucrative real estate business. So, why have I not invested in this lucrative and safe business every time I get some money even with an inside person who would make sure I get the best deals? Why do I keep investing it back in my music practice and even when I may not make much profits but rather losses?

The reason here is because I think music is my business and it is where I choose to invest. It is another story why I am not making much profit. In fact just to answer this, it is because I needed to equip myself with entrepreneurship and business management skills or hire business managers to help me operate with business strategies. I at least knew that I was in the music not only for passion but also for business.

This has been my position for some time now and it is greatly helping me make big strides with mind blowing business ideas in the music business which will eventually soon guarantee big pay cheques.

I may not be the best example for music business success right now but Diamond Platinumz, the artist from Tanzania is.

Diamond Platinumz has successfully built an entire ecosystem around the music industry for his home country Tanzania and the entire African continent. With the WCB record label, Mr Platinumz has made some of the most successful musicians in East Africa such as Rayvanny, Harmonise, Mbosso, Zuchu and himself. His investments have now stretched into sports betting, media and transport creating economic sustainability around him.

My heart is filled with joy whenever I learn that so many of the music executives and entrepreneurs on the African continent were once or are still talented musicians.

In Uganda, one of the institutions I am so proud of is Ndere Cultural Centre in Kampala. Owned and operated by cultural activist Mr Rwangezi Stephen has created a highly sustainable business in the form of a space to experience culture to the fullest. Stephen performs music with hundreds of other

young musicians at the center at least three times a week

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but also makes appearances with his cultural music troupes all over the world. The center he founded in 1986 as a cultural organization for universal unity through music, dance and drama is a space for music development and has served music lovers in so many different ways.

Away from big investments, for anyone to be able to afford a decent economically safe livelihood through their practice of music, it is an important step to build a sustainable business in music. It can take more than five years for an African artist to make enough money to pay their basic needs from music. However talented they may be, they need a serious and consistent business strategy to achieve this.

The good news is that you don't have to be immensely talented or even popular to start making a living from your craft. All you need is a business strategy or plan.

Once equipped with a working business plan, an artist will be unstoppable and will have a guarantee on making a living from music.

**Setting smart financial goals** is one of the most important elements of your business plan as an

artist. You can get my sample business plan for an artist in Africa if you send an email asking for it here (thecmhacademy@gmail.com)

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You must remember that **basic business management skills** are required to ensure success with a business. These business management skills are not necessarily acquired from school, but through simply casual but reasonable thought. A ten-year-old child may have enough business management skills to make money out of something.

You simply need to think of your practice as a good or service, then identify the demand (anyone who likes music) which is literally the whole world. Next, you need to identify how you exchange the good or service for something else that you want. I am quite sure that as long as someone likes music, they will be much willing to give something for it. If five year olds know how to negotiate with their parents when they ask to watch more TV if they do the dishes earlier or ask for an ice cream when they make good grades in class.

It's all about knowing what the other person needs, what you can offer, and what you will exchange for it.

The idea is that you should be able to ask for something in return and get that person to commit

before you deliver.

Back to Economics and business studies;

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There are factors of production, these help you to create a final product that you may be able to put on the market.

For the past five years I have been stuck with figuring out the factors of production I need so that I can output a fine product. This has been a bit of a limitation for myself. This handbook is one of my first products that did not take a lot of contemplating. While it is important to output a fine product like this hand book, you cannot allow yourself to be stuck with factors of production because then, your product will never come out and you will not go to the market.

Find ways through which you can negotiate for factors of production and perhaps you can share your profit after you put the product on the market and sell.

### **What are factors of production?**

In the case of music practice, these maybe; studio time costs, payment to your fellow musicians,

production costs, graphics and branding, touring costs, rehearsal costs, promotion, managers.

You need to be able to get around these costs by all means to have your product out. Most artists do not ever get out of this process, or if they do, they are operating on debt and losses.

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Once you have the cost of all this determined, you shall be able to determine your price in order to cover up all your costs.

### **Art has no price.**

The Kenyan producer Eric Musyoka says 'you get paid what you negotiate for'. You will therefore definitely get paid what you negotiate for. You will know your expenses to put out that final song or product. You will add to the price your costs for your basic financial needs and you will know what to ask. It is not a guarantee that you shall be given what you bargain for and that makes things complicated. Back to Economics.

Study the market trends, prevailing prices and all that stuff. You can clearly have answers once you ask yourself the right questions. Concentrating on your area of expertise and geographical area will help you extensively understand your markets and help you make the right business decisions.

It is also important to look at what your competitors

(fellow artists) are offering in that area. You don't have to copy their models, but learning about their business practice will give you an idea of what the consumers are finding at the market. And if your product or service is straying away from the normal market prices, then you will be able to explain why it

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is the case with knowledge of what is in the prevailing markets.

### **Working with others**

Working with any kind of business manager will be a great tool for you as an artist, you will not have to pay them before you have business (that's if you negotiate that with them).

This will help you concentrate on making content and soon you will be able to make business with your new partner.

### **Events Production**

So many African artists and musicians are passionate about creating their own events. It is because these events tend to be special platforms for these artists to independently express themselves which eventually gives them more independence and money if handled well. Many artists have become successful events producers,

creating bigger brands and income for themselves.

Muthoni Drummer Queen aka MDQ from Kenya founded the most consistent urban festival in East Africa called Blankets and Wines. Since its start, Blankets and Wines has provided a platform to over one hundred artists and bands from all over Africa.

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The festival offers a stable source of income to hundreds of service providers, artists, bands, transport services and government taxes throughout the East African region.

Her company went on to create other successful and positively impactful events such as Africa Nouveau as well as a platform to train novice Event producers called Perform Music Incubator. I have personally been through this Incubator and what I learned changed my approach to events making me a more efficient and knowledgeable event producer.

From my own experience organizing over twenty events this year alone, everyone can plan a successful concert as long as they hold a few principal elements. If you have one hundred people who support you and want to see you perform live, it is high time you started planning a concert for them and you will make some money.

Contact me in case you're afraid, CMH Live was started to support artists through the platform of live concerts.

CMH Live is a brand name under Cajon Music House Limited and it is specifically a platform that was set up to help create comfortable and diverse platforms for musicians. Artists and music lovers to express themselves. Since 2017 CMH Live has created new platforms which new artists find super comfortable and convenient to participate on. Over one hundred

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artists have since performed on these platforms which are in the form of live events. Some of these events include;

*The Music House Live Concerts.* This is a concert series that highlights new artists in special concerts which happen quarterly. With this concert series, CMH Live has collaborated with Uganda National Cultural Center, Alliance Francaise Kampala, Goethe Zentrum Kampala, The Academy Musician Fellowship and others. The concert has hosted ten artists on every show since 2017 and has seen over one thousand people attend as audience.

The Music House Live concerts are planned, and operated by musicians themselves to give them a business edge.

*African Christmas Festival;* this is a month-long event that involves over fifty musicians and over 30

venues for an entire month. The event is meant to share the Christmas spirit and it usually involves artists and musicians making appearances in public spaces such as malls, markets, streets, public transport playing music and sharing gifts and stories with the public. For the African Christmas Festival, CMH Live has partnered with Knight Frank and almost all shopping malls in Kampala, Giving Tuesday from USA, Kingdom Kampala mall, Simba Telecom and the government of the republic of Uganda.

*Artiste Promotion Concerts*; these are special concerts that CMH Live promotes for special artists every year, highlighting their work and bringing their

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fans together. CMH Live has promoted such events for artists like Igulu, Mutaki, JY Jaxon Kyeyune and others.

CMH Live all together has been a great events platform which ensures income generation for all participating stakeholders. It is most importantly a space where artists can hone their own business skills as it is fully run by artists and musicians.

Find out more about CMH Live on  
[www.instagram.com/cmh.live](https://www.instagram.com/cmh.live)

## **Sponsorships**

This is where a company or brand pays an artist money in exchange for fulfilling certain activities around the marketing of the brand. These activities could be anything from social media posts, appearing in ads and commercials and even positive mentions in interviews.

Attracting sponsorships for your craft can be a great way to gain financial support and exposure for your career especially if you can ensure a strong online presence, developed documentation such as electronic press kits, research and approach potential sponsors, define your brand value and create connections.

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## **Licensing**

One of the biggest revenue streams for artists is licensing music. Music licensing can be a confusing, intimidating journey, and most artists don't find success in this area of the music industry without a little guidance. But we're here to clarify any questions and misconceptions you might have about the whole process. Let's get started!

A music license is when you grant the right to use your work publicly, and in return receive payment via a flat fee and or royalties based on an agreed

contract. Sometimes licenses have a time limit, say for a few months during the holidays, while other licenses can be granted indefinitely or bought outright from the copyright owner.

These are types of Music Licenses as posted on a blog [Music licensing overview](#) by [indiemusicacademy.com](#)

### Synchronization License (or Sync License)

Frequently called a sync license, this is specialized for use with visual media, such as TV shows, film, commercials, news segments, video games and more. A license fee can be determined by how the song will be used, where it will be played, anticipated exposure, experience, and any other royalty rate. This license is also common with artists who want to

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make a music video for cover songs of other artists' work.

### Mechanical License

Used for the reproduction of the song in physical form, most often CD's or soundtracks. Typically, only relevant to the song itself, and not any videos associated with it. Extremely common if you release covers of songs that aren't in the public domain.

### Public Performance License

This type of license is very broad and encompasses radio, websites, stores, restaurants, music venues, nightclubs, and other public spaces. You usually don't need to worry about acquiring this license unless you are using a song for business purposes.

### Master Recording License

If you've ever asked yourself, what is a master recording license and why is someone asking for it, don't panic! A master recording license, also called a master use license or master license, grants the recipient the right to use the entirety or any parts of the original sound recording for their means. This is common with compilation albums like "Top 20s".

### Print License

Primarily used to reproduce sheet music or lyrics, whether for karaoke, merchandise, marketing materials, and more.

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### Blanket License

This license allows users to have access to a portion or complete collection of songs for a flat annual fee, which can be convenient for places that just want background music like a shopping center or a cafe. It's less time-consuming to compile all the songs requested, instead of creating a license for each and every track.

## **Music Licensing Fees**

Your music doesn't have to just passively be available to stream. Next time you pull up a blogger's new video, or watch the newest episode of that reality TV show, sit back and really listen to what's going on in the background. Do you hear those instrumentals? Odds are, that piece of music has been sold using licensing! It's not a crazy money making schemes for everyone, but the more content you have, the more you can earn royalty payments as a side hustle with sync opportunities.

The beauty of the world of music licensing is that you can find or create music licensing agreements for almost any scenario.

## **Merchandise**

The English premier league football teams, the WWE and others make a lot of their income from merchandise. World Wrestling Entertainment and so many other brands of this generation have inspired generations and can sell their merchandise more than companies and businesses which deal in direct product sales. Merchandise are branded goods that

people can buy and they represent a particular brand.

You can simply make available branded shirts, bangles, caps, guitar picks, guitars, and others, then sell them to your friends and fans for a profit. At times you have no active direct products such as a performance contract or concert tickets to make income from, your merchandise can do a big job sustaining you. Diamond Platnumz of Tanzania has got his face, name as well as his WCB brand on youth shirts from almost every town and suburban area throughout Africa.

Artists who are just starting out can choose to develop their brand with merchandise from the beginning, making their own merchandise available at all places they appear. They can even choose to wear it on performances or videos hence making them household products.

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In Uganda, songstress Azawi and her label Swangz Avenue launched her 'Ghetto' fashion brand which is now being displayed everywhere they go. The rapper and poet Wake, always has his hoodies and sweaters branded with his projects and Ssebo Lule, a poet also sells small books with parts of his poems at all events he attends.

## **Production.**

Music Production has proved to be one of the most consistently lucrative departments of the music industry. There is always a need for an extra music producer, sound engineer or session musician. As an artist or musician it is seamless to make yourself available for such opportunities and make extra money. Countless successful musicians and artists are also very successful music producers.

Here is the story of one of my favorite musicians and music producers;

Mr Michael Collins Ajareah aka Don Jazzy was born to a humble family in Lagos Nigeria in 1982. He learnt to play the bass guitar and drums especially through church. He studied business administration studies before he moved to London at 18 to play music in a church. Jazzy worked as a security guard at MacDonald's but soon started producing music with artists. His first collaboration was with Dbanj to form the now defunct Mo Hits records back in 2004.

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Don Jazzy produced music with Dbanj, Wande coal, Doctor Sid and Snoop Dogg before he was signed to Good music together with Kanye West in New York. He soon produced Wande Coal's Go low and one of Africa's greatest hits Oliver Twist by Dbanj in 2011.

Don Jazzy later produced the song 'Lift off' in 2012 when he worked with Kanye West, Jayz and Beyonce. In the same year, Jazzy founded his own label Mavin Records, he went on to sign artists like Reekado Banks, Korede Bello and Tiwa Savage for whom he produced her debut album called 'Once upon a time'. Tiwa Savage and other artists signed to Mavin records went on to become household artists and hit makers in Nigeria, Africa and globally.

Don Jazzy has developed and signed many more global artists to this age such as Johnny Drille, Ladipoe, Boy Spice, Ayra Starr, Rema and so many more.

Don Jazzy is a great example of work in music and impacting people greatly as well as building the ecosystem. He is considered one of the richest musicians on the African continent yet he continues to live a music filled life.

During his interview with Fisayo Fosudo on YouTube, Jazzy mentions that he regards a

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successful artist as one whose life gets better from yesterday and can support their immediate family. He advises that a good brand name ensures longevity and that artists should spend a lot of time

developing content on their social media as well as make sure to market their new music more aggressively.

### **Other skills**

Graphics design is quite an impressive skill since you make your own graphics design for your album covers. **Writing** your own songs and for others. You probably play your guitar as well or know how to develop concept notes and research.

Because so many other artists cannot do these simple things, you have the opportunity to offer them help and get paid for it.

My musician friend Bronson Mwanje has been creating graphics for almost all projects at Cajon Music House. He is a very useful resource that even when he is not on the stage, he is working and making a living. You may as well make a living from playing the guitar for others. I have personally made a good amount of money for myself from playing the guitar for other artists even when I just had basic guitar skills.

### **Studied professions.**

Note that to be a successful musician, you need to

put in a fair amount of time in music practice. This truth makes it hard for so many people to take up side jobs or to continue with jobs in their studied professions while practicing music.

However, I must say that it is still possible to be a professional artist and still have a side job that gives you an extra and more stable income. One interesting thing is that one can offer their services within the music industry itself. You can be a doctor and specialize in offering medical services at music events and on tours. That might be a more satisfactory job for you as a doctor who practices or loves music. It may even give you the time to practice music next to your emergency tool kit. The Music industry can use drivers, psychologists, business managers, accountants and even architects.

I trained to be a geography teacher but I use all my education knowledge and even more complex principles to run the Academy Musician Fellowship every year. I also need the expertise to simply teach a kid how to play guitar or to hold a masterclass on artist development.

Being able to practice music should not stop you from taking on your studied professions especially if

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it still contributes to your personal sustainable development or that of others.

## **Entrepreneurship and Investment.**

You do not have to be engaged in the development of all projects you can invest in from scratch. You can just invest in a particular element in the music industry such as a studio, musician band, record label, Events Production Company, music venue, entertainment agency, and so many others and employ yourself and or others to run it.

This endeavor may require you to have extra money to use as investment in the industry. Diamond Platinumz invests in Wasafi, Julius Kyazze invests in Swangz Avenue and Buzz events in Uganda, Benza invests in Vth season in South Africa, Yossou Ndour invests and so many others.

## **Charity and Legacy**

Be sure to give, support, and do charity work to support other developing communities. Artists who are already successful should be willing to support other fellow artists and communities to help build sustainable structures and leave a legacy behind.

This is another important part of an artist's

sustainability for the community.