**TIPS FOR A CAREER IN THE ARTS INDUSTRY: THE PORTFOLIO CAREER**

- figure out what your genuine passion is and follow it

- be enthusiastic, and have a “can do” attitude at all times

- understand it is very difficult to make a stable solid income from your artistic creative passion, and majority of people in the arts have a “job” that they make stable money to live from, and do their creative practice on the side or as a small percentage of what they earn. Jobs include arts administration, teaching, box office staff, music shop sales assistant, EG I still make most of my money through teaching. They are still great options as they make regular money you can live off and be around other people in the industry. Teaching is a great option because it is a big market. I got a teaching qualification (but you don’t always need one). There are part-time teaching jobs teaching in pretty much every area of the arts

-always try to think of varied ways of making money, eg I make some money from the sales of sheet music of my 60 published works that’s why it’s worth me writing new music not always for commissions because once I get it published I can make money from it at a later date. A good video of the work always helps with sales. And if you get it to your market (eg I wrote a solo viola piece and joined 10 viola groups on Facebook and let them know about my piece with sheet music link) then you will get lots of sales and performances (including international ones as the world is a small place with the internet these days)

- Sometimes very lucky, talented and diligent people do manage to make enough money purely from their creative passion, but this is not the norm. There is no point comparing yourself to them, as everyone is an individual and the arts is a highly unfair, random and unstable industry even at the best of times (let alone during COVID !!!) and this is not your fault or in your control. It’s always good to have a range of skills you can monetise.

- develop your website and your artistic persona as a “brand” – go looking at other artists’ websites in similar fields for inspiration and make a list of the things you like about each website. Have a look at international websites such as from Japan and USA. Once your website and social media presence is coherent and strong, and “on topic” of your art/music most of the time, you will find that you will naturally attract followers and people approaching you for your art. And once you have an idea about what your brand is, this can help guide your music/art etc. EG once I figured out I want to specialise in writing music about space, this gave my future projects direction. A friend in advertising once told me that people have to see your “brand” 9 times before taking it seriously. So, posting on social media every 3-4 days helps to raise “brand awareness”. You can post about inspiration, or little snippets of your current works, even if you have no actual projects on. Also it’s good to tag as many people as possible, so your “brand reach” is increased. After I embraced social media (as a way to market my works I have found quite a few people were approaching me with commissions

- keep making your art, whether you have support or not (even if this means self-funding, which I still do a lot of the time), as over time you will develop a body of work that will support your claim to be and artist or composer and means you can make some extra money at gigs through sales, also it means people can see more examples of your work either online or in real life. EG I’ve self-released 8 albums showcasing a variety of styles, with 4 solo albums. It’s also good, as once you get famous, people will want to see what else you have done. And a large body of work to look over is always great for this.

-once you’ve made you art/album etc, try to get it reviewed by some prominent respected media but don’t be disheartened if you get no response or a bad review. At the end of the day it’s just one person’s opinion. If it’s bad, you certainly do not need to share it with anyone buy try to objectively take the feedback in a constructive way. I spent $400 once sending my CDs off to UK and USA for review and no one got back to me. But then a few years later I did a similar thing (this time after emailing first to make sure I have the right addresses and that they take unsolicited albums etc) and got an amazing review from UK JAZZ JOURNAL all through me individual sending off my album and finding addresses through their websites. My reviews from Jazz journal Sydney Morning Herald, Melbourne Age, Limelight Magazine and Music Trust and others has definitely helped me get more gigs and raised my profile in the arts in Australia, which has resulted in more shows, more festivals and more commissions. Basically because people have heard of me. Obviously if you get a bad review, which I have occasionally, I’ve chosen not to share on my website or social media - your website is all what you choose to present to the world). All of this press attention has been through me cold emailing and physically sending them where they need to go. No one will know unless you tell them.

-once you have your website/social media presence clear and you have some music/art presented to the world, you can start applying for festivals and trying to get gigs/exhibitions. For gigs/exhibitions, a lot of venues want to know whether you have a following and a marketing plan. You can always say yes, and then hire a publicist for a few hours and/or build up your following by joining lots of groups on Facebook. When approaching venues, it is essential to say you have a following and a marketing plan –they want to know there will be bums on seats and fair enough. I have gained a lot of followers and sales of my works and ticket sales through social media groups and marketing. EG If you have a gig in Melbourne join “Melbourne live music” groups (there’s about 10) and share all your posts about your show. If ticket sales go badly (and you must watch ticket sales like a hawk), a few days before you can always give away tickets to important people in the industry so you don’t feel like it’s a waste of time. Remember all famous people in music have at some point played to one person in the audience. It is no reflection on the quality of your work and even if you work really hard it will happen at least once.

- understand you will get rejected most of the time and this is normal – I get rejected at least 3 times per week even now (from festivals, grants, sometimes through people not replying to my emails). I know I will feel like crap for a little while, then get over it. **YOU ARE STRONG AND YOU CAN DO THIS.**

- there is very little funding for the arts in Australia, so those grant applications even if they are amazing, will probably be rejected.

- I find a better use of my time is to think up cheap ways of achieving my artistic goals, and self-funding, or do a “Go Fund Me” campaign. Build into the project ways of making money eg CD sales, merchandise sales, sheet music sales. And remember fresh new projects well publicised will all raise your profile in the industry and create more work through people knowing you and your work – so think of it as an investment

- in music for example it is quite cheap these days to record your own albums and put them on Spotify and all streaming platforms through websites like CD Baby. Eg $79 for an album. And music studios are quite affordable. It’s easy to get gigs if you do everything yourself like marketing, booking venues, arranging photos etc etc.

- another option is to informally find supporters/donors who are willing to support you without having to jump through endless hoops. Asking around informally, or just going to lots of events to hear about this kind of thing can help. There are also a lot of websites and facebook groups which can be helpful

- branch out and dip your toe into as many different related areas as possible. EG in music there is music engraving, music journalism. See which ones fit your personality

- get good at talking about you dream projects and start cold-emailing people and organisations you want to work with or collaborate with - most of my most exciting projects have been through cold-emailing. Then if the organisation doesn’t have any money, you can arrange money from another source once you find people who care about what you’re doing.