

Music Résumé Handbook

Music Career Services DePaul School of Music

804 W. Belden Ave.

Chicago, IL 60614

773.325.4359

[music.depaul.edu>Resources>Career Services](http://music.depaul.edu/Resources/Career%20Services)

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by Rachael Smith, Coordinator of Career and Performance Services

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The Basics: Résumés 101

- What is a résumé? A résumé provides a formal overview of your current and past professional and educational experiences. As concise as possible, it should provide the reader with a blueprint of who you are, only including current and relevant information for the position in which you are applying.
- An effective résumé generates enough interest by the reader to warrant an invitation for an interview or audition. The résumé should serve an advertisement of and for a product—you! It is typical for musicians to have several versions of their résumé—one for performance, one for teaching, one for arts administration, etc.
- Because a résumé is your representative when you are not present, you want it to be perfect—well organized and polished. And while a great résumé alone will usually not secure a job, a poor résumé can easily prevent you from even getting in the door.

Gathering Content

Here is a list of résumé categories to help you get started. Look them over and decide which ones would best represent *your* professional and educational experience.

Remember, you do not need to use every category! This list is only *possible* categories, and is not exhaustive by any means. Some of these categories may not suit your needs—this is okay!

Use DePaul School of Music's **Résumé Builder Worksheet** at the back of this handbook to help get organized. It is best to first write down everything under the appropriate categories, not being too quick to prejudge your experience. Many people are experts at talking themselves out of including good, relevant experience before they can even get it down on paper. Save the editing for later until you have a better idea of the layout you'd like to use. Keep an open mind!

Some categories may be exclusive to the type of music you perform. For example:

For Classical Vocalists: Full Roles, Partial Roles, Choral Experience, Solo Recitals, Musical Theater, etc.

For Jazz Musicians: Clubs, Other Venues, Jazz Festivals, Has Performed with;, Recordings, Ensembles, etc.

For Classical Instrumentalists: Orchestral Experience, Chamber Music Experience, Solo Performances, Soloists with Orchestra

For Composers: Original Works (or just 'Compositions'), Selected Compositions, Premieres, Selected Performances of Compositions, Current Projects, Arrangements/Transcriptions, Commissioned Works

Pianists: Solo Recitals, Soloists with Orchestra, Chamber Music Performances, Accompanying, Church Positions

Standard categories include:

<p>Name</p> <p>Instrument/Voice Type</p> <p>Mailing Address (Mailing addresses are no long considered necessary, however you may include if you wish)</p> <p>Phone number</p> <p>Email Address (A word about email: If you do not have a professional email account and your email is something like "RobotsRCool@gmail.com", this would be a good time to set one up—usually your name and adding your instrument is a safe option. You want the potential employer to take you seriously. Use common sense!)</p> <p>Website</p> <p>Education/Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Degree(s) earned (include name of institutions and dates)- Grade Point Average- High School Study (if at a major music preparatory institution)- Major/Principal Teachers- Master Classes- Coaches- Summer Festivals- Professional Certification, Licensure, Accreditation- Freelance Work- Conducting/Guest conducting	<p>Recordings and Broadcasts</p> <p>Tours</p> <p>Competitions</p> <p>Honors/Awards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Scholarships- Fellowships- Scholastic Awards- Prizes and Grants <p>Other Experience</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Language Proficiency- Community Service- Volunteer Work- Collegiate Extracurricular Activities
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Here is what a brainstorming session for an instrumentalist might look like:

Jane Johnson

Violin

43210 Lincoln Ave.

Chicago, IL 60618

(312) 555-1212

janejohnsonviolin@gmail.com

www.janejohnsonviolin.com

Orchestra Experience

- Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra, substitute, 2015
- Cook County Festival Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra, 2015
- DePaul Symphony Orchestra, concertmaster, 2014-2015
- Civic Orchestra of Chicago, 2013-2015
- DePaul Concert Orchestra 2011-2013
- DePaul Opera Theater Orchestra, 2012-2015
- Interlochen Arts Academy Orchestra, assistant concertmaster, 2010-2011

Solos with Orchestras

- Elmhurst Symphony Orchestra, Stephen Alltop conducting, 2009
- Illinois Symphony Orchestra, Alastair Willis conducting, 2010

Chamber Music

- Chicago Quartet Seminar, 2010-2011
- Coaching with the Chicago Quartet
- Performances in The National Shrine of Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini
- Member of the Belden Piano Trio. DePaul School of Music, 2013 – 2015
- Ensemble 20+: contemporary ensemble, 2012-2014

Education

BM, Violin Performance, May 2015, DePaul University School of Music

High School Diploma, May 2011, Interlochen Arts Academy

Awards and Scholarships

DePaul School of Music Performance Award 2011-2015

Winner, Interlochen Arts Academy Solo Competition, 2011

Choosing the Right Format

Once you are satisfied with the results of your brainstorm session, you need to decide on the format for your résumé. Here are some options to consider:

Reverse Chronological

Exactly what it says, you list your work experience in reverse chronological order so that the most recent information is at the top of the page. This format allows the reader to track your work history and to easily visualize gaps in employment as well as professional growth. Many people who use this format do so *within* the sub categories they have chosen to include on their résumé, *not* necessarily for the entire résumé. This format is recommended for nearly all instances.

Order of Importance

Experiences are listed in order of importance so that the reader can quickly see your most impressive and relevant information first. This is the most common format for performance résumés. If you are applying for an opera company role, you do not want your choral experience to be at the top and your experience singing major operatic roles buried at the bottom of the page.

Functional

This format highlights your abilities, skills and accomplishments rather than the places where you learned them. Work experience should still be listed separately, but the focus is on skills and pointing out those that are the most transferrable to the job for which you are applying. This is probably the least common format for performance résumés, however it could be appropriate for arts administration positions that require a certain skill set.

Order of Categories

The order of résumé categories should reflect your level of experience as well as the position for which you are applying. For someone with significant performance experience, this is the most important category to show to the employer. For a recent graduate, it is best to keep education at the top. As your experience grows, you will need to rearrange the categories, adding new and remove older content. Remember, your résumé is a “living” document.

Other Tips

- **Only include information relevant to the position you are seeking.** For example, generally speaking, performance résumés should not include teaching or arts administration experience. However, if you know the orchestra does significant community engagement work, it may be beneficial to include this if you have that experience.
- **Don't be afraid of white space.** You want your résumé to be reader-friendly and visually pleasing. It's not about filling up the page—it's about keeping your content relevant!
- **One page or two?** This is a hotly debated topic, so here is a good rule of thumb: if you *truly* have enough *relevant* and *important* experience, training, etc. to showcase and it takes more than one page to do so, then go for it. But if you can tell your story in less space? Please do. If you are having trouble shrinking the text down to one page, try changing the margins or the

point size of the spaces in between text. In the word processing software, turn the paragraph symbol ¶ “on” so the formatting guides are visible.

- **Choose a simple font:** Something clean and modern like Helvetica, Garamond, Georgia are nice options. Times New Roman is the most default of fonts, so consider finding an alternative if you want your résumé to stand out from the crowd. Use a font size between 10 and 12 to make it easy on hiring managers’ eyes.

Finding Your Style

You will want to design a letterhead at the top of your page with your name, email address, and telephone number. Choose something attractive and professional so that it stands out. Make sure to also use this for your cover letter. This font in your letterhead can be different from the rest of the résumé if you wish. Here are some examples:

Jane Johnson, Violin
312.555.1212 • janejohnsonviolin@gmail.com
www.janejohnsonviolin.com

Jane Johnson, Violin

(312) 555-1212 • janejohnsonviolin@gmail.com • www.janejohnsonviolin.com

Jane Johnson, violin
312.555.1212 • 43210 N. Lincoln Ave, Chicago, IL
janejohnsonviolin@gmail.com
www.janejohnsonviolin.com

The Finishing Touches

- **Proofread, proofread, proofread!** You don’t want to solely rely on spell check and grammar check. Ask a friend to read it over with ‘fresh eyes’.
- **Always save your file as a PDF.** Sending a text document (like Word or Pages) runs the risk of the formatting going awry when the recipient opens it.
- **Name your file thoughtfully.** Instead of saving it as “My Résumé”, put your name (and possibly your instrument) in there for clarity. It’s one less step the hiring manager has to do!
- **Make an appointment with Music Career Services!** Whether you are starting your résumé from scratch, or just need to fine-tune it, Rachael is here to help! Email her at rsmith37@depaul.edu to set up an appointment.

Music Résumé Builder Worksheet

(Template used with permission from Eastman School of Music)

This worksheet breaks down the previously mentioned categories that you may wish to include in your résumé. Some of the categories may not suit your needs, and you may not have information that fits into every category. Don't worry! Begin building your résumé by writing down **every** experience where appropriate. Later, you can decide what to keep and what to omit. You can also just use as a guide, and start your own document from scratch.

Full Name

(If you normally use a nickname, it is best to use your full name on your professional résumé)

Phone Number _____ Email Address _____

EDUCATION

Name of school	City/state	Degree received	Major	Graduation date	GPA (Optional)	Other

Other credentials/ licenses/ professional affiliations

PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCE

Solo (event name, orchestra, conductor, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Recitals (event name / degree, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Chamber music (event name, coaches, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Accompany /ist (event name, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Orchestra (ensemble name, position, conductor, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Wind Ensemble (ensemble name, position, conductor, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Jazz (ensemble name, position, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Rock/Pop (ensemble name, position, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Opera (production, role, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Choral (ensemble, voice part, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Church (church name, responsibilities, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE (from most recent)

Schools (school district, city, state, age / grade levels, ensemble(s) conducted, lessons taught (instruments, voice, other) when)

Music coaching (who, where, when)

Private studio (age / grades, instruments / voice, where, when)

Summer camps (ages / grades, specific lessons, ensembles, conductor(s), where, when)

Master classes given (to whom, where, when)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (paid experience)

Solo (event name, orchestra, conductor, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Chamber music (event name, coaches, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Accompany /ist (event name, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Orchestra (ensemble name, position, conductor, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Music director (orchestra, conductor, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Wind Ensemble (ensemble name, position, conductor, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Jazz (ensemble name, position, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Opera (production, role, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Choral (ensemble, voice part, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Rock/Pop (ensemble name, position, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

Church (church name, responsibilities, collaborator(s), city, state, venue, notes, date)

TEACHERS

Major/Principal teachers (college/private, where)

Chamber coaches (ensemble, date(s), where)

Master classes (with whom, where)

Summer festivals (name of festival, collaborator(s), where, when)

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Arts Administration (position(s), responsibilities, where, when)

Internships (position(s), responsibilities, where, when)

Non-music teaching (position(s), responsibilities, where, when)

Other (position, responsibilities, where, when)

REPERTOIRE

Some schools or music festivals may require you to submit a list of repertoire. It is also a good idea to keep a list for your own records.

Solo (title, composer)

Orchestra/Wind Ensemble (title, composer)

Jazz (title, composer)

Opera, voices (title, composer)

Pop/Rock (title, composer)

COMPOSITIONS and ARRANGEMENTS

Original compositions (title, composer/arranger, venue, collaborator(s), notes, date)

Premieres (title, composer/arranger, venue, collaborator(s), notes, date)

Current projects (title, composer/arranger, venue, collaborator(s), notes, date)

Commissioned works (title, composer/arranger, venue, collaborator(s), notes, date)

HONORS and AWARDS (scholarships, fellowships, grants and prizes, scholastic award)

COMPETITIONS (name, placement, where, when)

PUBLICATION (title, publisher, date)

RECORDING and BROADCAST

PROFESSIONAL PRESENTATIONS/LECTURES

RELATED or ADDITIONAL SKILLS (computer, language)

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE (community service, volunteer work, non-music-related work, collegiate extracurricular activities)

