

the unsigned guide

YOUR GATEWAY TO THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

REVISED  
EDITION

# THE UNSIGNED GUIDE'S ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO MUSIC FUNDING



ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND



Creative  
Industry  
Finance



MUSICTANK



UK Trade  
& Investment



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# INTRODUCTION

IN A CLIMATE AND AGE WHERE THE music and arts industries in the UK have undergone radical changes, some of which have proven to be beneficial for the DIY grassroots artist and some not, the topic of finding money for development in these areas has become very prominent.

Here at The Unsigned Guide, we are regularly on the receiving end of enquiries from bands and musicians wanting to make a living from their craft, asking how they can be supported financially, what they need to do to get signed by a record label or what other artists do to make ends meet.

Unfortunately, most artists we chat to are largely unaware of the music funding opportunities available to them which led us to creating this booklet as a free source of information summarising the options out there. We are pleased to welcome contributions from Arts Council England, PRS For Music Foundation, Creative Industry Finance, Help Musicians UK, Music Tank, Musicians' Union, BPI, Transmit Start-Up and Pledge Music. All of these organisations have taken the time to present straightforward details of what they can offer grassroots musicians in terms of funding, support and development, and we've gathered it all together in one place for easy reference.

Of course, arts and music funding never has been and never will be handed out without the proven demonstration of an idea worth evolving and real passion & commitment to that idea. However, with the fundamental details of the options available to you as a music maker, here at your fingertips, you are now in an informed position to consider how you conduct your musical projects, how they could possibly be adapted to obtain funding, or it may spark fresh notions as to what direction your music career could take.

Although record labels are still a primary source of financial investment in new music in the UK, with recent transformations brought about by the economic climate and

the dawn of a digital age, it stands to reason that they are much more prudent about their risk-taking on new artists these days. Therefore, it is a good idea for any emerging band or artist to look beyond the record companies and see what other outlets can help them fund the marketing and release of their music. We hope this guide will clearly spell out the alternative routes available to DIY musicians; grants, creative funding, start-up loans and crowdfunding are all covered within these pages.

Whilst we have tried to gather together as much music funding information as possible, there are also other organisations providing ongoing funding programmes, as well as one-off, ad hoc schemes and initiatives that crop up, so other organisations and websites to keep an eye on for details or events would be [IdeasTap](#), [Scottish Music Centre](#), [Creative Choices](#), [UKTI](#), [Arts Council Of Wales](#), [Arts Council of Northern Ireland](#), [Creative Scotland](#) and [Generator](#).

On a more regional basis, members of The Unsigned Guide will be able to refer to the Music & Business Advice section of our directory to locate charities, projects and organisations based near you who may offer grants and other opportunities specifically to local musicians. Whilst this booklet is focused on what is available on a national level, there may be opportunities in your area that you can tap into so take the time to investigate a little.

We extend our **THANKS** in providing the information essential to putting this guide together to: Chris Tams at [BPI](#), Jonathan Robinson & Jenny Tyler at [Music Tank](#), [Remi Harris](#), Joe Frankland & Liam McMahon at [PRS For Music Foundation](#), Rebecca Williams at [Arts Council](#), Genevieve Pace & Sarah Thirle at [Creative Industry Finance](#), Damian Baetans & Richard Lyne at [Transmit Start-Ups](#), Maddy Radcliff at [Musicians' Union](#), Matthew Mulcahy & Ashling Pickett at [Help Musicians UK](#) and Julian Wall at [Pledge Music](#).

# HELP MUSICIANS UK – GETTING YOU STARTED & KEEPING YOU GOING



WE'RE
HERE TO
<b>HELP</b>
<b>MUSICIANS<sup>UK</sup></b>

**HELP MUSICIANS UK IS THE LEADING CHARITY** for professional musicians. We help at times of crisis, but also at times of opportunity, giving people the extra support they need at a crucial stage.

Since 1921, we've been backing musicians throughout their careers, including those who are starting out. In 2015 we invested more than £600,000 helping emerging artists. We fund individuals and groups directly through tailored schemes, and we also work with a range of other organisations around the UK to provide development and performance opportunities.



In an ever-changing music industry we are determined to help talent succeed without facing impossible financial barriers. We want to see a thriving musical culture in the UK and will continue to play our part in supporting upcoming musicians to ensure the vitality and diversity of the profession is sustained.

Our funding schemes are evolving – visit our [website](#) to have a look at our current opportunities.



## CAREER DEVELOPMENT BURSARIES

Our Career Development Bursaries help young artists access exceptional opportunities in the UK and abroad. Whether you want to work with a mentor or coach, attend a masterclass or residency, or undertake a personalised programme of development, this scheme could be for you. To apply, you must be primarily UK-based and aged between 21-30. Grants range from £500 to £2,000. You can find out how to apply and when the latest deadlines are on our [website](#).

WE'RE  
HERE TO  
**HELP**  
**MUSICIANS<sup>UK</sup>**

## EMERGING ARTISTS FUND

We have been working with leading direct-to-fan platform PledgeMusic to support a diverse group of emerging bands and solo artists. The scheme offers match funding to selected acts when they complete a successful PledgeMusic campaign. The aim is to identify and support emerging artists who have the talent and the 'DIY' drive to build a long-term career. To find out about current recipients and future application rounds, visit [helpmusicians.org.uk/emergingartistsfund](http://helpmusicians.org.uk/emergingartistsfund)

## SUPPORT IN A CRISIS

As well as helping you get started, we provide specialist help to professionals who are unable to work due to accident or illness. If you know someone who needs our help, give us a call on 020 7239 9100, email [help@helpmusicians.org.uk](mailto:help@helpmusicians.org.uk) or visit our [website](#).



**“Help Musicians UK is an incredible charity. They helped me when I was starting out and make a real difference to the lives of thousands of musicians every year.”**

**Soweto Kinch**

**Jazz saxophonist, rapper and ambassador for Help Musicians UK**



Photo by Benjamin Amure ©

# ALL ABOUT GRANTS FOR THE ARTS



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND**

ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND IS AN ORGANISATION dedicated to promoting arts and culture in England. The Arts Council's scope is not limited to the visual arts. They develop, invest, support and champion artistic and cultural experiences and activities across the arts, from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections. For musicians (or those working on music-based projects) looking for support, the open access Grants for the Arts scheme is a good place to start. However do check the website as targeted funds specifically aimed at musicians are sometimes also available.



Ruth Stigwick, Brunel, 200 launch event

## GRANTS FOR THE ARTS FROM ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND

Individual musicians, musical organisations and others who use music in their work can apply for Grants for the Arts. Grants are awarded for activities carried out over a set period which:

- engage people in England in arts activities
- help artists and arts organisations in England carry out their work

## HOW MUCH CAN I APPLY FOR?

These kind of grants range from £1,000 to £100,000 and in special circumstances they will award larger grants for more major projects. Grants for the Arts is a continuous funding programme so you can apply at any time. There are no deadlines but you need to allow enough time between when you apply and when your project starts.



Supported using public funding by  
**ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND**

The Arts Council needs 6 weeks to process applications for £15,000 and under, and 12 weeks for applications for more than £15,000. Find out more about the types of activity they fund in their How to Apply guidance documents and visit <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/gfta>

## CASE STUDY – RIZZLE KICKS/ AUDIOACTIVE HIP HOP FOUNDATION

Arts Council funding has enabled many creative music projects to flourish. AudioActive is a pioneering charity working to nurture the talent and potential of children and young people. Jordan Stephens and Harley Alexander-Sule (aka Rizzle Kicks) took part in AudioActive's flagship project Hip Hop Foundation, which was supported by Arts Council England's open-access funding programme Grants for the Arts.

Rizzle Kicks' involvement in the Hip Hop Foundation was a major turning point in their artistic careers, offering them the opportunity to gain major exposure for their work, including performing live to thousands at Brighton Hip Hop Festival 2006 and 2007, with the likes of Blak Twang and Soweto Kinch.

Today, Rizzle Kicks are playing sell out tours and recording a new album and have said of their early support from AudioActive: "*AudioActive did us a lot of good and without them we may not have got here!*" Rizzle Kicks

See more news and case studies about Arts Council investment here: <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/news/>

**“AudioActive  
did us a lot  
of good and  
without them  
we may not  
have got here!”**

**Rizzle Kicks**

# MOMENTUM MUSIC FUND, WOMEN MAKE MUSIC & OTHER OPPORTUNITIES PROVIDED BY PRS FOR MUSIC FOUNDATION



**PRS FOR MUSIC FOUNDATION WAS SET UP** as an independent charity in 2000, and is supported through an annual donation from **PRS for Music**. We support the performance and creation of music of any genre by UK based music creators. Since 2000, we've supported over 5,200 projects to the tune of over £22m. Our funding deadlines are publicised on our website, through our newsletter and social media. Applications are completed online and are assessed by specialists from our UK-wide network of advisors.



## OUR FUNDING

Momentum Music Fund is a partnership between PRS for Music Foundation and Arts Council England and in association with Spotify offering grants of £5-£15k for artists and bands based in England to break through to the next level of their career. Funding deadlines are 4 times a year. You are eligible if you:

- are writing, recording and performing music in the commercial genres
- are working with a team, i.e. a manager, booking agent, PR, plugger, indie label, lawyer
- have evidence of existing track record, i.e. club level shows, support tour, press, radio play, blog buzz

International Showcase Fund supports acts to showcase at international music industry events such as SXSW, CMJ, Eurosonic and NH7. Apply to ISF at least 3 months before the industry event will take place.

You are eligible if you have:

- an invitation to showcase at an international industry conference
- evidence of existing track record, i.e. club level shows, support tour, press, radio play, blog buzz
- genuine interest in your music/act from outside of the UK, i.e. from labels, agents, promoters, sync agencies



Women Make Music supports female music creators to increase their profile as well as stimulate new collaborations. Women Make Music has 3 deadlines a year.

**You are eligible if you:**

- are a female artist/composer or music creator
- have been active/working in music for at least 18 months
- have a project that would
  - support the creation, performance and promotion of outstanding new music in any genre
  - enable the UK's most talented music creators to realise their potential
  - inspire audiences

Our Open Funding offers grants to Organisations (i.e. promoters, large performance groups, talent development organisations, venues and curators) and Music Creators (i.e. songwriters, composers, artists, bands and performers who are writing their own music or commissioning others). Deadlines are 3 times a year.

**You are eligible if you have:**

- been active/working in music for at least 18 months
- a project that would
  - support the creation, performance and promotion of outstanding new music in any genre
  - enable the UK's most talented music creators to realise their potential
  - inspire audiences

We also work in partnership with other organisations, funders and foundations to provide musician residencies, professional development schemes and new music commissioning programmes, including:

- New Music Biennial
- BBC Introducing and PRS Foundation Showcases
- Bliss Trust Composer Bursaries
- Take Five (in partnership with Serious)
- Musicians In Residence China (in partnership with British Council)
- Steve Reid Innovation Award
- Beyond Borders

**“Since 2000,  
we’ve supported  
over 5,200  
projects to  
the tune of  
over £22m.”**

# WHAT THE MUSIC EXPORT GROWTH SCHEME CAN OFFER YOU



UK Trade  
& Investment

**THE MUSIC EXPORT GROWTH SCHEME HAS been created to help support music marketing activity in overseas territories. It is funded by UK Trade & Investment (UKTI), the Government organisation that supports UK business overseas, and run by BPI, which represents British recorded music businesses. The idea behind the Scheme is to help stimulate growth within the UK's creative economy.**



geishaboy500 http://www.flickr.com/photos/geishaboy500/



UK Trade  
& Investment

This is a new scheme (launched at the end of 2013) so is still fairly flexible and these guidelines are to help you with your application and steer you in the right direction. The important thing is to put a solid business case forward including where we would see a return on investment for the grant being requested. Each case will be looked at by the Selection Board and they will decide if the application is right for funding

or not. We will then let you know their decision. If they don't feel an application is appropriate, we will try and give some guidance on where you can improve and services you can use to assist you. For further information on the Scheme, guidelines for application and deadlines please go to BPI's website at: [www.bpi.co.uk/megs.aspx](http://www.bpi.co.uk/megs.aspx)

We've put together ten questions that are commonly asked about the Scheme and tried to answer them as clearly and precisely as possible.

### Q1. CAN I APPLY FOR THE SCHEME?

A. You are eligible to apply if you are a UK-based music company with a turnover of less than €50 million and fewer than 250 employees, as per the EU definition of an SME (Small to Medium Enterprise).

### Q2. WHAT IS THE MUSIC EXPORT GROWTH SCHEME FOR EXACTLY?

A. The Scheme has been set up to support emerging artists, bands, DJs, performers, projects, etc. that have had their first success in the UK and are ready to try and break into an overseas market.

If you want funding for a service rather than an act, please get in touch with your local UK Trade & Investment International Trade Advisor who should be able to give you more advice on any opportunities that are available to you. Type your postcode into their website to find your local office: <http://www.ukti.gov.uk/export.html>

### Q3. CAN I APPLY FOR MORE THAN ONE OF MY ARTISTS?

A. Yes, though you must apply for one artist or project on each application. A company can be awarded no more than two grants in any year of funding so you may wish to restrict your applications accordingly.

### Q4. HOW MUCH CAN I GET?

A. You can apply for between £5,000 and £50,000 in your application. The grant awarded can cover up to 70% of your eligible costs so companies must part-fund at least 30% of the proposed activity from their own resources, demonstrating their commitment to the plan. It is not a Dragons Den style all-or-nothing request; if the Selection Board feel it is a worthy project but the applicant has overestimated their costs they may offer a grant at a reduced level.

**“The important thing is to put a solid business case forward including where we would see a return on investment for the grant being requested.”**

## Q5. WHAT IS AN ELIGIBLE COST?

A. That's marketing costs, tour support, venue costs, international travel, visa costs, international promotion costs including hire of session musicians/singers etc. for TV performances and other such things. Non eligible costs are your normal day to day running costs, salaries, UK travel and items unrelated to the market you are applying for.

## Q6. WHEN WILL I FIND OUT IF I'VE BEEN SUCCESSFUL OR NOT?

A. If you get your application in by the deadline of each round and you are entered into a round of funding you will have a decision on whether you have been successful or not in approximately a month from the deadline date.

## Q7. AND IF MY APPLICATION IS SUCCESSFUL, WHEN WILL I RECEIVE THE GRANT?

A. You will need to undertake your planned activity before you receive any funding. The grant will only be distributed on the presentation of invoices for eligible spend. If the amount requested is a large amount this may be awarded in two parts.

## Q8. IS ANYTHING EXPECTED OF ME IN RETURN?

A. We need to make sure there is a return on investment so you will need to comply with any requests for information and provide updates at regular intervals detailing the impact the funding has had on your artist. We do not intend for such requests to be onerous, but we do need to evaluate the success of the scheme and the awards. BPI and UKTI may also call upon you to do some marketing on behalf of the Scheme or use your company name in promotional material, case studies and press releases

## Q9. WHEN DO I NEED TO APPLY BY?

A. The scheme runs regularly throughout the year so for the latest information on the next closing date for applications please visit [www.bpi.co.uk/megs.aspx](http://www.bpi.co.uk/megs.aspx)

## Q10. SO I UNDERSTAND IT ALL NOW, HOW DO I APPLY?

A. You will find the application form on the BPI website at: [www.bpi.co.uk/megs.aspx](http://www.bpi.co.uk/megs.aspx). The form is a downloadable, editable pdf. You need to fill it in electronically in order for us to accept your application so if you are unable to edit it, you may need to update your adobe software.

Complete the form in as much detail as you can so that we have all the information that we need available to us and then return your form, along with any supporting documentation, via email to [musicexportscheme@bpi.co.uk](mailto:musicexportscheme@bpi.co.uk). This is also the email address to send any queries or questions to in relation to the Scheme.

# EASY MONEY? THE DEFINITIVE UK GUIDE TO FUNDING MUSIC PROJECTS



by Remi Harris

published by MusicTank, London, 2013

**MUSICTANK**

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## EASY MONEY? THE DEFINITIVE UK GUIDE TO FUNDING MUSIC PROJECTS

BY REMI HARRIS



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*Easy Money?* is a must-read funding guide that puts the access to finance issue firmly under the spotlight, providing musicians, entrepreneurs, micro business and SMEs with a hands-on answer to the question “How can I get funding for my music project?”

Building on her extensive knowledge of creative industries’ funding, former AIM General Manager and UK Music Director of Operations, author Remi Harris identifies and considers the six main sources of money: Grants, Friends & Family, Crowdfunding, Sponsorship, Debt and Investment – and the five-stage

process essential to securing music business funding.

This digital-only publication has been designed to be used as both a reference guide for selective use by readers wanting to know about a particular funding source and an ordered, comprehensive guide to the six key sources of funding options available. The chapters are broadly ordered to take account of the level of funding sought, the associated costs of borrowing, and the processes involved, from the relatively straightforward to the complex.

MUSICTANK

Packed with tips, advice and contributions from 40-plus artists, managers, entrepreneurs, music businesses and funding organisations - including End of the Road festival's Sofia Hagberg, Red Grape Management and Carl Barât - this guide's plain-speaking tone and accessible structure demystifies how funding works for musicians, entrepreneurs and micro-businesses, helping them discover sources of money they were previously unaware or unsure of. It also includes details and links to 100+ grant funding destinations.

*"Artists and small music companies have more control than ever, but navigating the world of funding and finance is a daunting task. The attention to detail, pertinent case studies and practical advice in Remi's comprehensive guide make this essential reading for the DIY sector."*

**Joe Frankland**  
Senior Grants & Programmes Manager,  
PRS for Music Foundation

*"This publication is timely. As the business of making a living from music gets harder this is an essential guide to ways of getting help, and learning the language needed to get that help. There's probably no such thing as easy money from any funder, but as a funder who cares about true talent finding its way, anything that makes it more likely that talent and funding find each other is very welcome. Remi Harris provides a clear and much needed guide to navigating the tricky geography of the funding landscape."*

**Alan Davey**  
Chief Executive, Arts Council

*"Investment in British creative talent is at a critical juncture. As our nation struggles to move investment focus away from industrial concerns to internet-driven, knowledge-based youth enterprise, this publication is significant in both its timing and content. British music is a leading light in the creative field, a rare export jewel. Investment in music talent will define whether this sector will grow or decline; it's as simple as that. 'Easy Money?' will prove a useful tool in helping us push towards the hoped-for outcome."*

**Brian Message**  
ATC Management/ Chairman, MMF

**"This guide's plain-speaking tone and accessible structure demystifies how funding works for musicians."**

# BUSINESS SUPPORT & FINANCE FOR YOUR MUSIC VENTURE FROM CREATIVE INDUSTRY FINANCE



Creative  
Industry  
Finance

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR PRACTICAL ADVICE and support to develop your business in the music industry then the Creative Industry Finance (CIF) scheme may well provide the answer. The programme offers tailored advice and the opportunity to access loan finance from £2,500 upwards from one of their lending partners.



Funded by Arts Council England, the programme has supported over 150 creative enterprises with almost 1000 hours of business advice since its England-wide launch in September 2014.

Businesses receive one to one support from a business advisor who provides help and advice on a range of issues including business planning, accessing new markets and preparing to apply for finance.

Ulteria is a record label, publishing and management company that was supported by the Creative Industry Finance programme. For them, their business advisor was invaluable at helping improve their business know-how and networking.

“The business support was incredibly helpful as Jeff [their advisor] had some very good connections to give us. As he is himself a specialist in the music sector, he understood our needs perfectly and the connections really helped”, says Ryan Nile of Ulteria.

Oftentimes, just being able to discuss business plans with an advisor is a boost in itself. Amy Richardson from pop/producer duo Them & Us told us, “The advice from our Creative Industry Finance business advisor... has been extremely helpful in gaining insight into the different financial options for our project. They’ve also helped hugely with business training and cash flow projections, which is really important for a successful business model...”



Stevan Krakovic, Director of the Music Producers Guild and manager of Shock and Awe Studios needed support on their upgrade and expansion plans. He told us, “[our] business advisor was fantastic and a great help. She helped us to focus, and optimise our strategy and business plan...”



## THE ONE, TWO PROJECT

If you run a grassroots, small music venue then our One, Two Project is for you. With our partners at the Music Venue Trust, this Creative Industry Finance initiative offers free business support for venue owners and promoters.



**ARTISTE**  
**THE ONE/TWO PROJECT**

**ACCESS:**

**BUSINESS SUPPORT**

**FINANCE**

[creativeindustryfinance.org.uk](http://creativeindustryfinance.org.uk)

## WHO CAN APPLY?

Creative Industry Finance is open to a wide range of creative and cultural enterprises, from micro-businesses and sole traders through to major institutions. They welcome applications from charities and social enterprises, as well as commercial businesses.

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To be considered for support under this programme, you need to:

- Be based in England
- Be trading for at least 18 months
- Show how creativity is at the heart of your business

To get the ball rolling head to our website [www.creativeindustryfinance.org.uk](http://www.creativeindustryfinance.org.uk) to submit your application. If in doubt, give us a call on 0207 759 1114 or email us at [info@creativeindustryfinance.org.uk](mailto:info@creativeindustryfinance.org.uk).

We are happy to discuss your application, including signposting you to a relevant alternative means of support if your business is not the right fit for this programme.

**“The business support was incredibly helpful as Jeff [their advisor] had some very good connections to give us. As he is himself a specialist in the music sector, he understood our needs perfectly and the connections really helped.”**

**Ryan Nile of Ulteria**

# GOT A BRIGHT IDEA FOR A BUSINESS? TALK TO TRANSMIT



transmit  
start-ups

**IN 2012 THE GOVERNMENT SET UP THE START-Up Loans Programme to help kick-start a new generation of entrepreneurs with tailor-made financial support not normally available from traditional banking relationships.**



## ARE YOU?

Wondering what it would be like to run your own creative business such as a design company, music business, film production or photography business?

Passionate and ambitious about an idea you have? Want to turn your creative hobby into a business?

Ready to take control of your future?

Not sure about working for someone else?

If this sounds like you, you live in England or Scotland and have a new business idea or a business less than 3 years old, then you can apply for a loan.

## WHAT DO I GET?

- An unsecured loan of up to £25,000 for each founder (director/partner)
- A low interest rate of 6% APR over a repayment period of between 12 and 60 months
- Quality business mentoring from business people who have run creative businesses to guide you all the way, from the initial application, to business planning and development
- Exclusive discounts from global business partners including O2, Santander, Paypal, Worldpay and Regus.

transmit  
start-ups

## WHY IS THIS LOAN DIFFERENT?

The programme isn't just about providing financial help – you get a business mentor with extensive knowledge of the creative sector to help you on your enterprise journey and help you fulfil your potential. Our mentors have years of experience of starting up and running their own companies and can help you avoid the early mistakes many businesses make when starting out.

Applying is quick and easy, loans are affordable and based on clear terms, and you get access to a whole range of products and services from big name brands that would not normally be available to new businesses.

Transmit Start-Ups is an official delivery partner for the Start-Up Loans Programme. The directors have over 30 years experience in the creative sector. If you want to set up a creative business then get in touch!

## WHAT DO I DO NEXT?

### Applying is easy

To start with, just register with us here and we will be in touch with you to discuss the next steps  
[www.transmitstartups.co.uk/tug1](http://www.transmitstartups.co.uk/tug1)

For more information and examples of repayments visit our website  
[www.transmitstartups.co.uk/start-up-loans](http://www.transmitstartups.co.uk/start-up-loans)

### Any questions?

Email us at [info@transmitstartups.co.uk](mailto:info@transmitstartups.co.uk) or pick up the phone 0191 490 9328.

**“The programme isn’t just about providing financial help – you get a business mentor with extensive knowledge of the creative sector to help you on your enterprise journey and help you fulfil your potential.”**

# GATHERING A CROWD – RUNNING A MUSIC CROWDFUNDING CAMPAIGN

by Remi Harris



**CROWDFUNDING HAS BECOME INCREDIBLY high-profile in the music industry. Amanda Palmer became one of the most well-known names associated with it, when she raised over a million dollars from donors using the Kickstarter platform in order to produce her album, art book and tour. Meanwhile, on the music-specialist crowdfunding site Pledge Music, Ginger Wildheart raised money from over 6000 'pledgers' to record a triple album. Remi Harris takes a look at the use of crowd funding for songwriters and composers.**

**Remi Harris shows creatives, arts organisations and entrepreneurs how to write about what they do in a way that makes funders want to back them. To find out more about what she offers including workshops, business planning and coaching on getting grants please visit: [www.remiharrisconsulting.com](http://www.remiharrisconsulting.com)**



Neate Photos [www.flickr.com/photos/neate/](http://www.flickr.com/photos/neate/) photos/5440130376

## **CONTINUING A TRADITION OF PUBLIC SUBSCRIPTION**

It turns out that composers are well versed in having their work funded by public subscriptions and donations. A recent survey of BASCA members that asked how commissions are funded revealed that 48% of the 97 respondents had had a commission paid for from Individual Giving or Fundraising Schemes, so the tradition of public subscription as a way of funding composition is well embedded. A number of Orchestras

run schemes that offer members of the public the opportunity to contribute to the commissioning of new classical work. The Royal Philharmonic Society, for example, was set up 200 years ago in order to be put on concerts paid for by members' subscriptions, and has commissioned many new works including, famously, Beethoven's 9th Symphony. Their fundraising for composers and performances of new work continues to this day. Another example is Birmingham Contemporary Music Group's Sound Investment program, which allows the public to purchase units of £150 towards the cost of commissioning new music, in return for benefits such as a named acknowledgement, an invitation to

rehearsals or a chance to meet the composer.

Dr Gwendolyn Tietze, the group's Director of Development says that the scheme has been highly successful, *"We launched Sound Investment in 1991 with two aims: to raise money to be able to commission more composers; and to involve more people in the excitement of creating new work. So far, Sound Investment has helped us premiere 68 new works by a variety of emerging and established UK and international composers, raised over £300,000 for new commissions, and it has involved over 300 individual donors."*

Some media writers have seen new opportunities from the rise of online crowdfunding, with independent film and video game makers able to use the technology to plug into an alternative source of money to put projects into production. Richard Jacques, an award-winning media writer has been asked to create music for the online trailers used to generate crowdfunding income, and says these platforms can work well to get interesting and more indie projects off the ground. Richard recommends keeping an eye on projects that are in development as a way of tapping into potential score-writing opportunities.

## INDEPENDENT FUNDRAISING

Online crowdfunding platforms can also offer the individual composer or songwriter or small organisation the option of doing this sort of fundraising independently without having the infrastructure of a commissioning organisation or music publisher to financially support their writing. Websites such as Pledge Music, Indiegogo, Kickstarter, My Major Company and others are all geared up to connect individuals with music projects in need of funding. But how suitable are these platforms for the work of songwriters and composers? Certainly, one of the most obvious challenges is that most of the active crowdfunding campaigns for music online are being run by performers. The typical model is that supporters will be offered a physical or digital album and access to a live performance as a reward for their support, which may not be something that all writers can offer. Another issue is that in order to crowdfund you need a crowd. Writers who are also artists and have their own fan base are likely to have a ready-made group to approach, but others will find that this is something that has to be developed from scratch.

On the surface, crowdfunding sites may not seem like a natural home for writers and composers, but digging a little deeper, it is clear that there are advantages to them. One of the benefits of these sites is that they do allow more unusual and interesting projects to

**"Websites such as Pledge Music, Indiegogo, Kickstarter, My Major Company and others are all geared up to connect individuals with music projects in need of funding."**

find their audience without necessarily appealing to the commercial mainstream. Projects can take almost any shape or style, giving huge scope for creativity in how the work is delivered. Writers may find that they get a refreshing amount of support from their contacts and enjoy the experience of a dialogue with their network and the public directly as they create their work.

Author Miranda Ward experienced these benefits when she crowd-funded the publication of her first book 'F\*\*k The Radio, We've Got Apple Juice: Essays on a rock 'n' roll band'. The book is a memoir based on her experiences as a freelance writer and her friendship with Oxford-based band Little Fish. The book explores the nature of success and creativity, through the story of the band. Miranda was supported by fans of the band, readers of her blog and the local music community in Oxford to write the book. There was demand for the book, which Miranda was able to demonstrate to the publisher Unbound, by getting grassroots financial support. Miranda remarked, "*Fans of the band were prepared to throw their money at it and spread the word*". She warns, though, that independent fundraising does take a great deal of work, "*I was really happy to do it, but it's quite an exhausting process...I felt like I was a broken record constantly saying 'support this thing'...and then you have to sit down and actually write it...I felt I had a responsibility to these people [who had pledged money]...it is a lot of investment on both sides*".

## LIFE CYCLE OF A CROWD-FUNDING CAMPAIGN

Crista Kende is a professional freelance violist based in New York City. For over a decade she played on a viola on loan from a foundation, but when she completed her Masters at the conservatoire Juilliard she had to find an instrument of her own. As she also has a job working at crowd-funding site Indiegogo, it was natural for her to turn to the platform to raise money for a world-class instrument to continue her career. Crista set out to raise US \$ 24,000 over a 30-day campaign, and kindly shared some details of the process with The Works.

Speaking from her New York office, Crista says: "*There was definitely a lot of planning, a few months (worth). I don't think I understood the whole process until I did it for myself*". During the campaign she had to be very proactive about contacting people, publicising her campaign, updating her page and other social media and responding to queries, "*It's really like a part time job, spending a few hours per day – you work for it*", she says. This included reaching out to Viola and Classical Music groups on sites like Reddit, and contacting people on Twitter she thought would be able to publicise her campaign. She got a late boost from a mention on Norman Lebrecht's widely read 'Slipped Disc' blog in the UK, and all of this helped her break out of her inner circle and reach strangers.

The kind of perks that Crista included in her campaign were carefully chosen so

**“Projects can take almost any shape or style, giving huge scope for creativity in how the work is delivered.”**

that she would be able to put the money raised towards the cost of the Viola, and not spend it on fulfilling the perks. She offered Viola lessons, a 'Crista Channel' where she would release one recording each month of Viola pieces performed on her new Viola and tickets to a recital amongst other benefits.

25% of the money was raised within the first week. Then there was a 'lull' in the middle weeks, which Indiegogo says most campaigns experience. 2 days from the end date, there was still \$11,000 dollars to raise, but the target was reached by continually reminding people of the countdown to the deadline, which spurred some late funders into action. In the end, 188 different people contributed between \$5 and \$1500 to the campaign.

Crista estimated that she already knew around 75% of the people who contributed– some were family members, but others were loosely connected to her, and people that she would not have approached for funding had it not been in the context of the campaign.

Crista's primary tip is not to approach people feeling as if you are simply asking for money, the exercise needs to be treated as, "creating a market place for your services and finding a way to communicate with your audience on a different level". She says that in her experience, "*people are actually very interested*".

## CLASSIC CROWDFUNDING

A few examples of successful crowd-funding campaigns for classical music projects:

- [Armenian Guitarist Gohar Vardanyan raised \\$3,000 for her debut recording](#)
- [The Declassified raised \\$25,000 for the launch of a new organisation for classical music](#)
- [Lincoln Youth Symphony fundraised for a commission on Kickstarter](#)
- [Serenata Renaissance and Folk Music Group on Pledge Music](#)

## EARLY ADOPTERS

Over on this side of the Atlantic, and in a popular music genre, BASCA member Rob Flanagan of London band Some Velvet Morning used the French site My Major Label to raise £100,000 for the group's second album. The three-piece write all of their music together, and had already released their own debut album and an EP, before launching their funding campaign in late 2010. The site offers members a chance to invest in projects with profits being split between the investors, the band and the record label. This campaign saw the majority of the money coming from investors hoping to make a return on a few hundred or few thousand pounds speculated on the band, and fans putting in smaller amounts. Fans and investors were offered copies of the album and other rewards such as T-shirts, studio visits, vinyl and artwork prints, depending on their level of investment. The money was raised within 6 weeks.

Rob says that the group's good quality audio-visual material was important in winning the backing of investors on the site, "*We got a synch in the trailer of a film called Kickass with one of our songs called 'How To Start A Revolution', and were allowed to use the footage for our video. I intercut the film footage with video of us performing, which ended up looking like a very high quality product*".

Some Velvet Morning also posted demo material online, telling fans that as each new fund-raising milestone was reached, another demo would be released. This helped to drive the campaign forward,

with fans reinvesting or encouraging friends to back the campaign in order to hear the next demo. After a change of distributor and label personnel, the resulting album 'Allies' was released in Europe and online by My Major Company/Warner Music on May 13th 2013.

## WITHIN REACH

So crowdfunding is something that isn't new, but the online platforms available put it into the reach of every songwriter, composer and author – whatever their genre or size of project. The crowdfunding platforms will offer support to you as you plan your campaign. Pledge Music, for example, can offer guidance on choosing the right funding target, using a ratio that look at online engagement with fans. They also offer advice on the right rewards to offer, and introductions to their partners who can help with publicity, manufacturing and fulfilment. Or there's Indiegogo's Customer Happiness team, which offer extensive online advice about how to organise a campaign. Ultimately, though, the best way to pick up some inspiration is to look at successful campaigns, so there are links to all the campaigns mentioned in this article listed below which might spark even greater use of crowdfunding for new music.

## HOW THEY DID IT...

Discover more about the campaigns highlighted in this blog:

- [Amanda Palmer's Kickstarter campaign](#)
- [Ginger Wildheart on Pledge Music](#)
- [Birmingham Contemporary Music Group's Sound Investment scheme](#)
- [The history of the Royal Philharmonic Society](#)
- [Richard Jacques](#)
- [Miranda Ward and Little Fish on Unbound](#)
- [Crista Kende raised \\$24,000 to purchase a viola](#)
- [Some Velvet Morning raised £100,000 of investment on My Major Company](#)

Written by Remi Harris, Remi Harris Consulting. This article first appeared in issue 37 of The Works - the magazine of BASCA, the British Academy of Songwriters, Composers and Authors. Reproduced with kind permission.

# PLEDGEMUSIC - THE DIRECT TO FAN OPTION COMES OF AGE



by Julian Wall, PledgeMusic



PLEDGE  
MUSIC

**PLEDGE MUSIC OPENED SOME SIX years ago and today, it is probably the leading direct-to-fan pre-ordering and crowdfunding music-company, launching 1000+ new projects each year, working with bands and artists from all musical genres and at all levels of development.**



Recent projects on PledgeMusic have included The Libertines, Bring Me The Horizon, Killing Joke, The Darkness, Def Leppard, Slade, Queensrÿche, Ginger Wildheart, The Jam, Ash, Idlewild, Reverend & The Makers, Erasure, China Crisis, OMD and UB40. At the time of writing (February 2016), PledgeMusic is campaigning and providing album pre-ordering store pages for new titles by Marillion, Megadeth, Rob Zombie, The Wonderstuff, Primal Scream, Gary Numan, Right Said Fred and Jeff Healey amongst others. Many of these are in conjunction with labels, publishing and artist management companies as well as stand-alone artists who wish to self-release their music.

Further details of all projects on PledgeMusic can be found on <http://www.pledgemusic.com>.

Alongside the above, PledgeMusic is also working with many new, developing and embryonic artists, who are taking their first steps in building a recording career. Over the past 12 months, PledgeMusic partnered with a range of music organisations to help unsigned artists.

## **HELP MUSICIANS UK**

In conjunction with Help Musicians UK, PledgeMusic have been running an



Emerging Artists Fund to provide finance (through PledgeMusic campaigns and additional contributions from Help Musicians UK) to support a diverse range of new artists who have the talent and the 'DIY' drive to build a long-term career. This on-going programme was announced in 2015 and in the first year has helped over 20 new artists and bands including Elf Kid, Telegram, Lottery Winners, Roseau, Ghost Riders In The Sky and The Pearl Harts. Details of this programme and how to apply can be found on the Help Musicians UK web-site; <https://www.helpmusicians.org.uk/emerging-musicians/current-opportunities/emerging-artists-fund>



## LIVERPOOL SOUND CITY

Founded in 2008, the Liverpool Sound City festival and conference has gone from strength to strength. From the beginning, the event has been very forward on featuring new and up-coming bands. In 2015 the Sound City organisers partnered with PledgeMusic to offer the opportunity

for three new acts to run their own PledgeMusic campaigns and play live at the event.

The acts chosen – Sankofa, Gerry Cinnamon and Scarlet – all gained significant exposure from being part of the new partnership and went on to secure their targetted PledgeMusic funding. The three acts benefitted from significant career boosts - singer/songwriter Gerry Cinnamon played at the 2015 Scottish Alternative Music Awards and T In The Park Festival; Sankofa as well as securing the funding they required to record their debut album, found themselves live dates supporting name artists and Scarlet secured the services of an international artist management agency.



Gerry Cinnamon Sankofa

## KAROUSEL MUSIC

Karousel Music are a not-for-profit community interest company, promoting co-operation and collaboration amongst artists and industry, lobbying for writers and performers. PledgeMusic teamed up with Karousel in 2014 to promote concert nights for new and developing talent and have been regularly staging them since. Acts that have performed at these events include MALKA, The Galleons, The Black Feathers, SHEL and 6Music presenter and

**“The business of making music has never been stronger. The tools have never been better.”**



**Benji Rogers,**  
Founder and  
CEO of PledgeMusic

recording artist Tom Robinson. Notable highlight coming from the partnership to date have included MALKA, who funded her debut album via a PledgeMusic campaign and whose subsequent singles went on to get considerable airplay on Radio 1 and 6Music.

All of the above partnerships provide an immensely valuable platform in gaining exposure for new, developing artists and helping them to begin developing their career. PledgeMusic is committed to helping unsigned artists and bands and working with them to launch campaigns and break through. Writing on the 6th anniversary of PledgeMusic, Founder and CEO Benji Rogers says, “Six years

has taught me a lot. It has taught me that ‘good enough never is,’ and that it’s easy to look at the music business and see only gloom and doom. However, I see hope, brilliance, and opportunities like never before. The business of making music has never been stronger. The tools have never been better. The fans are more numerous and ready to participate than at any time in history... I could not be more grateful to the incredible artists who grace our platform with their brilliance and bravery each and every day.”

For further information about PledgeMusic, please contact Julian at [julian.wall@pledgemusic.com](mailto:julian.wall@pledgemusic.com)

# COMPLETING A FUNDING APPLICATION



Musicians'  
Union



**MOST FUNDING AWARDS WILL REQUIRE applicants to complete a comprehensive application form. Whilst these forms can appear intrusive and complicated, they are usually relatively straight forward to complete.**

[www.theMU.org](http://www.theMU.org)  
[@WeAreTheMU](#)  
[#BehindEveryMusician](#)

**Musicians'  
Union**



## **READ THE BRIEF**

Is this the right funding for your idea/project? Most funding awards have fairly strict briefs and you're unlikely to win an award if your project doesn't clearly meet the criteria. However, some organisations also offer 'open funding' awards which invite a wider and less specific range of applications.

## **GIVE YOURSELF ADEQUATE TIME TO COMPLETE THE FORM**

It may require you to obtain information from other people and/or organisations.

## PROVIDE ONLY THE INFORMATION THAT IS REQUIRED

Answer the questions fully, but don't include superfluous data that will render the application difficult or overly time-consuming to assess.

Some applications request video footage in addition to or instead of written accounts and proposals.

## PROOF THE APPLICATION THOROUGHLY BEFORE SUBMITTING

Check for typos, consistency and also ensure that all of the numerical entries in your budget(s) add up appropriately.

## BE REALISTIC IN YOUR FORECASTING

Where you are asked to provide budgets, be economic and resourceful but don't underestimate the true cost of resources or people's skills. If you're hiring musicians as part of your project, use MU rates where applicable as these are widely recognised by funding assessors.

You may also need to individually

negotiate rates with artists, depending on their profile and expertise.

## BE MINDFUL THAT FINANCIAL EVIDENCE WILL BE REQUIRED

It is often necessary to provide receipts and/or invoices for every financial transaction undertaken as part of a funded project. Bear this in mind when obtaining quotes and costings as part of your budgeting.

## BE TRUE TO YOUR WORD

You will need to deliver your project as outlined in your application. Don't write things purely for the benefit of obtaining funding, as you will be required to demonstrate that you have executed a project as promised, in terms of finance, creativity and delivery.



**“Answer the questions fully, but don't include superfluous data that will render the application difficult or overly time-consuming to assess.”**

# WANT TO KNOW MORE ABOUT WHAT WE DO AT THE UNSIGNED GUIDE?

the unsigned guide

**THE UNSIGNED GUIDE** is a music industry directory packed with over 8,500 music contacts spanning 50 areas of the business including record labels, music publishing companies, recording studios & rehearsal rooms, venues, promoters, music blogs, radio stations, festivals, producers and loads more!

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Since first publishing their music industry directory in 2003, The Unsigned Guide has become an essential resource for aspiring bands & artists, producers in the making, music students, plus new record labels, promoters starting out and anyone else working towards a career in the music business.

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Membership to The Unsigned Guide starts from only £4.99 per month and you can cancel after your first month, so there are no tie-ins. But that's not all we give you as a member... There is even more advice from industry experts in the form of blogs, reports, facts & figures, all at your disposal in our Advice hub.

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We have money-saving offers galore for our members! Search Deals & Discounts to find exclusive opportunities to save money with some of the businesses listed in our directory on recording time, rehearsal sessions, mastering, video & photo shoots, merchandise and loads more besides!

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Each month our Spotlight blog features 5 of the best tracks submitted by our band & artist members. We also send the selected tracks onto a bunch of experienced folks from all walks of the music industry. Take a look to see who could be listening to your music [here](#).

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**IT'S THE ULTIMATE  
TOOLKIT FOR ANYONE  
TRYING TO GET  
AHEAD IN THE MUSIC  
INDUSTRY, SO WHAT  
ARE YOU WAITING FOR?**

If you have any questions or queries for The Unsigned Guide, feel free to drop us a line at: [info@theunsignedguide.com](mailto:info@theunsignedguide.com) or call our office on 0161 233 1880.