Article: Entertainment and Show Business

Summary

This article covers the following jobs:

- Actor/Actress
- Broadcasting Production Assistant
- Broadcasting Researcher
- Costume Designer
- Dancer
- Make-up Artist
- Music Manager
- Musician
- Scriptwriter
- Singer
- Theatre/TV Designer.

The job descriptions are only a brief summary. It is recommended that you do further research on jobs that interest you.

Performing

Performing requires qualities such as dedication, determination, self-discipline, self-confidence and physical and mental stamina, as well as talent. You will need to:

- practise and rehearse to reach a high standard
- cope with competition, criticism and rejection
- work long, irregular hours, often away from home.

Only a small number of performers earn high salaries, so it may be necessary to teach or do other work as well. Some of the jobs in performing can be combined, eg, actors sometimes dance and sing as well as act.

Dancer

Dancers usually learn many types of dance, but specialise in one area, such as classical ballet, contemporary dance or ballroom dancing. Dancers spend hours practising and learning new steps and routines.

Because dancers use movement to tell a story, they must be able to interpret the music and choreography effectively. They sometimes do some research into their role, to help them to understand the character they are portraying.

Most professional dancers have had dance lessons from an early age, and have further training later, to help them pass a graded set of dancing exams. Some specialist dance schools train talented young dancers.

Entry requirements vary between dance schools. Performance ability, physique and personality are usually more important than exam passes.

Singer

Singers specialise in either classical or popular music. All singers spend a lot of time practising, and some attend singing lessons. Until they have had enough success to employ a manager or agent, most singers have to organise their own bookings, negotiate fees and contracts, and organise and plan performances.

As well as doing live performances, some singers spend time in recording studios. As they become more successful, they spend time touring, promoting their music and doing concerts.

Singing in the field of popular music doesn't have a clearly defined path of formal training, although some entrants may have had singing lessons.
Possible routes into classical singing include:

- taking graded exams
- joining a choir
- taking a specialist course at music college
- taking a music degree at a university or college of higher education
- taking a postgraduate course at music college.

**Actor/Actress**

Actors work in live stage performances and/or recorded media such as film and television. Their job is to bring life, as effectively as possible, to the role they are playing. They use their own experience and emotions to help them portray characters.

Actors usually work under the guidance of a director.

Many actors have periods of unemployment between jobs. During these times, they may have to take on other jobs.

There are no minimum requirements for entering this career, but most actors complete a professional training course at a drama school. There are many different routes into acting.

**Musician**

Musicians spend time practising, rehearsing, auditioning, and performing, as well as planning and organising performances. These activities are sometimes combined with teaching or composing.

Classical musicians usually start lessons at an early age and study for graded music exams. Then they might take a specialist course at a music college, or a degree in music at university. Students who reach the standard required to pursue a performing, composing or conducting career, usually go on to a postgraduate or advanced course at music college.

Once trained, classical musicians gain experience and develop contacts by taking part in competitions, festivals and concerts. The majority of recently trained musicians perform a variety of solo, choral/orchestral and ensemble work.

Many entrants to non-classical music are self-taught. Non-classical musicians perform at live gigs to build up a following, promote themselves on the internet and send demos to record companies.

Representatives from the Artists and Repertoire (A&R) department of record and publishing companies might respond to demos, view a live gig and offer the performer a recording contract.

**Behind the Scenes**

Behind the scenes work includes a variety of different jobs, including writing and researching, designing sets, working with costume or make-up, and managing performers and performances. Entry to this type of work is very competitive.

You may have to work long and irregular hours, involving weekends, evenings and nights. For many jobs, you will need to travel.

**Music Manager**

Music managers are responsible for an individual singer/band or have a specialist function in a music publishing or record company.

Band managers may be involved in getting a new band or singer started. This could be by raising money to buy equipment and finding appropriate venues for rehearsals and performances. Band managers have contact with record companies to negotiate contracts.

Publishing companies work on behalf of songwriters by promoting songs to recording artists. Managers who work in the Artists and Repertoire (A&R) department of a publishing company seek out promising bands or singers and secure airtime on television and radio.

Record companies employ specialists in each of these areas, but also offer opportunities in record production, marketing and accounts management.
Qualifications for entry to this work vary greatly. Communication and organisational skills are just as important as academic qualifications and relevant work experience. Courses in business and music industry management are available at colleges and universities.

**Scriptwriter**

Scriptwriters write material for performers to speak. Material ranges from comedy and light entertainment to serious drama and documentary. Scriptwriters write for film, television or radio.

They work on materials such as complete plays, episodes for long-running series and sketches for comedy shows.

Established scriptwriters work largely on commissions from producers and follow a brief that sets out the length of performance, characters, situation and so on.

If they want to work on an original idea, they first need to find out what kind of material will interest producers and commissioning editors.

There are no set entry requirements. Courses in scriptwriting, and relevant subjects such as creative writing, are available. However, the most important factors for entry are your writing abilities, creativity and ability to understand your audience.

**Broadcasting Production Assistant**

Broadcasting production assistants (PAs) provide administrative support to producers. They work on programmes in either TV or radio.

Possible tasks include typing scripts, booking studios, organising and attending planning meetings, making arrangements for actors and other artistes, sorting out travel and accommodation for film crews, and working in the control room.

Entry to this type of work is very competitive. Entrants often have A levels or equivalent, or higher qualifications such as HNDs or degrees. Secretarial skills are also usually needed.

**Broadcasting Researcher**

Broadcasting researchers provide the basic material for radio and television programmes. This involves developing ideas for programmes, finding out relevant information, interviewing people and writing briefs for presenters and interviewers.

It may be necessary to travel anywhere in the country to do research, so long hours are often involved, including evenings and weekends.

Entry to this job is very competitive. Most entrants have a degree, training in journalism and relevant work experience.

**Make-up Artist**

Make-up artists do the hair and make-up for people in television, film and on stage. In television news and chat shows, most of the people only need 'corrective' make-up. This means tidying up their hair and putting some foundation on, so they don't look pale under the studio lights.

For drama and film productions, make-up artists use a wider range of techniques. They may need to make someone look older than they really are, or as if they have an injury or illness. For dramas set in a particular period in history, the make-up artist tries to recreate the look.

To become a make-up artist, you need to train in hairdressing, beauty therapy or make-up and then usually gain experience as an assistant. Entry to this job is competitive.

**Costume Designer**

Costume designers work in theatre, film or television production. They design costumes and pick accessories such as jewellery, hats and bags to suit particular characters and settings.

Before they start to design, they read the script and carry out detailed research, especially if they are designing period costumes. They then take measurements of the cast members and create the costumes. They work closely
with directors, producers, set designers and performers so that the designs suit the overall look of the production.

The usual route towards a career as a costume designer is to complete a degree or HND in a relevant design specialism such as theatre, costume or fashion design.

Theatre/Television Designer

Theatre/television designers design and supervise the creation of settings for theatre, television and film productions. They read scripts and then work out what the sets should look like.

Theatre/television designers make decisions about the size of sets, colour schemes and scenic features. They do careful research, for example, to make sure that any historical details are correct.

When they have finished their research, they produce scale models and detailed drawings. They find, buy or hire props.

To become a theatre/television designer you are likely to need a degree in a relevant subject such as theatre design, interior design or architecture.

Further Information

Contacts

- ScreenSkills
  Skills for the creative industries
  Email: info@creativeskillset.org
  Website: www.creativeskillset.org

- Creative Choices
  Publisher: Creative & Cultural Skills
  Email: info@creative-choices.co.uk
  Website: www.creative-choices.co.uk

- Creative & Cultural Skills
  Skills for craft, cultural heritage, design, literature, music, performing arts and visual arts
  Email: london@ccskills.org.uk
  Website: ccskills.org.uk

- Council for Dance Education and Training (CDET)
  Tel: 020 7240 5703
  Email: info@cdet.org.uk
  Website: www.cdet.org.uk

- Incorporated Society of Musicians (ISM)
  Tel: 020 7629 4413
  Email: membership@ism.org
  Website: www.ism.org

- Worshipful Company of Musicians
  Tel: 020 7496 8980
  Email: clerk@wcom.org.uk
  Website: www.wcom.org.uk

- One Dance UK
  Tel: 020 7713 0730
  Email: info@danceuk.org
  Website: www.danceuk.org

- Dance Ireland
  Tel: 01 8558800
  Email: info@danceireland.ie
Website: www.danceireland.ie

• Equity
  Tel: 020 7379 6000
  Email: info@equity.org.uk
  Website: www.equity.org.uk

• Equity (Scotland)
  Scottish enquiries
  Tel: 0141 2482472
  Email: scotland@equity.org.uk
  Website: www.equity.org.uk

• Federation of Drama Schools (FDS)
  Tel: 020 7529 8794
  Email: info@dramauk.co.uk
  Website: www.dramauk.co.uk

• The Stage
  Entertainment and performing arts news
  Website: www.thestage.co.uk

• National Theatre Wales (Welsh Enquiries)
  Tel: 029 2035 3070
  Email: info@nationaltheatrewales.org
  Website: nationaltheatrewales.org

• Wales Screen
  Website: www.screenwales.com

• Cyfle (Welsh Enquiries)
  Address: S4C Media Centre, Parc Ty Glas, Llanishen, Cardiff, UK, CF14 5DU
  Tel: 029 2046 5533
  Email: caerdydd@cyfle.co.uk
  Website: www.cyfle.co.uk

• S4C (Welsh Enquiries)
  Address: Parc Ty Glas, Llanishen, Cardiff, UK, CF14 5DU
  Tel: 029 2046 5533
  Website: www.s4c.co.uk

Related Careers

• Costume Designer
• Theatre Designer
• Music Manager
• Make-up Artist
• Broadcasting Researcher
• Production Runner
• Scriptwriter
• Actor/Actress
• Dancer
• Musician
• Singer
• Children's Entertainer
• Music Producer