

THE MUSIC CAREER MAP

Where the roles in the business of music are: Pay, demand, AI exposure, and who's hiring.

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YOUR PLACE IN THE BUSINESS OF MUSIC

The business of music is hiring, and it rewards people who treat it like a craft. Whether you are trying to break in or you are already inside and aiming higher, the same things move you forward: knowing which roles are growing, what they pay, and the exact skills each one rewards. This map lays that out role by role, so your next move is a decision you make with evidence instead of guesswork. It is a competitive field, and technology keeps changing how some of the work gets done. That is not a reason to hesitate. It is the reason skills and a credential matter more at every stage, because the people who keep learning are the ones who keep getting hired. Use the profiles ahead to find where you fit and what to build next.

WHAT EACH PROFILE GIVES YOU

- 1

COMPENSATION: What the role pays from entry to senior, drawn from current music-industry job ads and grounded in government wage data. Real numbers you can plan a move around.
- 2

DEMAND: Where the hiring is heading, so you target roles with room to grow into.
- 3

AI EXPOSURE: What technology is changing in the work and what stays human, so you build skills that last.
- 4

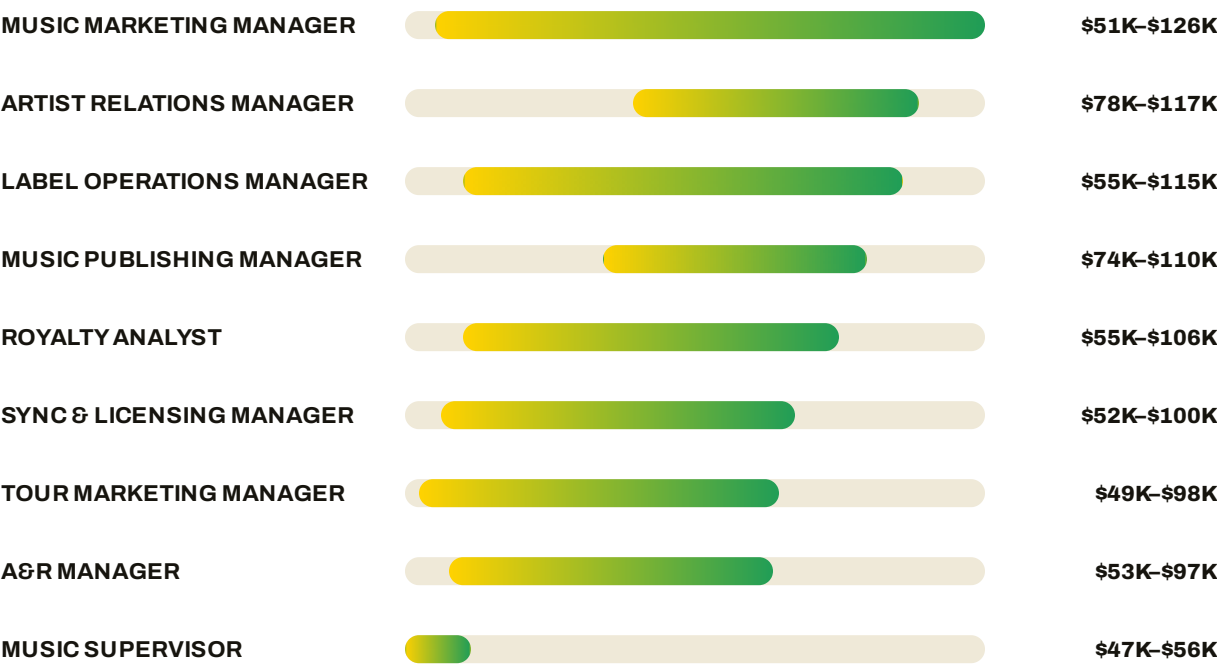
SKILLS: The hard and soft skills the role hires for, plus the ones that keep you competitive as you advance.
- 5

YOUR NEXT MOVE: One concrete step whether you are entering or leveling up, and the credential that closes the gap.

EARNINGS AT A GLANCE

This page sets the stage before the role profiles. It shows the pay range for each role in this guide, from a typical entry point to a senior level, so you can see how the field is shaped overall before you read any single role in depth. Read it as a map, not a ranking. Each bar covers one role's own range, drawn from current US job ads and US government wage data, and the roles sit in different parts of the field, so the bars are not meant to be lined up against each other. Use them to find where your interests and your earning goals overlap, then turn to those role pages.

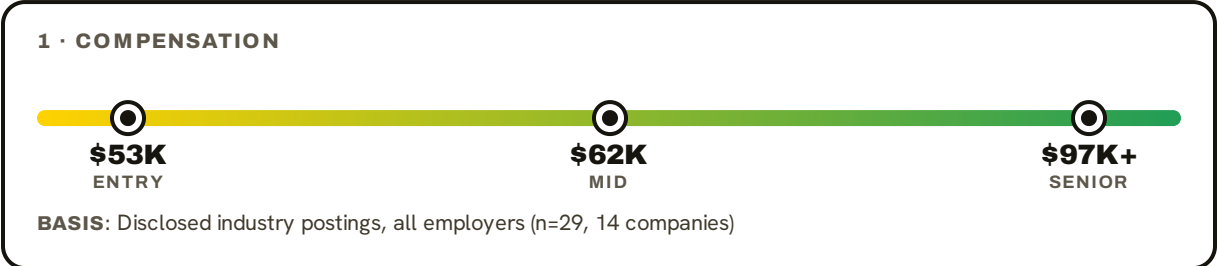
Roles in this guide range from about \$47K at entry to \$126K and up at senior.



These figures come from current US job postings (as of June 2026), gathered across many independent employers, not from Yellowbrick. Pay varies by region, employer, and experience, is not guaranteed, and is specific to each role, so the ranges are not comparable from one role to the next.

A&R MANAGER

You find the next breakout artist before anyone else does, then build the deal and the plan to make them last. A&R Managers sit at the creative and commercial center of a label, shaping rosters that define what people listen to. Few roles carry that kind of cultural weight.



2 • DEMAND

↗ Growing

Hiring for A&R Managers is growing, as labels and independents alike compete to identify and develop talent before the market does.

3 • AI EXPOSURE

LOW

AUTOMATING	STAYS HUMAN
Promotional outreach drafts, scheduling, accounting statements	Artist instinct, relationship-building, deal negotiation, career strategy

IN PRACTICE: AI surfaces streaming pattern data that informs scouting lists, but the judgment call on artist potential stays entirely human.

- 4 • CORE SKILLS
- Artist scouting
 - Deal structuring
 - Talent evaluation
 - Roster development

- FUTURE-PROOF SKILLS
- Data-driven scouting
 - Direct-to-fan strategy

- EXAMPLE EMPLOYERS HIRING
- Sony Music Entertainment
 - BMG
 - Believe

Illustrative examples drawn from recent US job postings, not an endorsement or a guarantee of current openings.

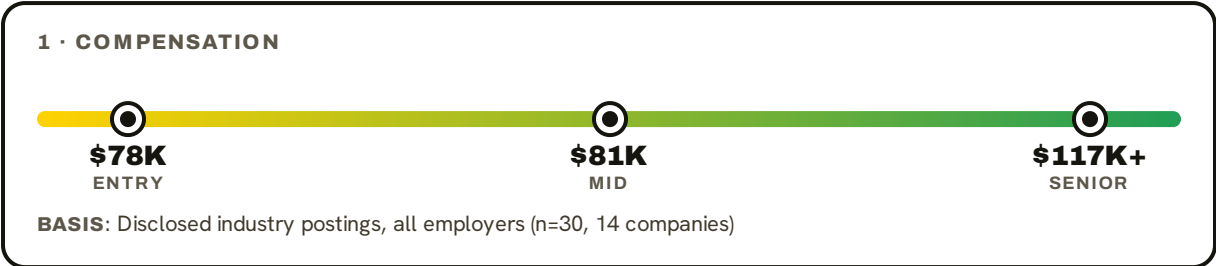
5 • YOUR MOVE

Build a mock roster pitch deck: real artists, your evaluation, your deal rationale. That artifact proves your eye and your business thinking. Pairing it with a music industry credential sharpens the deal-structuring language that separates scouts from managers.

YOUR NEXT STEP →

ARTIST RELATIONS MANAGER

You are the bridge between talent and opportunity: nurturing artist careers, aligning creative visions with business strategy, and making sure every campaign lands the way it should. In a people-driven industry, this role is pure relationship currency.



2 • DEMAND

↗ Growing

Hiring for artist relations talent is on the rise, making this a strong moment to plant your flag or move up.

3 • AI EXPOSURE

LOW

AUTOMATING

Scheduling, accounting statements, and promotional distribution logistics

STAYS HUMAN

Relationship-building, negotiation, career strategy, and talent judgment

IN PRACTICE: AI may surface listener data to inform campaign timing, but the human judgment behind every artist conversation stays yours.

- 4 • CORE SKILLS
- Artist development

Relationship management

Campaign coordination

Project management

- FUTURE-PROOF SKILLS
- Direct-to-fan & community strategy

Cross-platform audience growth

- EXAMPLE EMPLOYERS HIRING
- Sony Music Entertainment

Warner Music Group

Universal Music Group

5 • YOUR MOVE

Build a mock artist development plan as a portfolio piece, showing campaign coordination and project management in action. Sharpening your relationship management instincts, paired with a music business credential, positions you to step into rooms where careers get made.

YOUR NEXT STEP →

MUSIC MARKETING MANAGER

You build the campaigns that turn music into moments people remember. As a Music Marketing Manager, you connect artists to audiences through strategy, data, and instinct, owning every channel from streaming platforms to social. This is where creative vision and business impact meet.

1 • COMPENSATION



BASIS: Disclosed industry postings, all employers (n=30, 25 companies)

2 • DEMAND

↗ Growing

Hiring for music marketing talent is growing as labels, independents, and streaming platforms all compete for skilled strategists who can move audiences.

3 • AI EXPOSURE



MODERATE

AUTOMATING

Market research
synthesis, sales
forecasting, survey
analysis, distribution
data

STAYS HUMAN

Creative strategy,
vendor negotiation,
taste-driven
positioning, legal
judgment

IN PRACTICE: AI tools help music marketers analyze listener behavior and optimize ad targeting, so human creative judgment still drives every campaign decision.

4 • CORE SKILLS

- Linkfire
- data analysis tool
- Campaign strategy
- Streaming-platform pitching
- Audience growth

FUTURE-PROOF SKILLS

- Streaming & social analytics
- Direct-to-fan campaigns
- AI-assisted production tools

EXAMPLE EMPLOYERS HIRING

- Universal Music Group
- Sony Music Entertainment
- Warner Music Group

5 • YOUR MOVE

Build a mock campaign deck for an artist you love: pitch angles, platform targets, audience growth tactics. Sharpening your streaming-platform pitching and data storytelling will set you apart.

YOUR NEXT STEP →

SYNC & LICENSING MANAGER

You're the person who gets a song placed in a film, cleared for a brand campaign, or licensed to a streaming platform. That means negotiating deals, managing catalogs, and turning creative work into revenue. It's one of the most relationship-driven, high-stakes roles in the music business.

1 • COMPENSATION



BASIS: Disclosed industry postings, all employers (n=32, 25 companies)

2 • DEMAND

↗ Growing

Licensing managers are in consistent demand as content creators and brands seek cleared music at scale across every screen and platform.

3 • AI EXPOSURE



LOW-MODERATE

AUTOMATING

Accounting statements, promotional scheduling, contract tracking

STAYS HUMAN

Relationship-building, career strategy, negotiation judgment

IN PRACTICE: AI tools can surface catalog matches for a creative brief faster, but the negotiation and rights judgment still sit squarely with you.

4 • CORE SKILLS

Salesforce Rights clearance Licensing negotiation Catalog knowledge Contract drafting

FUTURE-PROOF SKILLS

Rights & metadata fluency Cross-media licensing strategy

EXAMPLE EMPLOYERS HIRING

Concord Universal Music Group Sony Music Entertainment

5 • YOUR MOVE

Build a mock sync pitch deck for a catalog of songs targeting visual media. Sharpen your rights clearance and contract drafting skills, since those travel. Earning a music industry credential gives your negotiation vocabulary and business fluency a credible foundation to stand on.

YOUR NEXT STEP →

MUSIC PUBLISHING MANAGER

You protect songs, track who owns what, and make sure every stream, sync, and sale pays the right people. Music publishing managers are the legal backbone of recorded music, turning creative work into lasting income. It is a role where precision and passion for music meet.

1 · COMPENSATION



BASIS: Disclosed industry postings, all employers (n=7, 3 companies)

2 · DEMAND

↗ Growing

Hiring for publishing managers is growing as catalogs expand and rights administration becomes more complex across global markets.

3 · AI EXPOSURE



LOW

AUTOMATING

Accounting statements, scheduling, promotional distribution

STAYS HUMAN

Negotiating deals, career strategy, relationship-building, client judgment

IN PRACTICE: AI assists with flagging duplicate registrations and scanning large catalogs for rights gaps, while human judgment drives every decision.

4 · CORE SKILLS

Copyright administration

Royalty splits

Catalog management

Rights registration

FUTURE-PROOF SKILLS

Rights & royalty systems fluency

Catalog data management

EXAMPLE EMPLOYERS HIRING

Universal Music Group

Kobalt Music

5 · YOUR MOVE

Build a sample catalog audit or mock royalty split memo to show what you can do. Sharpen your grip on copyright registration and licensing workflows, then earn a credential that puts the vocabulary and frameworks behind your experience.

YOUR NEXT STEP →

ROYALTY ANALYST

You track every cent a song earns, reconcile statements across streaming platforms, and make sure artists and rights holders get paid correctly. In a world built on intellectual property, royalty analysts are the ones keeping it honest. This work is precise, consequential, and always in demand.



2 • DEMAND

↗ Growing

Hiring for royalty analysts is on an upward track, as catalogs grow and rights management becomes more complex across global markets.

3 • AI EXPOSURE

HIGH

AUTOMATING Reconciling accounts, flagging discrepancies, and generating audit reports	STAYS HUMAN Advising management, interpreting compliance risk, and judgment calls on fraud
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IN PRACTICE: AI tools flag statement discrepancies and surface royalty underpayments faster, but analysts still own the judgment calls on complex rights conflicts.

- 4 • CORE SKILLS
- Vistex

Power BI

Royalty accounting

Statement reconciliation

Contract interpretation

- FUTURE-PROOF SKILLS
- Royalty & rights data systems

Financial modeling & audit

AI-assisted production tools

- EXAMPLE EMPLOYERS HIRING
- Concord

Universal Music Group

Kobalt Music

5 • YOUR MOVE

Build a sample reconciliation workflow using real-world royalty statement formats to show employers what you can do. Deepening your contract interpretation skills sharpens your value whether you are new or navigating complex catalog deals.

YOUR NEXT STEP →

TOUR MARKETING MANAGER

You map the journey from announcement to sold-out show, driving ticket sales and building buzz city by city. Tour Marketing Managers are the engine behind every successful run, turning strategy into screaming crowds. It is hands-on, high-stakes, and completely yours to own.

1 · COMPENSATION



BASIS: Disclosed industry postings, all employers (n=27, 11 companies)

2 · DEMAND

★ Active hiring

Based on current job-posting activity for this role. No government trend projection is available, so we report how active hiring is right now, not a growth trend.

3 · AI EXPOSURE



LOW

AUTOMATING

Campaign reporting, audience segmentation, and scheduling logistics

STAYS HUMAN

Artist relationships, creative strategy, and deal negotiation

IN PRACTICE: AI tools can surface audience targeting patterns, but the local instincts and promoter relationships that sell shows remain firmly human-driven.

4 · CORE SKILLS

Tour campaign strategy Ticketing analytics Local marketing Promoter coordination

FUTURE-PROOF SKILLS

Live-event audience analytics Direct-to-fan campaigns

EXAMPLE EMPLOYERS HIRING

Live Nation

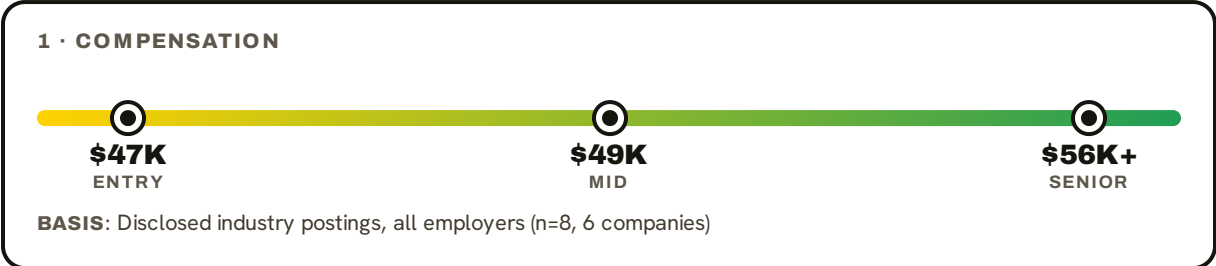
5 · YOUR MOVE

Build a mock tour campaign, complete with market-by-market strategy and a ticketing analytics breakdown, to show real decision-making chops. Sharpen your promoter coordination skills by connecting with regional venue and talent buyers.

YOUR NEXT STEP →

MUSIC SUPERVISOR

You pick the song that makes a scene unforgettable, then you make sure the rights are locked and the budget holds. Music supervisors sit at the creative and legal crossroads of film, TV, and media, shaping how audiences feel. It is detail work with real artistic stakes.



2 · DEMAND

→ Stable

Opportunities in this field hold steady as content creators across every screen format continue to need skilled supervisors who can clear music and deliver on time.

3 · AI EXPOSURE

LOW-MODERATE

AUTOMATING
Notation transcription, score copying, and music theory structuring

STAYS HUMAN
Taste-driven curation, director collaboration, and creative placement judgment

IN PRACTICE: AI tools can surface track suggestions and flag potential rights conflicts faster, freeing supervisors to focus on the final creative and legal calls.

- 4 · CORE SKILLS
- Music selection

Rights clearance

Budget management

Cue sheets

- FUTURE-PROOF SKILLS
- Music-to-picture curation

Rights & clearance fluency

- EXAMPLE EMPLOYERS HIRING
- Music & Arts

Live Nation

NBCUniversal

5 · YOUR MOVE

Build a sample cue sheet portfolio using scenes you love, and sharpen your rights clearance instincts on real-world examples. A credential in music industry fundamentals backs up your pitch to clients or employers at any stage, newcomer or veteran chasing a bigger chair.

YOUR NEXT STEP →

LABEL OPERATIONS MANAGER

You're the engine keeping releases on track: coordinating vendors, locking metadata, and making sure music hits every platform clean and on time. Labels run on this role. Get it right and artists get paid, fans get product, and the machine keeps moving.

1 • COMPENSATION



BASIS: Disclosed industry postings, all employers (n=37, 36 companies)

2 • DEMAND

→ **Stable**

Hiring for this role stays consistent, with labels and distributors keeping operations talent on staff as release volumes hold steady across formats.

3 • AI EXPOSURE



MODERATE

AUTOMATING

Financial report analysis, scheduling, inventory tracking, pricing forecasts

STAYS HUMAN

Artist relations, label policy judgment, team leadership, cross-dept coordination

IN PRACTICE: AI tools flag metadata errors and surface delivery inconsistencies before files reach distributors, reducing manual QC time on high-volume release slates.

4 • CORE SKILLS

Release planning

Supply-chain coordination

Vendor management

Metadata / QC

FUTURE-PROOF SKILLS

Catalog & metadata operations

Distribution analytics

AI-assisted production tools

EXAMPLE EMPLOYERS HIRING

Live Nation

Believe

Apple Music

5 • YOUR MOVE

Build a mock release timeline with full metadata QC notes as a portfolio piece. Sharpen your vendor negotiation and supply-chain coordination skills, then earn a music business credential to formalize the commercial fluency that gets you from coordinator to manager.

YOUR NEXT STEP →

AI IN THE FIELD

AI IN THE BUSINESS OF MUSIC

AI in this field changes month to month. This page is a snapshot of where it stands now, not a forecast. Companies are adopting these tools to scale their work, while the people whose work trains them are contesting how they are used. Both forces shape the careers in this map.

Yellowbrick's stance is simple: stay informed to stay competitive. We report only what employers and the industry are doing in practice, so you can judge your next move for yourself.

WHAT IS SHIFTING

Generative tools are taking on repeatable, high-volume tasks, which changes what a day's work is made of faster than it changes which roles exist.

THE OPEN QUESTION

Consent and credit, whether training data was licensed and whether the people who made it share in what the tools earn. Courts, unions, and regulators are still deciding.

WHAT STAYS YOURS

The parts that do not automate are what this map is built on: judgment, taste, relationships, and the authority to decide when something is good. Tools generate options; they cannot tell you which is right.

WHERE EARLY-CAREER SITS

Automation reaches entry-level tasks first, the rungs people use to break in. That makes a strong portfolio and a clear specialty matter more, not less.

HOW TO READ ANY AI HEADLINE IN THIS FIELD

- 1. Who benefits, and who carries the cost?
- 2. Is the use licensed and consented, or contested?
- 3. Does it automate a task, or replace a role?
- 4. Which skills does it make more valuable?

These examples illustrate the dynamics above and change as deals and cases resolve. Sources are numbered on the Sources and References page.

ADOPTION	OBJECTION
Universal Music Group settled its copyright case with Udio and agreed to launch a licensed, artist-authorized AI music platform in 2026. ¹	The American Federation of Musicians sued Universal Music Group and Warner Music Group, alleging they licensed members' recordings to Suno and Udio without compensation or credit. ³
Spotify and Universal Music Group licensed a paid tool for fans to make AI covers and remixes, which Spotify says is grounded in consent, credit, and compensation. ²	Deezer reported that AI-generated tracks made up about 44 percent of new daily uploads and that it excludes fraudulent AI streams from royalty payments. ⁴

Whether you are breaking in or already established, your leverage is the same: the taste, the relationships, and the credibility no model can manufacture, paired with enough fluency to use the tools on your terms. That keeps you the author of your career.

WHERE TO START

YOUR MOVE IN MUSIC

Wherever you are right now, breaking into music or moving up in it, the next step is the same: proof. A credential that shows you can do the work, and a network that opens the next door. The right programs give you both faster than figuring it out alone. Think of the programs listed below as a starting point rather than a finish line: a structured way to build the skills, the proof, and the contacts that the roles in this guide ask for.

- Breaking in? Start with the program below; it covers the business end to end, from rights to release.
- Already working? Add the skills and credential that move you up and keep you competitive.
- Either way, you come away with portfolio-ready work, a recognized certificate, and a network of people hiring across this map.

PROGRAMS IN THIS GUIDE

- 01 **Music Industry Essentials** NYU TISCH CLIVE DAVIS INSTITUTE OF RECORDED MUSIC
- 02 **Songwriting Across Genres** THE JUILLIARD SCHOOL
- 03 **Voice Performance Fundamentals** THE JUILLIARD SCHOOL

MUSIC INDUSTRY ESSENTIALS

Music Industry Essentials is an online program developed with faculty from NYU's Clive Davis Institute and industry professionals. It covers six core areas of the music business, including rights, deals, production, image development, and marketing, across six self-paced modules. Students who complete the program earn a non-credit certificate of completion from NYU.

WHAT STANDS OUT

- Six online modules, each three to five hours, completable at your own pace
- Certificate of completion from NYU Tisch Clive Davis Institute
- Taught by NYU faculty alongside working music industry professionals

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

You explore how records are made and released, how money moves through deals, licensing, and publishing, how artists build a public image, and how to reach audiences through social media and marketing channels.

Maps to in this guide: A&R Manager, Artist Relations Manager, Music Marketing Manager, Sync & Licensing Manager, Music Supervisor, Label Operations Manager, Music Publishing Manager, Royalty Analyst, Tour Marketing Manager, Music Product Manager.

EXPLORE THE PROGRAM →



SCAN TO EXPLORE

SONGWRITING ACROSS GENRES

Songwriting Across Genres is an online certificate program from The Juilliard School covering the craft of writing songs across styles including pop, country, hip-hop, and jazz. The program is built around five on-demand modules, each three to five hours long and divided into shorter lessons, so you can work through the material on your own schedule. Instruction comes from Juilliard faculty through video lessons, supported by skill-building activities and hands-on projects.

WHAT STANDS OUT

- Five flexible online modules taught by Juilliard faculty
- Certificate of Completion from Juilliard Extension upon finishing
- Suited to songwriters interested in multiple genres and instruments

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

You work through assignments and original projects that build a professional portfolio while studying melody, harmony, lyrics, rhythm, and the creative process across genres.

| *Turn raw ideas into finished songs, with craft from Juilliard that carries across any genre.*

EXPLORE THE PROGRAM →



SCAN TO EXPLORE

VOICE PERFORMANCE FUNDAMENTALS

Voice Performance Fundamentals is an online certificate program from Juilliard Extension that guides singers through the technical and artistic foundations of vocal performance. It is delivered fully online and self-paced, with five modules covering topics from music theory and sight-singing to repertoire development and performance preparation. Instruction draws on Juilliard Extension faculty and vocal artists who share studio demonstrations, rehearsal footage, and performance breakdowns.

WHAT STANDS OUT

- Five self-paced online modules, each three to five hours
- Earn a non-credit Certificate of Completion from Juilliard Extension
- Suitable for singers building practical skills and a professional portfolio

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN

You work through structured assignments and hands-on projects that develop sight-singing, musicianship, and repertoire while producing portfolio materials you can present on a resume or professional profiles.

Train your voice on Juilliard fundamentals and step up to perform with control and confidence.

EXPLORE THE PROGRAM →



SCAN TO EXPLORE

HOW WE BUILT THIS

This page explains how the guide is built and where each number comes from. Pay is drawn from current US job ads and US government wage data; demand, skills, and the companies hiring come from those same job ads. Every figure traces to a named source, and the guide is reviewed by qualified people before publication. The full source list and references are on the Sources and References page at the back. Data current as of June 2026.

- 01 Pay.** Each range is the pay shown in current US job ads for that role, gathered from many employers. Where ads do not show enough pay, we use US government wage data instead, from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (the federal agency that tracks pay). If we cannot ground a role's pay either way, we leave that role out rather than guess.
- 02 Demand.** Whether hiring is growing, steady, or cooling, based on how many ads we see and US government job-growth projections. When there is not enough to call a direction, we say so and show how active hiring is right now instead.
- 03 Skills and employers.** The tools and skills each role hires for, and the example employers, come from recent job ads. They show what the market is asking for; they are not official statistics.
- 04 AI exposure.** A plain read of what the technology is changing in the role and what stays human, based on the standard list of tasks each job involves.
- 05 Review.** This guide draws on several current sources and was reviewed by qualified people before it shipped.

SOURCES & REFERENCES

Every figure in this guide traces to a named source. The data sources below feed the pay, demand, skills, and hiring signals throughout the guide; the references support the claims on the AI page.

DATA SOURCES

US Bureau of Labor Statistics, via CareerOneStop: government wage data and job-growth projections. We use these to ground pay where job ads do not show enough, and to read demand.

O*NET: the US government's catalog of what each occupation does. It grounds the skills and the AI-exposure read.

TheirStack: a database of current job ads. It drives the pay ranges, the example employers, and the in-demand skills.

Pay ranges are role-specific and reflect each role's own market, so they are not directly comparable from one role to the next. The full note on the pay figures is on the earnings page.

Where neither job ads nor government data fits a role, pay is researched from third-party, methodology-backed sources and checked by people before it appears, never published automatically.

The AI page lists its own sources, used only for the claims on that page, not for the pay figures here.

All trademarks, logos, and brand names are the property of their respective owners.

AI PAGE REFERENCES (INDEPENDENTLY VERIFIED)

1. Universal Music Group (PR Newswire), 2025-10. <https://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/universal-music-group-and-udio-announce-udios-first-strategic-agreements-for-new-licensed-ai-music-creation-platform-302599129.html>
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3. Music Business Worldwide, 2026-06. <https://www.musicbusinessworldwide.com/musicians-union-sues-umg-and-warner-music-alleging-member-recordings-were-licensed-to-suno-and-udio-without-compensation-or-credit/>
4. Deezer Newsroom, 2026-04. <https://newsroom-deezer.com/2026/04/ai-generated-tracks-represent-44-of-new-uploaded-music/>