

James Banner - CV of 'failures'

During a lecture I delivered to graduating students at Leeds College of Music in early 2019 we discussed the idea of finding and creating opportunities as a professional musician, amongst many other things. The overarching theme was that work opportunities (commissions, finding gigs, recording opportunities, teaching positions etc.) are in general very hard to come by, and succeeding in those areas, whilst of course necessary as a musician, is difficult and can sometimes seem insurmountable as a student entering the professional world - something I also felt myself as an undergraduate. To illustrate the point in numbers, I decided to tally up how many opportunities I had applied for in the previous two years and how many of those had succeeded, the result being 6 out of around 30-35 at the time (beginning of 2019, some were pending) - around 20%. I had personally never considered this 'success' rate to be low since the 'failures' I had incurred during the process (learning how to write applications, updating my CV, making new contacts etc.) had been so valuable to me as a tool for my own development, even though 20% in most other contexts would be considered a fail. This CV may hopefully show someone that the 'failures' are inevitable, normal and worthwhile.

Credit goes to Lecturer Melanie Stefan for this idea, and to Composer Jenni Pinnock for passing it on to me. I decided to do this myself because of an interest in Carol Dweck's Growth Mindset (a term introduced to me by creative entrepreneur, musician and teacher Megan Jowett), and my recent introduction to an academic world where I am lucky to be able to discover new viewpoints on successes and failures from my own students.

n.b. for clarity, I don't include any 'non-failures' except where they are directly related to a 'failure'. In terms of performances, this list also only includes applications made for festivals, not venues, since there are too many 'failures' to list in this area.

2014

Deutsche Bank Award For Creative Enterprise - shortlisted and delivered presentation
Peter Whittingham Award - got to audition stage

2015

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2016

Elsa-Neumann Artist Stipendium - delivered presentation but was rejected (however was awarded this in 2018!)

Berlin State - Project Funding - for creation of new ensemble

Jazz Institut Berlin - Carl Hoffer Gesellschaft - soloist prize application

2017

12 Points Festival - Jazz festival application

Manchester Jazz Festival - Jazz festival application

100 Masters - Application to take part in a multidisciplinary arts festival as musician/composer

for-Wards - Call for composer

Francis Chagrin Award - Open fund, applied to help cover costs of a recording

Jazzlines Commission - Call for composer to create collaborative work with young musicians

Lots Of Odds - Call for composer for new theatre piece (lack of time to complete process)

Berlin State - Project Funding - for creation of new ensemble

Private call for typesetting/engraving work

OPUS - Call for composer to workshop a sketch with Britten Sinfonia members

Berlin British School - application for teaching position

2018

Terrestrial - Application for collaborative residency

12 Points Festival - Jazz festival application
Manchester Jazz Festival - Jazz festival application
Women of Longbridge - Call for composer to create collaborative piece - got to interview stage
Theatre Royal Plymouth - Call for composer for a new theatre piece
Hammersmith Apollo - Call for composer for a new theatre piece
Basel Composition Competition (did not enter despite registering)
CoDa/REwired - Call for composer for new dance project
Berry Theatre - Call for composer for new theatre piece
Help Musicians UK 'Do It Differently Fund' - Open fund
Leeds Creative Labs - Call to work collaboratively with Biological Researcher
London College of Music - Pieces rejected for inclusion in new piano syllabus
ORA Singers - Call for pieces to be workshopped and performed
Paperfinch Theatre - Call for collaborators to work on new theatre pieces
People Express - Commission to deliver workshops in schools
Imaginosity - Commission to deliver workshops in schools
Berlin State - Tour funding
Streetwise Opera - Call for composer in residence
Live Music Now - Call for new ensembles
Sound and Music - Call for playlists
Two part-time academic positions at Leeds College of Music - accepted for one other

2019

Phoenix Dance Theatre - Choreographers and Composers Lab - applied as musician
Queens Hall/Alnwick Playhouse - Call for composer for a new Christmas theatre piece
Music:Leeds Launchpad - Commission for new work as part of festival
Frozen Light - Call for composer for new choral piece
The Handful - Call for composer for new choral piece
LSO Soundhub - Call for composers for mentorship programme
Listenpony - Call for composers to write new 5 minute pieces for a concert
ISCM World Music Days 2019/2020 - Call for pieces to be workshopped/performed
Two part-time academic positions at Leeds College of Music - accepted for two others
Iwona Glinka/Phsama Music - Call for scores for compilation CD
Vanguard - Call for scores
No Dice Collective - Call for composers to collaborate with writers
Leeds International Festival OFF Programme - Call for arts events
Psappa - Call for composers
To be continued...

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