

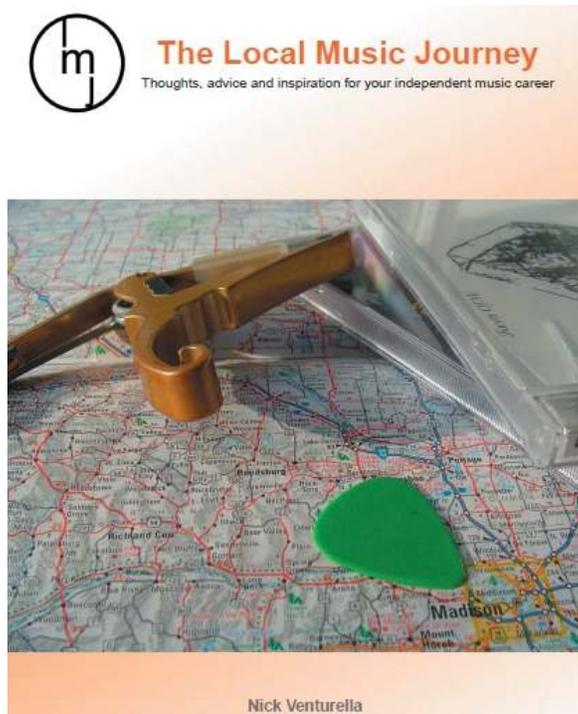
Excerpts from...



The Local Music Journey

Thoughts, advice and inspiration for your indie music career

Nick Venturella



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www.localmusicjourney.com

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The Local Music Journey

Thoughts, advice and inspiration for your indie music career (*Excerpts*)

By: Nick Venturella

The following are only a few excerpts from various sections of *The Local Music Journey* book.

The Forward of the complete book was written by Founder & CEO of Broadjam-Roy Elkins.

The complete book contains more practical ideas for your independent music career including an introduction to music entrepreneurship, building your band's brand, creating a demo and building relationships within the industry.

Additional interviews include Butch Vig's Smart Studios, Machine Records owner-Chris Buttleman, Rick Tvedt-Founder of the Madison Area Music Association, singer/songwriter-Hayward Williams, rock author-Susan Masino and more.

Order your copy of the complete book (in trade paperback or ebook) at www.localmusicjourney.com

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About the Author

Social networking creates a book compilation

One day, during the early days of MySpace, I was cruising around the site reading the blogs and bios of other Wisconsin independent musicians. I was looking for musicians who seemed to have good music and some apparent success. I was seeking such musicians so I could potentially glean something, perhaps through Internet osmosis, to add to my own repertoire of marketing tactics to try. Then something dawned on me, 'I bet there are other musicians out there that cruise the Internet for inspiration, tips, and advice from other musicians they admire or aspire to be like.' So, I thought I should use social networking to reach out to, and capture similar kinds of stories from the music professionals themselves? Hence, *The Local Music Journey* concept began.

Local beginnings build bridges

The Internet has shrunk our global community, and while the Internet allows independent music folks the ability to expand their reach internationally, an important and often vital part of that road to success still begins locally. That's in part, why I wanted all of the interviews in this book to be from independent musicians and music professionals within my current home state of Wisconsin.

The thought process is: by building local successes as stepping stones toward larger successes, such efforts organically radiate outward toward farther reaching victories.

My hope is for the interviews in this book to provide you, the reader, insight from the experiences of others, inspiration and motivation from your indie music peers (whether or not you call Wisconsin home). To me, those kinds of stories are the real-life benchmarks I measure my own independent music career against, giving me hope that my own success is attainable and actually happening.

Introduction of the book format

When I first thought about the idea of capturing the stories of Wisconsin independent (indie) musicians and music professionals I realized that I needed to define what I had in mind when I used the term “indie.” I also had to figure out a few other criteria to serve as a guide bringing more of a focus to this project, so here’s the criteria I settled upon, for now—these things tend to evolve:

Definition of indie as it applies to musicians and other music professionals:

- *Indie Musician: A musician who independently maintains complete creative control over their music, its distribution and the direction of their career.*
- *Indie Music Professional: A professional within the music industry who may or may not be a musician, but holds significant responsibility toward the production and/or consumption of indie music. Indie Music Professionals may have worked on major label projects, but remain independent as their own entity within their business and endeavors. (i.e. a studio engineer/owner, concert promoter, indie label owner, an indie music journalist, live music venue, etc...you get the idea. It’s a pretty broad definition)*

All music professionals profiled in this book are...

- *...current Wisconsin residents, or have strong current music connections to Wisconsin that often bring them to the state for music purposes.*
- *...currently active as an indie musician or music professional and have some indie music experience under their belt.*

- *...mainly involved with folk, pop, rock and Americana genres of music (at least for this book project—there are many other wonderful genres of music out there, but I wasn't able to capture everything for this book).*

All right, now that we have that aside...Part of the motivation for writing/compiling this book comes from my own journey as an indie musician. For the most part, I grew up in a musical family. My two older brothers, Mike and Tim, who are five and four years ahead of me, are multi-instrumentalists. So naturally, I followed in their footsteps. However, what's funny is that the only instrument my parents play is the radio, which hardly counts—maybe it skipped a generation because my grandfather on my mom's side is pretty musically inclined.

Anyway, my parents, rearing us boys to have practical heads on our shoulders about the very real necessities of living, a.k.a. being able to pay the bills, always found a balance between the realities of life and the required support needed to foster creativity, hopes, and dreams that us boys have now carried through to adulthood.

I believe that foundation is the reason I dream my dreams and live them to the extent I'm able. The best part about what I learned growing up, and continue to learn is that to live to the fullest and realize your potential you have to think the impossible is possible. I truly believe that to become that person you have to be a dreamer *and* a doer. Everyone can dream, but far fewer can do.

While growing up, artistic forms of expression became my outlet and my passion. Now, music, as well as other various creative endeavors, is such a part of me that I don't think I can *be* me without them. My creative successes have been achieved only because I've been able to *do* the dream, no matter how large or small—action results in successfully seeing your vision through to completion—it's that simple, although, it's always easier said than done.

The accomplishment of realizing your vision is one of the best feelings of satisfaction you can ever have. However, many on-lookers who only see parts of the process or only your end result cannot fully understand the scope of the accomplishment unless they are like-minded people who can relate to what it took to chase your dream and catch it.

I have been fortunate in my indie music career to meet some like-minded, down-to-earth, good-hearted people who have taught me so much simply by engaging me in casual conversations about their own experiences. To me, those conversations have been very inspiring and useful—motivating me to take my own journey another step further.

It's my hope that *The Local Music Journey* will serve as an inspiring reference to indie musicians and music professionals who sometimes need to refuel their soul with the positive energy that keeps them keeping on. I also hope the book serves as a practical guide to bring our Wisconsin indie music community, perhaps, just a bit closer, and from there we can take over the world (okay, so I'm kidding about that last part, but we can begin to radiate success beyond our state lines).

II. Practical ideas for your independent music career

The foundation

As you read this I am making an assumption that as an indie music professional you will always work to improve and perfect your craft—that has to be a given. However, many fail to understand that there is more involved with your success than your musical craft alone.

Regardless of whether you strive to be a full-time musician or just run a small project studio in your basement on the weekends, there are some fundamentals of human interaction that become necessary with any such endeavor. I'm talking about communication and relationships.

It sounds simple, and it is, for the most part, but a foundation built on communication and relationships is imperative to your success.

In the Stand Alone Records film *What is INDIE?*, director Dave Cool interviews Derek Sivers, Founder of CD Baby, about what it takes to be a successful indie musician. In the film, Sivers suggests musicians not be afraid to glean useful information from business books, but he begins by recommending an old book from the 1930's called, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, by Dale Carnegie. This book, spells out what I'm talking about as a simple foundation for success in music, business and really, life. I'm paraphrasing, but Carnegie essentially says that to build useful relationships one needs to communicate well with others, be empathetic, and allow others to feel good about their own ideas, and as a reciprocal gesture they will be more likely to consider *your* ideas.

So, let's pose a question to illustrate an example of what I'm talking about: How do you make a living as an independent musician or music professional?

First, let's assume the question implies that musicians or music professionals that make a living from their craft are doing so in a way that provides the following necessities...

- Regular financial support from their craft (music is affording enough money for them to continue pursuing and growing their craft)
- Because of the regular financial support derived from their craft they make enough money to also afford the basic necessities of life—food, water, and shelter.

Now, for most musicians and music professionals the link between their craft, experience, possibly education, and that preparation for making a living in their chosen field is not quite as clear as in other professions. Let me describe what I mean, being a musician isn't a very clear-cut career path unlike other professions that have a more defined and streamlined route to the end result. For example: go to college and major in Accounting to eventually become an Accountant, successfully go through medical school to become a doctor and many other similar examples. The common denominator with these professions is a certain amount of education/experience, after the successful completion of which, one can become certified or licensed to do that professional job.

The difference with music is you don't have to go to school and get licensed to do this job. Now, there are certainly an increasing number of schools that offer formal, reputable programs to aid folks in the pursuit of their craft, and you should look into them to see if they're a good fit for you and your goals, but my point is that it is not a pre-requisite for your success as a professional in music like it is for other professions. You simply dictate and create your education and experience in your music career by simply doing it, discovering it, and continually being open enough to learn and grow from it. This is where a foundation in understanding communication and relationships comes heavily into play.

The music industry, and most industries in the arts, is centered on people, awareness and relationships. This means, it is very much a business of whom you know and who knows you. In today's high paced, high tech world it is not so much a problem to find people or even make people aware of who you are and your craft, it comes down to understanding how to communicate with those people to build positive useful relationships that can be mutually beneficial to all parties involved, thus advancing your musical goals. You have to be able to connect with others. By doing this you will definitely increase your ability to book more shows, and grow your fan-base.

Here's how it breaks down... You create music, or provide a service/experience for others to create or consume music. By doing this you create value from your music or service to a group of folks looking for that value—that's the basis of the kind of mutually beneficial relationship I'm talking about. Usually, that group seeking the value of your craft is willing to give you something of value in return for providing it (i.e. money).

It was a very "aha" moment when I understood the concept of my craft providing value for someone else. I thought, 'Writing and performing my music is something I would do for free (and did do for free for many years), but there are people out there who really want my music and are willing to pay for it by buying a CD or paying a cover charge to see me live?' That's when I realized I would like to do what I love, and make that my livelihood. The obstacle in my way was/is finding those folks who are seeking my kind of music and what I do. Later in the book we'll meet a bunch of Wisconsin independent musicians and music professionals who have had the same realization, and who are in the midst of discovering those who are seeking their craft.

Success begins with a plan

There is a shift in the music industry's way of currently doing things that is empowering more independent music professionals than ever before. Music professionals are realizing that with new technologies and a little extra effort they can retain more control over their musical careers, and steer their careers in the direction(s) they want. Music professionals are doing this by connecting more directly with fans, bookers, and promoters without necessarily needing a major label, or any label for that matter.

Just as the U.S. economy, in recent years, has diversified into smaller entrepreneurial niche markets, so too has the music industry. Small indie labels and independent musicians are able to utilize new technologies to move more quickly, and be more flexible than their major label counterparts resulting in better customer/fan satisfaction because the independent musicians are more closely in tune (no pun intended) with their fans than the majors.

So, if you have decided you want to make a career out of your music, first things first: ask yourself, 'What do I want to get out of my music career?' When doing this it's helpful to have dreams and aspirations, but try to be realistic. In other words, it's pretty unrealistic to state, "By next year I want to be the biggest pop star in the U.S." Unless you have the kind of connections, luck, talent, and money to help get you there, you may want to formulate a plan B.

You want to be honest with yourself and seriously examine why you want to develop a professional independent music career. Is it because you love the music and can't envision yourself doing anything else with quite as much drive and determination, or is it just that you like being surrounded by groupies screaming your name? The former will likely withstand the long haul better than the latter.

On the other hand, it is realistic to want the ability to make a decent living as a music professional (i.e. live a little better than gig to gig in a van, although, you may still have to do that once in a while). It is reasonable to want to make enough money from your music to afford your bills, and maybe have a little extra money to go out with friends on your night off of performing.

Once you understand why you're pursuing this dream, and what your ideal end result is, you can begin to think about the action steps required to help you get there. A plan is often the best place to start—don't wait for opportunities to fall in your lap. If you do you may be waiting for quite some time. Be proactive, and create your own luck. Good things will come with each small success, and the more small successes you can string together the more you will become known for those successes, and the more you are known the more opportunities will start to find you, rather than you seeking them out.

Like many others I recommend writing out your goals and/or your plan, even if informal. By doing this your chances of actually following through with that plan increase tremendously. So, where is the best place to start your plan?—at the end. Envision your end result, and then think long and hard about the steps it will take to get there, working backward from the end. This may require a bit of research, *hint:* the Internet can be a great tool, however heed this *warning:* don't get so bogged down with the vast amount of information available on the Internet that you spend all your time *researching* and not *doing*. (The resources in the back of the book offer several websites to check out as you begin your research.)

Once you have your end result written down along with some of the steps to get there, make a concerted effort to try and do at least one thing everyday toward your goals. The one thing you actually do each day can be as subtle as replying to a fan who wrote a nice comment on your blog. You do have to take action on a daily basis to begin really seeing results, but you will start to see results in a month's time, after six months, after a year and so on. As you

complete action steps you will become more confident in yourself and what you're doing allowing the next step or steps to feel a bit easier to approach and accomplish.

By breaking down your end result into smaller steps, and further breaking those steps down into manageable single actions that you can complete each day, over time real results will begin to take shape. A word of wisdom, and something I picked up from a book called, *How to be a graphic designer without losing your soul*, by Adrian Shaughnessy. Because being a music professional means you're in business, just like any other arts professional, there are a few key organizational details to think about from the beginning that can help your operations run more efficiently. They are:

- A system for booking performances/work (your process for doing this)
- A way to determine the gigs you take are at least covering your expenses (I recommend no less than a 40% profit margin)
- A process for marketing each performance or your services (i.e. your e-mail list, your websites, social networking sites, hardcopy fliers, posters, a street team, constant networking with other industry professionals, etc.)
- An accounting system to track all your income and expenses, even if fairly informal (it doesn't have to be overly fancy to be accurate). This kind of system allows you to track your financial progress over time, which can help you see various trends like what gigs typically have the biggest payout, what times of the year tend to be busier than others, or what merchandise is selling well.

I also advise to periodically re-examine your written goals, and the action steps you've defined to achieve them. As time passes you will grow and so will your goals, and their action steps may evolve and change. It is helpful to make any necessary changes to your goals so you can adapt as your life changes. I recommend examining your goals every six months or at least once-a-year to capture where you are currently at, how far you've come, and how

to get to where you want to be in the future even if that's different than your original goal.

On- and off-line promotion

Online: If you're going to be successful as an indie musician then you need to embrace the Internet, and how people connect via this electronic medium. The Internet is not going away any time soon, but I can assure you that those that do not embrace it will find themselves with a smaller piece of the overall pie.

You can obviously expand your reach globally over the Internet, so as the name of this book implies you don't necessarily have to start only locally online. That said it still may be easier to focus locally even online while getting started only because it may be easier to translate relationships built online into the off-line realm (i.e. live performances, etc) with greater ease.

I would suggest utilizing ways to produce regular interesting free content to post online. Optimize that regular content for keywords and phrases associated with your music. I'm not necessarily saying you need to produce your music and give it away for free online, however, some have had success doing that and making money elsewhere. I am saying, that by posting regular free content that is of value to your target audience it will not only transform your current fans into more loyal fans, but it will attract new fans as they search the Internet for anything related to the keywords they may type into Google (remember, earlier on in the book we talked about identifying the characteristics of your ideal fan—what they look like, what their interests are, etc—it comes into play here with keywords related to those fans' interests). If your keywords are related to the keywords that a potential fan is typing into a search engine they may find your free content, be intrigued and want to see, hear or read more. Post music, a blog, a video blog, images related to what you do—something interesting and intriguing enough that others remain hungry to see, hear and read more. Then keep feeding them.

In the book, *Inbound Marketing Get Found Using Google, Social Media and Blogs* by Brian Halligan, Dharmesh Shah, the

Founders of the inbound marketing company, HubSpot, the authors outline another great aspect about providing regular content online—it becomes a sustainable asset. For example, by blogging you're posting content to the Internet that exists forever and is recognized by Google as its own web page. Now blog about something of value to your fans twice a week for a year and you have 104 blog posts, each post indexed separately as its own web page by Google. That's 104 more opportunities to be found online compared to just one or a few from your static website. In this example, as you post more blogs it only grows because your previous posts don't go away. Beyond simply having a plethora of pages indexed by Google to be easily found via search engines your content has to also be relevant. Search engines are smart they can tell when a web page is simply text full of keywords that don't actually make sentences (in case you were thinking you could outsmart Google). However, more important to relevancy are links from other sites back to yours. Basically, others who have found value in your content and linked back to it from their site as a reference. These are simply a few online tools on the road to Godin's 10,000 fans.

One of the biggest issues with the music industry today is connecting what you do with the right folks who are looking for what you do. Being found by your potential fans to turn them into loyal followers is no easy feat. This is made more difficult by the fact that the consumer is in charge of the way they're marketed to, and wants to be in charge of the way they're marketed to because otherwise they would be completely overwhelmed with the amount of marketing messages coming at them from everywhere. This is precisely the reason folks love TiVo and DVR's these days—they can fast forward the commercials.

Once you're found by potential fans via your regularly posted free valuable content you need to engage with them—respond to comments on blog posts, follow them on Twitter, post a message to their Facebook Wall—build relationships via these communications mediums. Then reinforce and enhance those online relationships by bridging them into the off-line world.

Off-line: When I talk about off-line activities I'm mainly talking about live performances and/or providing your professional music service, whether you're a studio engineer, live music venue, etc. I still think there is value in posting fliers for live performances and having street teams (perhaps you also supplement a street team with an online blog team—fans that are willing to blog for and about you). I suggest every time you book a new show you immediately mail the venue some posters for the upcoming show. Don't be afraid to contact the local newspaper in whatever town you'll be performing in and send them a press release about the show. The chances are good that you may get some published press in that town's local newspaper adding exposure for you and promoting the show, plus the venue owner loves it because they're getting free publicity too.

If you still use a "snail mail" mailing list you can send the flier that you created to fans that live in the town where your upcoming performance will be. The nice thing about "snail mail" these days is that most musicians don't do it anymore, and yes there is an expense to it that is higher than e-mail, but quite honestly it may be more effective depending on who your fans are and how they prefer to get messages from you.

T-shirts are great off-line way to get fans to become walking billboards for your band or your studio or your venue. Get a few colored T-shirts (perhaps choose one of the dominant colors from your website as the T-shirt color) and have them screenprinted with no more than a single color print of your name/logo and web address. Sell them at shows, and/or use them for contest prizes. The point is they don't have to be overly fancy, just interesting, noticeable and readable. Who doesn't love an indie band T-shirt?

My opinion is those that will have the most success will figure out how to balance both on- and off-line promotional activities as the lines between the online and off-line realm are continuously blurred. A few ideas are:

- Make online offers to those on your e-mail list and social media followers about physically attending a live performance.
- Develop a relationship with an independent record store (I'm talking about a bricks-and-mortar store), and drive physical traffic to the record store as the only place fans can buy tickets to your next show and advertise it only to your online subscribers and followers—exclusivity, can create demand.
- Offer the same kind of exclusive invite to an in-store live appearance in conjunction with an album release.

These are only a few ideas to scratch the surface. The great thing about both on- and off-line promotional ideas is that there are tons of combinations you can try, and there's really no wrong answer if it works and is ethical.

Web survey/interviews

The interviews in the following pages were compiled via an online survey form hosted by WisconsinMusician.com, a free service website created solely to connect and share resources with Wisconsin based musicians, bands and club/venue owners. (a friend of mine runs this site and it's definitely worth checking out)

In the pages that follow I have printed the web interviews submitted through WisconsinMusician.com.

I've used a printed interview format for sharing these interviews, thus, my interview questions and each Wisconsin indie's answers appear together. Because each Wisconsin indie answered the same questions you will see the questions repeated as a reference for each web interview.

The interviews appear in alphabetical order by band name or first name. I did little to no editing for each Wisconsin indie's answers (mainly only correcting spelling errors). I did this because I wanted each Wisconsin indie to be heard, or read, in their own voice/words.

I hope you enjoy reading these as much as I did. Though, we're all on our own indie music journey there is much we can share with each other. My intention is that these interviews serve as a small cross-section of Wisconsin-based indie music professionals offering tips, advice, inspiration, and most importantly, encouragement in those times when you are trying to find the source of what is still driving you in this industry.

Mike Mangione

www.mikemangione.com

www.myspace.com/mikemangione

Who are you/your band/your relation to indie music?

Mike Mangione and band consists of Mike Mangione, Brother Tom Mangione (guitar), Patrick Hocter (Cello), Kristina Priceman (Violin), John Collins (upright bass), and a drummer. Independent touring artists from Chicago now living in Milwaukee.

Where are you from, and where did you get your musical start (what WI city, or if you didn't get your start in WI but are here now, where did you get started and how did you end up in WI)?

The Mangione brothers were born in a northern suburb of Chicago called Glenview. Mike lives with his wife in Riverwest Milwaukee. Tom Lives in West Loop Chicago. John lives in Humbolt Park, Chicago; Kristina attends the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) and is from Oak Park, IL. Patrick attends UWM and is from Wheaton, IL. Mike attended Marquette University and fell in love with a woman named Stacy. After graduation Mike moved to L.A. for a year-and-a-half, worked odd jobs and played shows. Mike was cast as the "mail boy" in the movie Anchorman, worked for two weeks on the set then packed up and went on the road for a tour that lasted a year and half. After living out of his van and sleeping at rest areas Mike moved to Milwaukee to propose to his girlfriend and was married.

How long have you been involved in your craft (years)?

5 years

How long have you been a WI indie (years)?

3 years

What was one of your best indie music accomplishments? (feel free to add some accolades here if you think it's appropriate...it can be more than one)

The latest album, *Tenebrae*, up to this point has only had an independent soft release meaning we put a little money into the

release on our own. We did this hoping that it would generate a little buzz, get some attention but not expecting too much. Months after the release and we had a song picked up as song of the week by both *New York Magazine* and the blog *I Am Fuel, You Are Friends*. We were the *Illinois Entertainer* (like the *Shepherd Express*, in Milwaukee [free weekly A & E publication], but for the whole state of IL) top 10 albums of 2007. We had a lot of best songs of 2007 from different magazines and blogs. We were #9 on the Euro Americana Charts for January 2008 next to Steve Earl, Tom Waits...All of this off of a soft release. That was huge. Also, venues and people we have developed relationships with such as Summerfest, Schubas, Linnemans, Uncommon Ground, tmj4, WUWM, MSOE, Radio Milwaukee. It has been hard to accomplish and we feel blessed to have done so.

What is/was one of the hardest things to deal with or overcome as an indie? (this too, can be more than one thing)

The cost vs. the income.

Are you a full-time indie musician or music practitioner? If so, how did you get to the point that you are now able to do music full-time?

Full-time. Develop your act so that each show can be progressive. They all won't be for many reasons outside of your control, but you don't want to be slowing yourself down. Many outside factors can affect a show and they will, don't let it be lack of professionalism or preparation. Once you have a tight act choose the places you want to be then go after it. When you feel like you are wearing yourself out you are in the right place.

What is your best piece of advice for other indies?

Do not settle or compromise your acts dignity. This goes for venues, audience talking, musicians you play with, other bands you play with, and promoting your music. There simply is not enough time to settle. And don't believe anything someone promises until you are standing in it.

Tony Memmel

www.tonymemmel.com

www.myspace.com/tonymemmel

www.youtube.com/tonymemmel

Who are you/your band/your relation to indie music?

My name is Tony Memmel. I am a 22-year old college student at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh (UW-Oshkosh). I am a singer/songwriter. I was born with one arm, and learned to play guitar and piano. I host the Open Mic and "Live at Lunch" Programs at UW-Oshkosh. I also play frequently off campus and throughout Southeastern Wisconsin.

Where are you from, and where did you get your musical start (what WI city, or if you didn't get your start in WI but are here now, where did you get started and how did you end up in WI)?

I am from Waukesha. I got my start mostly by being in music programs in elementary school and middle school. I was in choir, and learned the trumpet. In high school I continued with band and formally joined choir as a senior and earned the lead role in the musical 'The Music Man.'

Also, in high school, I was one of the founding members of a locally popular ska band called RWK. I also sang lead vocals for several other bands.

How long have you been involved in your craft (years)?

My whole life

How long have you been a WI indie (years)?

8 years/ 3 years solo

What was one of your best indie music accomplishments? (feel free to add some accolades here if you think it's appropriate...it can be more than one)

There have been a few big turning points for me, but the biggest, was when I was 20 years old. I frequently attended the open mic program on campus (just to listen to other people play), and one

evening my good friend Scott was with me and signed me up, against my will, to play the piano and sing one of my songs that evening. This is a seemingly small thing, but it was a huge turning point for me. Within 2 months I was hosting the open mic program, booking entertainment to come to campus, and playing shows all over town. I've always loved the thrill of a live performance, but, I was not 100% confident in my solo ability at that point, If Scott hadn't pushed me to perform, I would not be where I am today. I had to practice like crazy and pushed myself to always learn new material to play each week. Like I said, I now host the open mic program, which is very successful, we have about 70-100 attendees a week (on average), I book shows for myself, I'm releasing my first full-length album ever and I've written over 40 songs. Sometimes you just need an initial boost.

What is/was one of the hardest things to deal with or overcome as an indie? (this too, can be more than one thing)

I think it's getting started. Once you get started you can usually develop a little momentum. As the host of a college campus open mic, I've witnessed firsthand, people who are reluctant to perform, but when they get up the guts to give it a try, they are often very talented, this also means that immediately you have a small audience and maybe some fans! It's a good feeling. Once you have a few people who really believe in your music, it's very exciting and immediately instills a confidence that can help to encourage further pursuit of shows.

Are you a full-time indie musician or music practitioner? If so, how did you get to the point that you are now able to do music full-time?

I chose to pursue a career in music by studying Music business in college. I then got involved in after school music programs etc. Though my true passion is playing and writing my songs, I currently do not make enough money to solely support myself in this way.

If you're not a full-time indie musician or music practitioner do you plan to be one day? Why or why not? How do you plan on

achieving your goal if it is to do music full-time?

My music is my passion. I intend to never give up, and to always create new material. For now, I will continue with self-promotion, and take a job out of college that will allow me to spend time playing shows.

What is your best piece of advice for other indies?

My advice is to find your niche, and to persevere. Being born with one arm, it took me years to even begin learning strumming etc. on the guitar because I had to figure out my own method to do it.

I think that right off the bat you need to determine what your passion is and what your goals are. Clearly defined goals are very helpful... Then, do your best to reach them. Good luck Wisconsin.

Dave Schoepke-drummer/percussionist
www.myspace.com/schoepke

Who are you/your band/your relation to indie music?

Dave Schoepke-drummer/percussionist in Milwaukee currently with Willy Porter (since 2002) the Cocksmiths (hard rock), Moloko Shivers (alternative), and Blank Radio (experimental improv)

Where are you from, and where did you get your musical start (what WI city, or if you didn't get your start in WI but are here now, where did you get started and how did you end up in WI)?

From the Waukesha county area...family is from Wisconsin, moved to Waukesha in 1973

How long have you been involved in your craft (years)?

I've been drumming 27yrs

How long have you been a WI indie (years)?

27

What was one of your best indie music accomplishments? (feel free to add some accolades here if you think it's appropriate...it can be more than one)

Playing all drums and percussion on Willy's album *Available Light* which was released internationally in 2006. Have toured the country with Willy. Acquired endorsements with Yamaha drums and Paiste cymbals Winning band WAMI's with Boxkar (best album 2006) and with Moloko Shivers, Reverser...nominated for best drummer 7 times.

What is/was one of the hardest things to deal with or overcome as an indie? (this too, can be more than one thing)

Low pay, a declining music industry in all facets from show attendance to product sales

Are you a full-time indie musician or music practitioner? If so, how did you get to the point that you are now able to do music full-time?

Yes I am. I teach private lessons at Cascio Interstate [music store].
Have been teaching for 20 yrs.

What is your best piece of advice for other indies?

Do your own thing.

Loren Claypool

www.lorenclaypool.com

www.myspace.com/lorenclaypool

www.clayphonicrecords.com

www.clayphonicmusic.com

Who are you/your band/your relation to indie music?

Loren Claypool is a multi-instrumentalist/composer with a primary focus on recording original genre-indifferent instrumental guitar music. I also own my independent record label, Clayphonic Records™ and my publishing company, Clayphonic Music™.

Where are you from, and where did you get your musical start (what WI city, or if you didn't get your start in WI but are here now, where did you get started and how did you end up in WI)?

I am from St. Albans, WV and currently reside in Mequon, WI. My career brought me to Wisconsin.

How long have you been involved in your craft (years)?

31 years

How long have you been a WI indie (years)?

4 years

What was one of your best indie music accomplishments? (feel free to add some accolades here if you think it's appropriate...it can be more than one)

Co-scored and recorded the soundtrack for the award-winning independent film Lost Love as well as countless performances. I am most excited, though, about the work I am doing right now.

What is/was one of the hardest things to deal with or overcome as an indie? (this too, can be more than one thing)

The complexities of the business side of music can be daunting. With a commitment to learning, though, the puzzle can be solved!

Are you a full-time indie musician or music practitioner? If so, how did you get to the point that you are now able to do music

full-time?

Part-time, by design.

If you're not a full-time indie musician or music practitioner do you plan to be one day? Why or why not? How do you plan on achieving your goal if it is to do music full-time?

No, if it happens under the right set of circumstances, so be it. I enjoy my career and not being financially dependent on my music allows me to let the music be what it needs to be.

What is your best piece of advice for other indies?

Establish goals, maintain focus, and work hard at everything that is required to bring your work to those that want to hear it.

Peter Mulvey

www.petermulvey.com

Who are you/your band/your relation to indie music?

I've made perhaps a dozen records, some self-released, and some with a couple different small labels. Certainly I've been independent from the major corporations for twenty years, and happy about that.

Where are you from, and where did you get your musical start (what WI city, or if you didn't get your start in WI but are here now, where did you get started and how did you end up in WI)?

I played my first gig at The Coffeehouse on 19th Street in my hometown of Milwaukee, New Years Eve going into 1986, so I was sixteen. At Marquette University I met a guy named Joe Panzetta and we formed a band called Big Sky that played around Milwaukee bars, both on and off campus. By the time we graduated I was still playing in bars, with Joe and on my own and with Pamela Means. In 1992 I headed off to Boston, got my start as a touring songwriter, and moved back to Milwaukee once I was on the road full-time, about 1996.

How long have you been involved in your craft (years)?

31

How long have you been a WI indie (years)?

21

What was one of your best indie music accomplishments? (feel free to add some accolades here if you think it's appropriate...it can be more than one)

Some friends of mine from West Virginia were cross-country skiing in Montana, met a lone skier out on the trail, and in the course of chatting mentioned me: he knew who I was. So my reputation has made it to the remote wilderness. I've played in a 12th century cathedral basement (now a rugby bar) in Paris, I've played in the most westerly cowshed (now a bar) in Ireland. I had a fifth of the whole town of Bethel, Alaska out to see me once. Probably the best thing is people often tell me that my songs have helped them

through tough times, or have reminded them of good times.

What is/was one of the hardest things to deal with or overcome as an indie? (this too, can be more than one thing)

Probably just the ups and downs- I do all right, but I live within a narrow financial margin, and sometimes a slow year turns into a slow-motion car crash and I watch the credit card smoke and burst into flame and wonder what the hell I'm doing.

Are you a full-time indie musician or music practitioner? If so, how did you get to the point that you are now able to do music full-time?

I've been full-time for a decade or more. I worked part-time to get here, I guess I never had a full-time job other than this. In Boston I could make more per hour just busking in the subway, so I never needed a full-time job.

What is your best piece of advice for other indies?

Play all the time. Find gigs and play them. Write and play music as much as you can. Run your deal up a hundred thousand flagpoles and see who salutes.

Mark Adkins of subvocal
www.subvocal.net
www.myspace.com/subvocal

Who are you/your band/your relation to indie music?

My name is Mark Adkins, I started a band (project) called "subvocal" We have been performing in Madison and surrounding areas for about 5 years now. I was at the conceptual meeting for the Madison Area Music Awards. I also owned and operated a small recording studio here called "Brokenshitstudios" on Madison's East side. I have promoted shows at: The Barrymore, Luthers Blues [now defunct] and other venues here in Madison. I also volunteered as the live music engineer for the Dave Zero Friday Rock Show at WORT [community radio station] for about 5 years.

Where are you from, and where did you get your musical start (what WI city)?

I am from Northern California but actually started finding myself (musically) right here in Madison. In fact, I came here to Madison just to do music. I had been putting that part of my life off and finally decided to find out what a life in music would really be like. I came here in 1997 and through my desire to play music have developed many other skills I never thought I would have an interest in, such as graphic design, promotion, engineering, production, web design and computer skills (of which I had none before I arrived in Madison)

How long have you been a WI indie?

about 10 years

What was one of your best indie music accomplishments?

Winning "Best CD" and "Best Band" at the MAMAS and pulling off the Barrymore show which included three bands, an aerial dance troupe, all of which materialized because of a CD I produced.

What is/was one of the hardest things to deal with or overcome as an indie?

Finding enough emotional support (band mates and spouses) and

financial support through CD sales and paying gigs in order to devote your time towards the art of making music.

What is your best piece of advice for other indies?

Learn everything about the business of making music, read books about indies who are making it (Ani Defranco) Work hard at developing contacts for venues, promoters and radio personalities, and number one would be to understand right from the start that this is not a business for the weak of heart. You can succeed but everything will try to discourage you and make you give up. The ones who finally can say "I make a living playing music" are the ones who simply don't give up!

About the Author

Nick Venturella is an entrepreneurial Arts practitioner. Venturella is a veteran independent musician, visual artist, marketing & communications professional and author/speaker. Venturella is dedicated to helping those in the Arts find resourceful ways to create, promote and earn a wage from their craft.

Venturella has been a professional independent folk/pop singer/songwriter since 1994. Venturella continues to perform his brand of music throughout the upper Midwest at colleges, clubs and coffee shops.

While building his career as an independent musician Venturella obtained a degree in visual art/design. That degree coupled with years of marketing & communications experience has allowed Venturella to offer an array of creative communications consulting services for other artists & musicians as well as small businesses and entrepreneurs.

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Order your copy of the complete book (in trade paperback or ebook) at **www.localmusicjourney.com**