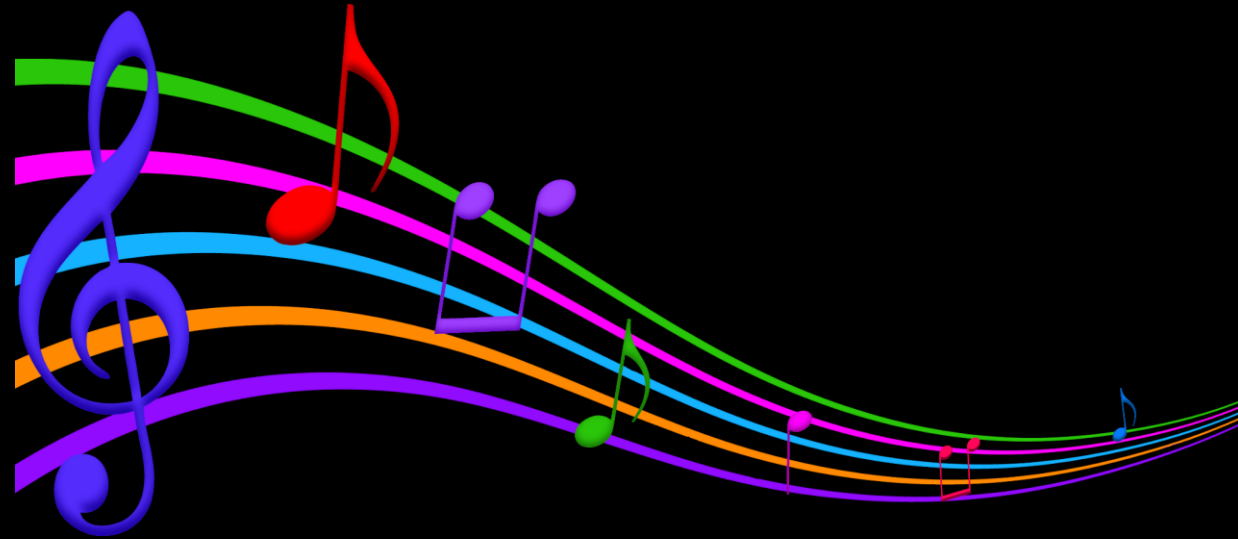


BUSKING UNIVERSITY



*“Training Young People to Change the
World... One Song at a Time”*

Joel Johnson, Director
National Crisis Intervention Training Institute, Inc.
Way Out of the Box Program
President, Busking University

Dedicated in Loving Memory of



Adam Joshua Johnson

July 31, 1984 – January 8, 2009

Veteran Busker / Grassroots Humanitarian

New York City, NY / Oklahoma City, OK / Eureka Springs, AR

Fed the Hungry & Homeless with His Busking Tip Money

Copyright of Intellectual Property



Adam's Guitar

Copyright 2014 – 2022

Joel Johnson, President

Busking University

A Subsidiary of the National Crisis Intervention
Training Institute's

Way Out of the Box Program

INTRODUCTION

Introducing Your Lead Instructor:

“And on the Clarinet...Mr. Joel Johnson!”

- Retired Law Enforcement Officer, Investigator, and Trainer who is now *“Living the Dream.”*
- Director, National Crisis Intervention Training Institute, Inc.
- Founder and President of Busking University (A community outreach workshop featured in NCITI’s “Way Out of the Box” program).
- Been playing the same Selmer Series 9 Bb Clarinet since 1966.
- Veteran Busker, having played in New York City, NY; Tampa, FL; St. Petersburg, FL; Atlanta, GA; New Orleans, LA; Eureka Springs, AR; and Oklahoma City, OK.
- Former member of “The Moonglow Duo” (Pinellas Park / Clearwater, FL).
- Featured in Four CD’s: “Moonglow,” “Fascination,” “It’s Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas,” and “...And on the Clarinet...Mr. Joel Johnson!”
- Published Author, including *“Notes of Adam’s Song: A Surviving Parent’s Journey through the Valley of the Shadow of Death,”* and *“A Veteran Busker’s How-to Guide to Making the World a Better Place...One Song at a Time.”*
- And Most importantly...Adam’s Dad.



OTHER BUSKING UNIVERSITY
FACULTY MEMBERS

THE AMAZING STEVE CRAWFORD

- Escape Artist, Magician, Hypnotist, Actor.
- Began studying escapes at age six, inspired by the film “Houdini.”
- Former Saturday morning cohort of Fox Television’s educational children’s show, “The Magical Mystery Tour.”
- Featured in two upcoming programs as an escape artist on The History Channel.
- Performed all over the nation: daredevil escapes for state fairs, theme parks, etc.
- Opened for Alice Cooper and was hired by Evel Knievel.
- Winner of Nab Co’s “Unlock the Magic” Award.
- **HAS ESCAPED FROM EVERY KNOWN LAW ENFORCEMENT RESTRAINT DEVICE!**
- To demonstrate his abilities, Steve successfully broke out of a locked cell at the Pottawatomie County (OK) jail, as well as a cell in the Lexington Assessment & Reception Center in Lexington, OK.
- Veteran “Carpet Magician” performing in many fairs, carnivals, street festivals, and restaurants.
- Founder of the Bricktown Street Performers’ Association (OKC).



Paul & Heather Dunlevy and the Dunlevy Family Band

- Veteran Busker from Dunedin, FL.
- Co-founders of the Dunlevy Family Band.
- Singers, Guitarists, Songwriters.
- Played with Adam Johnson.



TOPICS TO BE COVERED

Topics to Be Covered

- Dedication and Introductions.
- Defining 'Busking' and 'Buskers.'
- The Busking University Workshop.
- Types of Busking Acts.
- History of Busking / Some Famous Buskers.
- Why Busk?
- What Busking Can Teach Us.
- Types of Busking Acts/ Examples of Busking Venues ("Pitches.")
- Busking-friendly Cities.
- Branding.
- Dress Up, Not Down / Image.
- Choosing a Venue ("Pitch").
- Repertoire Tips.
- The Set-up: Set-up, Location, and Props.
- The Build and The Hold: Captivating the Audience.
- The Pitch: Engaging the Audience.



Photo Credit: Steve Russell (pixels.com)

Topics to Be Covered (Cont'd)

- The Act: Keeping the Audience.
- Sense of Humor's Role in Busking.
- Hat Line (The Close): Soliciting Donations.
- Making a Difference.
- Conveying a Message.
- Tying the Medium to the Message.
- Engaging the Audience (The Human Orchestra).
- Improvisation.
- Promoting.
- On-site and Residual Product Sales.
- Steering to Social Media.
- Busking & First Amendment Rights.
- Permits and Licenses.
- Busking and the Law.
- Thirty Cities' Busking Rules and Regulations.
- Safety Considerations.
- Common Pitfalls / Hazards / Safety Precautions.
- Theft Prevention.



Photo Credit: Vince Russell (pixels.com)

Topics to Be Covered (Cont'd)

- Common Challenges.
- What if Your City Doesn't Allow Busking?
- Don't Forget to Ask the Experts.
- Busking Etiquette.
- Busking During Covid.
- To Amplify or Not to Amplify?
- Cooperating with Other Buskers.
- Performing with Other Buskers.
- Networking with Other Buskers
- One-Person Business / Entrepreneurship.
- Busking University Curricular Activities.
- About the Busking University Talent Show.
- What It's Worth.
- Conclusion.
- Resources / References / Contact Information.



DISCLAIMER RE: LIABILITY

DISCLAIMER

The enclosed information is offered according to the most reliable resources available to the Author / Instructors at the time of publication of this training program.

Buskers, if going into a new city, should ALWAYS check with local authorities to confirm and/or clarify individual requirements and limitations imposed by the local government.

The Authors/Instructors are to be held harmless from any liability imposed upon individual performers. This release from indemnity applies to any and all information offered in the Busking University workshop, and/or the www.buskinguniversity.org website. All Students agree to this release of indemnity as a condition of receiving the training.

DEFINING AND DESCRIBING BUSKING

“What is “Busking?”

Performing in a public place in order to receive tips and/or donations from passersby.



Photo Credit: The Busking Project, 2022



Photo Credit: Keila Osbourne

What / Where is “Busking University?”

- **DISCLAIMER:** Well, to begin...not only is Busking University NOT an accredited University...it's not a University!
- Busking University is a comprehensive training program, empowering young people (and older!) to become safer, successful street performers...beginning with this 6 to 8-hour community workshop.
- The principles and techniques of Busking University apply to virtually every kind of aspiring street performer, from musicians to fire eaters.
- There is no set fee for participation in the Busking University Workshop...it's supported solely by at-will, voluntary financial contributions from its students and graduates. You decide “What It's Worth!”
- Busking University is everywhere! ...Available at local venues, as well as online via live webinars.

Tribute to “Buskers” Everywhere

- *“Among improvisational performers, accomplished ‘buskers’ are a special breed. They are consummate entrepreneurs and true professional performers. Not only are they paid every time they perform before a live audience, they meet the most important characteristic of entertainment professionals: exercising a special set of ethics, skills, practices, and professional etiquette which distinguishes them from other performers. They enrich the world around them each time they practice their craft, choosing to ‘fly without a net’ as they engage their audience. Some, not all, take their calling a giant step further, choosing to use their talent to convey a message that they deem important, in order to help, not just entertain, their fellow man. They strive to make the world a more wonderful, colorful, entertaining, enlightened, kinder, gentler, and better place.....one song at a time.”*



...Joel Johnson, President, Busking University ...Author of

“Flying Without a Net: A Veteran Busker’s How-to Guide to Making the World a Better Place...One Song at a Time.”

Photo Credit: Flying Without a Net – At Amazon

History of Busking

(Johnson, 2013; Wikipedia, 2021)

- The term “Busking” was first noted in English language circa 1860. but the practice of busking is found documented in many cultures for centuries.
- “Busker” is a derivation of the Spanish root word, “Buscar,” which means “to seek.” That term, in turn, evolved from the Indo-European word “budh-sko,” which means “to win or conquer.”
- Troubadours, Minstrels, Organ Grinders, Court Jesters, etc., date back to antiquity (e.g. Russia in the 11th Century a.d.)
- “Bottlers” (aka “Hat men” or “Pitch men”) were assistants who solicited donations from the audience, on behalf of buskers, using a device made of a half of a glass bottle with a leather pouch/flap that made it difficult to take money out of the bottle. Bottlers usually worked for a percentage of the proceeds. It was also common to use monkeys as bottlers (e.g. organ grinder and monkey acts).



Photo Credit: World4.eu

The “Bottler” Who Worked for Peanuts...and Bananas



Photo Credit: Celebrity Gems Entertainment

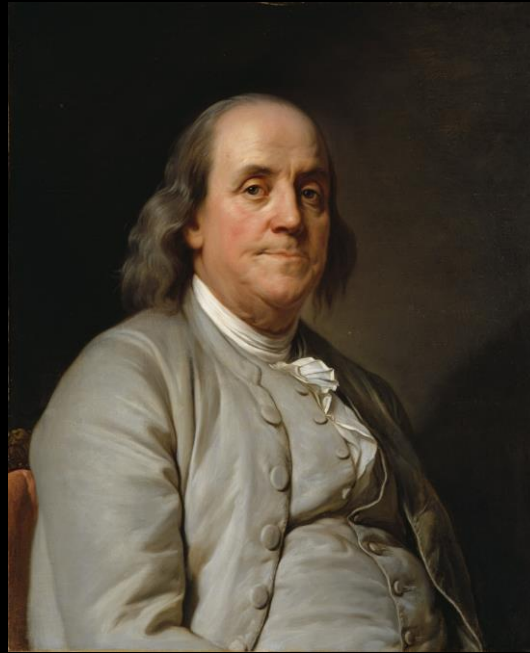


Photo Credit: infoescola.com

*“There once was a busker named ‘Ben,’
Who copied his prose with a pen.
His Dad got so mad, that he called ‘busking’ bad,
Yet Ben sold them again and again.”
...The Instructor...*

Some Famous Buskers

(Cater, 2020; Helzden, 2020; Johnson, 2013; Wikipedia, 2020)



Photo Credit: Adobe.com

- Benjamin Franklin.
- Jimmy Buffett.
- Bruce Springsteen.
- Bono.
- Tom Jones.
- Joshua Bell.
- B.B. King.
- Paul McCartney
- Kevin Spacey.
- Rod Stewart.
- Joni Mitchell.
- Billy Joel.
- George Burns.
- Dolly Parton.
- Robin Williams.
- Linkin Park.
- Ed Sheeran.
- Sheryl Crow.
- Jimmy Fallon. *
- Christina Aguilera. *
- Miley Cyrus. *

- Janis Joplin.
- Jimi Hendrix.
- Grateful Dead.
- Jefferson Airplane.
- Country Joe & the Fish.
- Josephine Baker.
- Jon Bon Jovi.
- Sting.
- Bob Hope.
- Joan Baez.
- Bob Dylan.
- Jimmy Durante.
- Eric Clapton.
- Simon & Garfunkel.
- Pierce Brosnan.
- Tracy Chapman.
- Eddie Izzard.
- Jewel.
- Bernie Mac.
- Passenger.
- Steven Tyler.
- Alanis Morissette. *
- Maroon 5. *
- U2*

* *Busked in Disguise with Jimmy Fallon on "The Tonight Show"*

Why Busk?

- Every rehearsal is a live performance!
- Get paid to practice!
- Overcomes “stage fright.”
- Builds self confidence and “people skills.”
- Sharpens performance skills (improvisation, timing, reading audience, audience engagement, repertoire selection, et cetera).
- Entrepreneurial skills.
- Self promotion.
- Develop fan base.
- Primary and residual CD sales, et cetera.
- Contact information / develop subscriber list.



Joel Johnson & Teresa Arruza
The MoonGlow Duo, 2008
St. Petersburg, FL

“If you can’t find a job...invent one!”
(NCITI’s “Way Out of the Box Seminar” Principle #7)



“And on the clarinet...Mr. Joel Johnson!”

Examples of What Busking Can Teach Us

- Self-reliance.
- Self-confidence.
- Self-discipline.
- Self-worth.
- Self-Motivation Skills.
- Communication Skills.
- Musical / Artistic Technique.
- “People-reading” Skills.
- Improvisational Skills.
- Entrepreneurial Skills.
- Multi-Tasking Skills.



- Problem-solving Skills.
- Critical Thinking Skills.
- Adaptive Skills.
- Altruism.
- Benevolence.
- Social Awareness.
- People-helping Skills.
- Dramatic Timing.
- Evangelism Skills.
- To Think, Visualize, and Behave “Way Out of the Box.”



Photo Credit: yorkmix.com

“It’s not just a job...it’s an adventure!”

TYPES OF BUSKING ACTS

Types of Buskers

- Instrumental Musicians.
- Singers.
- Musical Groups.
- Acrobats.
- Balloon Artists.
- Magicians/Illusionists.
- Dancers.
- Comedians.
- Contortionists.
- Mimes.
- Sword Swallowers.
- Sculptors.



- Living Statues.
- Painters.
- Performance Artists.
- Puppeteers.
- Clowns.
- Snake Charmers.
- Chalk-Talkers.
- Poets and Prose Artists.
- Fortune-Tellers.
- Story-Tellers.
- Caricature/Portrait Artists.
- Jugglers.
- Etc.

Types of Busking Acts



Photo Credit: YouTube.com

- Walk-by Acts – Continual performance acts.
- Circle Acts – Gathering audience for a single performance.
- Café Busking – Restaurants, bars, clubs, taverns, and cafés.
- Pop-up Acts – Surprise celebrities.
- Individual – Single-performer.
- Group – Multiple performers .

“Walk-by Acts”

- Continual performances.
- People may only stop for a moment or two, or up to a few minutes.
- Improvisation and modification of repertoire are key skills.
- “Closing” is often silently solicited by a sign, tip jar on ground, et cetera.
- Having an assistant (a “bottler,” “pitch man,” or “hat man”) to collect donations, sell CD’s, hand out brochures and business cards, et cetera, is a great idea. *“Will you contribute a little something to the performer?”* However, this person’s role is usually lower key with walk-by acts than with circle acts.
- Strategic places allow for listeners to sit for a few minutes (e.g. subway and bus stops, near benches, et cetera).
- May turn in to Circle Acts, depending on size of crowd.



Photo Credit: www.busking.com

“Circle Acts”

- Have distinctive beginning and end.
- Often last longer than Walk-by Acts.
- Crowd often stands in circle or semi-circle.
- Ideal length: 10-20 minutes.
- More tightly rehearsed; less improvisation than Walk-by Acts.
- Donations usually gathered at end of performance.
- Spokesperson announces person “passing the hat.” (referred to in busking parlance as a “bottler,” a “pitch man,” or a “hat man.”)
- Be careful not to impede flow of foot traffic.
- Sometimes more restricted by local ordinances than Walk-by Acts.
- Well-done Circle Acts may have larger potential for financial return.
- Suggest tipping amounts in terms of financial worth (e.g. price of a movie, magazine, sandwich, etc).



Photo Credit: stuff.co.nz



Photo Credit: Joe

“Café Busking”

- Background music, and/or featured entertainment in a café, bar, pub, tavern, or restaurant setting.
- Common in areas where establishment wants “live entertainment,” but lacks funds (or is unwilling to pay) for entertainment.
- Sometimes café busking is a way for the musician(s) to audition for promises of a “paid gig.”
- Performer(s) may receive tips only, tips and drinks/food, or tips + sales of CD’s, et cetera.
- Common in non-union cities where musicians are competing for relatively few paid engagements.



Photo Credit: The Jouby's – London Busking Live

Watch this Café Busker Interact with the Audience



Example of “Pop-Up Acts”

- Celebrities in surprise guest appearances.
- May be spontaneous, or planned.
- May remain anonymous, until announced.
- Some acts “just show up.”

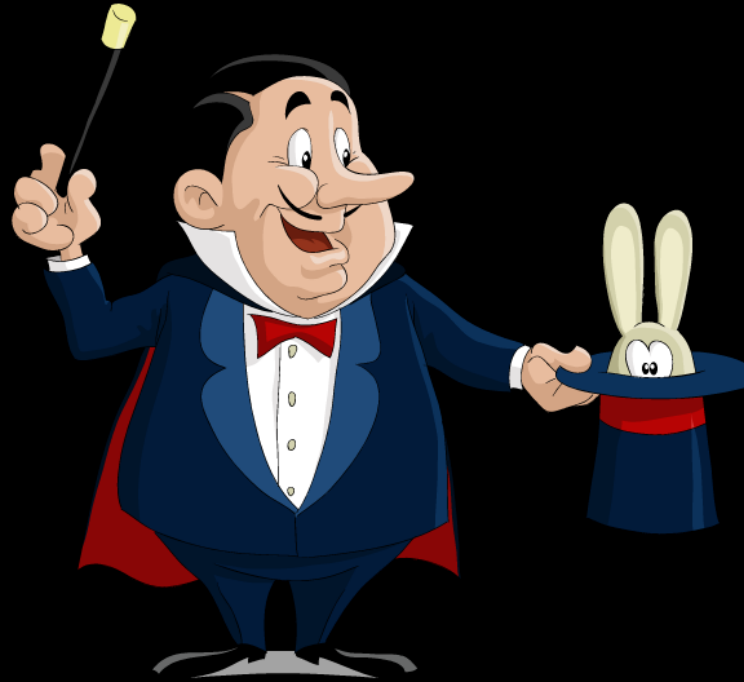


Photo Credit: Miley Cyrus and Jimmy Fallon

BUSKING VENUES

Examples of Busking Venues ("Pitches")

- Street Sidewalks.
- Malls .
- Shopping Centers.
- Subway Stations.
- Parks.
- Store Fronts.
- Piers.
- Flea Markets.
- Farmer's Markets.
- Beach Areas.
- Restaurants and cafés.
- Wineries.



- Train Stations.
- Airport Terminals.
- Picnic Areas.
- Campgrounds.
- Museum Entrances.
- Theater Entrances.
- Bookstores.
- Coffee Shops.
- College Campuses.
- Recreational Walkways.
- Pubs, Taverns, and Bars.
- Truck Stops.

OPEN MIC NIGHTS

“Open Mic Nights”

- Often advertised in local free weekly trade papers. Watch for fliers.
- Search for listings online: type “Open Mic,” and the name of your city (Try alternative spelling “Mike”).
- May require auditions (live or online).
- Plan on arriving early to help ensure a spot.
- Bring at least 6 people (if possible), to cheer you on and put “butts in the seats.”
- Put any appearances by you on the internet.
- Dress to impress, and to set yourself apart from other Performers.
- Limit on stage comments.
- Be sure to applaud for other performers, and to tip!
- Have your website and/or name displayed (if allowed).



Selecting an Open Mic Venue

- Be sure you are compatible with the venue.
- Advance reconnaissance is highly recommended.
- On first visit, dress appropriately, and, if possible, ask the manager relevant questions.
- Be sensitive to respecting their time. Don't approach them during a particularly busy time of the night.
- Get the email address for the Manager in charge of the Open Mic Night. Send them an introductory email, if applicable.
- Also send a "thank you" email or letter after you perform. Enclose a business card.



Photo Credit: Amondjack.com

Look for Advertisements and Announcements in Local Free Trade Papers

- These publications often advertise upcoming “open mic” events in local restaurants, bars, and coffee shops, inviting poets, musicians, etc.
- Some may require or suggest that you bring several of your friends.
- There is sometimes a cover charge, as well as a monetary prize for the best performer(s).

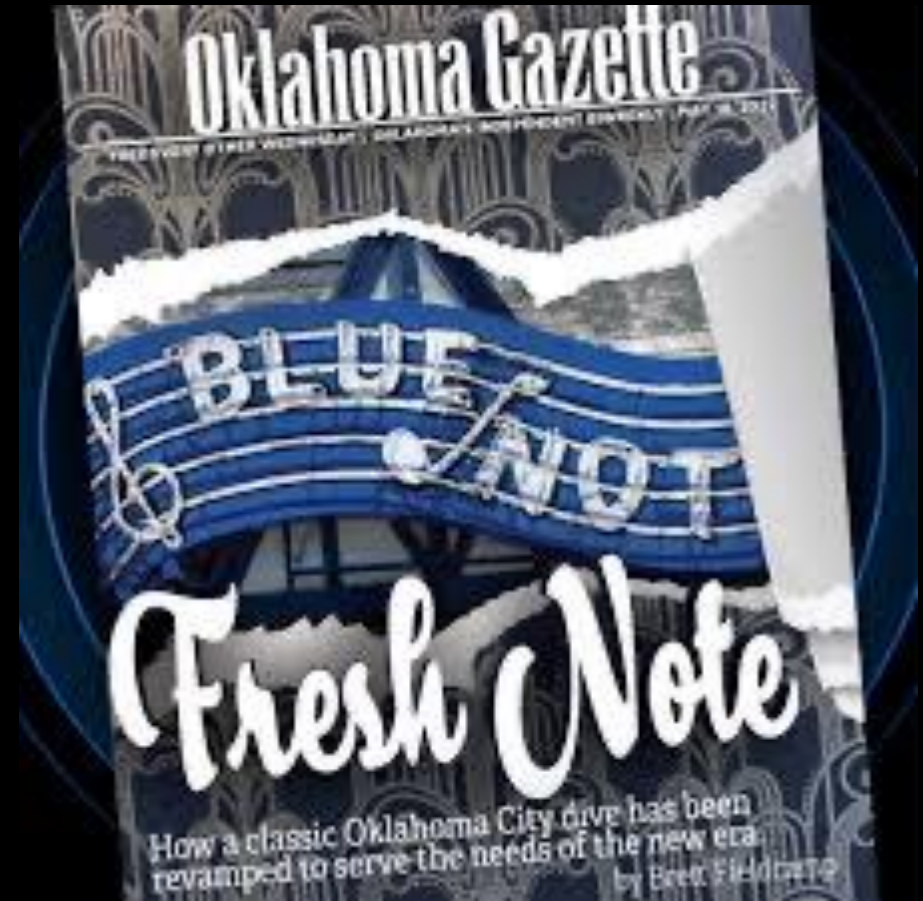


Photo Credit: Oklahoma Gazette

SUGGESTIONS FOR BUSKERS

Get Organized!



Photo Credit: The Day of the Busker – Stereo Stickman

Dress Up, Not Down



Photo Credit: Rhiannan Schmitt Nelson, Streetfest '98

VS.



Photo Credit: Mark Bernard Music

Image



Photo Credit: Busking.com



Photo Credit: JannHuizenga

- Don't reinforce stereotype of buskers being panhandlers, bums, et cetera.
- Wear a signature item (coat, hat, vest, et cetera).
- Look the part.
- Be well groomed.
- Exercise good hygiene.
- Wear comfortable, climate-friendly clothing.
- Always wear good, comfortable standing and walking shoes!!!
- Bring a change of clothing, just in case.
- Post an introductory sign with your picture on it, dressed in character.
- And...

Once Again, Dress Up...Not Down



*2021 Africa's Got
Talent Finalist*

Photo Credit: Blogspot.com

Always Look Your Best!

Repertoire Tips

- Have a MINIMUM of 1 to 2-hours of material available (avg. 20-40 songs) performance pieces.
- Organize (e.g. songs) according to theme, style, et cetera...to cater to crowd on hand.
- Intersperse fast and slow songs. Audience tends to like variety.
- Have mp3 tracks individualized, not in stream (to allow for improvisation of playing repertoire).
- Play what you sense they want to hear, not necessarily what you want to play.
- Be prepared to improvise and/or make transition to another song immediately.
- Alphabetize Repertoire List for easy reference.
- Keep in plastic sleeves, readily accessible.
- Take requests, if possible.
- Highlight special groups of songs, such as Christmas repertoire, for easy location on repertoire sheets.



Adam Busking and Composing on
Our Stoop in Brooklyn, NY, 2004

Repertoire - Updated 10 06 2022

1. A Closer Walk	32. Hallelujah
2. A Day in the Life of a Fool	33. Happy Days Are Here Again
3. A Summer Place	34. Hard Candy Christmas
4. All the Way	35. Hark! The Herald Angels Sing
5. As Long as He Needs Me	36. Help Me Make It Through the Night
6. Begin the Beguine	37. Here Comes Santa Claus
7. Bewitched	38. How Can You Mend a Broken Heart
8. Beyond the Sea	39. How High the Moon
9. Birth of the Blues	40. I Believe
10. Blue Christmas	41. I Could Have Danced All Night
11. Blue Hawaii	42. I Don't Know How to Love Him
12. Blue Moon	43. I Don't Want to Talk About It
13. Blue Skies	44. I Dreamed a Dream
14. Bohemian Rhapsody	45. I Fall to Pieces
15. Bring Him Home	46. I Only Have Eyes for You
16. But She's Not You	47. I'll Be Home for Christmas
17. Can't Help Falling in Love	48. I'll Be Seeing You
18. Can't Live Without You	49. I'll Remember You
19. Christmas Song	50. I've Grown Accustomed to Her Face
20. Crazy	51. Icarus
21. Cry Me a River	52. Isn't It Romantic
22. Danny Boy	53. It Had Better Be Tonight
23. Do You Know What It Means to Miss New Orleans	54. It's Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas
24. Don't Get Around Much Anymore	55. It's Impossible
25. Evergreen	56. Jesus Loves Me
26. Everybody Loves Somebody	57. Joyful, Joyful
27. Fascination	58. Ladyfinger (Tiquana Brass)
28. Far Else	59. Let's Swing
29. Forget on My Mind	60. Long Ago and Far Away
30. Good With Ya (Philly Soulmates)	61. Lovin' You
31. Goodbye Thomas	62. Maria

Choosing a Venue (“Pitch”)



While busking in Chicago in 2012, setting up under Marilyn Monroe's skirt seemed like the right thing to do at the time.

As it turned out, I was...uh...upstaged, to say the least. The tourists didn't even see me!

Set-up

- **Set-up.**
 - Announce upcoming performance to crowd.
 - Invite crowd to stick around...it's worth the wait!
 - Free CD for the first 3 "Name that Tune" winners.
- **Location.**
 - Good traffic flow.
 - Comfortable for both you and the audience.
 - Natural stopping point for passersby.
 - Power outlet, if needed / Electric cords out of way.
 - In compliance with ordinance.
 - Not too near other buskers.



Props / Equipment

- Musical instrument(s).
- Props and Costuming.
- Change of Clothing.
- Stool (s).
- Sound system.
- Power converter / battery / electric cords.
- Microphone(s) / stands / microphone cords.
- Sheet music / notebooks / et cetera.
- Water. Lots of Water...and Sunscreen!
- Business cards / Brochures / Signs / Promotional Items.
- Merchandise.
- Cart.
- Wide-brim Hat.
- TIP JAR !!!



Photo Credit: www.dxt.com

“The Build” and “The Hold” (Getting the Audience’s Attention)

- Building your audience prior to beginning your performance requires attention-grabbing / intriguing measures.
- Often begins during set-up.
- Brainstorm audience-participation techniques.
- Ask for volunteers in audience to help in Act, hand out business cards, brochures, et cetera.
- Pick a cute assistant in the crowd the audience will like (child, cute girl, et cetera).
- Involve the audience as much as possible (clapping, finger snapping, et cetera).
- Good rule of thumb: 1 part dazzling skill to 2 parts humor!



Photo Credit: weekendnotes.com

“The Act” (Keeping the Audience)

- “Read” your audience; choose performance piece accordingly.
- Actively perform. Capture their eyes, not just their ears. Be animated!
- Practice rapid, smooth medley transitions.
- Eye contact, eye contact, eye contact!
- Non-verbally acknowledge your audience’s attention, approval, and their generosity.
- SMILE!
- Develop audience-participation techniques.



Photo Credit: Alamy

Sense of Humor Vehicles

- Signs.
- Eye contact / gestures.
- Amusing body movements.
- Comedic facial expressions and responses.
- Song selection (e.g. “Let it Snow” in hot subway during the summer).
- One-line witticisms.
- Non-verbal interaction with audience (e.g. following a cute girl a short distance).
- Always “work the crowd” and look for environmental humor opportunities (e.g. moving to avoid sudden leaks in roof, et cetera).
- Roll with the punches when distractions happen. Make it an amusing incident, not an annoying one.

“Hat Line” (The Close)

--Soliciting / Receiving Donations--

- May be a verbal or Non-verbal invitation to put money in the hat during “Circle Acts.” (NOT ALWAYS ALLOWED IN CERTAIN CITIES).
- For Walk-by Acts: “Thanks for Listening” sign does not overtly solicit a donation, but gets the point across.
- Put seed money in tip jar at beginning of set.
- Periodically empty tip jar or instrument case.
- Watch for thieves.
- In subway stations, put a “MetroCard” or two in the tip jar. Hey, it’s as good as money!
- Use humor: e.g. a sign stating “Suggestions: Free / Requests: Sliding Scale” (when signs indicating a donation is welcome is allowed by ordinance).
- *(NOTE: When I played on the sidewalk outside Carnegie, I placed a sign on my tip jar that said, “Working My Way Inside,” with an arrow pointing to the front door).*

ENGAGING THE AUDIENCE

“The Human Orchestra”

- Solicit at least 12 – 15 volunteers from the audience.
- Divide into groups of 3-4, and assign the following parts to the Reena-Reena Song:
 - Bass foundation.
 - Percussion.
 - Cymbal sounds.
 - Clapping.
 - Melody line.
 - Up a third harmony.
 - Yada-latah singers with hand motions and foot choreography.
 - Lead counter-melody (you).
- Rehearse hand motions and the end.
- Perform the “Reena-Reena Song” for audience.

IMPROVISATION

Improvisation Tricks of the Trade

- To a large extent, the art of improv can be learned, or improved by practice, practice, practice.
- Musically, improvisation brings life and finesse to your renditions of either “cover songs,” or your own creations.
- Creatively, through certain embellishments, such as chromatic scales, you can learn to “play by ear,” and to free yourself from being bound by written sheet music.



Photo Credit: www.westminsterworld.com

Embellishments

- Trills.
- Chromatics and Scales.
- Drags.
- Slides.
- Tempo Variation.
- Varied Syncopation.
- Volume Changes.
- Volume Variations.
- Song Transition (Medleys).



“Looping”

An Excellent Way to Add Instrumentation



Field Analysis Process
Utilized by NCITI's
“Invisible Inventions”

Team in MacGyver 101 Workshops

Excerpt from NCITI's MacGyver 101 Workshop

Strategies for Turning Common Object into an “Invisible Invention”

- **Intended Use Already in Mind:**
 - Focus on **similarity of form** (between object in hand), while visualizing object normally used for that function.
 - Seek out and utilize **collateral objects to adapt** the object in hand to the intended use.
 - **Experiment and employ.**
- **Object in Hand / No Preconceived Intended Use:**
 - Focus on **form and normal function** of object.
 - **Brainstorm alternative functions** of the object in hand.
 - **Seek out and utilize collateral objects to adapt** the object in hand to newly-intended use.
 - **Experiment and employ.**

Linsey Pollak – The Carrot Clarinetist



Trevor Cox - The Watermelon Drummer



And on the Baseball Bat...Mr. Linsey Pollak!



SELF - PROMOTING

Self-Promoting

- Business Cards.
- Booking Cards.
- Calendar of Upcoming Performances (and Locations).
- Website with Online Store.
- Social Networking Pages.
- Branded Products.
- Signs and Banners.
- Paper Weight.



Photo Credit: YouTube: Immi Davis

On-site and Residual Product Sales

- CD's.
- DVD's.
- T-shirts.
- Sweatshirts.
- Caps and Hats.
- Coffee Mugs.



Photo Credit: Spencer MacDonald (pixels.com)

Steering to Social Media

- Facebook.
 - Through personal pages.
 - Through subscription pages.
 - Through “friend” pages.
- LinkedIn.
- MySpace.
- eBackpage.com.
 - Local places.
 - Events, bars/clubs, restaurants.
 - Community.
 - Classes/workshops, general, groups, volunteers.
 - Musician.
 - Available/wanted, instruction, services, plug the band.
- Craigslist.org.
 - Community.
 - Activities, artists, classes, events, groups, local news, musicians, volunteers.
 - Services.
 - Creative, events, lessons, skilled trade.
 - Gigs.
 - Talent, creative.
 - Discussion.
 - Media, music.
 - Topics related to experience at local venues, etc.
- *Instagram.*
 - *Announcing events, websites, etc.*

Local Trade Papers and Bulletin Boards

- The aforementioned free newspapers are excellent for advertising events, as well as inviting other performers for auditions.
- Ask persons in charge about posting announcements and posters in University and school bulletin boards, book and music stores, libraries, et cetera.
- This is often “free advertising,” but some publications may charge for an ad.
- These papers may be found in area coffee shops, restaurants, bars, convenience stores, etc.



Photo Credit: Oklahoma Gazette

Register with The Busking Project, and Others (busk.co)

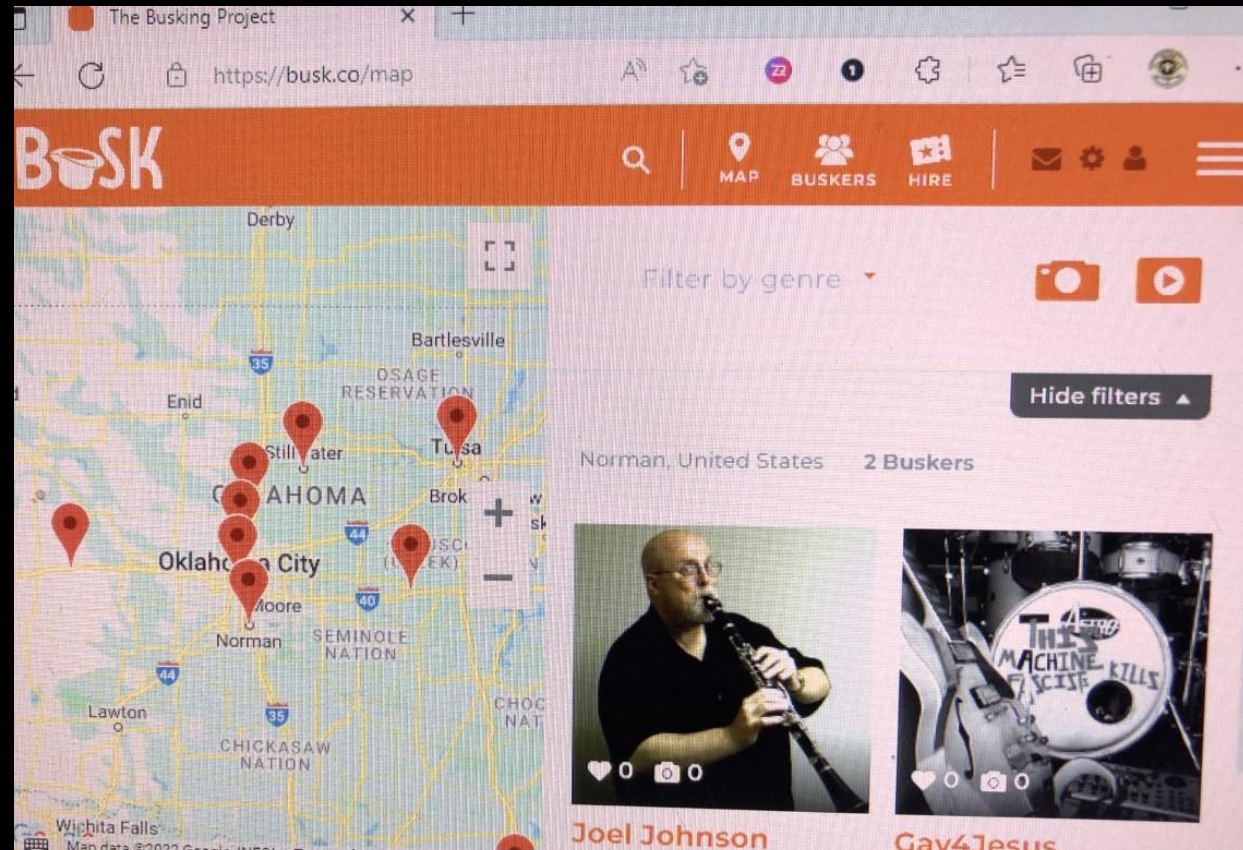


Photo Credit: Busking.com

BUSKING AND THE LAW

What if Your City Doesn't Allow Busking?



Photo Credit: Alamy.com

About Busking Prohibitions

- Avoid trouble and complications. DO YOUR HOMEWORK FIRST!
- Sometimes busking is prohibited on certain days, or certain times.
- Sometimes acoustic busking is allowed, but not amplified.
- Ordinance prohibitions may not exist, but merchant rules may be in effect.
- Keep laminated copies of applicable ordinances, Supreme Court rulings, et cetera, to politely present to law enforcement officers, if necessary.
- Never argue with law enforcement. Cheerfully comply with their directives.
- It may be a good idea to offer a % cut of your tip money...or announcements advertising the store or restaurant.
- Don't forget to offer to play an inside acoustical set, for food or drink.
- If selling merchandise (such as CDs, t-shirts, et cetera, don't compete with the businesses.
- Even if answers to your questions are found in websites or publication, always verify by calling local permit and licensing agencies, police departments, et cetera.

Busking & First Amendment Rights



Photo Credit: IrelandStoleMyHeart.com

Buskers' Legal Rights

- Freedom of Speech (e.g. artistic expression) protected under the First and Fourteenth Amendments of the U.S. Constitution.
- Baird, Stephen (2000). Turley v. New York City prohibits law enforcement from seizing street performers' instruments. Source: Street Performers and Buskers Advocates. Retrieved 2010-06-15.
- Busking cannot be prohibited in any area where other forms of free speech are not prohibited. Exceptions include sedition, public displays of pornography and obscenity, defamation, incitement to violence, et cetera.
- Title 18, Sections 241 (Conspiracy to Deprive Rights) and 242 (Deprivation of Rights) prohibit officials under color of law from violating First and Fourteenth (and all other) Amendment rights, and impose criminal penalties for doing so.
- Exceptions also include public expression where public safety and noise violation issues are at play.

Permits and Licenses



Permits and Licenses



Photo Credit: Busk.co

- Contact your local city government. Ask for department that issues special permits and licenses.
- Bring required documentation.
- A fee may be charged (average \$40).
- Fingerprinting may also be required.
- If you will be using amplification, please inquire re: special permit.
- If playing in a group act, each participant may or may not be required to purchase an individual permit.
- Keep permit either worn externally, or posted in plain view.
- In spite of permits and licenses being unconstitutional, it is not advisable to argue the point when contacted by LEOs.

One-Person Business / Entrepreneurship



Photo Credit: StreetMusicApp.com



Photo Credit: www.FrenchQuarterJournal.com

- Consider getting a business license. It may be required by local ordinance in your city.
- Business license may not be necessary for busking only, but is if merchandise is sold, or if amplification is to be used.
- Make sure permits or licenses are in order and current. Have them in your possession whenever busking.

DECLARING TAXES

DISCLAIMER

The following information has been gleaned from publicly-accessible information found on various web sites, and is NOT TO BE CONSTRUED as “tax advice.” Please check with your tax preparer and/or accountant to determine what your tax liability is.

Guidelines re: Busking and Taxes

(www.keepstreetsalive.com)

- In locations that regard busking as “panhandling,” buskers may not be required to pay taxes. But in most places...
- Busking is regarded as self-employment income; therefore, they should register as a “self-employed entertainer.”
- Many expenses are tax deductible, as long as they directly relate to your street performing.
- “Buskers should file utilizing a 1099Misc.” form, and fill out “Schedule C” and “SE” forms for business income.
- Important to keep receipts re: connected expenses.

Five Timely Tips re: Busking Income

(www.newmusicUSA.org)

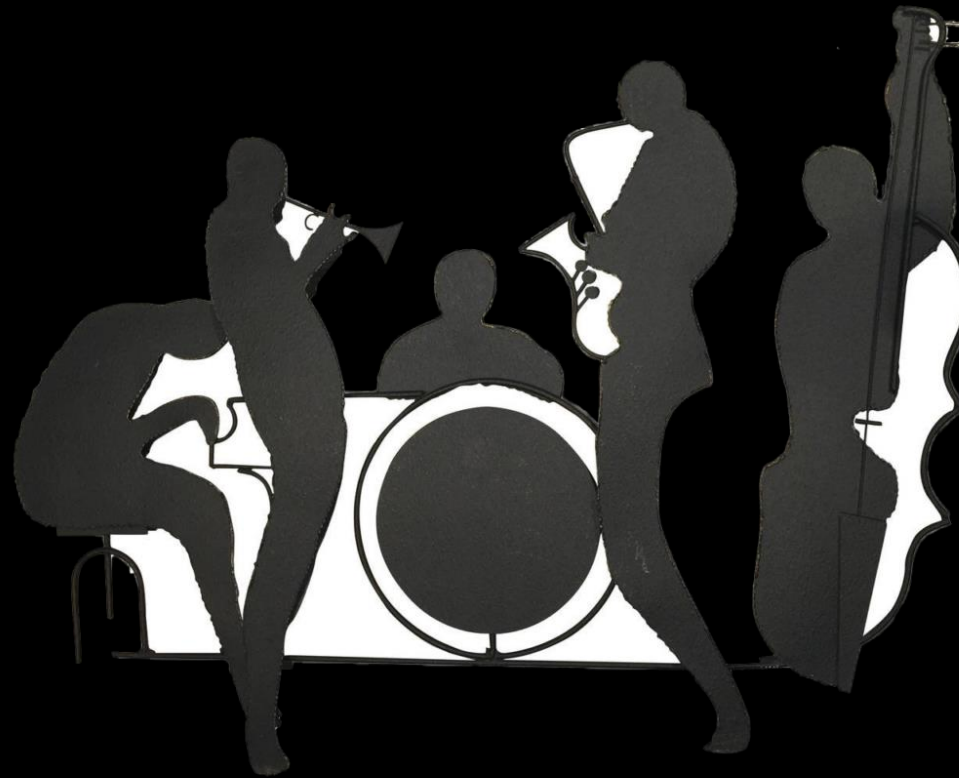
- Know your tax obligations.
- Income tax.
- Self-employment tax (12.4% Social Security / 2.9% Medicare).
- Be prepared to prove you have a business, not a hobby.
- File your taxes, even if you don't owe, or are not required to file.
- Gather your expense records and deduct gig expenses.
- File a "Schedule SE" and "Schedule C" form.
- Examples of allowable expenses:
 - Musical instruments used in busking.
 - Repair and maintenance of those instruments.
 - Sheet music and music-business books.
 - Instrument consumables, such as drum sticks, guitar strings, etc.
 - Insurance for instruments.
 - Travel expenses to and from gigs. Mileage: 57.5cents per mile).
 - Meals when travelling to and from gigs.
 - Promotional recordings.
 - Recording equipment (when not extravagant).
 - etc. (SEE ARTICLE).

BUSKING-FRIENDLY CITIES

Some Busking-friendly Cities Around the World

(Johnson, 2013; Reutinger, (Year Unk.); Wikipedia, 2021)

- New York City, NY
- Boulder, CO
- Chicago, IL
- Kansas City, MO
- San Francisco, CA
- Wichita, KS
- New Orleans, LA
- Cincinnati, OH
- Nashville, TN
- Cambridge, MA
- Oklahoma City, OK (Bricktown)
- Atlanta, GA
- Philadelphia, PA
- Los Angeles, CA
- San Diego, CA
- San Antonio, TX
- **Tampa, FL**
- **Clearwater, FL**
- St. Petersburg, FL
- Dublin, Ireland
- Belfast, Ireland
- Galway, Ireland
- Edinburgh, Scotland
- Melbourne, Australia



- Austin, TX
- Dallas, TX
- St. Louis, MO
- Houston, TX
- Madison, WI
- Honolulu, HI
- Las Vegas, NV
- Washington, DC
- Key West, FL
- Miami Beach, FL
- Boston, MA
- Baltimore, MD
- Santa Cruz, CA
- Portland, OR
- Seattle, WA
- London, England
- York, England
- Birmingham, England
- Berlin, Germany
- Rome, Italy
- Brisbane, Australia
- Sydney, Australia
- Amsterdam, Netherlands
- Athens, Greece

Photo Credit: Adobe.com

DISCLAIMER RE: “BUSKING-FRIENDLY” CITIES

This list is offered as a guide, based upon reports from local buskers, on various websites. Most, if not all, of these cities have certain limitations, governing allowable locations, times busking may occur, et cetera. Some require licenses or permits. Check with local city officials for local requirements prior to travelling to those cities, and/or setting up to perform. Also, keep in mind that the legal requirements are not often easy to ascertain. When in doubt, contact the local offices of the City Attorney, and/or the City Clerk (or other offices that are involved in issuing permits for public performances).

Ask about what specific areas where busking is allowed, whether or not sound amplification, solicitation of donations, product sales, et cetera, are allowed.

ADDITIONAL DISCLAIMER

The enclosed information is offered according to the most reliable resources available to the Author / Instructors at the time of publication of this training program.

Buskers, if going into a new city, should ALWAYS check with local authorities to confirm and/or clarify individual requirements and limitations imposed by the local government.

The Authors/Instructors are to be held harmless from any liability imposed upon individual performers. This release from indemnity applies to any and all information offered in the Busking University workshop, and/or the www.buskinguniversity.org website. All Students agree to this release of indemnity as a condition of receiving the training.

THIRTY SELECTED CITIES'
BUSKING RULES AND REGULATIONS
(LISTED ALPHABETICALLY)

Albuquerque and Santa Fe, NM Busking Rules and Regulations

(Subject to Change)

(Albuquerque Municipal Codes)

- No commercial advertising or signs (regardless of size) allowed on public property, per municipal ordinance.
- Recommended: “Thanks for Listening” sign with no mention of tips or donations.
- Acoustic performing recommended, due to noise ordinances.
- No specific ordinances found re: busking, per se.



Photo Credit: the Santa Fe New Mexican

Austin, TX Busking Rules and Regulations

(Subject to Change)

www.AustinTexas.gov / <https://blog.sonicbids.com>

- Busking is legal in Austin. The City of Austin sponsors the “Street Performance Program” during the Spring and Fall months...in the downtown area. Music must be unamplified. Auditions are required. Buskers are paid by the city.
- Otherwise, Sixth Street is a historic location, excellent for busking. Also, Congress Avenue features a number of “hip” cafes, bars, et cetera.
- Red River Street is an eclectic, three-block strip, excellent for busking.
- Second Street District is one of the best-known dining and shopping districts, with plenty of foot traffic.



Photo Credit: Flickr

Boston, MA Busking Rules and Regulations

(Subject to Change)

(www.boston.gov)

- No permits or licenses required for busking in public places.
- Okay to ask for and receive donations. Also okay to sell recordings of busker's own performances.
- Noise ordinances enforced (less than 70 decibels allowed prior to 11pm. 50 decibel limit from 11pm to 7am. Also, setting up on handicap ramps is prohibited.
- Performers may not impede pedestrian traffic.



Photo Credit: www.bostonbusking.wordpress.com

Boulder, CO Busking Rules and Regulations (Subject to Change)

www.buskersbeat.com

- Pearl Street and The Hill are premium busking locations.
- Boulder attracts a lot of transient pedestrian and tourist traffic.
- Standard busking regulations re: sound limits, etc. apply.
- At this time, no special permit required. No other applicable ordinances.
- Much more sedate environment than Denver busking areas.



Photo Credit: www.flickr.com

Branson, MO Busking Rules and Regulations

(Subject to Change)

(www.packages.grandcountry.com)

- Large tourist population frequents shows, and several business locations throughout the city.
- If setting up in public walkways, be considerate of local businesses.
- Some restaurants, etc. are amenable to allowing busking; will want you to audition first.



Photo Credit: www.youtube.com

Chicago, IL Busking Rules and Regulations

(Subject to Change)

(www.busk.co)

- Busking allowed with city license. License is \$100, renewable every two years.
- License may be purchased at City Hall, Room 800, at the Department of Business Affairs and Consumer Protection.
- Transportation Authority only allows buskers to set up at Jackson/State (on the Red Line), Washington/State on the Red Line, Jackson/Dearborn on the Blue Line, and Washington/Dearborn on the Blue Line.
- Downtown at the “Magnificent Mile” on public sidewalk and recesses is a premium location.
- All standard prohibitions re: noise level, blocking foot traffic and business entrances apply.



Photo Credit: Oleg Mihans

Dallas, TX Busking Rules and Regulations

(Subject to Change)

(www.dallasobserver.com)

- Busking allowed in Business District.
- General rules and regulations common to most cities apply.
- Check with Police Department before setting up.



Photo Credit: Dallas Morning News

Denver, CO Busking Rules and Regulations

(Subject to Change)

(www.denvernorthstar.com)

- Denver is very busking-friendly.
- Outside of 16th Street, there are currently no regulations or prohibitions, other than standard requirements to not block foot traffic, entrances, etc.
- Noise restriction: less than 75 decibels required from 7am to 10 pm. 70 decibels from 10pm to 7am.
- Try 16th Street Mall, as well as Sloan's Lake, 32nd Avenue, Highlands Square, and LoHi.



Photo Credit: www.busk.co

Eureka Springs, AR Busking Rules and Regulations (Subject to Change)

- Busking allowed in public areas and city parks, with some limitations.
- No permit or license is necessary.
- No amplification allowed, unless sanctioned by the Town of Eureka Springs.
- Recommended: Check with the Management of the “5 Grand Hotels” about busking in front of the Hotel, or even in the lobby!
- Busking allowed in certain bars and pubs. Check with Management.
- Be considerate of other buskers re: scheduling, locations, etc.
- Busking not allowed on Great Passion Play properties, unless specifically sanctioned by the Management.



Photo Credit: www.grouptravelleader.com

Kansas City, MO / Lawrence, KS Busking Rules & Regulations

(Subject to Change)

(www.reddit.com)

- License not required for acoustic busking, but a street trading license is required if you want to sell any merchandise, including recordings.
- License is required for amplified busking.
- Check out dates for Lawrence Busking Festival!
- Time limits: 8am – 11pm.



(Photo Credit: ExploreKansasCity.com)



(Photo Credit: www.kansastravel.org)

Las Vegas, NV Busking Rules and Regulations

(Subject to Change)

<https://everydayperformers.com>

- SEE Las Vegas Municipal Code, Sections 11.68.107 and 11.68.108.
- Busking is thriving, especially on “The Strip” and at the Fremont Street Pedestrian Mall.
- Busking is allowed from 3p to 1a.
- Lots of competition / diversity of types of buskers.
- Permits are not require at either place, but registration is necessary. Apply in person at the Mall Office, between 10a and 7:30p...or at the City of Las Vegas DSC Building located at 333North Rancho Drive.
- Registration is valid for 180 days. Form must be displayed in plain view where you are performing.
- First come/first serve: There are 190 available time slots...so come as early as possible.



Photo Credit: Las Vegas Review Journal

Los Angeles, CA Busking Rules and Regulations

(Subject to Change)
(blog.sonicbids.com / www.tuneupandtravel.com)

- 7a – 10p.
- No amps near residential areas.
- No permit required.
- If amp allowed, can't be heard more than 200 feet.
- Stay 200+ ft. from hospitals, churches, and schools when open.
- Stay off city benches, furniture, etc.
- Don't block ramps, doorways, or driveways.
- Always leave clear path for pedestrians.
- Street level only in Metro Subway areas. NO busking on ramps.
- Signs 30"x30" or smaller. Must be free-standing.



Photo Credit: Joseph Gordon Levitt

Memphis, TN Busking Rules and Regulations

(Subject to Change)

(www.downtownmemphis.com)

- Free Busking Permit is required, especially for downtown area.
- Allowed areas: Main Street Mall, Civic Center Plaza and Court Square during allowed times.
- Other allowed areas listed on Permit Application.
- Beale Street is prohibited.
- Sound performers must be 200 + feet away from each other.
- Sound performers are required to move daily.
- No amplification allowed.
- Valid ID required.



Photo Credit: www.springboardexchange.com

Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN Busking Rules and Regulations

(Subject to Change)

(www.onnicollet.com)

- No license or permit required.
- Best area: on Nicollet.
- Standard rules re: amplification and not impeding foot traffic apply.



Photo Credit: www.streetworksmn.org

Nashville TN Busking Rules and Regulations

(Subject to Change)

(www.nashvillenoise.com)

- No permit required for acoustic busking in downtown area.
- No amplification, no saxophones, drums. No stools allowed.
- Selling merchandise requires a vendor's license.
- Broadway and 2nd Street are most popular. Lower Broadway is very "touristy."
- Be cautious to not interfere with pedestrians and crowds near Ryman Auditorium and Nashville Convention Center.



Photo Credit: www.nashvillearts.com

New Orleans, LA Busking Rules and Regulations

(Subject to Change)
(www.busk.co)

- License is required for a low annual cost.
- Jackson Square and certain sidewalk areas in French Quarter are best locations.
- Sound levels must remain below 85 decibels.
- If you play jazz, Royal Street is a good area.



Photo Credit: www.dissolve.com

New York City, NY Busking Rules and Regulations

(Subject to Change)

(<https://thevillagesun.com>)

- Busking allowed 9a – 8p if within 50 feet of a residential building.
- Must be at least 500 feet from school, churches, hospitals, and courthouses during operating hours.
- No permit required for unamplified performers.
- Amplified? – must get permit: \$45/day.
- If playing in a park, amplification permit is \$25 for up to a month.
- Unamplified performances in Subway stations and platforms.
- Sound limit on amplification = 85 dBa.
- For a choice high-traffic spot on subway mezzanines, apply @ Music Under New York (MUNY)



Photo Credit: Gothamist

Norman, OK Busking Rules and Regulations (Subject to Change)

(City of Norman City Clerk / University of Oklahoma Student Life)

- No license or permit required when busking on public properties.
- Do not obstruct walkways.
- Beware of noise violations if using amplification equipment.
- No overt solicitation or fees are allowed.
- It is, however, okay to accept tips.
- Consider University of Oklahoma as a possible venue, as well.
- Prior permission must be obtained to perform in Student Centers or within any building.
- Same rules re: not obstructing foot or vehicle traffic apply, when busking on University property.



Photo Credit: www.nondoc.com

Oklahoma City, OK Busking Rules and Regulations

(Subject to Change)

- Currently, street Performer license is required - \$30 / year.
- OSBI fingerprint check is required.
- Various documents also required.
- Best busking venue – Bricktown.
- No aggressive panhandling or soliciting allowed. Strictly enforced.



Photo Credit: www.pinterest.com

San Antonio, TX Busking Rules and Regulations (Subject to Change)

(www.sanantonio.gov)

- San Antonio is an extremely “busking friendly” city.
- However, busking is not allowed on the Riverwalk, Alamo Plaza (bounded by Alamo Street from Commerce to Houston, and east to Crockett and Blum Streets).
- Downtown public pedestrian spaces are allowed.
- No permit is required.
- Buskers may not obstruct pedestrian or vehicular traffic on walkways and streets.
- Sign size is limited to 24” x 36.” No oral solicitation is allowed.



Photo Credit: DanielJCosio.com

San Diego, CA Busking Rules and Regulations (Subject to Change)

(blog.sonicbids.com / www.tuneupandtravel.com)

- Busking is legal.
- Annual Busking Festival at Seaport Village.
- Mild amplification allowed.
- No blocking walkways, etc.
- Follow common busking etiquette.
- In Balboa Park, a permit is required (excellent location).



Photo Credit: San Diego Union

San Francisco, CA Busking Rules and Regulations (Subject to Change) (www.busk.co)

- No mandatory permit or license is required.
- Certain areas of Fisherman's Wharf feature busking acts.
- Licenses are available to perform at Fisherman's Wharf, via the Fisherman's Wharf Street Performer Program. Inquire at a local merchant.



Photo Credit: www.dreamstime.com

Santa Monica Pier, CA Busking Rules and Regulations (Subject to Change)

(blog.sonicbids.com; www.tuneupandtravel.com)

- On weekends, street performer permit required: \$37 annually. (Jan 1 thru Dec 31).
- No permit required on weekdays.
- No elaborate set-ups allowed (must be able to break down in 3 minutes).
- 2-hour time limit within 120 feet from your previous spot.
- Stay at least 40 feet from the nearest busker.
- Stay off city furniture and benches.
- Performance hours: 8a-10p Mon-Fri / 9a-10p on Sat/Sun.



Photo Credit: Jean Paul Bigirindavyi

Savannah, GA Busking Rules and Regulations

(Subject to Change)
(www.savannahga.gov)

- Permit required.
- Acquire via Special Events, Film and Tourism Att'n: Tourism Division. SEE <https://www.savannahga.gov/2890/Street-Performer>
- Annual permit badge fee: \$20, paid by money order, payable to City of Savannah.
- Must complete Street Performer application, provide copy of current driver's license or state ID card, a color photo, and;
- Demonstrate stated performance, art, or craft (via video mp3 or 4, YouTube, etc.)
- Busking allowed on public right-of-way.
- Further requirements and limitations listed on application (including allowed/prohibited areas).
- Permits expire on Dec. 31 of each year. No permits issued after August 31st.



Photo Credit: www.alamy.com

St. Louis, MO Busking Rules and Regulations

(Subject to Change)

(www.reddit.com/r/tlouis.com)

- Busking ordinance was repealed in 2013.
- Be cautious about setting up in outlying areas (due to street crime).
- Highly-trafficked downtown areas are very busking friendly.
- Recommended: busk during day business hours.



Photo Credit: www.blogspot.com

Tulsa, OK Busking Rules and Regulations

(Subject to Change)

(City of Tulsa City Clerk)

- Busking allowed.
- Not within 100 feet of elementary or secondary school, library, or church while in session. Not allowed at hospitals any time.
- Unless approved by the city event coordinator, no busking within 300 feet of organized activities.
- No busking within 10 feet of a bus stop or street corner, or near a business entrance.
- Must be a minimum of 50 feet from another performer.



Photo Credit: Youtube

Wichita, KS Busking Rules and Regulations (Subject to Change)

www.oldtownfarmandartmarket.com

- No license required.
- May not set up within 10 feet of any bus stop, any marked pedestrian crosswalk, or on the property of the Wichita Transit Center.
- Standard noise restrictions apply.



Photo Credit: Wichita Farm and Art Market

BUSKING SAFETY

“Remember: It’s not just a job...it’s an adventure!”



Photo Credit: yorkmix.com

Safety Considerations



Photo Credit: www.wordpress.com



Photo Credit: TorontoGrandPrixTourist.com

Common Safety Pitfalls: Protect Yourself From

- Physical injury.
- Damage to equipment.
- Theft.
- The weather elements.
- Sunburn.



Photo Credit: Dreamsime

Other Common Hazards

- Theft and Robbery.
- Confiscation and Fines.
- Arrests.
- Hostile Audience.
- Removal due to violation of local rules and regulations.



Photo Credit: www.coconuts.co.



Photo Credit: [Reddit.com](https://www.reddit.com)

George Burns Recalls His Days as a Busker



Photo Credit: Cigar Aficionado Online

Sometimes the customers threw something in the hat. Sometimes they took something out of the hat. Sometimes, they took the hat.

Theft Prevention

- Keep tip receptacle close by, within reach.
- If possible, have a friend there to fetch water, to guard money, and to shill, if necessary.
- Thieves will sometimes use distraction ploys and work in teams.
- Keep dollar bills weighted down to avoid them blowing away.



Photo Credit: Hillary Klug

Look for Set-Up Spots that “Protect Your Back”



Photo Credit: Carl Catron / Busking London

Don't Forget to Ask the Experts

- Do reconnaissance first!
- Ask local police officers (especially “Beat cops”).
- Check with Chamber of Commerce / Local talent coordinators.
- Confirm allowable days/nights/hours.
- Talk to local merchants. Some may welcome your presence in front of their business.
- Be prepared to AUDITION first.
- Meet and interview established Regulars who do well.
- Talk to local veteran buskers who are currently working the area. However, “Trust but Verify.”
- Tip them for their time and/or offer to buy them lunch, dinner, whatever.



Photo Credit: Rob Hawkins (pixels.com)

Busking is Seriously-Fun Business. No Clowning Around!



Photo Credit: The Busking Project

BUSKING DURING COVID

Caution re: Public Requirements Making Masking, Distancing, and Crowd Limitations

- Be sure and check with local authorities re: community limitations due to COVID risk.
- These limitations may include, but are not limited to:
 - Masking requirements.
 - Social distancing requirements.
 - Facilitating crowd-gathering.



Photo Credit: www.classicfm.com



Photo Credit: www.chicagohealthonline.com

There is More than One Way to Skin a Cat

- Posting on YouTube can allow you to busk at a distance, while offering a link where your audience can choose to “tip” you via Venmo, CashAp, and PayPal on your personal website.
- Don’t forget to offer explicit, easy-to-follow directions on how to tip.
- This is also an excellent way to sell merchandise.
- It is also very inexpensive to purchase a url address (GoDaddy.com is highly recommended) which can include a free 5-page website to promote your music and products.
- Work on developing your “stage presence” when recording your busking sessions.



Photo Credit: Irishbuskers.com

Busking During Covid



Photo Credit: [Busking.com](https://www.busking.com)

BUSKING ETIQUETTE

Key Points of Busking Etiquette

- Don't "cut in" without an invitation.
- If possible, approach other buskers during a break; begin by tipping them, and then gently breach the subject of a "sit in."
- Don't overwhelm. Remain a back up to their act, unless explicitly invited to take a lead in the set.
- Not all ingredients mix well. Make sure you're compatible.
- Don't expect financial remuneration. Let the hosting busker(s) keep the tip money. If it's a great set, they may choose to tip you.
- Don't outstay your welcome, especially when sharing a busking location.
- If being followed by another act, offer to introduce them...especially if there is going to be a slight delay in setting up, et cetera.

Don't Block Foot Traffic!



Photo Credit: The Buskteers

Problems with Blocking the Sidewalk

- Blocking walkway is one of the most sure-fired ways of getting complaints from merchants, and calls to the police.
- Also, it may encourage pedestrians to cross to the opposite side of the street.
- Also, do not block window-shopping opportunities for passers-by.
- Look for set-up spots that allow plenty of pedestrian traffic, while still allowing you to set up (especially with multiple performers).
- Rudeness → far-fewer tips.

Avoid Being Upstaged



Photo Credit: NaroomaNewsOnline.com

No “Begpacking” in 3rd World Countries

- Certain countries (e.g. in Southeast Asia), American and European youth often try to “busk their way” across the country, competing with impoverished locals who vitally need the income.
- This is discouraged, even criminalized, by some local authorities.
- If you choose to beg-pack, first check with local authorities, and openly give majority of your tips to local impoverished people.

AMPLIFICATION

To Amplify or Not to Amplify: That is the Question



Photo Credit: YouTube: Testing the Busking Rig

- Check local ordinances.
- Special permits may be required for amplification.
- Best option: Audible up to 40 feet away. Don't drown out other buskers.
- Always be ready with "Plan B."
- "Too loud" attracts complaints.

Making Amplification Choices

(busk.co)

- Battery-Operated amps **GENERALLY BEST.**
- Don't necessarily buy the cheapest. Test quality at retailer first.
- **Better deals generally found online. Compare prices!**
- Test with condenser microphones, if needed. Some amps do not accommodate them.
- **Another option: Purchase marine battery and electric converter.**
- Carry in roller cart. Look for most comfortable/convenient/durable.
- **Buy high quality cables. Bring spares!**
- How many channels needed?
- **Guitars? Vocals? Some amplifiers do not accommodate both.**

Shop Around and Test Each One / Price Compare

(Busk.co)

- AER Compact 60 Amplifier.
- Behringer EUROPORT PA System.
- Fender Passport Mini Portable PA System.
- Fender Rumble Base Amplifier.
- Fishman LoudBox Mini Amplifier.
- Fishman LoudBox Artist Amplifier.
- Marshall AS50D Amplifier.
- Roland CUBE GXR Amplifier.
- Roland CUBE Street EX Amplifier.
- Roland BA 330 Amplifier.
- Tanglewood T6 Amplifier.
- VOX Mini5 Modeling Amplifier.
- VOX Mini5 Modeling Amplifier.
- Yamaha THR10 Guitar Amplifier.
- Etc.



Photo Credit: Guitar Center

WORKING AND PLAYING WELL WITH OTHERS

Cooperating and Performing with Other Buskers



Photo Credit: YouTube: Brothers of Brass



Photo Credit: Brian Jensen (pixels.com)

Performing with Other Buskers



Take it from me: From a distance those female Chinese ballerinas look so small....

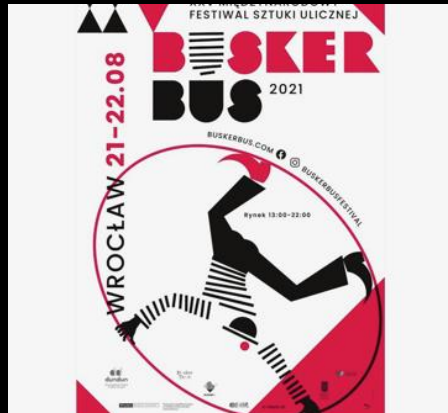
...but up close???

They're HUGE!

Networking with Other Buskers

- Advertise for fellow buskers in free trade newspapers, bulletin boards, et cetera.
- Have a meeting to coordinate acts and scheduling.
- Consider auditions for members of your local busking network.
- The more available entertainment, the better.
- Become known for an area that is busking friendly.

Busking Festivals is a Great Place to Start!

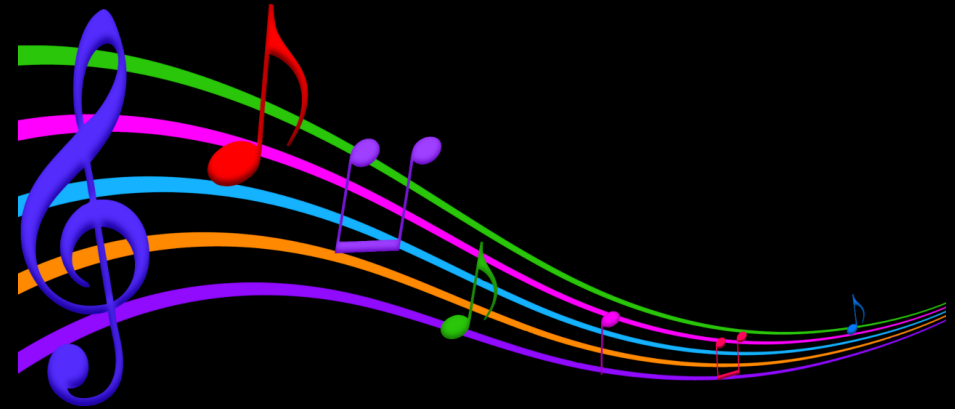


**BUSKING UNIVERSITY SCHOOL
AND CHURCH PROGRAMS**

Busking University Program Itinerary

- Pre-arrival Student Survey to Select Recipient Organization.
- Faculty Meeting.
- Introduction Assembly.
- Classroom Demonstrations / Discussions.
- Support Team Meeting and Assignments.
- Busking University Workshop.
- Busking University Talent Show.
- Busking University Regional Talent Show.
- Busking University Finalists' Field Trip.
- Ongoing Student/Faculty Support.

BUSKING UNIVERSITY



About the Busking University Talent Show

- This event requires a lot of coordination and effort.
- Offered as the culminating final of the Busking University training program.
- Free admission is highly recommended, with a “What It’s Worth” envelope (with freebie contents) given to each patron.
- Participants:
 - Advance advertising teams.
 - Ushers.
 - Light and sound technicians.
 - Announcers / hosts.
 - Judges.
 - And of course, the performers!!!



Photo Credit: Shutterstock.com

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Making a Difference

(The World is Your Oyster!)

- Homeless People.
- Hungry People.
- Abused and Neglected Children.
- Battered Spouses and Families.
- Addiction Recovery Programs.
- Evangelism.
- Environmental Issues.
- Social Change.
- Anti-Gang Violence.
- Church Missionary Trips.
- HS Band and Chorus Trips.
- Evangelism.
- Special Medical Needs.
- Disaster Relief.
- Political Reform.
- Animal Rescue.
- The Arts.
- Educational Reform.
- Public Health Issues.
- School Renovation.
- Protect Landmarks.
- School Athletic Programs.

Et Cetera

Conveying a Message

- Virtually any entertainment medium can be used to convey a positive social message.
- If contributions are going to a benevolent cause, identify the cause to the audience.
- Have supportive written documentation on hand.
- Use signs to identify your target cause.
- Sometimes, the best way to sell something is to give it away.
- Be a behavioral ambassador for your intended cause.
- Convey a message with ANY free handout, promotional item, et cetera.
- Choose a “cause” that is important to you; that you have a passion for.
- Strategically select your pitch, audience, and act to be consistent with helping that cause.
- Thank your audience for making a difference!



Photo Credit: Busking.com

Great Example of Social Message Busking



Photo Credit: Jaano Junction

Tying the Medium to the Message

- Virtually any busking medium can be used to convey a message.
- Conveyance may occur through lyrics, poetry, demonstrable actions, or handout materials...to name a few.
- Sometimes the message may be conveyed quietly, after the conclusion of the act.
- You are only limited by your imagination, and the object of your heart.
- NOTE: A “Christianized” Busking University training is included in the “Creative Evangelism” curriculum taught by NCITI. Inquire if interested.



Artist's Rendering of Adam, Busking in Bricktown, OKC

CONCLUSION

What It's Worth Envelope

What It's Worth

“What It’s Worth” Envelope Contents

- Excellent to hand out at local presentations about busking (e.g. Busking University, et cetera).
- Ask audience that, if they wish to make a donation, to enclose it in the envelope, after taking the contents for their use and enjoyment...As a “thank you” for stopping by to listen.
- Possible items to enclose.
 - Business card.
 - Links to access to your music (e.g. ReverbNation website.)
 - Coupons for discounts on your promotional items.
 - Discount coupons from local restaurants and businesses.
 - Any small promotional items, such as buttons, decals, etc.

And Back by Popular Demand...Linsey Pollak and the “Cyclogists.”



Questions?

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Online Resources and References

- www.AustinTexas.gov

Provides specific rules, regulations, and ordinances affecting buskers in the Austin area.

- www.busk.co

The Busking Project: Excellent online resource for busking internationally. Great product reviews.

- www.buskercentral.com

A complete reference site for international **buskers** & street performers featuring **busking** insights, videos, photos, songs, comics, and more!

- www.busking.com

An excellent resource for self-promotion, as well as locating venues, networking with other buskers, etc.

- www.dallasobserver.com

An excellent resource for locating various entertainment opportunities in Dallas, TX

- <https://everydayperformers.com>

Excellent resource for finding out about rules and regulations for busking in the Las Vegas metroplex.

- www.fiddleheads.ca

An group/business headed up by Rhiannon Schmitt, a veteran busker, whose “Busk or Bust” article provides lots of great information for aspiring street performers, in addition to violins and “fiddle paraphernalia.”

- <http://www.mta.info/mta/aft/muny/>

Music Under New York. This link to the www.mta website gives information about becoming a sanctioned busker in the New York City public transit system.

- www.sanantonio.gov

Explicitly describes the ordinance allowances and restrictions for buskers.

- www.sonicbids.com

An excellent resource for reviewing rules, regulations, and ordinances for busking in Los Angeles.

- www.thebrokebackpacker

Another helpful website covering an array of topics related to busking.

- <https://thevillagesun.com>

An excellent resource for locating various entertainment in the NYC area (including rules and regulations on busking).

- www.tuneupandtravel.com

An excellent resource for reviewing rules, regulations, and ordinances for busking in various cities.

Other References and Suggested Reading

- Cater, S. (2020). *Busking for beginners: The prosperous musician*. Cherish Press. Available on Kindle Unlimited.
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- Johnson, J. (2013). *Flying without a net: A veteran busker's how-to guide to making the world a better place...one song at a time*. Norman, OK: NCITI / Busking University.
- Regling, D. (2014). *How to make money busking: Your guide to busking & street performing*. Freeport, OH: Magic Marketing Company.
- Reutinger, C. (Unknown Year) *A musician's guide to busking: How to become a street musician for fun & profit (Everything a musician needs to know to be successful)*. Self-published: Available on Kindle Unlimited.
- Weinstein, H. & Weinstein, J. (2011) *Buskers: The on the street, in the trains, off the grid memoir of two New York City buskers*. Berkeley, CA: Soft Skull Press.

For More Information

Joel Johnson, M.A.Ed.

President, Busking University

Director, National Crisis Intervention Training Institute

405-543-9221

JJohnson@NCITI.org

Joel@BuskingUniversity.org

www.NCITI.org

www.BuskingUniversity.org