

Overview to  
**BUSKING**  
**UNIVERSITY**



**Training young people to change the world...one song at a time**

# DEDICATION



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July 31, 1984 – January 8, 2009

Veteran Busker

**New York City, NY / "Bricktown" - Oklahoma City, OK / Eureka Springs, AR**

*Grass-Roots Humanitarian, Who Used His Tip Money  
To Give Homeless People Food and Dignity*

# INTRODUCING THE BUSKING UNIVERSITY FACULTY



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

# Steve Crawford

Illusionist / Magician / Escape Artist



# Topics to Be Covered

- ❑ Busking University Curricular Activities.
- ❑ Defining 'Busking' and 'Buskers.'
- ❑ 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.
- ❑ Improvisation Techniques.
- ❑ The Set-up: Set-up, Location, and Props.
- ❑ The Build and The Hold: Captivating the Audience.
- ❑ The Pitch: Engaging the Audience.

# 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.
- ▣ Improvisation.
- ▣ Promoting.
- ▣ On-site and Residual Product Sales.
- ▣ Steering to Social Media.
- ▣ Busking & First Amendment Rights.
- ▣ Permits and Licenses.
- ▣ Safety Considerations.
- ▣ Common Pitfalls / Hazards / Safety Precautions.
- ▣ Theft Prevention.

# 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.
- ▣ To Amplify or Not to Amplify.
- ▣ Co-operating with Other Buskers.
- ▣ Performing with Other Buskers.
- ▣ Networking with Other Buskers.
- ▣ One-person Business / Entrepreneurship.
- ▣ Busking University Curricular Activities Revisited.
- ▣ About the Talent Show.
- ▣ Changing the World...One Song at a Time.
- ▣ Conclusion.
- ▣ Resources / References / Contact Information.

# Busking University Curricular Activities

- ▣ 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”

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

# A TRIBUTE TO “BUSKERS”

*“Among improvisational performers, accomplished ‘buskers’ are a special breed. They are consummate entrepreneurs and true professional performers. Not only are they paid each and 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 and every time they practice their craft, choosing to ‘fly without a net’ every time they engage their audience. Some, not all, take their calling a giant step farther, choosing to use their talent to convey a message that they deem important, in order to help...not merely entertain---their fellow man. Those special Buskers strive to make the world a more kinder, gentler, and more loving place...one song at a time. As a veteran of their ranks, I am honored to be called a ‘Busker.’”*

*...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.”*

# Types of Busking Acts

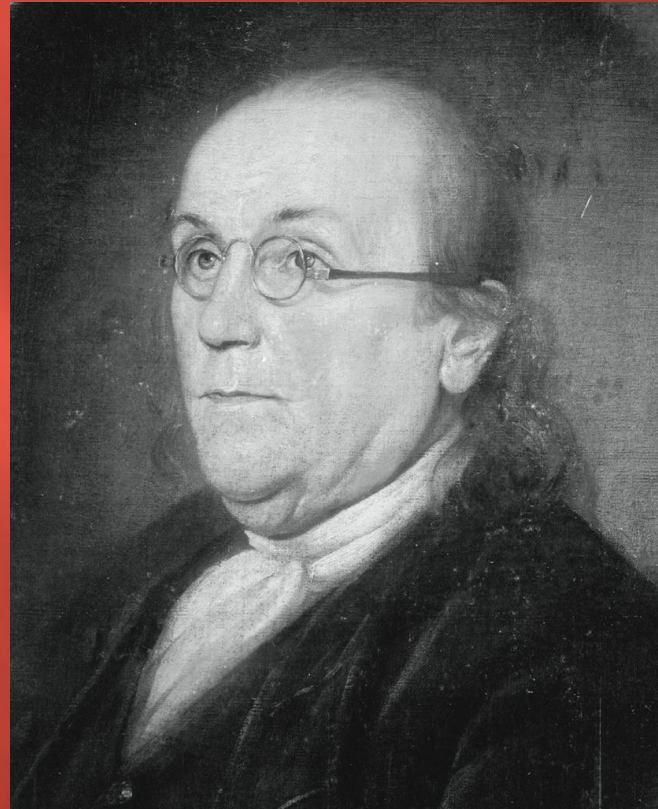
- ▣ Instrumental Musicians.
- ▣ Singers.
- ▣ Poets and Prose Artists
- ▣ Musical Groups.
- ▣ Acrobats.
- ▣ Balloon Artists.
- ▣ Magicians/Illusionists.
- ▣ Dancers.
- ▣ Comedians.
- ▣ Contortionists.
- ▣ Mimes.
- ▣ Sword Swallowers.
- ▣ Sculptors and Potters.
- ▣ Living Statues.
- ▣ Speed Painters.
- ▣ Performance Artists.
- ▣ Puppeteers.
- ▣ Clowns.
- ▣ Snake Charmers.
- ▣ Chalk-talkers.
- ▣ Slight-of-Hand Artist
- ▣ Fortune-Tellers.
- ▣ Story-Tellers.
- ▣ Caricature/Portrait Artists.
- ▣ Et Cetera, Et Cetera.

# History of Busking

- ▣ The term “Busking” first noted in English language circa 1860. but the practice of busking is found documented in many cultures for centuries.
- ▣ Troubadours, Minstrels, Organ Grinders, et cetera date back to antiquity (e.g. Russia in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century a.d.).
- ▣ “Bottlers” (aka “Hat men” or “Pitch men” were assistants who solicited donations from the audience, using a device made of a half of a glass bottle with a leather pouch/flap device 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).

# The Bottler Who Worked for Peanuts...and Bananas





*There once was a busker named "Ben"  
Who wrote down some prose with a pen.  
His Dad got so mad, and he called "busking" bad,  
But, Ben sold them again and again.*

# Some Famous Buskers

- 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.
- 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.

# Why Busk?

- ❑ Get paid to practice!
- ❑ Perform before live audiences...every day!
- ❑ Build self confidence and “people skills.”
- ❑ Sharpen performance skills (improvisation, timing, reading audience, audience engagement, repertoire selection, et cetera).
- ❑ Develop entrepreneurial skills.
- ❑ Self promote.
- ❑ Develop a loyal fan base.
- ❑ Make primary and residual CD sales, et cetera.
- ❑ Get your contact information out there, and develop a subscriber email list.
- ❑ Have FUN!







**Busking: It's not just a job,  
it's an adventure!**

# 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.”

# Types of Busking Acts

- ▣ Walk-by Acts – continual performance acts.
- ▣ Circle Acts – gathering audience for a single performance.
- ▣ Café Busking – Restaurants, bars, clubs, taverns, and cafés.
- ▣ 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 is a key skill.
- “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.



# 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, et cetera).



# 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.



# 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.

# Some Busking-friendly Cities

- ▣ 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
- ▣ Atlanta, GA
- ▣ Philadelphia, PA
- ▣ Los Angeles, CA
- ▣ San Diego, CA
- ▣ Dublin, Ireland
- ▣ Belfast, Ireland
- ▣ Galway, Ireland
- ▣ Edinburgh, Scotland
- ▣ Amsterdam, Netherlands
- ▣ 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
- ▣ Melbourne, Australia
- ▣ Athens, Greece



# DISCLAIMER RE: “BUSKING-FRIENDLY” CITIES

This list is offered as a guide, based upon reports from local buskers.

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.

# Stand Out in the Crowd



# Image

- ▣ 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 excellent 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...

# DRESS UP OR DRESS DOWN

*The Record  
shows I took the  
blows....and did  
it MYYYYY  
WAYYYYY!*



*2013  
Africa's Got Talent  
Top Finalists*



*Regardless, Always Look*

# Be Out of the Way...but Not TOO Out of the Way!



Yes



No

# Repertoire Tips

- ▣ Have a MINIMUM of 1 to 2-hours of material available (avg. 20-40 songs) performance pieces available.
- ▣ 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 play itinerary)
- ▣ 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.
- ▣ Take requests, if possible.

# Improvisational Basic Tools

- ▣ Chromatics – The “*Play-by-Ear*” Secret Weapon.
- ▣ Scales.
- ▣ Trills.
- ▣ Cross-Fingering.
- ▣ Slides.
- ▣ Rifts.
- ▣ Eight-Bar Segments.
- ▣ Stops and Starts.
- ▣ Slowing Down and Speeding Up.
- ▣ Ad Lib.
- ▣ Accents.
- ▣ Sudden Volume Change.
- ▣ Lean-Ins.
- ▣ Mini-Medleys.
- ▣ Mash-Ups.
- ▣ “*Our Eyes Met from Across the Room.*”

# 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...slightly 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.
- ▣ Sunscreen / tarps / umbrellas / et cetera.
- ▣ Business cards / Brochures / Signs / Promotional Items.
- ▣ Merchandise.
- ▣ Cart.
- ▣ TIP JAR !!!

# “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!



# 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.

# Sense of Humor Vehicles

- ❑ Signs.
- ❑ Eye contact / gestures.
- ❑ Amusing body movements.
- ❑ Walking behind pedestrians, mimicking their walk.
- ❑ Comedic facial expressions and responses.
- ❑ Song selection (e.g. “Let it Snow” in hot subway during the summer).
- ❑ One-liner 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--

- ▣ Maybe a verbal invitation to put money in the hat during “Circle Acts.”
- ▣ 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.
- ▣ 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).
- ▣ Watch for thieves!

# Beware of Pickpockets!



*“Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.”*

▣ ...I Peter 5:8 (ESV)...

# Common Pickpocket Plays

- ▣ Looking For and Creating Diversions and Distractions.
- ▣ High-Traffic Areas and Crowds.
- ▣ Casing You as a Prospective Victim.
- ▣ Separating You from Your Money.
- ▣ Separating Your Money from You.
- ▣ Street Bump.
- ▣ Mustard Scam.
- ▣ Targeting While You're On the Move.
- ▣ Targeting You When You're Tired.
- ▣ Snatch and Run.
- ▣ Watching for Money Stashed in Public View.
- ▣ Blockers and Stallers.
- ▣ Rocking and Swaying.
- ▣ Targeting in Pickpocket Warning Areas.
- ▣ Slight of Mind.



# Making a Difference (The World is Your Oyster!)

- ▣ Homeless People.
- ▣ Hungry People.
- ▣ Abused and Neglected Children.
- ▣ Battered Spouses and Families.
- ▣ Addiction Recovery.
- ▣ Evangelism.
- ▣ Environmental Issues.
- ▣ Social Change.
- ▣ Gang Violence.
- ▣ Evangelism.
- ▣ Special Medical Needs.
- ▣ Disaster Relief.
- ▣ Political Reform.
- ▣ Animal Rescue.
- ▣ The Arts.
- ▣ Educational Reform.
- ▣ Public Health Issues.
- ▣ School Renovation.
- ▣ Protect Landmarks.

# 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 and posters to identify your target cause.
- ❑ *“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!

# Tying the Medium to the Message

- ▣ “*Changing the world, one song at a time*” applies to non-musical as well as musical media.
- ▣ The focus of the “*message*” is linked to an issue or cause of great importance to the Busker (e.g. suicide prevention, evangelism, resource conservation, et cetera).
- ▣ “*The message*” may be conveyed through lyrics, scripts, handout materials, 1:1 interaction between Busker and audience, et cetera.

# Examples of Promotional Items

- ▣ Business Cards.
- ▣ Booking Cards.
- ▣ Calendar of Upcoming Performances.
- ▣ Website with Online Store.
- ▣ Social Networking Pages.
- ▣ Branded Products.
- ▣ Gimmick tools and toys.
- ▣ Logo on Gifts.

# On-site and Residual Product Sales

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

# The “What It’s Worth” Envelope

***WHAT IT'S WORTH***

(OPTIONAL CONTACT INFO)

Supporter Name

---

EMAIL ADDRESS

---

PHONE

---

# Steering to Social Media

- Facebook.
  - Through personal pages.
  - Through subscription pages.
  - Through “friend” pages.
- LinkedIn.
- MySpace.
- Backpage.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.

# Permits and Licenses



Contact local city office that issues permits and licenses



# Busking & First Amendment Rights



**NO BUSKING  
BY ORDER**

# Busking is

- ▣ Freedom of expression, protected under the First Amendment.
- ▣ Not a “*business*,” requiring local business license, unless you are selling merchandise or services.
- ▣ Legal noise levels must be adhered to. Amplification and gathering in groups may require a special permit.
- ▣ NOTE: You may be required to keep your permit (if applicable) on your person, or publicly displayed.
- ▣ Law Enforcement Officials may not be aware, or familiar with, these regulations. *CHOOSE YOUR BATTLES!*

# 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.

# Safety Considerations



# #1: Avoid Dehydration

*DRINK WATER ONLY!*

This here is  
HIGH  
QUALITY  
H<sub>2</sub>O!!!



# Hydration No-Nos

- ▣ Sugar.
  - Increases thirst.
  - Promotes dehydration.
  - Increases blood glucose level.
  - No long-term nutritional value.
- ▣ Artificial Sweetener.
  - Stimulates hunger and appetite for junk food.
  - Plays tricks on your insulin levels.
- ▣ Caffeine.
  - Xanthene-derivative diuretic.
  - Promotes water retention in the lipid cells.

# Common Pitfalls



# Common Hazards

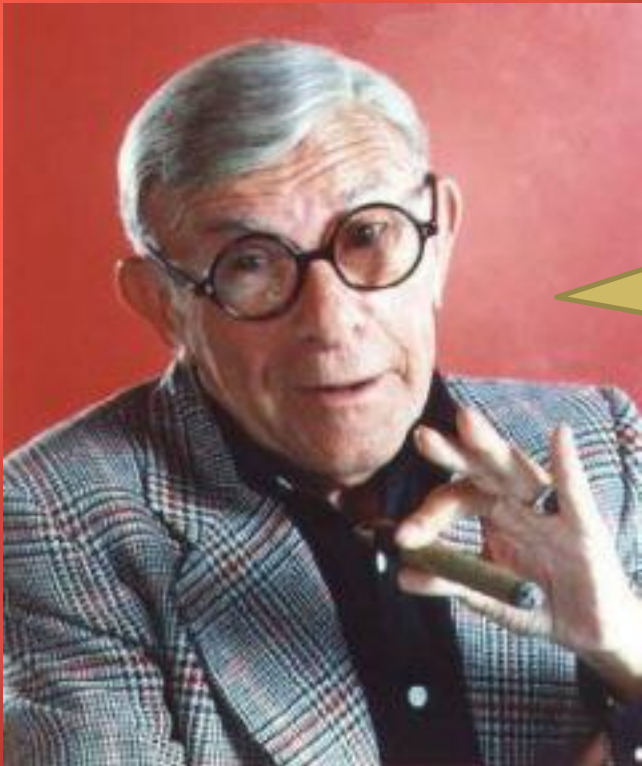
- ▣ Theft.
- ▣ Confiscation of Equipment and Instruments.
- ▣ Fines.
- ▣ Arrests.
- ▣ Lost Time (Due to Mandatory Relocation).



# Safety Precautions



# GEORGE BURNS RECALLS HIS TIME AS A BUSKER



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

# Theft Prevention



# Top Ten Most Common Challenges

- ▣ Hecklers.
- ▣ Thieves.
- ▣ Overly-Demanding People.
- ▣ Excessive Talkers.
- ▣ Multiple or Unpopular Requests.
- ▣ Purchasers who Interrupt Performance.
- ▣ Inclement Weather.
- ▣ Ordinances.
- ▣ Enforcers Who are Not Informed or Accurate.
- ▣ Unfamiliar or Unpopular Requests.

# What if Your City Doesn't Allow Busking?

- ▣ Go to another city.
- ▣ Inquire about exceptions and allowed locations.
- ▣ Inquire re: special permits.
- ▣ Check into local special events that allow performers, and give exposure.
- ▣ Inquire re: local venues that allow sale of promotional products, such as CDs.
- ▣ Turn your lemons into lemonade.
- ▣ Be familiar with federal case law; carry copies of statutes.
- ▣ Meet law enforcement duty commanders.
- ▣ Meet law enforcement working area of your target venue.

# Busking & First Amendment Rights

- ▣ Busking is not panhandling.
- ▣ There may be permit issues related to selling CDs, et cetera.
- ▣ Often, pricing cannot be legally posted without permit.
- ▣ *“Thanks for stopping to listen!”*

# Don't Forget to Ask the Experts

- ▣ Other Buskers.
- ▣ Online Contacts.
- ▣ Licensing Agencies.
- ▣ Shop Owners.
- ▣ Local Law Enforcement.
- ▣ Local Websites and Free Papers.
- ▣ Local Radio Stations.
- ▣ Radio Call-ins.
- ▣ Send email announces re: upcoming trips to local areas.
- ▣ Keep address book of local contacts.

# Busking Etiquette





# Buskers' Unwritten Rules

- ▣ Don't monopolize pitches.
- ▣ Communicate and coordinate with other buskers.
- ▣ Be consistent and prompt, if working busking shifts with other Buskers.
- ▣ Respect distancing and noise levels, especially at late hours in residential areas.
- ▣ Don't compete with other Buskers.
- ▣ Don't criticize other Buskers.
- ▣ Follow law enforcement's directions.
- ▣ Don't argue with law enforcement of venue hosts.

# To Amplify or Not to Amplify...that is the Question!



# Cooperating with Other Buskers



# PERFORMING WITH OTHER BUSKERS



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

...but up close???

They're HUGE!

# Networking with Other Buskers

- ▣ Sometimes it just happens.
- ▣ May consist of verbal agreements re: schedule, location(s), noise levels, saving place in line, jamming, watching each other's equipment and sale table, et cetera.
- ▣ Continuity helps build audience loyalty
- ▣ Clusters of performers with compatible styles benefits all, by promoting audience retention.
- ▣ Eliminates or minimizes friction.

# One-person Business / Entrepreneurship

- ▣ You are your own boss.
- ▣ More entertainment freedom.
- ▣ Every busking session is a combination of rehearsal, laboratory, and performance.
- ▣ You set your own hours.
- ▣ You control your destiny.
- ▣ The world is your oyster.
- ▣ Tax-wise: Important to keep records and pay taxes.

# Busking University Curricular Activities

- ▣ 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.

# About the Busking University Workshop and Talent Show

- ▣ Usually facilitated in conjunction with high school Busking University Workshops.
- ▣ Led by seasoned Busking University Faculty.
- ▣ Teaches and trains students to be successful and safe street performers.
- ▣ Allows the High School Students to contribute to a local benevolent cause.
- ▣ Operates with a variety of formats.
- ▣ Gets everyone involved in making the world a better place...one song at a time.



# Making the World a Kinder, Gentler, More Loving Place... One Song at a Time



Conclusion

***QUESTIONS?***

# Resources

- [www.buskercentral.com](http://www.buskercentral.com)

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

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

Music Under New York. This link to the [www.mta](http://www.mta.info) website gives information about becoming a sanctioned busker in the New York City public transit system.

- [http://www.wikihow.com/Make-Money-Busking-\(Street-Performing\)](http://www.wikihow.com/Make-Money-Busking-(Street-Performing))

This “wikihow” page offers eleven simple steps to becoming a paid street performer.

- [www.fiddleheads.ca](http://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.”

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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