

"If you are passionate about music and think you would enjoy sharing this with others, this is a very rewarding career path"

Introduction

I am a professional musician and currently teach the violin, flute and fife for South Gloucestershire Music Hub. I teach in a range of settings from individual and small group music lessons, to whole class lessons, to orchestral coaching. I also regularly perform in concerts with orchestras and chamber music ensembles.



Image: **Simone Willis**, Associate Music Teacher – South Gloucestershire Music Hub

How did you get started in your career?

I studied the violin at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, where I gained a Bachelor of Music Honours degree. As a child I was very enthusiastic about playing the violin and I have been learning since I was five. I attended the Junior Conservatoire in Birmingham as well as several other youth orchestras, such as the CBSO Youth Orchestra.

Can you outline a typical work day?

My day involves travelling to different schools, where I mainly teach individual and small group lessons. I also teach private music lessons, to both children and adults from home. Some days involve rehearsals or performances with chamber music ensembles or orchestras. Every day is different!

What do you enjoy most about your job?

The variety of the work is great, as I get to interact with lots of different people on a daily basis. Everyone has their own ideas about music, and sharing these ideas can produce exciting results.

What skills are important for anyone wishing to start in your profession?

Strong performance skills on a musical instrument are key for someone who wants to teach music. It is also important to be passionate about music and to enjoy communicating that passion and skill to others. My degree allowed me to develop not only my musicianship skills, but also my understanding of teaching. Time management skills are also key, as I have to keep up personal instrumental practice, as well as manage rehearsal and teaching schedules.

What main personal attributes do you think is important for your type of job?

Excellent communication skills, thorough understanding of music, personable, and a passion for music!

Do you have any tips or suggestions on how young people and adults can enter your industry?

You can begin to gain experience by teaching a friend or family member an instrument. In your own instrumental practice, make sure that you always understand why you are practicing something in a particular way. Think about how you would clearly explain that to someone else. Make sure you ask lots of questions of your music teacher so that you thoroughly understand musical concepts.

What career progression opportunities are available in your business/sector?

There are lots of different opportunities in music, such as chamber music teaching, orchestral coaching, conducting ensembles, composing and performing. There are even opportunities for musicians to do academic research.

Why is it important for your sector to attract and train young people and new entrants?

From active listening, to background music in films and on TV, music is a key part of our daily lives. That means we need highly skilled musicians, who are able to compose and perform this music. Music teachers are the people who train and inspire people to develop these performance skills!

What trends do you predict for your industry within the next 10 years? E.g. is it a growing market requiring more young entrants

An expansion in the use of technology has already led to the creation of computer software programs, which make musicians' lives easier. I expect this to continue over the next 10 years with the development of more Apps for musicians, and for these to be used increasingly in the teaching of music.

General words of advice

Teaching music is an incredibly rewarding job, and I am very privileged to be able to share in my students' progress. Learning a musical instrument has many challenges, and developing the skills and knowledge to play an instrument takes hard work and dedication. If you are passionate about music and think you would enjoy sharing this with others, this is a very rewarding career path.

Further contact/information

If you are inspired by Simone and would like to get in touch with her, please email inspiringsouthwestncs@prospects.co.uk with your enquiry and we will pass on your contact details.