



Can Music Make You Sick? Music and Depression

A Study into the Incidence of Musicians' Mental Health

Part 1: Pilot Survey Report

Client: Help Musicians UK

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About This Paper

Help Musicians UK commissioned this report (the first UK academic study on the incidence of mental health and musicians) in response to the charity's observation around the rise in the number of calls and applications from musicians with mental health problems and is seeking to understand and quantify their significance as well as find solutions to this issue within the industry. This report is part one of a more extensive research project that will follow in 2017.

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About Help Musicians UK

Help Musicians UK is the leading independent music charity in the country. It has an unrivalled reputation for providing health and welfare support to working and retired musicians and also provides additional investment in organisations as well as emerging and mid-career artists to further artistic development.

Its independence enables the charity to be a truly representative voice for musicians and the wider industry. In preparation for its centenary the charity has set the ambitious fundraising target of raising £21m by 2021.

Registered charity No. 228089 020 7239 9100

helpmusicians.org.uk

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Summary Findings

A recent University of Westminster pilot survey of 2,211 self-identifying professional musicians working across a broad swathe of the UK music industry found that:

- ***71.1% of respondents believed they had experienced incidences of anxiety and panic attacks***
- ***68.5% of respondents experienced incidences of depression***

Office for National Statistics data (2010-13) indicated that nearly 1 in 5 of the population suffer from anxiety and/ or depression (aged 16 years +). **This research suggests that musicians could be up to three times more likely to suffer from depression compared to the general public*.**

Yet the majority of respondents felt underserved by available help:

- ***52.7% found it difficult to get help***
- ***54.8% considered there were gaps in the provision of available help***

These early, preliminary findings suggest that music, and by this we mean working in, or having ambitions to work in, the music industry, might indeed be making musicians sick, or at least contribute towards their levels of mental ill-health.

* According to the ONS (2013), nearly 1 in 5 (19%) of people in the UK aged 16 years or over experienced anxiety or depression (using the GHQ method which asked if they had experienced these things 'recently') in 2010-11. This was consistent across the two subsequent years for which ONS data is available (ONS, 2015), with 18.3% of people (nearly 1 in 5) similarly responding in both 2011-12, and again in 2012-13.

Source (accessed Sept 2016): ONS Measuring National Well-being: Health, 2013 (2013): http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160105160709/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171766_310300.pdf
 ONS Measuring National Well-being: Life in the UK, 2015 (2015): http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160105160709/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171766_398059.pdf

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Introduction

In August 2014, Help Musicians UK published the results of its survey into the health and wellbeing of professional musicians in the UK. As the UK's leading charity for professional musicians working in any musical genre and at any stage in their careers, Help Musicians UK is focused on delivering the highest level of support tailored specifically to the needs of musicians.

As part of the charity's continued commitment to developing first class services, and in light of the findings from its initial Health and Wellbeing Survey (2014), Help Musicians UK commissioned a new, specific study into the mental health issues faced by musicians and the wider music industry workforce. With a remit to support professionals whose income from musical work provides the majority of their earnings, Help Musicians UK looked to extend their previous research base to a wider, more inclusive cohort of music professionals. This was to be achieved by increasing the participation age range, widening the breadth of musical genres, and extending its focus to include those who might be categorised more generally as creative labourers, including artist managers, producers, songwriters and others. This new research conducted by a team from the University of Westminster, entitled Music and Depression, is the largest survey of its kind ever carried out in the UK, to-date.

1.1. Context

"You don't have to be mad to work here, but it helps"

In Western culture, there is a pervasive idea circulating that creativity and madness are somehow related. However, there are as many confusing and conflicting opinions on the subject of their relationship, as there are on the idea of creativity itself, and indeed mental wellbeing. Yet within this discussion, beyond individual biographies, little attention has been paid to how musicians themselves, and other

workers along the supply chain of this complex and competitive cultural ecology we call 'the music industry', experience these conditions as a workforce. How do these workers feel about their work, the world they inhabit, and, crucially, their mental wellbeing?

The romantic rhetoric of the tortured musician is embedded in the Western history of popular music, from classical composers including Schumann, Mahler and Rachmaninov through to the enduring myth of tragic rock stars, such as Janis Joplin, Kurt Cobain, and Hendrix. However, attempts at mapping the emotional and psychological wellbeing of musicians working and seeking to forge careers within the music industry have largely been absent, with arguments often rooted in an unhelpful, individualistic and dismissive pathologisation of creative or affective labour. Anecdotally, and rather tellingly, when discussing this research with music industry professionals and even amongst academics, we have been met by a reverse kind of scepticism; a frequent "well, of course musicians are all mad!", "oh well, artists love to moan don't they", or most frequently, "they should try getting a real job". It is this very position that informs why we are asking the workers - musicians, solo performers, agents and managers, sound engineers, tour managers – how they feel. How are they psychologically experiencing working in the music industry, and what can we learn about the emotional conditions of this labour? We were not asking people for their medical records or doctors' notes, but seeking to examine how these cultural workers experience and understand their health issues in relation to the work they do, and exploring what we can learn from their accounts.

1.2. Aims, Objectives & Remit

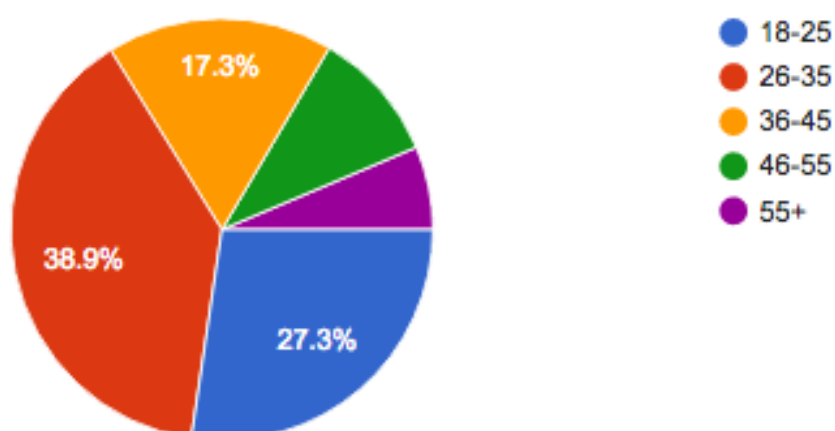
The focus of this research was to hear directly from professional musicians, aspiring musicians, and workers within the wider music industry, about how they feel about their working conditions, and how they perceive working in the music industry to affect their mental wellbeing.

In this initial phase of the research, we were seeking to ascertain the scale of the 'problem' as understood from the perspective of this workforce. In order to do this, we launched a survey comprised of ten simple questions, with space at the end for respondents to share additional comments. At this stage, we were not asking any of the respondents to qualify or evidence their professional status or what percentage of their income was derived from their professional musical work. Instead, the guiding objective here was to listen to what these self-identifying professionals have to say about their chosen profession, and how it is affecting them. Interestingly, the subject of self-evaluation, judgement and validation was very evident in the feedback, as a source of both concern and stress.

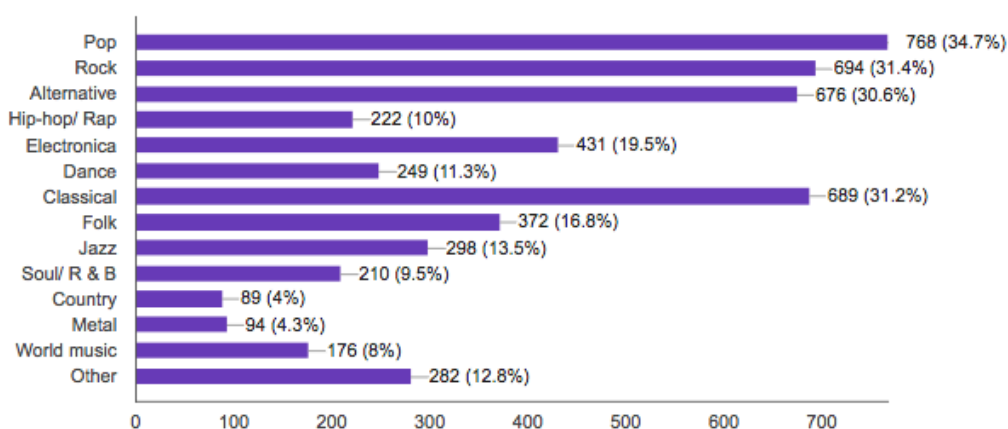
1.3. Survey Sample

2,211 musicians responded to our online survey (conducted May/June 2016), making this the largest ever survey of its kind in the UK. In contrast to Help Musicians UK earlier August 2014 survey, the respondents to this survey were younger, and there is a larger representation from the popular music field, with classical musicians making up 31.2%.

Survey Data: Age:



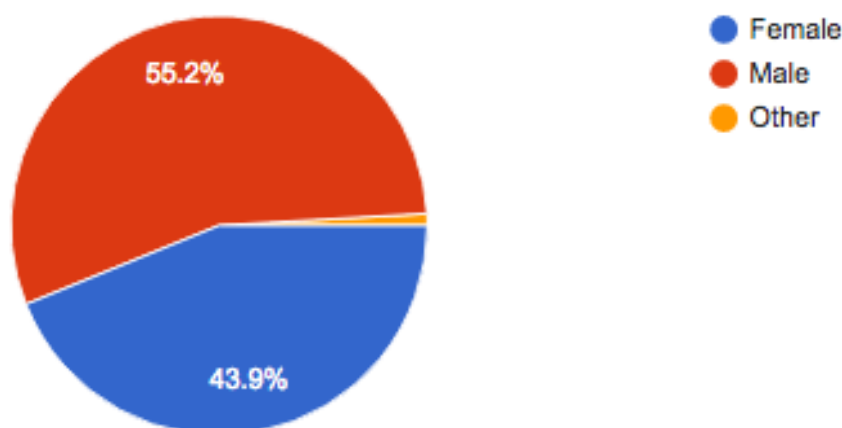
Survey Data: What Best Describes The Musical Areas You Work In:



Respondents were contacted via a number of channels. The online Google Forms survey was facilitated by MusicTank, University of Westminster, who together with Help Musicians UK, signposted and further disseminated the survey by social media, music industry trade press (including Music Week, Record of The Day, CMU and Unsigned Guide) and industry associations including the Musicians' Union, AIM, FAC, MMF and the MPG. Unlike the 2014 Health and Wellbeing Survey, our call for respondents this time was not limited to those whom Help Musicians UK had offered support to in the past.

There was a relatively even male/ female split (55.2%/ 43.9%), which was almost the reverse of the 2014 survey (women comprising 54% of that survey).

Survey Data: Gender:



The majority of respondents (66.2%) were between the ages of 18-35.

The largest group of respondents described themselves as musicians (39%). These musicians were working in genres as varied as Pop (34.7%), Hip Hop (10%), Electronica and Dance (30.8%) and Metal (4%). As perhaps expected, there were a large number of respondents from London (39.5%), but many experiences were shared by artists from across the United Kingdom, demonstrating the geographical breadth of feeling on this subject.

Survey Data: Location



It is important to acknowledge two things at this stage vis-à-vis the survey cohort:

1. Respondents self-identified as professional musicians;
2. Respondents self-identified as having 'mental health' issues ranging from anxiety to depression and bi-polar. Researchers did not medically verify these conditions, although many participants spoke of being hospitalised.

This survey was designed to find out how much of a problem musical workers perceived mental health issues to be. The answer was startlingly clear: **mental health is an enormous problem.**

Findings

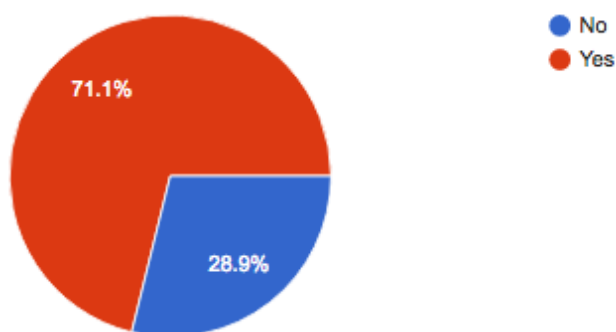
The primary findings of our survey can be subcategorised into three headings:

2.1. The Problem is Real

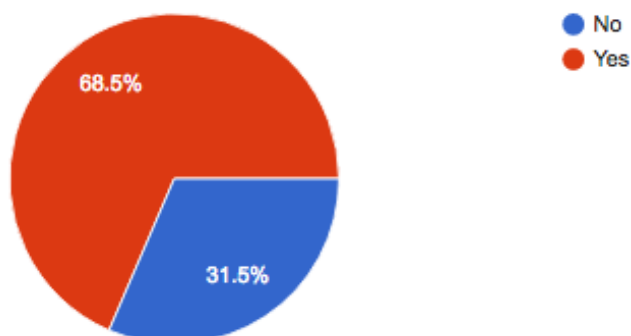
The most striking of all our findings was that irrespective of genre, **musicians are suffering from anxiety and depression in huge numbers.**

- 71.1% of all respondents admitted to having suffered from panic attacks and/or high levels of anxiety, and;
- 68.5% suggested they had suffered from depression.

Survey Data: Have you ever suffered from panic attacks and/or high levels of anxiety?



Survey Data: Have you ever suffered from depression?



Data collected from the Office for National Statistics between 2010 and 2013 in their reports on *'Measuring National Well-being'*, suggests that, of those over the age of 16 in the UK, nearly 1 in 5 of the population suffer from anxiety and/or depression. **This therefore suggests that musicians could be up to three times more likely to suffer from depression compared to the general public*.**

To many, of course, this finding is not an altogether surprising one. As suggested, the paradoxically romanticised pathologisation of artistry may very well lead one to reasonably hypothesise numbers such as these. However, our second finding is crucial in helping us to understand the potential source of this psychological unease amongst musicians.

2.2 Music Helps, a Musical Career Doesn't

The second finding to emerge from this survey was that **whereas artists find solace in the production of music, the working conditions of forging a musical career are traumatic**. This is a fundamental and important finding. Whilst it is a widely held perspective that creating music attracts people with particular psychological tendencies, the message that came through in the survey was clear: **music making is therapeutic, but making a career out of music is destructive**. As one respondent succinctly stated: "The only thing that causes depression for musicians is the music industry itself". This theme was echoed again and again in the 'Comments' section of our survey:

"I find, on the whole, music to be a great release which helps when I'm feeling anxious or depressed...[However], the stresses of being in the music industry, for me, are a big cause of uncertainty which to leads to stress, anxiety and depression."

*For full reference please refer to footnote on page 5

*“My depression is made worse by trying to exist as a musician...
Rarely has playing music been detrimental to my health, quite the
opposite...but the industry and socio-economic pressures...make
this a f*****g s***** industry to try and make a living in”*

*“I’m not sure I’d say it’s the music that makes me sick. It’s the lack of
things I’d consider success. It’s the lack of support doing something
that’s not considered “real work””*

“I LOVED my job; but it did not love me”

These early, preliminary findings suggest that music, and by this we mean working in, or having ambitions to work in, the music industry, might indeed be making musicians sick, or at least contribute towards their levels of mental ill-health.

Fundamentally, respondents suggested that structural composition of the music industry negatively impacted their mental health due to **poor working conditions**. Central to this is the profound difficulty of sustaining a living. The industry was said to contribute towards high levels of anxiety and depression given the precarious nature of the work, an inability to plan ones time/ future, the nature self-employment, anti-social hours, exhaustion, and, crucially, low or often zero pay. As one respondent beautifully articulated:

“A plumber doesn’t work for ‘experience’; a doctor doesn’t perform surgery for ‘exposure’”

Other answers provided included:

- a lack of recognition for one's work (be this from friends and family not seeing it as 'real work' or from others within the industry expecting musicians to tolerate unprofessional behaviour and being unappreciated for their labour);
- a lack of transparency in contracts;
- the welding of music and identity into one's own idea of selfhood (and the impact a lack of perceived success can have on this);
- a frustration with live venues in the UK, particularly regarding sound quality.

Finally, respondents also mentioned the physical dangers of a musical career (for instance Repetitive Strain Injuries, in particular from classical musicians), and issues related to the problems of being a woman in the industry - from balancing work and family commitments, to sexist attitudes and even sexual harassment.

It is of vital importance that we dig *much deeper* into the detail of these findings in order to more clearly understand the particular compositional characteristics which musicians feel contribute towards their prevailing sense of mental ill-health. Only by understanding these wider structural features of what one respondent called "the exploitative rollercoaster" of the music industry in the United Kingdom, can we seek to not only better understand this industry, but also, better suggest ways that we might seek to remedy, or at least mitigate, this epidemic of anxiety, panic attacks and depression amongst creative workers. This desire to understand these industrial dynamics, and in particular, the extent to which they might be unique or not to the music industry, will be the motivation behind Part 2 of this nationwide project.

2.3 A Demand for Change

The third finding to emerge from the survey was that musicians feel that there are gaps in existing provision, and that something needs to change. Whilst certainly charities such as Help Musicians UK are a vital resource to artists, a number of key concerns were raised. **These issues were threefold:**

1. In the first instance, sourcing available help is both time-consuming and difficult. That is, the help which is currently available, be it NHS, private or charitable, is not always easy to learn about and/ or access;
2. Secondly, there is sense that when help is provided, there is an overreliance on unwanted, often unhelpful, and expensive pharmaceutical solutions i.e. anti-depressants;
3. Finally, non-pharmacological help which is available is often hugely expensive, which, in the context of an industry which is typified by incredibly low earnings, makes it near impossible to access.

Conclusions

We were aghast at the scale of response to this survey. Certainly, the design of the survey itself was not perfect. From a lack of nuance within the questioning (a perennial bane of survey construction), to a self-selection bias in that, of course, respondents most likely to be suffering were more likely to respond, this exercise was not a methodologically perfect one. However, in the first instance, it is crucial for the individual to recognise they are unwell, either mentally or physically, and in this sense, the survey may have been an important first step for many. More generally though, we, as researchers, needed *to start asking important questions*. It was clear from the comments and responses that opening this subject up for investigation and discussion was overwhelmingly well received by musicians and music industry workers. The response was very positive, and one of relief that somebody had decided to take on this complex and difficult subject.

This survey was therefore a vital first step at seeking to understand how musicians in the UK experience mental health concerns, suggesting where the source of their ill-health might be emanating from, and in beginning to find ways we might seek to offer support.

It is of vital importance that we build on the crucial findings generated by this preliminary Part 1 survey. Having identified the scale of the problem facing musicians today, we must develop our work on findings (2) and (3), in order to both understand the compositional stresses facing artists, and offer policy solutions to better help musicians.

For this reason, Part 2 of this research will qualitatively delve into the crucial finding of this survey: the link between the compositional structure of the music industry and the mental health of those working within it. Indeed, these structural connections have been made in other industries; for example, the link between the stresses

placed on models in the fashion industry and the subsequent development of conditions such as body dysmorphia or anorexia are well accepted. The suggestion herein is that similar institutional dangers exist in the music industry. We must better understand, and more systematically categorise, these risks.

Finally, Part 3 of this research will, be exploring a range of solutions that might be offered to musicians and others within the music industry, to better help them cope with the vicissitudes of an insecure industry.

Case Studies

1: Lauren Aquilina – Artist, signed to Island Records/ Universal Music Group

Lauren Aquilina is a 21-year-old singer-songwriter from Bristol, who has been living in London for the past year. Following huge success with three independently released EPs, she signed a record deal with Island Records (Universal Music Group), and a publishing deal with Sony/ BMG, at the age of 19. She is currently preparing to release her debut album entitled 'Isn't It Strange?'

"When I was about 14 or 15 I started making YouTube videos and putting covers and originals on the Internet. When I left school, I signed to Island Records and signed a publishing deal with BMG. That was two and a half years ago and since then I have been writing a lot and making my album. I moved to Shepherds Bush this time last year. I'm still living off my [recording and publishing] deals at the moment... There's definitely a time limit on it - I'm very aware of that..."

"The best things [about being an artist] for me are writing... Writing is the thing that I feel most strongly about and most passionately about. The fact I get to do that for a job is amazing. The connections and friendships that I've built with people that listen to my music have been sometimes life saving for me... [Having said that] there are so many things that come with the music industry that aren't necessarily music related, such as knowing that your money is going to run out eventually, which all contribute towards how I'm feeling now..."

"For example, there's the lack of routine. I would hate having a 9-to-5 job. But you go from being so exhaustingly busy, and then you look at your calendar and you have nothing on for the next two weeks. I get so depressed. I struggle with that. There is pressure in every job, [but] I feel like in the music industry there's this thing

of either you are smashing it or you're a failure. There's no in between... I would say that there's a [small] team of people [within the industry] who can single-handedly decide where your life is going for the next year, and that has been a really difficult thing for me to wrap my head around. One side of me is like, 'Oh my god, this team of people have just decided they don't like you and they've ruined this for you, potentially. Doesn't that make you hate them?' And then the other side says, 'maybe you just weren't good enough, maybe you need to fight for this, maybe you need to write better songs, maybe it's not their fault and they have to make tough decisions.' I'm dealing with that right now...

"[That being said], I've found most of my criticism has come from other artists – my competitors... I hate the fact that I call them competitors... The way that my label, my radio pluggers and my manager talk about them, they become competitors and that's what I see them as. But quite often I'm also a big fan of these artists, so it's a conflict. I would never say anything bad about them, or bitch, or do anything. But the business side of me has to see them in that way because it's like every man for himself here...

Sometimes you forget that these people are also a business and they're not just your friends, they're not just here to help you... I had a session recently where I turned up to this guy's house – I'd travelled pretty far for it as well, it was an hour and a half journey. There had actually been quite a quick turn around just the week before and the label had suddenly said, "we want you to deliver your album now as we want it to come out at this point." So I turned up to this guy's house, and he was like, "so wait, your album's finished?" "Well, yeah. It happened quite quickly." And then he just kicked me out. He said, "you're not worth my time." The producer had realised that because Lauren's album was already finished, there was no way he could have a song included on it – a 'cut' – and therefore was unlikely to be paid for the work he was about to do. Instead of making music together, he ultimately decided to throw her out.

"I have been thinking more recently about writing a CV, and what else I would do. All my friends are finishing university. I don't have a degree, I don't have very good A-levels. My only work experience is in music and a Saturday job in retail... I don't know how to get a job that I love when I feel like I have no experience. I don't know if I've wasted the past 3 years trying to do music if it was never going to work out... Music became my identity... Now, I'm in a position where I'm not sure if music is going to be my life.

"I would argue that probably a lot of songwriters, especially, are a bit mad to begin with. But I definitely feel that I'm 10 times worse now than I was 3 years ago... Writing a song has never made me unhappy. Sometimes I've been, like, 'that's not a great song, but oh well, I got something out of it.' That's never made me unhappy, but it's the industry, it's the game. It's the game that makes you unhappy."

2: James Rhodes - Concert Pianist

James Rhodes is a British concert pianist. He was the first classical pianist to sign a record deal with Warner Bros, has released six albums, and performs globally. He also contributes to publications including The Guardian and The Telegraph, and has presented documentaries on BBC Four and Channel 4. His international bestselling memoir *'Instrumental'* was published last year.

"I would fall in love with these pieces of music when I was a little boy, and now being able to play them myself, it fosters this real sense of just a kind of wow factor. The travel is great, being able to record. I suppose most of all just being able to do what I've always wanted to do. How many people can say that?... [Music is] my first and longest lasting love. It's been my best friend for as long as I can remember."

"[That being said] the worst things are the loneliness and the pressure – constant pressure I put on myself. It doesn't really come from outside. I'm not really worried about the critics or the press. I feel like I have to live up to a certain standard otherwise it's not good enough and I can never really attain that standard. A lot of time on my own either practicing at a piano or travelling... You don't have a set routine as well. And that's difficult... You don't get on the tube at the same time every day, and you could be in three countries in a week, and everything is different all the time. So that can be challenging. And nerves of course can be challenging as well... Also you've got to be really careful when you're doing something that's so personal, and you're exposing yourself in that way to criticism and abuse and whatever."

James wrote an article in 2013 in The Guardian entitled ['Find What You Love and Let it Kill You'](#). Speaking about this article, he said:

"[To succeed in music] you have to work for years, decades, tens of thousands of hours. You have to practically let it kill to have any chance!..."

In that article he wrote:

“[I had] no income for five years, six hours a day of intense practice, monthly four-day long lessons with a brilliant and psychopathic teacher in Verona, a hunger for something that was so necessary it cost me my marriage, nine months in a mental hospital, most of my dignity and about 35lbs in weight. And the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow is not perhaps the Disney ending I’d envisaged as I lay in bed aged 10”

*“I trusted that if I did do it then the money would come if it was meant to, and I would be taken care of, and that’s what’s happened. But, you know, I’ve had a lot of help: my manager, my touring company, and record labels... It hasn’t been me on my own. I think it would be very hard if it was just me and a SoundCloud account trying to get money and touring... As far as earning a living and forming a business, you’ve got to get help. You need management, if you can, and a record label. But, record labels are usually filled with ***s who just want to ***k you... There are a lot of charlatans.*

“It’s not that it’s “hard” to be a musician; it’s hard to make a living at it. A lot of that is down to the industry, and a lot of it is down to just the fact that it’s a really tough gig... I’m in a very lucky position because I have a full calendar and I’m earning well, but I think if I was starting out now it’s really challenging. You need a lot of support.

“I mean, of course it’s who you know, isn’t it? That’s one of the biggest things. You’ve either got to be really lucky or you need to know someone... but also you need to be resourceful. The only reason [my career took off] is because I decided, ‘Who’s my very favourite pianist in the world? Who’s his agent?’ I found it out. I sent him a bottle of champagne and I sent him an email. I chased them. And he agreed to meet me. But that came from me. He didn’t just knock on my door and say, ‘Hey, do you want to play the piano to me?’ You’ve got to be quite cheeky, I think, and resourceful.”

3: Conrad Thompson – Drum & Bass MC, songwriter and producer

Conrad Thompson is a leading figure in the world of Drum and Bass and has been a professional musician working in urban, dance and electronic music as a vocalist, producer and collaborator for 30 years now. During which time he has performed to thousands of people all over the globe and experienced all the highs and lows a career in music has to offer. A few years ago a series of events in both his professional and personal life meant that Conrad found himself in an extremely difficult position and by chance he found Help Musicians UK through an advert in the PRS (Performing Rights Society) magazine and called them. Here he explains what happened...

"They (Help Musicians UK) were a final cry for help when resources from friends and family had dried up. I reached a point where I thought I was going to be alright, and a few things triggered in my home situation that actually put me further back than I thought I was. And I was about to lose my home. I didn't really want to be a musician anymore, but I thought if I was going to get some help from somewhere then I've got history strong enough to verify that I'm a musician that needs help."

Help Musicians UK were able to help Conrad with his financial emergency, and offered him practical help too - a series of sessions with a music industry mentor, which he found especially useful.

"They gave me a mentor, which was very, very helpful, because it was a non-biased professional ear and voice that I could use as a sounding board. That was really helpful."

"We'd do an hour every week at a specific time. We'd do some emails in between, but we'd communicate for an hour. And we'd spend some time just looking at different creative ideas, away from being the main stage performer, which I'd been for all these years. It wasn't just that, he was open to anything. If I had said, "I want to

get back on stage”, he would look at ways of doing that. I was looking at channelling my energies into going back to something that I did before music, which was food and cooking, and going into education. All the different avenues, he’d explore them and give them credibility; audit them in a way that I could look at them and go, “right that makes sense, that’s going to take that amount of time.” And knowing that it wasn’t coming from a place where he was going to make out of it, or he had somebody’s vested interests. That was very important. Because friends and family can help, but if they don’t understand what it is you’re trying to achieve, and don’t have a good understanding of how that’s achievable, it can kind of contradict what you’re trying to do.”

The fact that Conrad had discovered people who understood his needs was especially appreciated.

“I never disconnected from my musical self. I put my musical self into a box of luxury and it was becoming a hobby. If I was going to be creative, that was something that I would allow myself to do, much in the same way that someone would go fishing, or would go to the pub.”

“Knowing that there is help is a sense of security. Without making that call, that seemed a far off fantasy that that help applied to me. And that diffused that, to the point that I’d like to go to other musicians and say, “if you need help, phone up and speak to them.

“The exchange of art into commerce is a very strange exchange. And so it’s never going to be one thing for all or one thing for another, it’s a balance. Finding the place where it balances for the individual is important and you can’t predict it. I think just apply some kind of rules to it, for your own sake, even if you throw those rules out of the window later on down the line, at least you got to test if it was good or bad, A or

B. At some point it won't be so rocky and you'll find a very balanced place to go forward on."

4: William Doyle – solo artist, formerly East India Youth

William Doyle is the real name of the recording artist formally known as East India Youth. William's first's album was enthusiastically received by the independent music community and shortlisted for the Mercury Music Prize in 2014. Within a very short space of time he found himself catapulted into the music industry spotlight, signed to a record label and on a world tour and recording his second album. William has been a musician since his early teens and before evolving into a solo artist had spent several years in a band as he explains here:

"I've always wanted music to be job, I suppose. I decided that when I was about 14, I think. So I was in bands and stuff at the time. When I left college I had one year out – well, it was meant to be. I didn't end up going to university in the end because the band I was in started playing more, and we were like, 'this is good, this seems to be going alright. Why don't we try give it a shot?'".

For many artists the pressure of touring and the pressure they put themselves under; the eternal cycle of expectation and ambition coupled with self-criticism and anxiety is crippling and that feeling of self- imposed pressure is clearly articulated by William.

"And when I did get home I couldn't work on anything. I didn't have the concentration to do anything, and I was trying to make stuff and getting really, really, really frustrated. I was drinking a lot, and smoking a lot, and just had a terrible diet, and everything and no exercise."

William found himself touring and promoting his work for nearly three years without any real breaks and now feels that artists could be better informed and supported through these intense working periods.

*“The main key really is that there needs to be better resources for people to really truly understand what it’s like. If you have to, like I have, check out from it a bit, that’s almost seen as a weakness. Maybe I’m only projecting it on myself as well, I don’t know, but I definitely feel like, ‘You’re only going to be this successful if you f*****g get out there and keep doing it till it kills you.’ And then it’s like ‘no, that’s not what it’s about.’ You can be very successful and not do that.”*

“It wasn’t like XL were going, ‘you’ve got to tour this much.’ But there’s a feeling of like they want you to be on these festival bills in certain spots for perception’s sake. And I wonder how useful that stuff is, really. It’s great to be on the bill. You know, it’s cool. But it’s also not everything. What I realised is that I love performing and I hate touring, basically.

Getting caught up in the music industry hype and the distance between the myth and the reality of working in the music business is a big challenge and the need for help in the way of guidelines is something many of the survey respondents mentioned. William has very strong opinions about this:

“Education. You need to be educated about these things. No one tells you what it’s going to be like, and you go your whole childhood wanting to be in the music industry, and be a touring musician – however much glory that brings you or whatever you want out of it. And no one tells you along that journey, ‘You can get that, that can be yours. You can achieve fulfilment and happiness. But there’s also all this other shit that comes as a cost to that.’ No one tells you that.”

In 2016 William made the decision to take some much needed time off and to move on from his East India Youth project. He moved out of London and has since started working on himself and new music in a way that feels better for his health and wellbeing.

“And I’m really conscious about how I control environments that I’m going to play in next time round when it comes to touring. In fact, I’m actually quite looking forward to touring again, despite everything I’ve said. Because I feel like if I can carry on making the progress that I feel like I’ve made over the last six-months into myself, then maybe I will be able to have a better experience next time I do it that has less demands on me and everyone else working with me to do it. So that’s really good. I feel good about things going forward.”

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Report commissioned by: Help Musicians UK

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Graphical Summaries of Survey Questions

University of Westminster was commissioned to carry out a pilot study and survey to assess the incidence of depression and anxiety in UK musicians.

The survey launched on Friday 20th May 2016 at The Great Escape music industry conference in Brighton, England, and concluded on Monday 27 June 2016.

The survey was so constructed as to ensure efficient data capture, and to provide a clean data set, free of complicating variables. At the request of Help Musicians UK, this study focused purely on the incidence of depression and anxiety within its target group – self-identifying professional musicians and ‘creative labourers’, including artist managers, producers, songwriters, sound engineers and others.

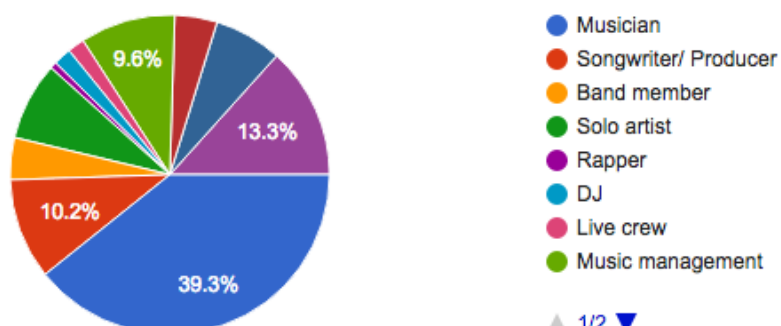
In engaging 2,211 respondents across a broad range of music genre, this represents the largest known academic study of this nature in the UK.

Appendix 1:

HM UK Music Industry Mental Health Survey: FINAL RESULTS

SECTION 1: YOUR WORK & YOUR MUSIC - 1) Which of the following terms best describes your occupation?

(2211 responses)

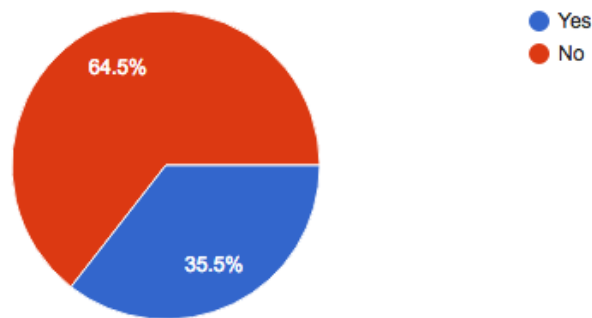


- Audio production (recording studios, live sound etc.)
- Label or music publisher
- Other...

2/2

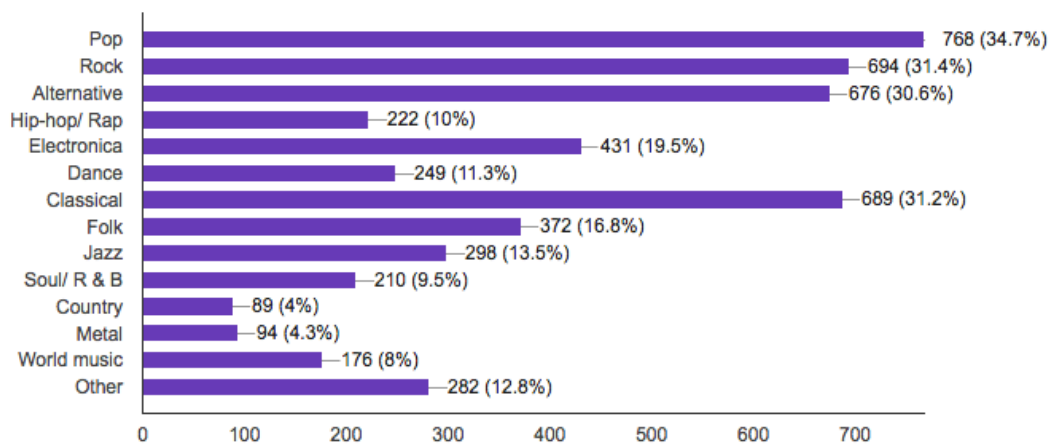
SECTION 1: YOUR WORK & YOUR MUSIC - 2) Do you work in one specific musical genre?

(2211 responses)

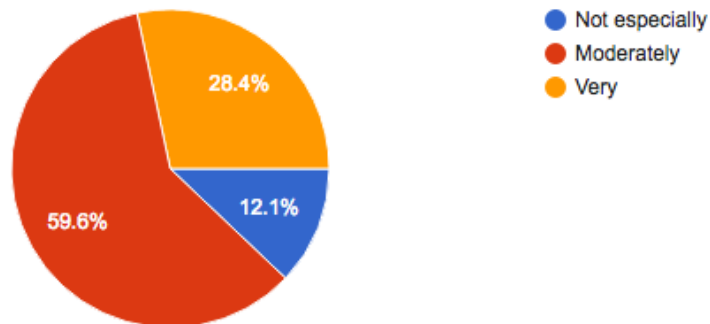


2a) If YES, please select 1 of the following. If NO, please select the top 3 that best describe the musical areas you work in?

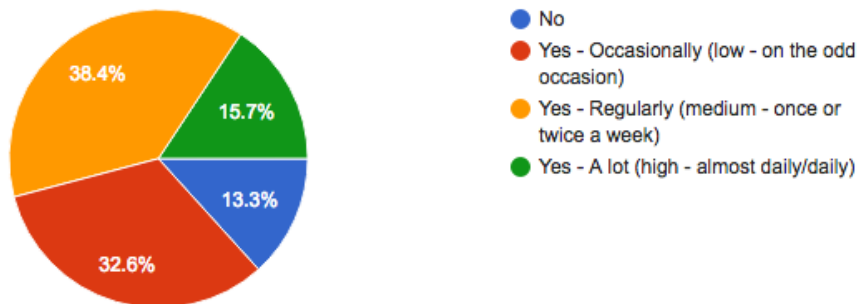
(2211 responses)



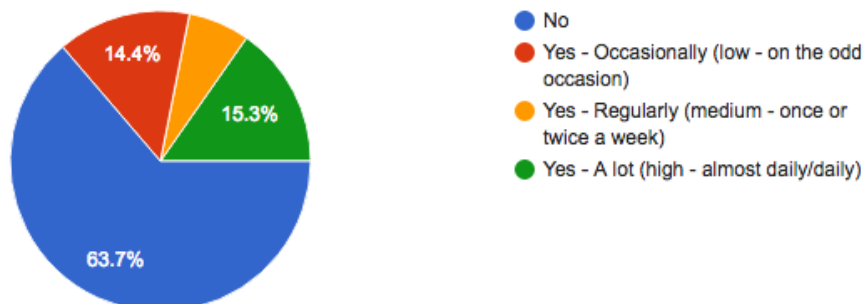
SECTION 2: YOUR HEALTH - 1) Are you health conscious? (2211 responses)



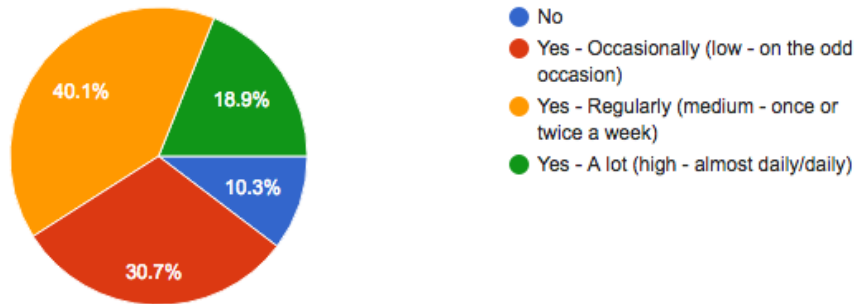
SECTION 2: YOUR HEALTH - 2) Do you take regular exercise? (2211 responses)



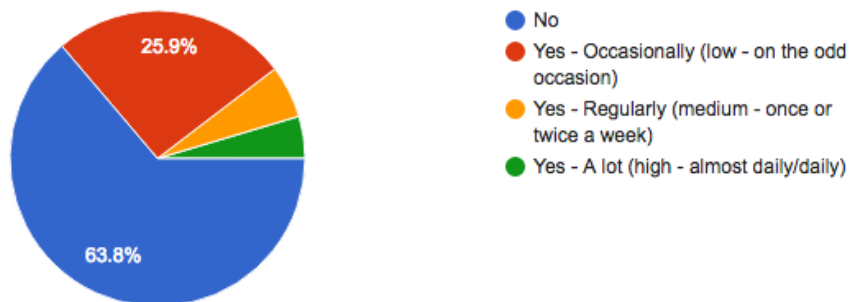
SECTION 2: YOUR HEALTH - 3) Do you smoke? (2211 responses)



SECTION 2: YOUR HEALTH - 4) Do you drink alcohol? (2211 responses)

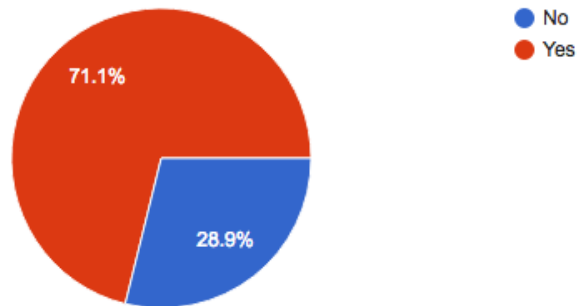


SECTION 2: YOUR HEALTH - 5) Do you take recreational drugs? (2211 responses)

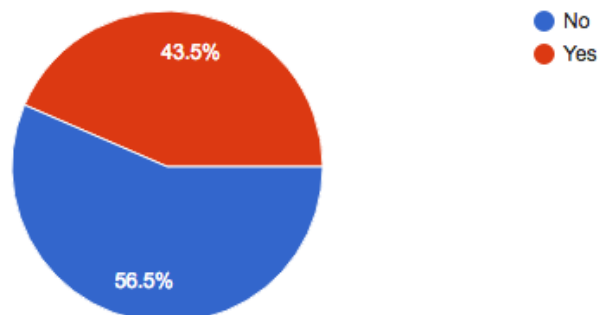


SECTION 2: YOUR HEALTH - 6) Have you ever suffered from panic attacks and/or high levels of anxiety?

(2211 responses)

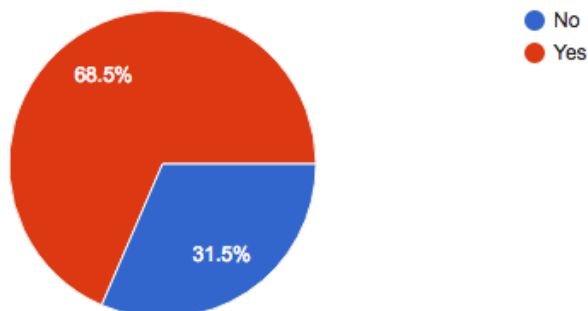


6a) If YES, did you receive treatment? (If No, please move to Q7) (1758 responses)



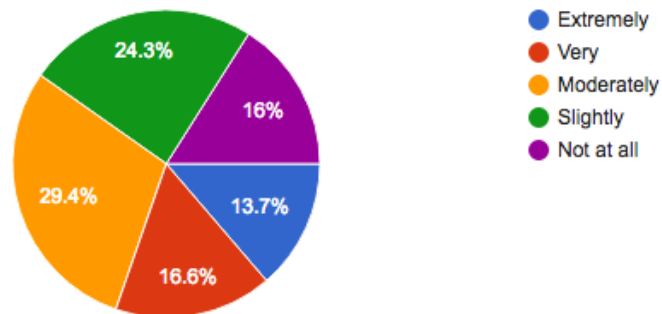
SECTION 2: YOUR HEALTH - 7) Have you ever suffered from depression?

(2211 responses)



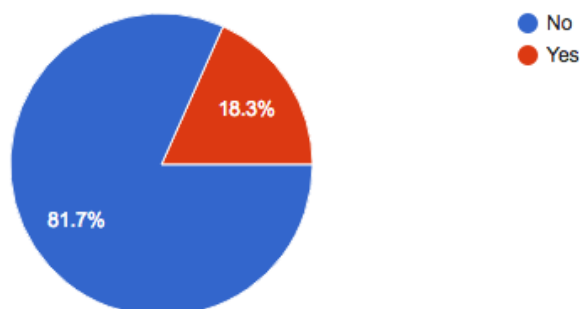
7a) If YES, how likely are you (or have you been) to seek help? (If NO, move to Q8)

(1570 responses)



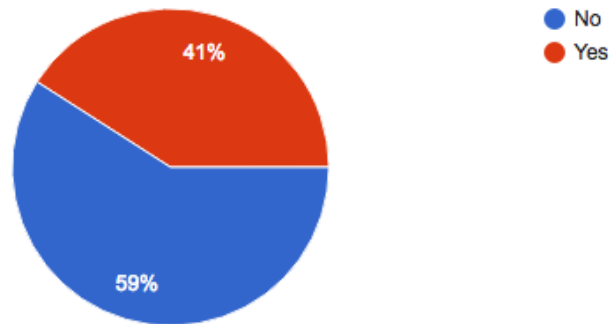
SECTION 2: YOUR HEALTH - 8) Have you ever suffered from any other mental illness?

(2211 responses)

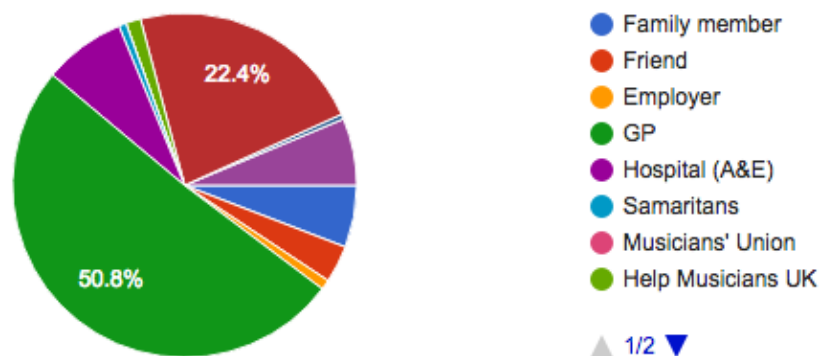


8a) If yes, did you get treatment? (If no please move on to section 3)

(862 responses)

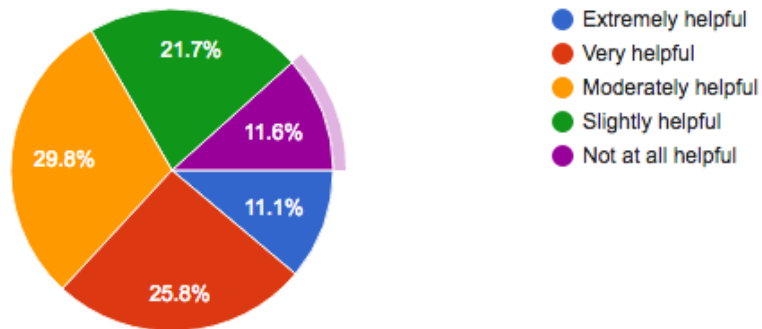


8b) If yes, where did you go for help? (429 responses)

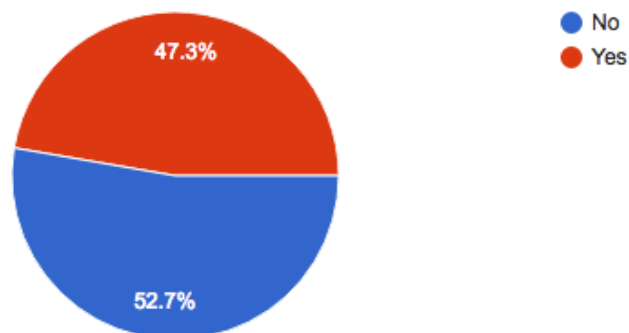


- Counselling service
- Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous
- Other...

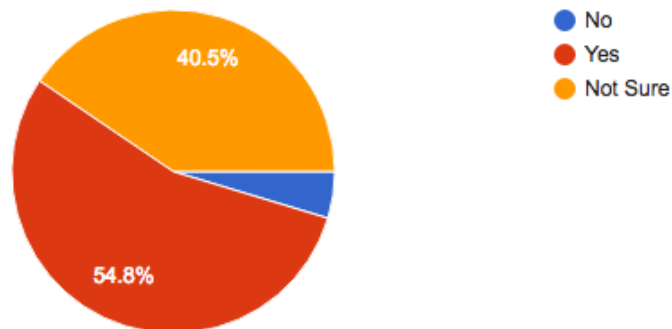
8c) If yes, how helpful was advice/ treatment you were given? (396 responses)



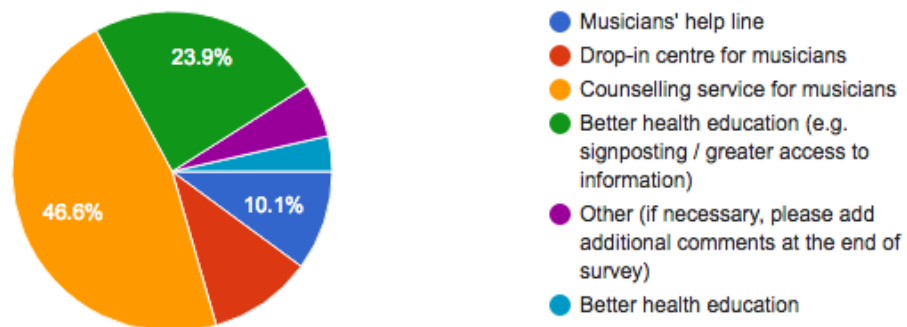
8d) If yes, did you find it easy to get help? (442 responses)



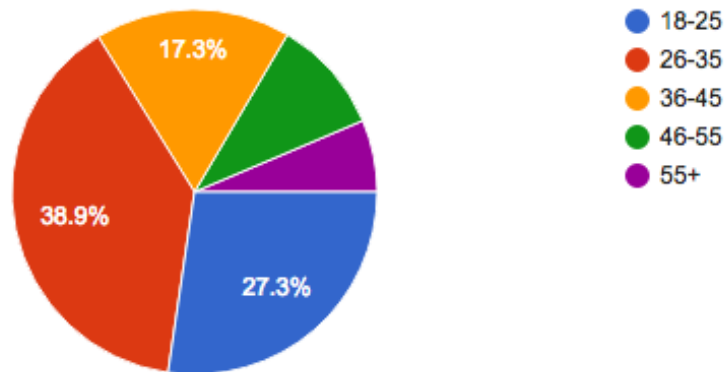
SECTION 3: HEALTH SUPPORT FOR MUSICIANS - 1) Do you feel there are gaps in the provision of services for musicians? (2211 responses)



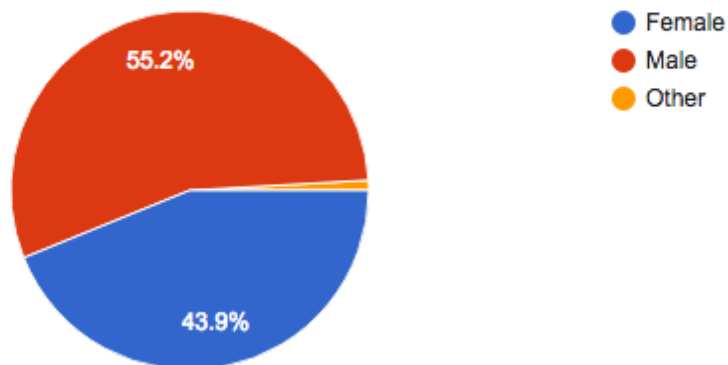
1a) If YES, what would you like to see? (if NO/ NOT SURE please move on to Section 4) (1290 responses)



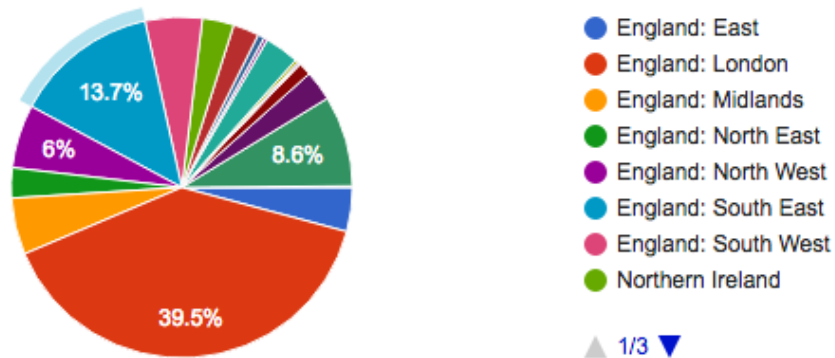
SECTION 4: ABOUT YOU - 1) Your Age (2211 responses)



SECTION 4: ABOUT YOU - 2) Gender (2211 responses)



SECTION 4: ABOUT YOU - 3) Location (where do you live?) (2211 responses)



Appendix 2: Raw Data: Survey Respondents' Freeform Responses

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS - If you have any other comments you'd like to make please do so here...

(203 responses)

I am not employed as a musician, but work in music in a semi professional occasional basis, both live and in a studio having taken early retirement from a Public Sector job.

I am not employed as a musician, but work in music in a semi professional occasional basis, both live and in a studio having taken early retirement from a Public Sector job.

no

no

Awareness courses for managers so they can develop their understanding of mental health

I was hospitalised against my will. I wasn't around the most understanding people. My family was thousands of miles away and I was hospitalised in a foreign country. If my story can help further anyone along, I'd love to be a part. Cheers!

Re: 'What would you like to see?': Apart from all of the items suggested, I would welcome not only greater understanding and compassion, but also greater encouragement to believe in ourselves and dispel negative impulses. The news media and politicians have a great responsibility here, and the medical establishment also, instead of promoting hideous drugs like Prozac, need to be focusing on positive imaging.

I've sent you an email regarding MAD and other issues

S3,1A - all of the above

I don't think my mental health was good before I started touring, I doubt it was, but there was a downhill shift a few years in

Very keen on contributing in any way to research. My mental health relating to my career as a musician has been something I've been considering a lot recently, and I feel I have gained significant perspective on it having released two albums over two years and touring extensively. Only now after stopping tour and taking control of my life can I look back and see how deeply unhappy and anxious I was for a lot of that time. I am taking what I can learn from this now to incorporate in how I choose to conduct my career going forward.

Education is key, but there should be more safety within contracts, and responsibility placed on employers to help those effected by any illness. This goes beyond the music industry and those who are self-employed should have better support.

We need a great support system

Creating music is an important thing for my mental health...outlet/therapy/escape? I don't know which...maybe all three...

I think there are specific stresses attached to being a woman in the industry, particularly around family concerns, but also arising out of simply not being allowed to be a woman.

Very interesting subject. Glad you're doing the research. Will stay up to date on the MAD campaign.

I work in music publishing, as stated above, but I am also a published musician and make my own music

I was an artist but moved behind the scenes so have experience on both sides

I have spent 20yrs as a writer and artist in the music industry at a relatively high level. It is an incredibly difficult industry to navigate in terms of it's ups and downs and at the same time maintain good mental health

We need more events in London that can get us all together as a society of music people. We're all so isolated in music when we work alone as independent industry. Gigs are good, but other social events with community in mind

As a freelance manager / small business / directly working with artists I think there is a massive gap in supporting mental health. Being mad becomes quite normalised. I was diagnosed bipolar once I had been in full time work for two years. Before that I was 10 years self employed. A lot more support could be done. C.A.L.M is a valuable resource worth mentioning already doing a lot with younger men and MH that I've found speak my language so have used in times of crisis. As have FRANK. I'd be happy to speak further on my experiences and really pleased your looking at this.

Interesting study. Would like to hear about the results and statistics. I have always felt that music and the arts attracted 'troubled minds', those of us who are looking for something different, want to express their feelings through a medium and aren't content with the mundane. Is music the causality or is it the release?

Networks and communities really help with this - I'm in a creative girl gang called Go Girl and it's really helped my mental health, because we all have the same lifestyle and can support and lean on each other. Most of the time you can feel really isolated, because you don't live life like you're 'supposed to'

Being a musician is not like most jobs, often the music chooses you rather than you choosing the music. Taking this path of life is often the road less travelled, less respected and fully acknowledged. It takes a lot of hard work, self reflection and drive to sustain your physical and mental energy in this creative field which is why I feel so many of us go through these peaks and troughs. Being a woman in this industry adds another dimension of struggle I feel so I am intreeged to see what the findings are of this study.

It's not just musicians who have mental health issues. There needs to be resources for everyone in the music community. Tour personnel, support personnel and business people are all effected and find it even more difficult to voice problems than artists as they may lose jobs or clients.

struggling with health issues some depression related some stress related all down to my struggles in music I think... trying to shift into something new proving difficult... not wanting to let go... struggling to stay relevant... so much to say on this

The long term instability of income is a major stress that impacts on health

I'm not sure that the lack of adequate counselling is a musician-specific problem. I think there's the broader problem of lack of mental health services available on the NHS, so anyone on a low income can't get the help they need. In my experience of NHS counselling, I didn't like or do well with the CBT approach but that's all that was offered. I think mental health services need improving in general, especially to people on low incomes. And then secondarily, or maybe as part of that, expanding the types of counselling available to better suit certain lifestyles, or rather ways of thinking. I did find that the counsellors I saw on the NHS had absolutely no understanding of my way of life which made it difficult for us to connect and therefore progress anywhere. So despite the fact that I'd definitely benefit from further counselling, because of my experience I wouldn't go through the NHS again, and I can't afford private, so unfortunately I will probably continue without - which I think is a real shame, and possibly dangerous too.

Better Health Education, Counsellings, but especially a bit more financial support for artistic interesting projects!

I went to music college. I think one thing that is really lacking (apart from singers) is how to look after your body - at least the relevant parts to playing your instrument. As a guitarist I often have shooting pains / cramps in my hands from over stretching regardless of warm ups.

The only thing that causes depression for musician's is the music industry itself. Based on constant rejection juxtaposed with random praises, getting signed, getting dropped, streaming paying a pittance, superficiality, no job security, one minute people love your music, the next that have forgotten who you are. It's an exploitative rollercoaster based on money and data, what do you expect? For women there's even more pressure focused on physical appearance. Who wouldn't be depressed in an industry like that? It's not average nor healthy but they do it because of their love for music. No research needed, it's obvious.

<3

I would love to be involved further in this research. I have had panic attacks for over 25 years and can almost directly link it to performing live (which I no longer do, due to the anxiety). I recently did an interview on this for www.everythingindieover40.com and was really surprised by the volume of people who contacted me afterwards about it.

I don't know where to begin... 10 yrs of antidepressants and therapy has stopped me from wanting to end it all... and although musicians have their own set of complications and disappointments ... I'm not sure that these are exclusive from the rest of the world .

I find on the whole music to be great release and helps when I'm feeling anxious or depressed. Especially playing/rehearsing. The stresses of being in the music industry, for me, are a big cause of uncertainty which leads to stress, anxiety and depression. And the more stressed I am the more likely I am to drink/take drugs because it gives me some rest bite from the worry.

Please, please, please change the name of this campaign. It's not only about depression, so the name is inaccurate. Also, conflating depression and 'madness' is very damaging - the two are not the same, but people suffering depression and anxiety often worry that they are 'going mad'. For those people, the title of this campaign is only going to serve to confirm that to them. 'Madness' is a term that has not been used in mental healthcare for decades, it's a catch-all from the time of asylums. Careful use of language around the topic of mental health is very important, and I fear you will have put off many of the people who would be most useful to you in this research.

This survey seems superficial. I eat junk food, smoke weed and drink alcohol all as a coping mechanism for my depression which is made worse by trying to exist as a musician. The side effects of which require more of the "cure". It is a self-perpetuating cycle. I've gone extremely clean and exercised at doctors advice, and while I had more energy, I was still incredibly depressed. At least if I'm drunk and high I notice it less. Maybe I'll get to the doctors again and maybe they can try to help me, but it is a horrible prospect. Under the microscope. My first and only visit I entered the office and sat in silence. The doctor after a moment says "are you going to speak?". Perhaps fuckheads like him should understand how difficult that is!! He decided I was depressed because I drank and my job prospects were shit. 5 years later I've an "OK" income, have done some very neat gigs, have spent months totally clean and still theres times I wish I didn't exist, drunk or otherwise. At the end of the day the responsibility lies with me and my perseverance with the system. We shall see what happens.

Final note: rarely has playing music been detrimental to my health, quite the opposite in fact - it's like a healthy drug, but the industry and socio-economic pressures and insecurity make this a fucking shite industry to try and make a living in. I think about how if I want to have a family I'll have to give up all I love, take some grey sludge telecommunication job and just give up on my life.

I am grateful for this. I really hope this leads into something more to help for people in the music business who are in need of it. I have to say that I am currently not my best mentally speaking because of my current situation of no job and no funds, but too afraid to talk to others for all my friends can be potential colleagues in the business as well. Maybe this is something that needs to be touched upon; the fear of judgement and if it will affect business. Then again I have to say, doing this survey alone has given me some relief as well. So maybe an anonymous helpline for this who have been there in the music business.

Finally someone is addressing this issue! Thank you

I am really happy to see a survey such as this being provided. As a woman of color working as a musician with depression I find it hard to find spaces where I can express these concerns or even take part in sharing with other musicians of various backgrounds. This is ironic seeing that I am involved in various projects however I sense that there is a lot of unease and competitiveness between musicians. We want to share but not too much. We want to support but don't want to seem too enthusiastic (if that makes any sense). Anyways thanks for letting me fill this in!

Money makes people sick. Money and the system it encourages only teaches people that there is no value in human life. Everyone is overworked and underpaid and stressed and repressed and quick to defense, offense and compensatory behaviour. And the more I look around, the more I see that people who see themselves as creative are sneered at more than most. Making peace with the idea that any meaningful changes happens in increments over long periods of time is as uphill a struggle as just trying to ignore what makes you unhappy in the first place, and it feels like most of my adult life thus far has been spent unlearning too many bad habits taught to me by school, parents, adults, the media etc. as a child.

I experience ptsd following a severe prolonged trauma. I feel that there is very little public understanding about this and other illnesses that directly effect a person's ability to function. And honestly my music career is now the only work I feel capable of doing and that has helped me heal some aspects of my experience of ptsd. I hope by the end of my life I can truthfully claim that it helped me overcome all aspects that have continued to have effect on my functionality and that produced prolonged symptoms of anxiety and cognitive shut down...

Emphasis should be made on substance and alcohol abuse linked with depression and other mental illnesses. My experience within my friendship circles, especially in Northern Ireland, is that it is one of our biggest coping mechanisms!

I think that a big part of the problem is a societal one. A plumber doesn't work for 'experience'. A doctor does perform surgery for 'exposure'.

Musicians are under appreciated. Sure people want to have music and art, but they assume its free and that artists don't need compensated. This makes carving a career path very difficult. You have to do things you wouldn't normally choose and a lot of the time end up stretched thin, doing more than one job to be able to get by.

I not saying we don't want to work hard, but I am saying that the hard work put in doesn't receive nearly the kick back it should. Its a rough industry. Full of sexism, blunt and tough opinions and a lot of just plain assholes to work with, So no wonder there are a few folk who cant deal with the pressure.

I have Crohn's disease and fibromyalgia so it kind of buggers things up a bit.

I run a music school for children and see music having a positive effect on mental health. i believe depression in musicians is due to our lives being creatively and emotionally led rather than practically, so routine and stability is absent.

I actually live in Germany, but lived in Leeds once.

Probably a dumb comment, but I reckon most of the depression musicians feel nowadays is due to impossible expectations more than anything else...

Better awareness of mental health issues and willingness of GP to treat more seriously and where appropriate consider possible medical causes.

Battled depression and anxiety for many years, with times of relapse and times of peace. Music can be healing, but can stir up the raw emotion and disassociation with reality that can bring it all tumbling.

it makes me less productive, but it makes the songs better

There doesn't seem to be a North East location option.

Health related problems with being a violinist for many years include; clicking/damaged jaw, neck and back problems, hearing impairment and carpal tunnel syndrome in hands

Access times for mental health support are not compatible with musicians' working hours. Almost impossible, for example, to book ahead for a GP appointment. Causes extra stress!

The music industry is a largely freelance/contracting based industry. Unlike other industries however the models of remuneration for musicians is inadequate and it's expected more and more for those working in music to work for free as 'promotion'. The divide between those who have ongoing regular paying opportunities and those who do not has grown and it's now harder than ever to support yourself through music. This I believe causes a lot of anxiety and shame around pursuing music careers and can lead many to feel they are not succeeding even though they are creating wonderful work. It's likely that this issue has been exasperated due to financial pressures around those exploiting music in the UK and this divide is not as extreme in other countries (like Spain). I could go on about this further but I don't think is the place for it! Thanks.

I think there is a MASSIVE need for looking at mental health for musicians - I think creating safe spaces for discussion, creative workshops, better education, innovative support groups etc.

Lack of opportunities in Yorkshire. The way the funders messed up the Yorkshire project at SXSW was tragic.

I understand that this survey is aimed at gathering the very broadest of pictures of the current situation, but as a manager who has worked with multiple artists (a majority of my clients) with mental health issues it feels incomplete and frustrating to not be able to share any of my specific experiences as a carer of sorts, which would statistically help your research. I would also suggest that the large number of artists I have managed or known would not benefit from a help line or informal counselling. They are mostly perfectly aware that they have a chronic health condition which requires medication as well as therapy from a qualified professional, and their difficulties lie in how impossible it is to maintain lifelong, needed routines and care whilst also working as a musician. Or if they need help recognising that they have a medical condition, they should be pointed towards the NHS. Energy may be better spent lobbying government to improve NHS care for mental health, which is disgraceful, and to proposing industry-wide reforms. Ours is one of the most aggressively hostile workplace environments in the world for a normal person to maintain even baseline levels of physical health and sobriety, due to both structural issues (long hours, late nights, touring, presence of alcohol/drugs) and cultural issues (valorisation of all of the above). It should not be impossible to make our workplace a bit less hostile for all.

Hi I think that depression exists to a high degree in the music industry. I'm someone who has had very high success and experienced extreme pressure. I think that there needs to be more information and help provided and that the stigma of depression needs to be discussed more openly. Something that I'm very willing to be involved with.

regarding the help support for musicians, I think it would be important to create partnerships with gyms/pools and massage/physiotherapy centres because at some point in our lives we tend to have some physical problem related to our instrument and I think a lot of us won't be able to afford proper treatment, or better yet, ways to prevent it (like the gym and pool). If there were some discounts for musicians in certain places would be a huge help

It can be incredibly isolating being a musician. It is also very hard work - burn out, often accompanied by another job, has often been a big part of the depressions I have suffered.

Please do get in touch if possible as I would like to be able to help and express my experiences.

I have found music to be a boon during times in which my mental health is suffering. It allows me to express emotion in a way that words can't and allow me to think in a way that is much more present-oriented. It's absorbing, rewarding and creative.

I've known around a dozen people with depression (including myself) and GP's are not helpful. They simply say "try this" & give you some brain-chemistry altering drugs which just make you feel like a 'different kind of not-yourself'. Meds have only worked for 2 of the dozen people I know who've tried them, and their depression was stress-related and not hereditary. I can't say that goes for the whole world; it's just my personal observation. I've had it my whole life - yes, even as a child, telling my Mum "I feel sad". It wasn't until I was 25 that it got manageable, and this is because I said to myself: "Well, it looks like I'm always going to have this." It sounds simple and obvious, but prior to that I was in denial by believing it would disappear forever each time that my mood improved. This just set me up for being very frustrated when it returned. When the depression would subside, I would still be angry at myself for 'wasting time' and not being in control. I realised that I was adding this layer of anger myself, worked hard to remove my reactive ways, and became more open about it with friends. I can't exactly say "Nice to meet you, I have depression", but they're usually relieved to hear that you're not 'in a mood' with them in particular! I still get what I call 'social-claustrophobia' where I can't even pop to the shops but accepting it and being open about it has massively reduced the frequency of my lulls. I have of course attempted to simplify a very complex matter, but I'd like to add that even as an adult, there's peer pressure to drink, which definitely sends me downward if done too often. At the very least, letting people know about your condition makes them a bit more respectful in that regard!

- I'm not sure if this is an appropriate use of the comments section, but even though it's anonymous, I wanted to give more of a personal insight as perhaps this might open another way of approaching things. There needs to be an orchestra of ways to help people as we're all tuned differently... that's not a perfect analogy but I think you'll get my meaning!

Feel free to share this or any part of it privately or publicly, and thanks for your efforts!

live in the U.S.

This is a fantastic initiative. It would be great to have specialised music counselling/therapy available in order to meaningfully address issues and scenarios which are prevalent in the profession.

Just the other day I was thinking there's a need for this - a great start, and well done!

I am a music student and do some musical work too to clarify. I have noticed a very high level of anxiety in my classmates

I actually did a small research paper on this subject during my time at uni, having noticed that a significant number of my friends were suffering from mental illness (the majority of whom were receiving treatment). I thought there might be a connection between becoming a musician and being mentally ill. I focused on some of the most successful musicians of all time and found that the vast majority had either suffered a tragic loss early on in life, or were suffering from mental illness.

I am very interested to see where your research goes.

Amazing study, would like to be kept up to date with developments.

I dont think it's music that made me ill, I think western society made me ill and music kept me sane+alive x

I'm a mother of two and unfortunately this has had a negative effect on my career as a touring musician and recording artist. I am doing my best to continue as a musician but can't easily go to gigs and my output is now very slow. This time is quite isolating for me and many others in my shoes. I'd like issues for musician mothers to be addressed.

Section 3, 1(a: I would like to see all those options in place. However, musicians do not own up to even their closest colleagues if they have a problem so the first hurdle is, as the world of sport has achieved, to overcome the stigma of injury/illness.

There ought to be more openness and discussion surrounding mental health issues within music. How one goes about it, is the \$50million question...

I don't really know what depression feels like or what the signs are.

BAPAM has always been very helpful when I've needed help or advice.

Mental health services don't understand the strains and demands of the routines of the musician

Reason for lack of exercise in answer to question - am disabled

I think, especially in Conservatoires/orchestral and opera houses, there should be mandatory mental health meetings/clinics.

I couldn't just pick one answer for Section 3, 1a. I think education is very important, so many people do not realize they suffer mental health problems and more importantly the people around them don't know the signs to look out for so they can reach out. The music industry as a whole need to support their artists. You see cases like Sinéad O'Connor, Nick Drake, Brian Wilson, Oli Sykes or Shara Nelson (the list goes on too long)- the media attack them and their management/labels do not do enough. The people around them need to be educated so they can recognise the signs first and then the artists need to know they have a safe place without judgement that they can turn to for support. Helplines, counselling, education etc are ALL needed.

I believe that every human may have a threshold within them for stress. I believe that most people will never have to find out where and what makes their depression/anxiety or other health issues arise. I believe that once music becomes a career, once long hours, hard work, stress and the constant weight of validation from a room of strangers, from ticket sales, from professional teams. Music does inevitably force the discovery of everyone's threshold and ability to heal.

There have been times when I've been so down that I don't even want to think about singing but have dragged myself to do so on most occasions (though have admittedly called in sick a couple of times). I wouldn't actually know what constitutes depression and would always choose to try and 'suck it up'...

I feel musicians are a breed of their own, misunderstood by doctors. The work we do is not leading a normal life by any standards.

I would like my business to help not only my artists but others with this study, if I can get involved I'd love to.

Most music makes me feel sick, either mentally, physically, or both. I am reasonably certain that my mental health issues are, in a sense, environmental and caused by the current state of human culture. Yet music also seems to bring me great therapeutic benefit.

What I would like to see is some sort of paradigm shift to a situation where society and music are meritocratic. I would like to see people who care about music make a stand for higher principles above their own progress. I would like to see an end to the artifice of 'genres' and a population versed in music theory.

I think it reflects pretty poorly on us all that non-musicians (and musicians alike) know no better than to grovel about in the shallows, oblivious to the coming and passing of giants like Carter, Boulez, or, indeed, like Ali Khan or Shankar. I would go so far as to suggest that a world in which musicians, even mentally ill musicians, do not require the provision of services is entirely possible, if we can all stop thinking that it serves us to say that there is a difference between house and techno.

I feel there should be more awareness, people should talk about it more and hopefully the stigma over mental health will dissipate over time. There does seem to be extra pressures as a musician to HAVE FUN ALL THE TIME 'cos of the nature of the game so it can be difficult. I mean, what other profession is there where you turn up for work and there's a crate of beer and a bottle of whisky in front of you? I'd rather have a bottle in front of me than a frontal lobotomy though.

I am very interested in this study. Whilst I have answered that I have not had any depression or mental health problems that I have sought help for. I have had experiences that you may find interesting.

Before retraining to be a professional musician I went to university, did a graduate office based job until i was 27 and did music regularly for fun. During this time and throughout childhood, I felt very balanced and my mood was consistent and generally positive.

However, after completing music college and working as a musician, I have notice regular fluctuations in my mood. I find I occasionally have days when I am in an incredibly negative mood, dont feel like doing anything, which I never ever had before, despite enjoying my current job way more than being in the office.

When those days come, I just think I need a day off and do something else, so it doesnt overly concern me.

But I regularly talk to people about this phenomenon and really think that the music profession does have a tendency to create problems which wouldnt otherwise be there. I have attribituted to having the high of a performance etc and the body having to deal with the inevitable low afterwards.

I have other friends who have had similar experiences but have had mental health or anxiety problems throughout life. However, this is not the case for me, it's a new thing and I really feel like my body's reaction to things has changed.

I would be very happy to talk more if that were useful.

I

Please add Americana as a genre

Help Musicians have been wonderfully supportive but it is frightening as tomwhat happens for the future.

Brilliant idea, not enough help out there

Money worries are one of the main concerns/driving factors behind anxiety for me and also the nature of freelance work. Unpredictability of work/money certainly a significant stressor

The issues don't just surround musicians, it is the road crew and industry as a whole that is affected. The industry professionals suffer from the long and odd hours, touring schedules and lack of structure just like musicians do. If there was a service it should be extended to everyone.

I personally have found music and drumming to be the way forward in helping me to control any depression I might have that could reoccur

I believe the pressure to produce good work drove me a bit insane for a time. I later realised that it was self-perpetuating - I couldn't make the good work because I was unhappy, and I was unhappy because I couldn't make good work. It's important to remember that music is play - It's not as serious as we make it. The work won't be good if it didn't come from "play". You can't force it and you shouldn't try too hard to make it happen. (This is, of course, not to be confused with being lazy). It's very difficult to make good art from a state of depression because it saps your enthusiasm for anything (not to be confused with sadness, which can be full of feeling). You should allow yourself to heal before expecting anything from yourself. I found my work starting to improve once I stopped caring if it was commercially viable - I.e I returned to the childlike state of "play", and it became a tool for happiness.

3) Location (where do you live?) *: In France

I'm really interested on what you found because there is a profile in music industry (at least the people I know) that do not go by himself to doctors maybe because they are mostly men but also because we sleep more in the day, forgot the appointments, usually a problem with one or both parents, especially no dad ! In our "crew" we are about 50 people but we are only two (!!!!!) and females (!!!!!) with relationship with our dad.... It always let me without voice, to see how everybody wants to recreate a family. And girls are like their mums. I feel that way.

Music Colleges need to be more aware of mental health problems and not employ lay counsellors - need experts in the field.

This is a great survey that's being taken - it's so important to not only make sure that help can be provided, but also to bring up this topic and erase the stigma - thank you.

Poor mental health provision is a problem, in general, in Northern Ireland

We're talking a lot more about the mental health of musicians and the pressures on artists in the public eye and this is wonderful. We're trying to break down the stigma and help them. It is SO hard if you suffer from any mental illness as a musician, and the support from your team is imperative.

However, the same support and understanding is simply not there for those not in the public eye. I've been a music manager for 10 years (at a large management company), and found my employers to be unsupportive, dismissive and even contributory in the detriment to the mental health of their own employees. For instance; an over-worked manager at the brink of break down was almost fired. For having panic attacks. They discussed her mental state publicly among other junior staff members, pondering whether to fire her for having another panic attack. It was scare tactics for the rest of the staff - don't you dare think about having a panic attack/mental illness or you're out. Other employees were openly bullied and treated appalling. But it's the music industry, so it's acceptable to be treated that way. I suffered from severe anxiety attacks brought on trying to deliver a successful campaign for my artist; the relentless 18 hour days/7 day weeks, and pressure of trying to deliver for my artists single-handedly was enormous. Nothing was ever enough. Literally, kill yourself trying to make a campaign no one will care about in 6 months work. There was little to no support, encouragement or understanding from directors/senior staff. It was seen as a weakness to care about your job/have anxiety. Thankfully, I left a few months ago. I LOVED my job, but it did not love me. The Music Industry had made me sick.

I am in the process of having counselling funded by Help Musicians UK, and am grateful for it. It is hard to tell what the effect will be as I am still in the process.

Not only could there be services for musicians but also for those who look after the musicians, so there is understanding of what they may be going through and how to best help.

Good research!

My best friend (also a musician) took his own life two years ago and I've been struggling ever since. I haven't found anyone that understands how hearing certain pieces of music we shared makes me feel and there's nowhere that can offer support. I am both a musician and teacher in the classical sector.

Interesting stuff! Cherish Mengel referred me to this.

I feel that your initial question is the wrong way round for me. I look on music and my job as more of a sanity saver than anything that makes me sick. Of course it can be a source of stress and anxiety as most of us care deeply about what we do and how we play, but music itself has rarely been the cause of hyper anxiety for me since leaving college. It's usually life circumstance and occasionally other people that have had much more effect on my mental health - just as long as my ego stays in its place!

i think the fanasy needs to be taken away from the so called rock and roll lifestyle of famous musicians, and it needs to be exposed for what it is. People need to know the truth. To be successful in music you have to be so many things. Physically, mentally, emotionally, psychologically you need to be in peak condition to survive. Not just ok, but fit as an athlete. The workload is absolutely shocking. And it is a totally unregulated business. It's a disgrace in my opinion. I could talk about it all day but the truth is they don't respect us, and they still see this as a mickie mouse job

You never really know who to ask or how to ask.

This is a great area of research. I know many musician friends of mine who've experienced sizeable existential problems during the pursuit of a life in music. I personally have experienced moderate / high levels of emotion in relation to music, (as a career, as a life, as what can feel like a contest) often very negative. I'd be intrigued to be contacted again and asked more- but I won't be offended if not, it's all good.

I have partially filled survey in re my late husband he was a theatre and jazz musician, I am a singer, my late husband ,Dennis Price, did we now believe suffer from depression ,he took his life 3 years ago,I would like to fill in a survey for him. Thank you.

Most musician are freelancers, so would be interested to know what form any help service would take

Something as simple as implementing a minimum wage for musicians would be a great help to all aspects of our lives.

The MU should be the ones making that a priority but I don't think it's on their agenda at all.
Thank you for creating this survey and for caring about our experiences. Peace.

Please get more musicians talking about their problems.

I very much support this research. If you need a helping hand with the report in anyway - feel free to get in touch! I'm currently studying on the Entertainment Law LLM course at Westminster University.

it would be nice to see more outreach to those working on the peripheries of the so called 'music industry'.

I am taking SSRI and I used to go to group therapy as I had bulimia. Lately I've been fine and the meds work well (escitalopram 10mg/day). However obviously I have good and bad days, it'd be great if there would be a drop-in or a counselling opportunity or just someone to talk to about my work and the stress it involves.

the matter of mental health in the music industry is a major big deal for me, i've received some great, much needed & crucial help from help musicians.org in the past, without which i would not be able to continue as a musician/creative.

I think the Music Industry has affected my mental health. This, however, is not because of the overwhelming beauty of music but because of the way the industry works.

I think it would be good to have a specialist centre for health for creative artists and musicians, where for example, you could get musician and sound professional related hearing tests. Boots is telling people lies to sell hearing aids. And what they're selling isn't the best I don't think. Further it could offer STD advice and more. Mental health advice. Most musicians I know do not have conventional relationships, multiple partners, more than one child by different people. Group counselling on negotiating a musicians life. Call it The David Bowie Centre for Musician and Sound Professional Mental and Physical Health. Or The Prince Centre of Sound Well Being.

To be honest, the greatest support might be a musicians retreat, where you could go FOR FREE for at least a few days each year to relax, be fed well and get some peace and quiet. It's hard to afford a break most of the time, so the pressure is never really off.

I am very pleased with the help and advice given by Help Musicians Charity

You're section on occupation needs a multiple click section on Musicians + other as I am a musician, producer and a scientist

I think the key problem with the music business in regards to mental illness is that there isn't time for basic physical needs once you are working. If you're not working, life is tough, but you have a bit more time to eat and sleep (although working enough to be able to invest in music sometimes makes sleeping and eating hard as it takes a long time to work enough to pay bills and rent in Vancouver, and nobody wants an employee who's going to go on tour or leave for auditions, so you're relegated to shift work and minimum wage hospitality work, generally.) The trick is, once you become a little more successful, you have to work so hard around the clock to stay fresh, current, the continuously put new work out there, to collaborate, and to find new clients, that your physical exhaustion levels are really high (which is deeply triggering for anxiety and depression) and the shit you eat (if you eat at all most days) is convenience/fast food. Without sleep, without time to calm down enough to sit and eat a meal, and without time to exercise, your body (and mental health as a result) suffers greatly.

confidence problem

I feel that sometimes it is harder for men to talk about mental health issues than women. This attitude for males needs to be changed in our culture, and more support should be offered from a young so that they can get over this.

Addition to Section 3, 1a) - Better physiotherapy provision for musicians would also be useful.
Question 1 - I'm a classical music (piano) teacher.

Dealing with venues and their staff is the bane of my life

In section 8b - I was able to seek the help of friends & also had long term private therapy - self funded for PTSD

Those working within funded organisations and education settings could do with better training around mental health awareness and suicide prevention. The pressures on musicians are huge. The way that organisations and musicians work together need to change. The mental health benefits of working in a healthy team with good line management need to be extended to solo creatives who are often isolated in their work. Many of those teaching in Higher Education have little experience of supporting students with mental health conditions. These students can be under huge competitive pressure. Through doing coaching work with composers I have learned that composers often feel there is no one to talk to about the pressures of their work. They feel they are in competition with their peers so cannot turn to them. They feel that their non-music friends will not understand. They feel they will lose work if they talk to music organisations. The whole competitive nature of the way that the funded arts are set up needs to be questioned. Artists are in competitive scenarios with each other all the time for commissions and residencies and this leads to a low-synergy situation (ie. each individual person's success does not benefit the system as a whole). It is hard for individuals to celebrate the success of others because in a competitive situation it means lack of success for themselves. This is a recipe for poor well being. Outside of my music job I work for a charity that supports people in suicidal crisis and I know of musicians who have used our services due to falling ill from the competitive pressure placed on them and I have heard very bad things about the levels of 'support' that these suicidal musicians have been given by highly regarded institutions.

In the area I work in (the 'fringe of the fringe' of creative composition, or the 'growing tip' of new work and ideas, depends how you want to frame it) the combination of low pay, isolated working, high levels of competition, poor support skills within funded organisations and general media and public non-interest can be a very dangerous combination.

I'm happy to talk about this more... can you tell?

thanks for doing this work! Really is important. I'll share as much as I can hope you get many responses.

what do people find is the impact of intensive periods of touring followed by near solitude?

I'd like to see better education around mental health awareness in music colleges

I think specialist services for musicians are important and they should include psychoanalytic psychotherapy, which is the most intensive form of psychotherapy. While many musicians have good mental health because of the healing properties of musical engagement (especially with others), it should be clear during training that "taking care of the instrument" includes psychological health as well as physical health.

i think that the industry needs to make the majority learn that mental health is a much more diverse subject and needs to be more funded in area such as youth work and gatherings for like minds to put their idea and their progress to the test if that makes sense ? The way forward is to heal and not to hinder the proved track record of therapists and others in the way of the sound healing therapies that can and will be used for greater good and with this intention i think at this period we can all benefit from it as a strong medium for Mental Health Ills

It's very interesting to come across this study.

In a way I believe depression & anxiety are on the creative spectrum, but i would love to be better educated on the correlation between creativity and mental health as well as more support from the industry

Never suffered from depression or high level anxiety but definitely aware of lower level anxiety issues/sleep disturbance/ on a fairly regular basis.

Would like to see Help Musicians UK team up with NAS - potential for coordinating help for musicians who have Aspergers/autism spectrum disorder.

I invest a large amount of my time into personal development so that i can better understand myself and help others. I've been teaching in music for over 10 years and i now run an agency to help artists overcome the stresses of the music industry. I would be delighted to help out with anything so that everyone can have more fulfilling careers. Please feel free to contact me if you wish to set up a meeting, ask more questions or require any expertise on this matter. Regards Jon

I'm not sure I'd say it's the music that makes me sick. It's the lack of things I'd consider success. It's the lack of support for doing something that's not considered "real work" by so many. I do think that things can be exacerbated by the days my head is full of creative ideas I must get out and so I miss sleep or forget to eat. That travel to perform or record can put me in situations where my routines are neglected or my best tools for taking care of myself aren't easily (or at all) available. And I do feel that mental health concerns are part of what drives my creation. I also feel that the stereotype of what it means to be a "cool" musician can leave those involved in music feeling as if they have to party in order to fit in, to give up sleep in order to prove they are committed, etc. I don't think it's the music, but I do think that there are things particular to making music that can make me less well.

we need more info about what alcohol, drugs and the lack of sleep do to people. when working in a label or event agency... we are expected to go out late, or work with an area of the world that has a big time difference, but still get up in the morning for the office -that s insane, human beings need sleep. also women are under more pressure than men for mostly the same reasons as i other industries (pressure to look good/skinny/young, not get pregnant, not have children, not sleeping around/not being a prude, having to do twice as much as men, etc). thanks for doing this study!

I have experienced mental health issues and so have many of my clients along with road crew and everyone involved in this unpredictable and unusual industry. I believe strongly that the music industry should be doing more to protect its own, educate and provide easy access to help for those who need it. I believe that this line of work definitely contributes to mental health issues on every level. Please feel free to contact me if i can assist more.

I became moderately depressed/anxious whilst on board ships as a function singer in a band. It's not a glamorous career but I didn't expect it to be how it was. I would have loved someone to tell me how lonely and isolated the lifestyle was before exploring it as a career.

I would like to see more financial support for people working in low paying creative industries, services like counselling are very expensive

Only part of my income comes from being a musician , I do think though it's a important issue to better support whilst we do have mental health support practioners don't always understand our working lives nor accomidate the unpredictable nature of our hours

I work on a cruise ship which has an extra set of difficulties often not addressed. We are mostly not understood or appreciated by our employers, poorly paid with no status on board. This, added to living on a ship for up to 7 months at a time away from family can cause issues not seen on land. There is nobody on board for example that understands musician specific physical or medical issues. A research project on this sector would be very helpful.

I feel mental health provision in the UK in general is poor particularly in the wake of government cuts. I'm unsure specialist musicians' services are needed as much as better funding and an overhaul of the whole system.

The survey title seems misleading - there is no way to draw a conclusion about whether music can make someone sick simply from gathering data about how many musicians have suffered mental health problems. For one, there is a self-selection bias, as musicians who suffer mental health problems (myself included) will undoubtedly be more likely to fill out the form than those who don't. For another, correlation does not equal causation. There are many reasons why those who suffer from mental health problems may be drawn to the arts. This doesn't prove that those who work in the arts are more vulnerable to mental health problems because of their area of endeavour.

I also had an issue with some of the questions - for instance, my mental health goes through phases, at some crisis points I have sought help, at others I have not. So asking if I sought treatment is a little simplistic, and only allowing one option for where I sought help is deeply misleading. I have at times turned to friends, at other times turned to my GP, and currently I receive therapy from an NHS mental health unit. I responded with "A&E" because I have most frequently ended up there after self-harm or suicide attempts, but that does not give anywhere close to the whole picture.

On the other hand, the question about whether or not services could be expanded or specifically tailored to musicians and their needs is an interesting one. I responded with "not sure" because I'm not convinced that the NHS services have a budget or a reason to tailor their services specifically to career/artistic paths (though they do have art classes as part of some recovery courses which could certainly be expanded to include music, though then that would be "music helping you get well" not "music making you sick"). However, as you are part of a charity I think there is definitely room for building a community that aims to provide support for those of us who are both musicians and suffering from mental health issues. A website, forum and hotline could all be useful resources, and an online awareness campaign could be added to with leaflets/posters in concert venues.

There is also another suggestion I would like to make, while appreciating it is not the main focus of your study. If you are conducting this research with a view to offering services, I would also look at issues of gender relating to mental health and music. Women with mental health problems are often vulnerable, and many male-dominated music environments serve to make them more vulnerable. Services that could help with sexual intimidation, harassment, or assault in a musical environment would be extremely valuable resources.

in relation to section 3.1a... I think there are a variety of issues inherent in different aspects of popular music culture that negatively impact health and wellbeing. So what I believe to be equally, if not more, important than the extra provision of health support services, is to improve how we shape music education and music industry career paths through policy that understands music culture from a much more holistic and socio-environmental perspective than it does currently. I'm currently finishing a masters in Music In Development at SOAS, and this is something I've thought about quite a bit. I'd be more than happy to discuss my thoughts if you'd like to get in touch.

I had issues with low-level, but consistent anxiety caused by a high workload for an extended period of time. The two hardest things about running a small business: not enough work and too much work. :)

Congratulations for moving this forward

I deal with clients daily many of which have mental health issues- training on how to help them for studio guys like me in the brief contact I have with these people would be helpful.

Please consider mental and physical health impact on parents in music sector (musicians and people behind the scenes). From post-natal depression to the ongoing challenge of trying to keep up to speed in a sector that is so night time / weekend focused while also looking after children. Especially hard for mothers.

I feel there are significant pressures on a musician's mental health due to the fluctuating levels of work available and the massively varying levels of success that can be achieved.

this survey is long overdue!

I have been a professional performer, writer, recording artist and - inevitably - teacher since 1978. I love my work, but I come into contact with so many people who do NOT. I tell my students "you think your biggest challenge will be making a living. It is not - it's to stave off disillusion, and the cynicism, anger and depression that stalk us". There are a lot of once bright and idealistic folks out there who used to walk in the light, but now feel trapped in the shadows. Yes - musicians (and anyone in a so called vocational profession) frequently need help. John Kenny, professor at both Guildhall and Royal Scottish Conservatoire.

Inadequate list of music genres - yet I HAVE to choose 3 - ignore my choices as they don't equate to my genres.

I am a composer, piano teacher and social entrepreneur and have received support by Help Musicians UK for which I am very grateful. I have been (and am) dealing with a complex combination of financial, mental and physical health, housing, family and career issues. Since 2015 I have been developed an unique methodology of creative mindfulness in an organic way with Humming in Harmony using sound, listening and humming (www.humminginharmony.com) which is starting to see results. I keep receiving great feedback and encouragement to continue from users and partner organisations I work with.

I have been asked to write a blog entry for the campaign by Help Musicians UK and have been in touch with Music Tank in the early January. I am working in partnership with Westminster Music Library since January for the first pilot of Humming in Harmony. The results are very positive and the library management (before knowing about this campaign) is interested in continuing the delivery of workshops at the Library especially for musicians. I will be writing a report and data of the experience so far as part of the fundraising strategy.

The event I organised for mental health week with a focus on integrated care under the title Mind the Body was successful and the format of a community based practise for low level mental health target plus a creative approach to allow conversations on public health and peer to peer learning seems promising,

I have been to the absolute brink with Mental Health and am keen to do whatever I can to raise awareness about mental health, especially for those in vulnerable professional situations like my own (self employed musician / songwriter / producer etc.)

I suffer from obsessive thoughts

In general I can say I've moved to London to build my music career. Living here is unrealistic for artists, but you are forced to stay because of the "music business" gravitating here. I get down or in depressive moods easily and the lack of support and often times, isolation, has been damaging so far. Working 2 jobs and therefore having no time to make music related stuff and just to stay here, doesn't really make sense to me. In the other hand, focusing on the music path only is unrealistic. I've been trying that, and I'm super poor at the moment. I've been searching for grants and financial help often, but most of the time those grants are too low money wise to be really helpful. Work/living spaces for artists are getting even more expansive, the quality of my life got way lower than it used to be since I live here. I tried counseling twice, it hasn't been helpful either.

I believe that depression is normal human behaviour, I try to find the wisdom from the experience. I don't believe that medication is that useful in many cases.

I know a number of musicians who have suffered physical injuries like RSI due to lack of physical health awareness. This in turn is something that can then lead to a mental health issue and having to playing for long periods of time can be very difficult to deal with. More awareness of what we are doing to our bodies when we practice and perform for long periods of time needs to be addressed, in the same way as an athlete.

Making music helps stop me being depressed!

I believe a lot of musicians are under constant stress, that may lead to mental illness.

This is a subject which is very important to me. I don't feel that this survey has asked me any useful questions though, and I would actually argue that the initial questions, which ask you to define yourself in the categories provided reproduce a discourse driven by the commercial music industry that drives people into narrow categories that suit their marketing and management criteria. These classifications are part of the problem, and are a signifier in the course of my own emotional and psychological engagement with the music industry for over 30 years. It is disappointing that this survey seems to be reproducing these categories. It suggests that the discourse that has formed these unwieldy definitions doesn't fall into the purview of the study, or that the study hasn't examined and questioned these definitions.

As someone who, over 35 years has worked in many ways with music, I have answered 'other' in both questions. In the first instance, my practice has been both as a producer and performer but also, for a long period, as an educator and arts facilitator in projects managed by what is now sometimes called, the Third Sector, in the second, concerning genre, because I can't seem to be able to define myself in terms proposed by the commercial needs of the industry. That is part of the problem which I and many others, I should think, experience throughout their careers.

Music has posed a considerable number of challenges to my mental health, and many of those have occurred much further down the road than 28 years [as your pot noodle eating example connotes].

I would also argue that many of the issues experienced by musicians are not unique to the profession. However, Western commodification of an essentially social practice that is common to all societies but ascribed very different cultural and social roles in places outside the West, has engendered a notion of separate and somehow distinct mental health challenges for musicians and artists from other disciplines too.

I would very interested in seeing how this study develops, and if you are looking for interviewees, I am more than happy to take part.

I went to a clinical psychologist that gave me pills. I needed educating. I don't have a good opinion of the UK mental health services for that reason. That said, I respect that the vast majority of the people who work in the service are genuine and want to help and there jobs are extremely difficult.

Please remember the music industry can and is very stressful, but music per se is not necessarily the cause as i find playing different genres when not working relaxing and stress relieving e.g country, classical.

I think peripatetic music teachers are a big demographic you've missed

I think it's absolutely great that you are researching mental health in musicians. I've suffered a lot during my time on the conservatory for a lack of interest from the institution regarding my mental health. I really hope People Will pick up on this research and things Will change for the next generations.

What made me instantly depressed while doing the survey is the fact that my occupation, that is composer, wasn't even recognised as an existing occupation on your list. And no, it is not the same as songwriter/producer. Would be super nice if you could do something about it.

I retrained as a psychotherapist and offer a low-cost service to musicians

I can't see that special services for musicians/composers would help (mental health services are rubbish for EVERYONE - more talking therapy is needed etc etc). However, I think the trouble is being freelance... if your income/career depends on working hard all the time, building a track record, staying in front of people's faces... and your health/neurology can't cope with that, then something's going to crack. This must be worse with the kinds of people that don't have the bank of mummy and daddy to bankroll them.

My personal experience is that I get depressed, I don't make music, then when it comes to put together a proposal for an organisation like Sound and Music, I just don't have the recent achievements to wiggle under their noses... potential and ideas are insufficient.

I'll pass this along to my mental health people :)

This is a very minimal survey. I expected something more in-depth. Lots of questions weren't asked it seems.

I'm recovering alcoholic and drug addict, it would be good if there were options within the drink/abuse section of the survey that gave me the opportunity to make this evident as it might be helpful?

A while ago, I noticed on the CUKAS Annual Report that very few applicants declared a mental health issue (33 out of 3,728 applicants in 2013). Whilst this requested information is said not influence the application process in any way, I can't help but feel that some are not comfortable sharing that information and simply don't for fear of being seen to not cope with the high-pressure environment that is classical music. Many of my musician peers struggle with mental health conditions and I just don't think these numbers add up. It may have nothing to do with your research but I thought it was worth a mention, especially given that I made a point of being open with the Conservatoires I applied to about my mental illness. When offered a place at Birmingham Conservatoire, I was sign posted straight to the services and support available. I didn't have the same experience with other institutions and felt that the pastoral provision at other Conservatoires wouldn't be enough to support me comfortably through my degree. It played a huge part in my decision to accept my place at Birmingham.

I have not personally suffered from depression or psychosis as a result of musicians lifestyle / financial pressures involved, but a GREAT number of my musician friends have, including a good friend who continues to suffer, 10 years after his first episode. It is one of the most ill-supported, stressful, little respected professions I know. When you're starting out, there is no blueprint, no advice on how to set up, no practical / useful professional body. People expect you to play for free / very little after 4-12 people travelling miles and paying for food. Hard. I now teach, like so many others, because we couldn't make the playing pay.

There should be extra support for those going through stressful auditions which can cause panic attacks. Also I have suffered a hand injury which means I am unable to practice for long periods of time putting me off music, there should be someone I could call or speak to in regards to this

I made the transition from being an orchestral player to a teacher a few years ago. Leaving a profession where it was commonplace, even the norm to have spent your formative years practising and around highly motivated and selected people it came as a massive shock being anonymous in a larger world. Do our musical hot houses really prepare our young people for the reality of the current profession?

Over the years I have had many musical roles, from session player, recording artist to University music teacher. Usually I juggle several different roles at the same time. I would imagine this applies to many (most?) working musicians so trying to assign particular discreet roles to them may be misleading.

My experience in classical music has taught me we are never to show weakness. So anxiety/stress/depression keep us from being "cool" and "great". It would seem the overwhelming opinion is that if you suffer you do so in silence and away from everyone else. Feelings of anxiety are only made worse by dismissing/ignoring them.

I may have an unbelievably sunny disposition, but it's such a tough existence trying to operate at full pelt in the face of constant criticism and difference of opinion. And there's an increasing part of me that wants to opt out of being a classical musician. The portfolio player now has no training to do all the different things which are expected of you. Half the time you've no idea if you're doing it right or if anyone cares. Taking time off in theory is really simple, but no work no pay is not an option for most freelancers. The pressure I have felt recently has risen enormously.

I'm a Turkish musical comedian, I'm mostly depressed, I think because of what's going on in this country, I mean politically, but it affects my everyday life. Because people are changed, all the good guys are scared and bad guys are liberated. My gigs are like therapy to me - from depression to music - and to some of my audience. At the end of the night everybody's smiling, laughing and going home happy (hopefully). So I don't know if music causes depression but I know it helps to cure it in a way. Maybe it's not enough, maybe music's just an illusionary temporary joy helps you forget the real reasons of your depression, that needs help. Anyway, thanks.

While I wouldn't say I ever suffer from high levels of anxiety, panic attacks or depression, I think that there is a fairly constant ongoing low-level of anxiety connected to forging a career as a musician (in my case composer) and one often feels on the edge of these psychological difficulties.

there needs to be a services that deals with mental health within music and disabilities

In regards to SECTION 3, I feel that if there were a better education given to non music makers it would make this situation a little easier on everyone. With mental illness in general there is obviously a stigma attached. I've also found that people tend to attach a stigma to musicians, songwriters, producers, all music makers, in that there is an unwillingness to except making music as a serious/acceptable way/part of living your life (and earning a living). To a lot of people I feel that it simply feels like a bit of fun. There are certain attitudes towards music makers which may not directly lead to their depression or other form of MI but can exacerbate the problem. When people aren't willing to listen or understand because they believe that you've created your own problems by choosing a untraditional path in life, it can make you question yourself a little harder. If we were all taught a little better about people in general and the fact that not everyone strives for the same ideals, then it may make sharing our concerns and thus seeking help a little easier.

Thanks!

The busy competitive environment of a musician can become an unhealthy lifestyle if you do not have the right mindset. People should be educated in how to deal with industry pressures at college level and although making counselling more accessible to musicians is a good idea, maybe people wouldn't need it if they were taught better coping techniques and strategies?

We are told many times about physical health and posture in order to play well but no one hardly talks about mental health focused in music making, perhaps sometimes I have heard talks about stage fright and managing nerves but never got deeper than that. I think reinforcing our self esteem is essential to be able to truly open ourselves and be honest with our music.

I hope this survey gets put to good use and not just used to point out issues without correcting them. Thank you

I feel there isn't enough support for musicians and often too much pressure

I think all those services mention would be great to implement for the music community. Depression and anxiety are very high especially as the possibilities of making a living in the business decrease and decrease. It will be very difficult for young creatives (musicians, songwriters, producers, artists) to do so in the future. Especially songwriters. Soon the job of professional songwriter will disappear.

Mine is a profession in which some individuals feel that expressing weakness may adversely effect their employability

Interesting survey. I am a student on interruption from studying music at university and I have just come out of a psychotic episode. In the run up to the episode, I would often cry to music to help with releasing the emotion (I was suffering from insomnia/anxiety/depression at the time). I'm not sure whether listening to music helped but it certainly released emotion. After the episode, I seem to be more aware of the effect music has on me - sometimes I can't listen to certain songs because I associate them with an instance leading up to the episode. I seem to be more sensitive to music now, and I find the lyrics much more meaningful. I have also stopped listening to music before bedtime because it seems to awaken my mind.

I am more health conscious than many of my musician colleagues, regular gym work and occasional physiotherapy sessions to keep me as healthy as possible - some professional health care workers (physios etc) with specialism or knowledge of musicians' issues would be good, and encouragement to musicians to look after themselves! Often the need to work gets in the way of health.

i would love to see a greater understanding for not only musicians, but creatives in general. It is a fact we use a different part of our brain function than others, and I feel this needs to be deeper understood to help us in keeping ourselves well in hard times. A lot of our mental instability can stem from not being stable enough in our careers as professional musicians to know how we will survive and this can cause endless anxiety problems and depression. Its like no other industry in that sense.

This derives from people believing that music should be free, or that its a hobby, even though most of us have studied music the same way as any other student that has a job and gets paid for their known craft. This can out immense pressure on our phycological well being and I would love to see more help available.

There needs to be more 'mentor' like openings and attitudes for help and advice. Most of the anxiety attached to my career is that I am making it up myself and most musicians are careful not to help/reveal their successes in case you yourself take those opportunities. You sometimes feel like you are stumbling along rather than feeling like pathways are open to you.

More help and support for developing musicians rather than awarding them to 'the finished product'. Most development help is given to prize winning musicians popping out of college who have had exceptional training from a young age. Potential is something never rewarded or invested in it seems, and puts off many musicians who have so much yet to discover.

I am not a full-time musician nor do I make a living out of it.

Thank you for researching this.

I'm very concerned about mental health well-being generally because of my own experiences and because of those of people close to me (not necessarily musicians) who I've watched suffer. I'm currently organising a SING4SANE Big Sing - that is, I'm inviting anyone to sing a song of mine entitled LIVE AGAIN in a London recording studio which will be recorded and released as a charity record to promote awareness of mental health issues. All proceeds will go to mental health charity SANE. Recording is hoped to happen next month with release in August. You can hear LIVE AGAIN if you wish via <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QevfGiZuRzk>

Please be in touch if you wish to support/help/be involved in some way or merely to discuss.

Since I've started working in the music industry as a solo artist (I do write and produce my own songs) I have suffered from a lot more anxiety than I ever have. Working with a label, having to deal with bookers, managers, label execs and band members is exhausting and protecting my creative integrity has been difficult and draining to the point that I have not picked up an instrument willingly (in spare time) since december last year. I am still relatively young, about to turn 22 and none of my friends or relatives go through the situations I go through, although I have noticed my acquaintances in the music industry all struggle with stress and anxiety, some of them with drug or alcohol abuse, I can't reach out to them. I wish there was a place I could go to when I'm down and ready to give up and get counselling, or just someone to talk to who understands the issues one faces when "trying to make it" in the industry. I hope you can make a change in the UK, so other countries like mine can take notice. I'm from the Netherlands. Creating is hard. And the world can be harsh. Thank you for reading.

I think this is a obviously a widespread issue that musician /creatives happen to be particularly susceptible too. I think greater accessibility to better information on self education and thought processes would be beneficial particularly with depression. Too much emphasis on a reactive drug solution to problems rather than dealing with the core issues and thought processes. Proactive rather than reactive rehabilitation would be a good place to start. Not to say the drug solution doesn't work for some people temporarily but a longer term targeted method should be available to try and address why people are struggling. A resource that's available, could be online or targeted through music publications, PRS ect, with easy exercises in thought processes [brain training] as well as the usual support. Support from therapists is good in sharing the problem but many people unfortunately leave it too late and / or feel embarrassed ect so don't ask for help. When wellbeing help lines and groups open their gambit by saying 'if we feel you're a danger to yourself or others we have to power to take you into care' it's no wonder people are reticent to seek help! Therapists can listen but they don't have your experiences...this could your age, your thoughts or lifestyle so it's hard for them and for the patience to buy into that relationship, often why people turn to close friends, but that only goes so far. Ultimately we are the only ones who can address our issues and make steps to re-align our selves through all the angles and opportunities available. The more information available the better. The easier it is for that information to find it's way to the right people the better. So a permanent presence within the industry would be a great thing. Maybe the music industry can lead the way in the more socially conscious 21century in providing greater wellbeing for its members by taking on that mantel.

There needs to be better medical support for those working within music, especially those like me with existing disabilities (autism). Instead, we are routinely excluded and discriminated against.

Really interesting survey. I think that career progress would have been an interesting point of data as working internships before I got into my first job somewhat destructive financially. I've always been bipolar but periods of depression and mania were certainly exacerbated by freelance income, and then regular income. But good on you guys for doing the survey,