



15 Income Streams

To Tap Right Now
To Create Sustainable Revenue
From Music

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“The key to creating a sustainable career as a musician is to combine as many sources of income as possible to generate healthy, consistent income each month. To create a solid foundation for your musician business, choose at least 4 major income streams as your cornerstones (#s 1 -9). These cornerstones will provide the foundation for your “brick house” business. Then you can add the ” – Bree Noble

These ideas align with the current economic climate for musicians. Some you may have thought of or tried, but keep an open mind. This resource presents a different twist on the obvious. Some income streams may be totally new to you and suggest a completely new horizon you have likely never investigated.

1. Super Fan Subscriptions

Subscriptions are a somewhat new and still very exciting way to generate income from SUPER fans. Patreon is one of the best options for creating a subscription income stream - www.Patreon.com. They have a good reputation and people trust Patreon with their credit card information.

If you'd like to sell fan subscriptions on your own website, my favorite music website company, Bandzoogle, now offers the ability to sell subscriptions and house content exclusive to your members right on your website. You can see how it works at this link.

You can create different subscription levels and deliver different benefits based on those levels - i.e. with one level, fans receive 2 songs per month. With another, they receive 2 songs plus a private performance video, etc. You can be creative. Ask your audience what special content would interest them.

I know some artists making a part-time and even a full-time income JUST from Patreon subscriptions. This will allow you to have a steady income (like a salary) that you can count on to pay the bills each month. For inspiration, check out other artists' Patreon pages or our subscription offering at www.patreon.com/femusician

2. Teaching Private Lessons Online

I know TONS of musicians who use teaching private students as a side income. I even know people who give piano, guitar and voice lessons over the Internet! If you've already got a studio of students that you want to move to online, or you want to know the best way to prepare students for online lessons, [take a listen to this podcast for a ton of helpful tips.](#)

If you are willing to teach children, there is a great deal of opportunity to grow a full studio of private students. Especially now as children are becoming more accustomed to online platforms, virtual lessons can be an exciting option for them. Also, parents don't have to drive them anywhere which makes it a win/win for parents!

Or maybe you prefer to teach adults. Many adults have put learning a musical instrument or improving their voice on their bucket list and you can help them check that off and experience a great deal of pride and enjoyment in the process. It can definitely be a rewarding experience for both student and teacher.

A teaching schedule can be extremely flexible so you can organize it around your performing, live streaming and mini tours.

3. Selling Online Workshops or an Online Course

The idea of putting together an online course can feel very intimidating. It doesn't have to be as complicated and robust as you might think. If you already teach in a private studio, you probably already know the questions you are answering over and over for your students. You also may have developed a proprietary system for teaching certain concepts. These can form the basis for an online workshop or course.

But if you've never taught before, you probably still have a course or workshop inside you. Just consider what kinds of questions friends or other musicians ask you all the time. What would they say is your "superpower" (musically or otherwise)?

Because musicians often have a great deal of knowledge and experience to share but aren't sure how to get it out of their brain and into a format they can sell, I created a free masterclass that breaks down the process.

[Watch this free masterclass](#) which will help you figure out what material you could teach, decide what format to offer it in, and determine the best platform and payment processor to use. I also discuss the best ways to attract new students.

4. Live Streaming

What should you share on a live stream? Live performances are the most obvious but not the only option. There are so many interesting and fun ways to engage with your fans and make them excited to tune in.

Songwriting sessions, home studio tours, masterclasses, Q&As — if you're comfortable sharing it, give it a shot! You never know what might resonate with someone watching. You can even mix and match — maybe play a couple songs, and then pause to have a casual chat with the audience for a few minutes as you read through the comments section to shout people out and answer questions.

Live streaming is a great way for your audience to really interact with you as a person and start seeing parts of your personality that they may not have known about before. Once they start following you for you, they'll become those diehard fans every artist dreams of having.

Whatever you decide on, try to emphasize the live interaction aspect as much as you can. It'll feel more intimate and personal, and less like a random YouTube video of a performance that they could watch anytime. Give people a reason to watch you live and feel like they're a real part of the experience.

For all the live stream platform options and how they work plus best practices for promoting and running live streams, [check out this awesome guide](#) put together by our friends at Bandzoogle.

Now the big question relevant to this resource - "How do you monetize a live stream?"

The easiest way to create a profitable live stream is to offer a donation opportunity. A simple solution is to create a Paypal.me link. Go to [Paypal.me](https://www.paypal.me) and choose a username that fits with your artist or band name and is easy to type and understand when spoken aloud. For example, my link would be [Paypal.me/BreeNoble](https://www.paypal.me/BreeNoble) or [Paypal.me/MusicbyBree](https://www.paypal.me/MusicbyBree).

Be sure to mention the Paypal.me link several times throughout the live stream. Also place the link in the first comment so people will see it or even in the live stream description if possible. Remember, you'll get donations during the live stream but you'll also get more during the replay, especially if you are diligent about promoting the replay to your fans.

5. Private Live Stream Concerts

Now that you've got the hang of live streaming, you can create a more intimate experience for your super fans by offering private paid concerts through an online platform like [Zoom](https://zoom.us).

One option would be to offer a ticketed event on Zoom. Create a Zoom link that only paid ticket holders get access to. You can also offer incentives for purchasing tickets like access to the recording and the ability to request songs in advance or submit questions.

Our friends at [Bandzoogle](https://bandzoogle.com) offer commission-free ticket sales which are perfect for both offline and online events. Just create an event with date, time and online URL and password. Once your fans purchase a ticket, they'll be sent all the details to access the live stream. You can [see how it works here](#).

Another option is to offer private live streams for individuals. This can be an awesome gift for a special occasion. You could also provide virtual entertainment for a party or get-together. You can charge a similar rate as you would for a live performance. To increase the value you can create a DVD or YouTube of the recording for them to enjoy forever.

6. YouTube Channel

YouTube can provide quite a lucrative income stream. But before you can tap into it, you need to get your subscriber count and watch time up to the standards YouTube has set to qualify for monetization. Check YouTube's current guidelines. As of the writing of this guide, they are 1K subscribers and 4K hours of watch time within the last year.

There are two different approaches I find are most successful on YouTube. 1) Recording great cover versions of popular songs 2) Teaching tips on a subject you enjoy and know well like songwriting, singing, learning an instrument, recording or gear.

Remember, YouTube is a search engine. Be sure to consider popular keywords when creating your video titles. You can enter words into the YouTube search bar to see what people are searching for. With cover songs, create videos around current hits and ride the wave of the charts while people are searching for recordings of those songs. For tips and teaching, search for other videos on the subjects you want to teach. See what keywords they are using. If you see top results within a keyword that are over 1 year old, you may have the ability to "steal" the top spot from them because your information will be more current which is often deemed more relevant by YouTube.

7. Home Demo Singer or "Session" Player

Many musicians have a home studio. I've been recording demos for other songwriters for years in my studio. I don't have a complicated setup - just a high quality studio mic, a pop screen, an audio interface (my favorite is the Focusrite Scarlett), a recording program (I Logic or Ableton but you can use Garageband if on a Mac) and a halfway decent computer.]

How did I get clients? I met songwriters in online forums and places like Just Plain Folks or Musicians Collaboration. I also work with a company called PureVocals that sends me work.

A few years ago I started getting vocal gigs through AirGigs - www.AirGigs.com. I love their professional, easy-to-navigate site and their system for getting gigs and delivering your product. They've also created a section to search for work for hire. I know the owners personally and they have a heart to help musicians. Definitely check it out!

I have personally been paid as a backup singer for other people's projects, as a demo singer, and as a duet partner for a track.

When I recorded my album in the studio, I hired a few side musicians to play parts that were above my or my band's skill level. I hired a lead guitarist to play some parts on several songs. I also hired a sax player to lay down some crucial solos. These are services you could offer on a site like AirGigs.

8. Arranger

If you are a multi-instrumentalist, loop-smith or midi musician, and can easily hear how parts should be arranged in your head from a simple demo, arranging can be a lucrative source of income. If the artist you're working with has the budget, you can even create an arrangement on paper and hire other musicians to play the parts.

I have been paid for simple piano arrangements that I created for songwriters. And on the other end of the spectrum, I've paid musicians to create the perfect arrangement of an original song that captures just the right feel for the genre or to add a modern flair.

9. Mixing/Mastering From Home

If you're already doing home session work and arranging for others, or you've been sharpening these skills on your own music, you may have developed some mixing skills. If you haven't, I recommend taking a class to improve your skills so you can save money on your own projects by mixing them yourself and even start making money doing it for others.

Here's the class I recommend by Kris Bradley called [Produce Like A Boss](#). It may not be open for new students at this moment, but be sure to get on the waiting list.

Mastering is a whole different animal. If you've learned how to master well and can create high-quality masters, there will be a demand for your work. If you're looking for a course to learn how to master, [check this out from my friend Fett at Azalea music](#).

10. Unique Merch Bundles

Because CDs are often a "hard sell" on their own these days, I always encourage musicians to create merch bundles. It's time to think outside the box. I want you to think about how you can make your merch bundles unique and really exciting for your fans.

What can you add to a merch bundle that is highly personalized? What are some cool, one-of-a-kind items you can include?

A popular add-on is hand-written lyrics. Or maybe you're a crafter or artist who can create unique gifts for your fans. Do you have a book you've written? What about recording a personalized video directly to each fan who buys a bundle? Think about how you can use your time and unique gifts to create things fans want that they can't get anywhere else.

You may consider polling your fans to see which of the ideas you came up with appeal to them. Then create a limited-time bundle including CDs, merch items and unique items and start promoting.

11. Increase Spotify Income

Getting your music on a playlist managed by an Independent Curator will help raise your play count, expose your music to tastemakers and could eventually lead to Spotify or Apple Music taking note of your music and adding you to their main playlists.

How do you find playlist curators to reach out to? Look for songs by artists who are similar to you on Spotify and research what playlists are featuring those songs. You can track down the curators by searching for their name or playlist name on social media. Once you locate them, reach out with a personalized email or DM. Be sure to ask if they have a process established for music submissions.

The more playlists you can get featured on, the higher your stream count will be which will translate into dollars. There is also a ripple effect. Increased plays feed the Spotify algorithm which helps you be considered for Discover Weekly which can attract new followers and fans. This cycle creates exponential growth of your following and income.

There are also sites like [SubmitHub](#) where you can search for Spotify playlist curators in your genre. Submissions are only \$.50. This has a much better risk/reward ratio in my opinion than hiring playlist pluggers.

Instrumental and mood music does very well on Spotify in terms of streams because these playlists are often used as background music. While these streams may not translate as often to followers, they can create a very respectable income.

12. Affiliate Income

Maybe you've never heard of the term "affiliate income"? Affiliate income is often used as another name for a referral program. It involves recommending products and services that you like to others and receiving a percentage.

The great thing about affiliate programs is that your recommendation can be tracked simply by using a special link called an affiliate tracking link. This allows you to easily promote the product or service anywhere online including on social media, in emails and on your website.

One very popular affiliate program has been Amazon Associates (although they recently lowered their percentages significantly). You can [sign up to Amazon Associates](#) and then start recommending products including your favorite books, music, movies, gear and more. You can even use it to recommend your own music available on Amazon.

You can also reach out to your favorite vendors to see if they offer an affiliate program. If they don't offer a monetary program, some may offer site credit as payment.

Another great way to earn affiliate income is through programs you've used. Reach out to online course creators and teachers who's programs you've taken and you're excited to recommend because you've seen results from them. Many already have an affiliate program setup and will give you the link to sign up so you can get your promotional link. If they don't already accept affiliates, you may inspire them to make it available.

If you're a student of ours and would like to promote any of our programs including The Female Musician Academy and Rock Your Next Release, just send me an email at bree@femusician.com and we'll get you started.

13. Sell Backing Tracks

Once you've spent all that money on creating your CD, don't forget to get a mastered copy of the backing tracks from the studio. I suggest you get a copy WITH and WITHOUT backing vocals just in case you need them.

I usually use the version with backing vocals to perform live (if I'm somewhere I can't play my instrument). I've sold both versions, with and without backing vocals, online.

If you have a song that is popular with your audience, chances are you'll get requests for the backing track so fans can sing it at home or at a local event. You can put your backing tracks up for sale online either at your website and/or sites like Audiosparx or Bandcamp. I still get income from tracks that are up on these sites.

Conversely, I bought some backing tracks from various places (directly from individuals and from Audiosparx) when I recorded my Christmas album. I wanted some creative renditions of well-known Christmas songs and I wanted to shortcut my production time and money. This was a perfect solution and the creators benefited.

14. Sell Sheet Music

If you have a handful of songs that are extremely popular, especially with people who like to sing and perform them, then I would definitely consider having them transcribed into sheet music. No need to create paper versions, PDF Downloads work great these days.

There are over 3 Million visitors to Sheet Music Plus each month looking to buy music. Especially if your song has lyrics that align with specific events (like weddings, funerals or celebrations), holidays or social causes, you may find that you can make some decent money selling sheet music.

If you set up an account with Sheet Music Plus you can benefit from their 3 Million visitors and link to your songs there from your website which takes all the hassle out of selling sheet music.

Side note: If you are a whiz at transcription, this may be a great source of income for you. I know artists who are doing this to make extra income.

15. Sell Custom Songs to Fans

Custom songs are personalized songs you offer as a premium service for your fans. To make these extremely personalized and valuable, I recommend you have at least one conversation with the client to get all the details of what they want, the occasion, and the backstory for what you'll be writing the song about.

You can make custom song offers to your fans during your performances and live streams as well as through email and on your website. Create packages that are exciting and offer lots of value! Include a recording, framed lyrics sheet and other bells and whistles that will enhance the experience for your customers.

Remember, these are custom gifts so be sure to charge premium prices. I personally would not charge less than \$500 - \$1000 for a custom song, Remember to calculate

into the price all the time you'll spend gathering info, writing, recording and preparing the deliverables. As you become more experienced and get some testimonials, you can raise your prices.

My friend Tiamo De Vettori has mastered the art of selling custom songs. He goes through his whole blueprint for making a substantial income offering custom songs in his free Masterclass: 5 Lucrative Markets for Musicians. [Check out the free masterclass here.](#)

WRAP-UP

If you are open to exploring even a few new sources of income on this list, I know you can build the sustainable income you desire from music. I'd love to hear some stories about how these strategies worked for you. I welcome and look forward to your feedback. Email me at bree@femusician.com.