

Contents

About the Authors	4	College Auditions Advice	
Foreword	5	From John Tafoya	45
Sample: Seven Questions & Answers ...	7	Do the Obvious: Repertoire Requirements ..	45
SECTION 1. HOW TO PLAY BETTER		Sight-Reading	45
Attitude	11	Interview	45
Warm-Ups	11	Tuning Fork [for Timpani Players]	45
More Tricks of the Trade	14	SECTION 4. PERFORMANCE TIPS	
Foot-Tapping	15	How to Deal with	
Please Be Seated	15	Performance Anxiety	46
Reading	17	Manners	48
Sight-Reading Advice from the Pros ...	20	Speaking of Talking	49
Playing a Difficult Piece of Music	28	SECTION 5. MAINTAINING A HEALTHY	
Versatility	29	LIFESTYLE (YOU'RE ASKING US?)	
Percussive Perspective	30	Staying Healthy on the Road	53
Esthetics	33	More Tips for Traveling	54
SECTION 2. PRACTICE		Travel Advice from the Pros	55
Make the Most of Your Playing	34	SECTION 6. THE BUSINESS OF MUSIC	
More Practice Tips	35	The Art of Networking	61
Peter's Best Practice Tip	36	Should I Join Music Organizations?	63
SECTION 3. AUDITIONS		Should I Attend Music Conventions?	64
Preparing for an Audition—Part One,		How Can Social Media Best	
for a Professional Job	38	Be Utilized?	64
Where Can I Find a List of		How Much Self-Promotion Is Too Much?	64
Available Auditions?	38	Negotiation	65
Applying for an Audition	38	Fee	65
If the Audition Is Out of Town, Who Is		Recording	66
Responsible for the Cost Related to Travel		Don't Be Afraid to Say No	66
and Accommodations?	39	Maynard Ferguson's Rule on Charity	67
Preparing for the Audition	39	Burn Out	67
Preparing for an Audition—Part Two,		Endorsements and Music Industry	
for School	43	Companies	68
The Day of the Audition	44		
After the Audition	44		

**General Business Etiquette
and Strategies** 69

Music Copyrights 70

Business Advice from the Pros 78

SECTION 7. SOUND ADVICE

How Do You Work with a Difficult
Bandmember or Leader? 89

How Do You Make Suggestions and/or Tell a
Bandmate to Turn It Down (Play Softer)? 90

People Skills Advice from the Pros 92

**Advice “to and for” Drummers
(Pun Intended) from the Pros** 98

SECTION 8. FROM A TEACHER’S PERSPECTIVE

From My Own Teaching Archives 105

Transcriptions 108

A Personal Story 110

SECTION 9. NON-PERFORMANCE CAREERS IN MUSIC

Is a College Degree Still Valuable? ... 112

Creating a Music Industry Resume 114

The Interview 118

**How Do I Submit a Manuscript
for Publication Consideration?** 120

Alternate Careers in Music 121

**What’s Something You Would Have
Done Differently?** 122

Piano 122

Composition 123

Practice 123

General 124

SECTION 10. THE WORLD’S GREATEST ADVICE

The Best Advice I’ve Ever Received .. 128

Wisdom from a Studio Legend 138

The Best Advice I’ve Ever Given 140

SECTION 11. IN THEIR OWN WORDS... MORE ADVICE FROM THE PROS

More Sight-Reading Advice 149

More Business Advice 153

Best Overall Advice I’ve Ever Received 157

Best Overall Advice I’ve Ever Given 162

More Travel Advice 166

More People Skills Advice 169

In Hindsight 172

More Advice to Drummers 176

Seven Questions, Seven Answers
with Jorge Calandrelli 177

More Words of Advice
from Composer Charles Bernstein 180

Our Contributors 181

**Glossary of Words You
Should Know** 188

Recommended Books 190

Additional Quotes 191

About the Authors

Peter Erskine has played the drums for sixty years. He appears on over 700 albums and film scores, has written 12 books, has won 2 GRAMMY Awards, and is the recipient of an Honorary Doctorate from Berklee College of Music. Over 50 albums have been released under his own name or as co-leader. He's played with Stan Kenton, Maynard Ferguson, Weather Report, Steps Ahead, Joni Mitchell, Steely Dan, Diana Krall, among others, and has appeared as a soloist with the Los Angeles, Chicago, London, Oslo, Helsinki, BBC, and Berlin Philharmonic Orchestras. Peter graduated from the Interlochen Arts Academy and studied with George Gaber at Indiana University. He is currently the Director of Drumset Studies at the University of Southern California, and continues to maintain a very active playing and recording career.

Dave Black received his Bachelor of Music in percussion performance from California State University, Northridge. A prolific composer and arranger, more than 60 of his compositions/arrangements have been published/recorded by several of the major music publishers. Many have been used as source/background music on numerous TV shows and movies, including the film *Drumline*. He is the recipient of numerous awards and commissions, including 26 consecutive ASCAP Popular Composer Awards, two GRAMMY participation/nomination certificates, the Percussive Arts Society President's Industry Award, a Modern Drummer Readers Poll award, two Drum! Magazine Drummie! awards, and a certified Gold Record award for the sale of more than 500,000 copies of *Alfred's Drum Method, Book 1*. As one of the biggest-selling percussion authors in the world, he is the author and/or co-author of over 30 books with combined sales now totaling over two million units.

Foreword

Why *The Musician's Lifeline*?

The initial impulse for writing this book was to build upon the success of our previous collaboration, *The Drummer's Lifeline: Quick Fixes, Hacks, and Tips of the Trade*. This book would represent our combined knowledge and opinions formed by lives lived in music. Since Dave and I are both drummers, we naturally felt that, while much of our advice would be universal in scope and appeal, we needed to bring another voice into the authorial mix. But who?

Turns out that we both had the same inspired thought one morning, and our emails—like ships crossing in the morning sun—were semaphoring the same message: “What if we invited the best musicians we can think of to participate?”

So, that's what we did. To our everlasting gratitude, over 150 of the best musicians and educators we have the honor of knowing agreed to answer this simple set of questions:

- 1. What's the best advice you've ever received?**
- 2. What's the best advice you've ever given?**
- 3. What's the one thing you'd have done differently in your studies/career?**
- 4. Best travel advice?**
- 5. Best sight-reading advice?**
- 6. Do you have any business advice for a musician?**
- 7. Any advice relating to people skills?**

Plus, a bonus question for non-drummers—re: advice to a drummer, and a few more bon mots of wisdom regarding auditions, recording, etc.

The answers will surprise, inform, and confirm what you already know or completely contradict what you've been taught by others.

SECTION

1

HOW TO PLAY BETTER

PROBLEM: How do I play better?

TIP: Listen to the music, and play what you'd like to hear...not what your hands, fingers, or lips know. Play what your ears and heart tell you to play. It's really that simple.

RULE: No licks! Compose when you play. Use your imagination, but always play for the song.

REASON: Job number one is to play in a way that makes all the other musicians play their best. Within this duty, there are an infinite number of choices we can make. Add to that the complicating factor or feeling of playing to someone else's expectations, ego satisfaction, audience response, and so on—this is when the muscles begin to take over the musical mind. The simplest solution? Just play what you'd like to hear, not necessarily what you'd like to play. Those can be two very different things. Experience brings the hearing and playing process together as one. And certainly don't play what you imagine someone *else* wants to hear. Not in jazz, at any rate.

That said, it's normally necessary to establish your credibility on the bandstand with the other musicians onstage, as well as those listening out front. Tone, musicality, time, and feel.

The correct playing of the melody is the “correct passcode” to gaining trust and acceptance when it comes to any style of music. If you fail at that, you'll have to claw your way back into that position of melodic and improvisational authority. It's not hard to do: it only takes the **commitment** and discipline to do it.

And, yes...
practice.

Practice sight-reading all styles of music daily. Recognize style, repeated patterns, chord progressions, musical structure, and the “road map” quickly.

—Julie Berghofer

I am always glad that I started on piano to understand notation and clefs. My advice to musicians who play any other instrument: learn the basics of playing piano, as it will help you read and comprehend music for your entire career.

—Chris Brubeck

Don't forget to use your ears along with your eyes.—Glenn Kotche

Quiet all the mental dialogue so you can hear what you're seeing, and then trust yourself.—Liesl Whitaker



Keep your ears open!—Ed Soph

Look at the big picture.—Adam Nussbaum

Don't be afraid to wear glasses.
—Marty Panzer

Make sure you have all pages of the chart and they are in order!—Bill Cunliffe

WHY

is this such a mystery for some musicians?

Reading music is a language like any other. Learn the grammar and it will serve you well. It's

simply a matter of being able to quickly recognize the patterns and symbols on the page, just as you are right now as you read this sentence. And if you buy into the philosophy that some musicians express, which says that reading music will detract from your individuality, then you are kidding yourself and are just afraid to do the work. And really, it's not even THAT much work to become a good reader! Get to it and check that box!—Gordon Goodwin

RESUMÉ: PROFESSIONAL**John Doe**

Percussionist and Educator

Address
Phone
Email**Education**

University of California, Los Angeles
MM Percussion Performance
June 2017

Azusa Pacific University
BM Percussion Performance
Mathematics Minor
May 2014

Performance Experience

Section Percussionist 2017 - Present
Pasadena Community Orchestra – Pasadena, CA

Percussion Substitute 2017 - Present
American Youth Symphony – Los Angeles, CA

Section Percussionist 2017 - 2018
South Coast Symphony – Aliso Viejo, CA

Percussionist November 2017
Los Angeles Opera Company – Los Angeles, CA

Principal Timpanist 2014 - 2016
Young Musicians Foundation Debut Orchestra – Los Angeles, CA

Teaching Experience

Percussion Coach 2018 - Present
Blair High School – Pasadena, CA

Drum-line Coach 2015 - Present
Maranatha High School – Pasadena, CA

References Available

Upon Request