

Musician Working Conditions

Harris Academy of the Arts – Professional Musicians



What working conditions need to be considered for the musician(s)?

Things you and I may take for granted or do not consider, may mean a world of difference to musicians as they strive to provide a top quality performance for your special event. Elbow room, large instruments, bows moving across the strings, bulky equipment, proximity to electrical source, sun in the eyes, extreme temperatures, bugs, shelter from wind so we can read the music, adequate lighting, clear view of physical cues and key individuals, and much more.

Parking/Loading.

Missed that up close up parking space by 2 seconds? Imagine physically transporting instruments and equipment from 2 blocks away in concert dress attire. Please have parking options, transportation to/from, or helpers available to unload equipment near the event.

Physical Space.

Allow for an approximate 2.5 square feet of space per musician. Some larger instruments (e.g., drum set, string bass, percussion equipment, etc.) will likely require additional space. A 10' by 10' space would be adequate for a string quartet or jazz ensemble.

One Level.

For an ensemble of musician(s), it is preferred for all to be seated on the same floor level. If the physical space prevents this, it will be important to ensure that each level is wide enough for a chair and a music stand (2.5 square feet).

Temperature.

Everything slows down in the cold, including musician's fingers – the fingers that strum the guitar, find notes on the violin and move across the keyboard. In fact, if it gets too cold, it's hard for a musician to play at all. And we don't have to explain how hard it is to talk, let alone sing when your lips are numb. The same goes for very hot temperatures when sweaty necks struggle to keep a violin from sliding and sweaty fingers cause difficulty in playing any instrument. Extremes in hot or cold can also effect the tuning or intonation of instruments. That's why if the temperature drops below 65 degrees or rises higher than 85 degrees, it will be necessary for an alternative plan and solution (e.g., heaters, air conditioning, etc.). The temperatures that affect the musicians will also affect your guests and wedding party.

Lighting.

Have you ever tried to read in the dark? Sunsets, glaring sun, turned down lighting for ambience and bright stage lights...just some of the challenges of being able to read the music. To ensure quality performance, lighting must be adequate to read music, maintaining a consistent illumination level.

Bugs.

For the comfort of all, please treat the area for bugs. Preventative measures are appreciated. We guarantee a better quality performance when vocalists are not swallowing bugs and instrumentalists are not using their hands to swat at insects during that BIG, special moment at your event.

Shelter.

Instruments are a big investment for musicians and, naturally, it's important to keep them protected and sheltered from sunlight and moisture. For this reason, it's imperative that musicians are located in a shady area, protected by a roof and sides (e.g., tent, gazebo, etc.).

Smells.

Vocalists, woodwinds and brass musicians are particularly sensitive to odors, fumes and perfumes.

Water.

For services warmer than 85 degrees and/or longer than 1.5 hours, water should be provided to musicians.

Breaks.

Imagine holding a violin mid-air or sitting in one spot for long durations of time without a break. To ensure quality performance, musicians should be provided a 15 minute break for bookings that are 2.5 hours in length, occurring no later than 1.5 hours after the start time. For additional performance hours, musicians will need 10 minute breaks for each hour thereafter.