How to Win a Music Faculty Position

Gerald Klickstein, Director
Music Entrepreneurship & Career Center
Peabody Conservatory
peabody.jhu.edu/mecc
MusiciansWay.com
gk@jhu.edu
Mini Case Example

A. “I finished my DMA in piano from a top program a couple of years ago and have two MM degrees from one of the best conservatories in the world. . . .

B. “. . . I have always felt that with my many abilities and terrific recommendation letters, a full-time job was just around the corner. . . .
Mini Case Example, cont.

C. “. . . But in spite of being shortlisted for a number of academic positions, I have come up empty-handed.”

–Overqualified and Underemployed

Letter to the “Ask Edna” blog on MusicalAmerica.com, 5/5/11
Questions about Case Example

1. What are some possible reasons that the applicant hasn’t been offered a position?

2. What might you advise the applicant to do differently?
How Applicants Can Succeed

1. Understand the higher ed economy
2. Understand music school missions, needs, economics
3. Acquire a portfolio of knowledge and skills that meet needs and are in demand
Studio Teachers: Regarding your job performance, what is the primary economic concern of a school that might hire you?

a. Your faculty recitals will generate ticket sales
b. You will publish CDs, books, compositions
c. You will recruit and retain lots of students
d. You will bring grant funds to the school
Studio Teachers: Regarding your job performance, what is the primary economic concern of a school that might hire you?

a. Your faculty recitals will generate ticket sales

b. You will publish CDs, books, compositions

c. You will recruit and retain lots of students

d. You will bring grant funds to the school
Steps to Succeeding in Academic Job Searches

1. Build credibility
2. Forge a professional network
3. Discover opportunities
4. Submit polished materials
5. Present commanding interviews
I. Build Credibility

- Artistry
- Teaching
- Recruiting
- Technology
- Service & Governance
- Collegiality
- Leadership
- References
Artistry

Ongoing record of activity & accomplishment that demonstrates a compelling artistic vision

Perform, compose, publish, present

• Concerts/compositions
• Audio and video recordings
• Online content
• Peer-reviewed publications
• Commissions/arrangements
Teaching

Evidence of successful college teaching

Gain teaching experience

• Assistantships (official/unofficial)
• Festivals
• Substitute
• Part-time employment
• Advanced pre-college
Recruiting

Evidence of successful recruiting

Gain recruiting experience

- Festival recruiting & teaching
- Recruiting events at your school
- Recruiting events at other schools
- Part-time employment
Technology

Evidence of facility with and adaptive use of tech

Use technology to create & communicate

• Teaching, administering, performing
• Collaboration
• Personal website (blog) & social media
• Composing, creating, fundraising
• Online marketing & PR
Service & Governance (1)

Activity in professional & service organizations

Join & contribute to organizations

• Propose conference sessions (CMS, other)
• Contribute to newsletters, journals, blogs
• Initiate and participate in community programs
Service & Governance (2)

Participate in organizational governance

- Serve on committees
- Contribute to innovations in organizations, at school, at work
- Gain administrative experience
Collegiality

Evidence of consistent collegial relationships

Collaborate with and support others

• In school
• At festivals
• At work
• During service activities
Leadership

Act according to your artistic vision

Take on leadership roles

- Festivals, committees, collaborations
- New & traditional ensembles
- Concert programming & presenting
- Compositional/commissioning concepts
- Professional and service activities
References (1)

Gather relevant references

Employers, colleagues, teachers

• School or festival directors who have employed you
• Conductors and chamber music partners
• Notable composers and performers you’ve collaborated with
• Major teachers of note (teacher-employers make better references)
References (2)

Request and store letters strategically

Provide key points to references

- Indicate how a job and your work with the reference overlap
- Send talking points in bullet form, if helpful
- Request generic and job-specific letters
- Have references upload generic letters to your Interfolio account
  - store official transcripts on Interfolio too
II. Forge Networks

- Participate in festivals & conferences
- Collaborate
- Grow online communities
Participate in Conferences and Festivals

• Present, teach, perform, attend
• Interact with diverse participants
• Connect with prospective colleagues
Collaborate

• Initiate projects with diverse colleagues
• Identify organizations that share your vision and then contribute to their programs
• Participate in innovative work
Grow Your Online Community

- Maintain a portfolio website
- Create profiles on social networks and then steadily build connections
- Contribute to online communities, blogs, journals
III. Discover Opportunities

• Search job sites regularly. See: peabody.jhu.edu/conservatory/mecc/jobsearch/#highered

• Research institutions that may lack yet need the skills you possess

• Connect with other professionals
IV. Submit Polished Materials

• Address all duties & qualifications
• Be clear and concise
• Obtain pre-submission critiques
• Update your websites & social media
Address Duties & Qualifications

• Create a checklist or spreadsheet
• Give examples of how you meet required and preferred criteria
• Articulate your vision
• Convey energy and expertise
Be Clear & Concise

- Organize your CV meticulously
- In a cover letter, indicate why you and an employer make a good match; don’t merely restate content from the CV
- Answer questions that will be foremost in committee members’ minds
- Research an institution’s needs
Obtain Pre-Submission Critiques

• Prepare materials far in advance
• Send your draft materials and links to position descriptions to the Peabody Career Center – mecc@jhu.edu
• Plan to revise multiple times
• Ensure that your materials are in top shape before you submit them
Update Web Content

• Communicate your identity and mission
• Give prominence to artistic abilities
• Inspire site visitors
• Edit text and design meticulously
V. Present Commanding Interviews

• Prepare to address all duties and qualifications in concise, articulate ways

• Do mock interviews ahead of time

• Display artistic excellence, pedagogical command, collegiality, leadership

• Emanate enthusiasm and curiosity

• Study interviewing resources
How to Win a Music Faculty Position

1. Understand the higher ed economy

2. Understand music school missions, needs, economics

3. Acquire a portfolio of knowledge and skills that meet needs and are in demand
   a. Create multi-year action plans
   b. Take steady constructive steps
Questions?

Gerald Klickstein: gk@jhu.edu
peabody.jhu.edu/mecc
facebook.com/pbdymecc
twitter.com/klickstein
linkedin.com/in/klickstein
MusiciansWay.com