Bios for Performers and Composers

A bio is a marketing and publicity tool that showcases your accomplishments and qualifications for a particular opportunity. Your bio is an important element of your “brand” because it shows how distinctive and unique you are. See Introduction to Great Materials. A bio is not a biography! It should never be a laundry list of your performances and accomplishments. Instead, it should highlight your greatest and most relevant achievements. Most bios are boring. Therefore, we have included suggestions on how to make your bio dynamic, interesting and relevant.

It is important to gear your bio toward the intended readers:

✧ Is this going to be used on your website and for general publicity?
✧ Will you be including it in your press kit?
✧ Is it for a grant application or an academic job position?
✧ Are you submitting it for a performance venue to use in a program book?

The length of your bio will depend on what you are using it for. For website bios, feel free to include all of your significant accomplishments. To book engagements or for program notes, your bio should be shorter since there are often space limitations in the program book. Bios for academic use or for grant applications can also be longer. Therefore, you should prepare both a long and a short version of your bio.

If you are submitting your bio for publicity and as part of your press kit, print it out on your letterhead following the guidelines described in Introduction to Great Materials.

Always update your bio. This is an evolving document that will reflect the progress of your career!

WRITING YOUR BIO

Start by collecting all of your professional accomplishments and organizing them by categories. See Introduction to Great Materials. Think about the common threads in your professional life. These themes can help you establish your brand and present yourself distinctively. Remember that a bio is not a chronological list of your accomplishments so make sure that it flows well and that it is organized by topic.

✧ Introduction
The first sentence should introduce you as the dynamic and unique performer that you are. What makes you stand out and sets you apart from your peers? Through the first paragraph, you should highlight your most impressive credentials and your most significant recent accomplishments. Your introduction should catch the attention of your readers and entice them to continue reading about you. Many performers and composers include a press quote in the opening paragraph since a good quote can provide objective information about your particular talent or style.

✧ Body
The remainder of your bio should mention your top achievements and showcase your interests and versatility as a musician. Briefly touch on your most prominent performances and any renowned groups or artists with whom you have collaborated.

Group your performances by category: solo, orchestra and ensemble. Be sure to tailor your performance history to the audience who will be reading the bio. For example, if the bio is for an orchestral performance, start with and highlight your orchestra experience before talking about other types of
performances. Include your range of repertoire and any interesting projects in which you have engaged. Where relevant, you can include any community engagements and outreach that you have been involved with. Also include any prestigious awards, grants, competitions, or scholarships you have won. Again, remember to keep your audience in mind when deciding what and how much to include. Finally, avoid the temptation to present your entire professional history in chronological order.

Avoid sweeping, grandiose statements and be sure to back up your remarks with specific examples in order to enhance your credibility:

“Winner of prestigious competitions including the Naumberg Competition Winner, 2010”
“Has performed throughout the Northeast/US/Europe/ in venues including ...”
“Founder of ABC Ensemble that regularly performs in ...”

If your performances have been reviewed, be sure to include quotes from press reviews. For short bios, just hit the highlights in one or two paragraphs. For longer bios, feel free to elaborate and have one paragraph for each category (performances, awards and prizes, recordings, projects). We have provided examples of both short and long bios for you.

✧ **Last Paragraph**
Include your education credentials: schools, degrees, teachers and coaches. You might also add a sentence about your non-musical hobbies and interests to give added flavor to your brand.

**TOP TEN TIPS FOR WRITING AN EFFECTIVE BIO**

1. Refer to Introduction to Great Materials to make sure that your bio is personal, professional and accurate.
2. Have a catchy, personal opening paragraph that summarizes who you are and what you are all about.
3. Craft your bio with the intended audience in mind, presenting the most relevant and significant accomplishments.
4. Save your education and personal information for the last paragraph.
5. DO NOT oversell your accomplishments or make grandiose statements.
6. AVOID generalities and be sure to back up each statement with specific examples.
7. DO NOT include your entire professional history. A bio is not a biography.
8. Proofread your bio and have it reviewed by trusted friends and colleagues. DO NOT rely on spellcheck. Proofread your bio. And proofread again!
9. Create a short and long version of your bio.
10. Continue to update and refine your bio as you gain more experience. Do not compare yourself to more experienced musicians. You will get there someday!
Composer Bios

Composers have the added challenge of describing their music. In your bio, be sure to keep your audience in mind. Most bios are not intended for the professional music field so think about your music in terms that a general audience member can understand. As you think about your music, answer the following questions:

- How do your teachers and mentors describe your music?
- What have the critics said about your music?
- What is your approach and underlying philosophy toward writing music?
- What are you trying to say through your music?
- What emotions does your music invoke?

Use a few short phrases that describe your music. Typically, these phrases appear in your first paragraph and you can then proceed to organize your composing and performance highlights in the next paragraphs of the bio.

Ensemble Bios

A bio for an ensemble should have the same characteristics and goals as your individual bio. Highlight the accomplishments of the group and be sure to gear it towards the intended readers. List the names of each member of the group and have a separate bio for each member, presenting the individual's most significant accomplishments that are relevant to the work of the group. Do not allow the achievements of the individuals to overshadow the goals of the ensemble. The ensemble bio should include the range of repertoire and the instrumentation of the group.

In the last paragraph, specify what the ensemble provides in addition to concerts, such as master classes, workshops and event celebrations. Be sure to include contact information so that prospective audiences can get in touch with your ensemble.

The following are examples of bios of students and graduates of the Yale School of Music. Think about how each bio reflects character of the individual or the ensemble. See how it can inspire your own bio.
BIOGRAPHY

Praised as having “undoubted talent” by the Los Angeles Times and described as being “impossibly virtuosic” by the Edinburgh Guide, young Australian pianist David Fung continues to impress audiences with his poetry, artistry and elegance. In recent seasons, Mr. Fung has performed as soloist with such orchestras as the Canberra Symphony Orchestra, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, the Israel Camerata Orchestra, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra, the Orchestra Ensemble Kanazawa of Japan, the Queensland Orchestra, the San Diego Symphony Orchestra and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra among numerous others. He has also been invited to perform recitals and chamber music at international festivals such as the Aspen Music Festival, Bari International Music Festival (Italy), Goslar Festival (Germany), Der Internationaler Klaviersommer (Germany), Music at Menlo, the Sarasota Music Festival, and the Edinburgh International Festival Queen’s Hall Recital Series, where Fung was acclaimed as being “prodigiously talented... and probably [doing] ten more impossible things daily before breakfast,” by Jonas Green in the Edinburgh Guide.

Mr. Fung has won coveted prizes at both national and international piano competitions. In 2008, Mr. Fung was a top prizewinner at the 12th Arthur Rubinstein Piano International Masters Competition in Tel Aviv, where he was also distinguished by prizes for Best Classical Concerto and Best Performance of Chamber Music. He won 2nd Prize and the Audience Prize in the 3rd Lev Vlassenko Piano Competition, and was the grand prizewinner of the 2002 ABC Symphony Australia Young Performer of the Year Award. In 2007, Mr. Fung was honored by the City of Los Angeles for his contribution to the cultural life of the city, and was recently named the recipient of the Charles S. Miller Prize awarded to an outstanding pianist by the Yale University.

After departing the University of New South Wales medical school in 2003, Mr. Fung studied piano at the Colburn Conservatory in Los Angeles with celebrated pianist, John Perry. In 2007, Fung became the first piano graduate of this prestigious school. Mr. Fung holds a Bachelor of Music and Artist’s Diploma from the Colburn Conservatory, and a Master of Music at the Yale University where he studied with Peter Frankl and
Claude Frank. Mr. Fung has gained valuable insights from his work with Alfred Brendel, Leon Fleisher, Robert Levin, András Schiff, and Arie Vardi.

In addition to recording with NAXOS and ABC Classics, Mr. Fung has recorded three albums with Yarlung Records. In 2005, his first U.S. album was released by Yarlung Records, which included works by Liszt and Ravel. His most recent solo release with Yarlung includes works by Schumann, Dun, Chopin, Scarlatti, and Mozart, and was praised as “an overall favorite” of the 2007 piano albums reviewed by James Harrington in the American Record Guide. He has recorded the complete violin and piano works of American composer, Lawrence Dillon, with violinist, Danielle Belen, which was released in 2011 on the NAXOS label. His album with Canadian ‘cellist, Elinor Frey, “Dialoghi”, can be heard on Yarlung Records.

Mr. Fung has been featured in many radio and television programs by the Australia Broadcasting Corporation Television and Radio (ABC), Sydney’s Special Broadcasting Services Television and Radio (SBS), the UK’s BBC 3, Radio Scotland, Aspen’s KAJX, Los Angeles’ K-Mozart and K-USC, the "Music of Friends" series with the Radio and Television Hong Kong (RTHK4), the Israel Broadcasting Authority, Israel’s “Voice of Music” radio station, MEZZO (Europe), and Cleveland’s WCLV.

Mr. Fung’s fascination with other art forms has led him to explore relationships between visual art and music with audiences. He has presented music in tandem with exhibitions at numerous galleries and art spaces, including the Art Gallery of New South Wales. A champion of contemporary music, Mr. Fung has premiered and recorded numerous new works of living composers, and has also performed with contemporary music ensembles such as eighth blackbird and New Music New Haven.

A strong communicator and an advocate for music education, Mr. Fung has presented masterclasses and lecture-recitals at the Galleria Nazionale della Puglia in Italy, the Colburn School in Los Angeles, Yale University and in Australia. In 2011, Mr. Fung was appointed artistic director of the Bari International Music Festival in Italy. In addition to the piano, Mr. Fung plays the harpsichord and violin. Mr. Fung is a Steinway Artist.

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SHORT BIOGRAPHY

Praised as having “undoubted talent” by the Los Angeles Times and described as being “impossibly virtuosic” by the Edinburgh Guide, young Australian pianist David Fung has performed as soloist with orchestras such as the Israel Philharmonic, the Israel Camerata Orchestra, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the Melbourne Symphony, the Orchestra Ensemble Kanazawa of Japan, the Queensland Orchestra, the San Diego Symphony, and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra among numerous others.

Festival highlights include appearances at the Aspen Music Festival, Goslar Festival (Germany), Music at Menlo, and the 2006 Edinburgh International Festival Queen’s Hall Series, where Fung was acclaimed as being “prodigiously talented... probably [doing] ten more impossible things daily before breakfast,” by Jonas Green in the Edinburgh Guide.

Mr. Fung won three major prizes at the 12th Arthur Rubinstein Piano Masters Competition in Tel Aviv, including prizes for Best Classical Concerto and Best Performance of Chamber Music. He won 2nd Prize and the Audience Prize in the 3rd Lev Vlassenko Piano Competition, and was the grand prizewinner of the 2002 ABC Symphony Australia Young Performer of the Year Award. Mr. Fung has recorded albums with NAXOS, Yarlung Records, Linn Records, and ABC Classics/Symphony Australia, and can also be heard on dozens of labels around the world.

Mr. Fung holds a Bachelor of Music and Artist’s Diploma from the Colburn Conservatory, Los Angeles, and a Master of Music at the Yale University. He is currently a candidate for the Master of Musical Arts at the Yale School of Music under the guidance of Peter Frankl. Mr. Fung has also worked with world-class pianists such as Emanuel Ax, Boris Berman, Alfred Brendel, Yefim Bronfman, Leon Fleisher, Claude Frank, John Perry, András Schiff, and Arie Vardi. Mr. Fung is a Steinway Artist.

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Paul Murphy
Trumpet and Teaching Artist

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Praised by critics as one of the “standouts” among the many rising stars in Carnegie Hall’s new and widely acclaimed Ensemble ACJW, trumpeter Paul Murphy is passionate about drawing audiences deeply into the art of music. His work as a soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral player has taken him to hundreds of cities and 18 countries throughout Asia, Europe, and the Americas.

Reviewing Paul’s recent collaboration with Lorin Maazel in Stravinsky’s virtuosic L’histoire du Soldat, the Washington Post raved that the performance was "...as strong and solid as if hewn in stone." Other recent chamber music collaborations include projects with John Adams, Thomas Adès, James Conlon, Christopher Hogwood, Susanna Mälkki, Andrew Manze, and Matthias Pintscher. An active freelancer, Paul has performed with the International Contemporary Ensemble, the Orchestra of St. Luke’s, the Kansas City Symphony, the Metropolis Ensemble, Second Instrumental Unit, the Trinity Bach Players, and frequently tours and records with the Paragon Ragtime Orchestra.

Committed to expanding the role of what it means to be a 21st century musician, Paul’s work often takes him beyond the concert stage and into the community. He appears as a performer and teaching artist through Carnegie Hall’s groundbreaking Musical Connections program, which sends artists into community centers, hospitals, and correctional facilities, and is proud to serve on the teaching artist faculty of the New York Philharmonic.

Prior to living in New York, Paul served as Principal Trumpet of the Daejeon Philharmonic in South Korea. A graduate of the Yale School of Music and St. Olaf College, he has also studied at the Castleton Music Festival, Schleswig-Holstein Music Festival, and the Music Academy of the West.
Garth Neustadter is an Emmy Award-Winning composer and multi-instrumentalist. He has composed feature-length scores for Warner Bros., PBS, Turner Classic Movies, and China’s CCTV. The Baltimore Sun says of his music, “The guy’s a natural, as his soaring theme makes plain.”

In 2011, Neustadter became one of the youngest composers to receive a Primetime Emmy Award for his score for the PBS ‘American Masters’ documentary, “John Muir in the New World.”

Neustadter gained international attention in 2007 when he was selected by Academy Award-winning composer Hans Zimmer as the First-Prize Winner in the Turner Classic Movies Young Film Composers Competition. He was subsequently commissioned by Turner Classic Movies and Warner Brothers to compose and produce the feature-length musical score for the film The White Sister, which premiered on the TCM channel.

Neustadter has been recognized as a five-time DownBeat Magazine award winner in the areas of composition, classical violin performance, and jazz saxophone performance. His achievements have been profiled in USA Today, The Baltimore Sun, Film Music Magazine, Variety, The Chronicle of Higher Education, DownBeat Magazine, the National Federation of Music Clubs Review, and NPR. He recently received an ASCAP Morton Gould Award, ASCAP Young Jazz Composers Award, and ASCAP fellowship for Film Scoring Studies at Aspen, as well as multiple awards from the National Federation of Music Clubs. Most recently, he was selected as the Second-Prize Winner in the Transatlantyk Film Music Competition (Poland).

Neustadter is currently studying composition at the Yale School of Music with Martin Bresnick. He has previously studied with Aaron Jay Kernis, Christopher Theofanidis, and Samuel Adler.
The Jasper String Quartet

J Freivogel, violin
Sae Chonabayashi, violin
Sam Quintal, viola
Rachel Henderson Freivogel, cello

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Biography: Winner of the 2012 Cleveland Quartet Award, the Jasper String Quartet has been hailed as “sonically delightful and expressively compelling” (The Strad) and as "powerful" (The New York Times). They play "with sparkling vitality and great verve, ...polished, engaged, and in tune with one another.” (Classical Voice of North Carolina) Based in New Haven, CT, the Jasper Quartet enjoys prestigious appointments as 2010-12 Quartet-in-Residence at Oberlin Conservatory (Oberlin, OH) and Ensemble-in-Residence at Classic Chamber Concerts (Naples, FL).

After winning the Grand Prize and the Audience Prize in the 2008 Plowman Chamber Music Competition, the Jaspers went on to win the Grand Prize at the 2008 Coleman Competition, First Prize at Chamber Music Yellow Springs 2008, and the Silver Medal at the 2008 and 2009 Fischoff Chamber Music Competitions. They were the first ensemble to win the Yale School of Music’s Horatio Parker Memorial Prize (2009), an award established in 1945 and selected by the faculty for “best fulfilling... lofty musical ideals”. And in 2010, they joined the roster of Astral Artists after winning their national auditions.

The Jaspers perform pieces emotionally significant to its members ranging from Haydn and Beethoven through Berg, Ligeti, and living composers. They have already commissioned four string quartets from today’s up-and-coming composers and critics and audiences continue to commend the Jasper Quartet’s “programming savvy” (clevelandclassical.com). They have performed throughout the United States and in Canada, England, Italy, Japan, Korea, Norway and Panama.
The Jasper Quartet has also brought well-over 100 outreach programs into schools and enjoys educational work of all types. In their *Melba and Orville Roleffson Residency* at the Banff Centre they embarked on "guerilla chamber music," performing concerts in unusual settings around Alberta, Canada. More recently, the quartet has worked closely with Caramoor and with Astral Artists to bring outreach activities to schools. They recently completed their *2009-2011 Ernst C. Stiefel String Quartet Residency* at the Caramoor Center for Music and Arts (Katonah, NY).

Originally formed at Oberlin Conservatory, the Jasper Quartet began pursuing a professional career in 2006 when they studied with James Dunham, Norman Fischer, and Kenneth Goldsmith as Rice University’s Graduate Quartet-in-Residence. In 2008, the quartet continued its training with the Tokyo String Quartet as Yale University’s Graduate Quartet-in-Residence.

They are named after Jasper National Park in Alberta, Canada and J and Rachel are married. Barrett Vantage Artists represents the quartet throughout the world and Astral Artists represents the quartet in Pennsylvania. For more information, please visit www.jasperquartet.com or facebook.com/jasperstringquartet.

**J Freivogel**, first violinist of the Jasper String Quartet, grew up as the youngest brother/second violinist of his family’s quartet. He attended Oberlin College and Conservatory for Bachelor’s degrees in Violin Performance and Politics and, during his time there, won the Kauffman Chamber Music prize three times, the Presser Music Award, the Hurlbutt prize for most outstanding violinist, and the concerto competition. He received his Master’s in String Quartet Performance from Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music and an Artist’s Diploma at the Yale School of Music as graduate quartet-in-residence with the Jasper Quartet (www.jasperquartet.com). His principal teachers include Marilyn McDonald, Sylvia Rosenberg, and Cho-Liang Lin for violin, and James Dunham, Norman Fischer, and the Tokyo String Quartet for chamber music. He is married to cellist Rachel Henderson Freivogel and they live in New Haven, CT.

**Sae Chonabayashi**, violin, was born in Ibaragi, Japan and began playing violin at age three. She attended the prestigious Toho Gakuen School of Music in Japan from the age of fifteen, where she completed her studies with Koichiro Harada, a founding member of the Tokyo String Quartet. In 2001, Sae came to the United States to study with Donald Weilerstein at the Cleveland Institute of Music. As a full scholarship student, she continued her studies with Mr. Weilerstein at the New England Conservatory, where she received undergraduate and graduate diplomas. She won third prize in the 2006 Swedish Duo International Competition. At Rice University Sae studied with Cho-Liang Lin.
Sam Quintal, violist of the Jasper String Quartet, was born and raised in Fairbanks Alaska. He began playing the violin at age six and viola at age 11. As a member of the Jasper Quartet he has won many awards including the Cleveland Quartet Award. He has performed extensively in North America, from Zankel Hall and Merkin Hall in New York, to Harris Hall in Aspen and performances at the Banff Center in Canada. He earned his B.M. in violin performance from Oberlin Conservatory studying with Marilyn McDonald, his M.M. from Rice University studying viola with James Dunham, and his Artist’s Diploma from Yale University studying with the Tokyo String Quartet.

Rachel Henderson Freivogel, is the founding cellist of the Jasper String Quartet. She began her studies with her mother in her hometown of Ann Arbor, MI at the age of four and completed her undergraduate studies at Oberlin Conservatory of Music, where she also received a Master’s Degree in Historical Performance. With the Jasper String Quartet she has won several awards including the Cleveland Quartet Award, as well as the Grand Prize at the Plowman, Yellow Springs and Coleman Chamber Music Competitions. She received her Master’s Degree in String Quartet from Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music and her Artist’s Diploma in String Quartet from Yale School of Music. Her principal teachers include Norman Fischer, Clive Greensmith and Catharina Meints. She is married to violinist J Freivogel.
Biography

Described as “...truly riveting...” by *MusicWeb International*, the Linden String Quartet is a winner of the 2010 Concert Artists Guild Victor Elmaleh Competition. Founded in spring 2008, the Quartet has enjoyed remarkable success in three short years, also winning the Gold Medal and Grand Prize of the 2009 Fischoff National Chamber Music Competition, the Coleman-Barstow Prize at the 2009 Coleman National Chamber Ensemble Competition, First Prize at the 2010 Hugo Kauder Competition, and most recently, the ProQuartet Prize at the 9th Borciani International String Quartet Competition. Praised for its “remarkable depth of technique and brilliantly nuanced, sumptuous tonality...delivered with a palpable, infectious joy” (*MusicWeb International*), the Linden Quartet is currently the Graduate String-Quartet-in-Residence at Yale University, where the ensemble is mentored by the Tokyo String Quartet.

Summer 2011 appearances for the Linden Quartet include the Chautauqua Institution, the Chamber Music Festivals of Amelia Island (FL), Madison (GA), Ruidoso (NM) and Highlands-Cashiers (NC), as well as Princeton Summer Concerts series at Princeton University’s Richardson Auditorium. The Quartet was also selected recently for the prestigious *2011 A.N. and Pearl G. Barnett* Fellowship (including a $25,000 award).

Highlights of the 2011-12 season include concerts in New York at Carnegie Hall’s Weill Recital Hall (produced by CAG) and at Merkin Concert Hall and two concerts at the Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts. Across the US, the ensemble appears on the Ravinia Festival’s Rising Stars series near Chicago, the Chamber Music Societies of Detroit and Little Rock, Friends of Chamber Music of Stockton, CA, Eureka Chamber Music Series, Quick Center for the Performing Arts at St. Bonaventure (NY) and BIG ARTS in Sanibel, FL. The Quartet also collaborates with CAG First Prize-winning pianist Michael Brown in joint recitals at the University of Illinois’ Krannert Center for the Performing Arts and on the Purdue University Convocations series.

The Linden Quartet is the 2011-12 Ernst Steifel Quartet-in-Residence at the Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts, including a series of educational workshops in the school districts surrounding the Center. The Quartet is also the Canton Symphony Orchestra’s Quartet-in-Residence, a program established to promote the arts of Classical music and quartet playing through a series of presentations in various elementary schools in the Northeastern Ohio area. In spring 2010, the Quartet performed a one-week tour of Kentucky, focused on educational concerts in rural schools.

In addition to its regular work at Yale with the Tokyo Quartet, The Linden Quartet’s mentors have included the Cavani String Quartet, Peter Salaff and Paul Kantor. The Quartet has also worked with Donald Weilerstein and William Preucil of the Cleveland Quartet, Joel Smirnoff and Robert Mann of the Juilliard String Quartet and members of the Guarneri and St. Lawrence Quartets. The Quartet has collaborated with pianist Peter Frankl, guitarist Jason Vieaux, mezzo-soprano Jana Baty, violinist Geoff Nuttall, as well as acclaimed accordion and bandonéon player Julian Labro.

In summer 2010, the Linden String Quartet was resident ensemble at the Norfolk Chamber Music Festival, as well as chamber music festivals in Banff, Alberta and Stanford, California. As winners of the Fischoff Grand Prize, the Quartet toured the Midwest in fall 2009 and the 2009-10 season included appearances at the Emilia Romagna Festival in Italy, a one-week concert tour throughout the state of Kentucky, and a one-week residency at the Music at Port Milford summer chamber music festival in Milford, Ontario.