

Josep Borràs, director of the School of Music of Catalonia (ESMUC)

‘At present, professionals in the music field generally need to be flexible, have skills in a wide range of fields and be independent’

Josep Borràs studied Music, specialising in the Bassoon, at the Municipal Music Conservatory of Barcelona, as well as further specialisation studies in Basel, earning a Doctorate in Musicology at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. In the field of teaching, he has taught courses at several music schools and conservatories, both in Spain and abroad. He was a member of the teaching staff at the School of Music of Catalonia (ESMUC) since it was founded, as well as the department chair for Ancient Music. At present, he is the director of the School of Music of Catalonia (ESMUC).

Which professional profiles are currently in most demand in your sector?

Nowadays, one profile that is in great demand, with an unemployment rate of practically zero, is music manager and promoter.

Specialists in sonology have also found increasingly more jobs that are not exclusively related to the field of music, but may be needed by audiovisual media and the advertising sector. This professional is constantly involved in a transformation process due to new technologies.

Musicians with training in community music (within pedagogy education) have also started to have new opportunities, as they are in high demand at institutions such as homes for the elderly and special schools.

In the field of education, music professors are also jobs with high demand, particularly at secondary schools.

In general, people must be aware that the job market in the world of music is very harsh. Due to this, music schools must be realistic in their teachings and musicians must be very flexible in order to adapt to what is available. Orchestras have a limited number of spots and competition is intense, thus, musicians must look for their places at conservatories, music schools, create their own small-format groups and have different sources of income.

Musicians often spend a lot of time in semi-professional situations, dividing their time between studies and one-off jobs. There is great job precariousness due to the excess in supply. This is why professionals must be educated who have entrepreneurial spirits. It is not a situation of high unemployment, because almost no musician is totally unemployed, but most of them have little stability.

What are the main qualifications needed for each of these job posts?

At present, professionals in the world of music generally need to be flexible, have skills in a wide range of fields and be independent. They must also be knowledgeable about new technologies, namely, know about recording, installing sound systems, computer supports, websites, etc. In short, they must be experts in the maximum number of tools possible in order to build their careers.

Music managers and promoters are expected to know how to financially manage equipment and facilities and, thus, have some expertise in planning techniques and human resource management, as well as knowledge about law and legislation.

The profile for music teachers has become, due to new music styles, a profession that demands great flexibility and is increasingly more focused on modern music.

What are the main reasons for the demand for each of these professional profiles?

Starting in the eighties, many performance infrastructures were created in Catalonia that now need good managers. Until now, the world of theatre has provided a large part of the labour needed for these facilities, both a management and technical levels.

Moreover, the relationship between music and new technologies has changed the way of understanding composition and musical creation. Computers make composition tasks easier due to musical score creation programs and simulation programs. Likewise, recording methods are constantly transformed, as well as designs of supports, etc. Thus, musicians, whatever their speciality may be, must have at least basic knowledge about new technologies.

Which professional profiles needed in the sector today have the most significant shortages?

One of the jobs with the highest demand is secondary school music teachers. These schools are increasingly seeking to include musical training as part of their core subjects, taking into account that this type of learning not only promotes musical knowledge, but also fosters other types of skills. Despite this, many of the job openings available each year for these posts are not filled.

In general, given the speed at which new technologies are advancing, the reality is that knowledge is needed of the newest innovations in these areas.

How do you think these shortages could be resolved?

Music classes must be maximised at secondary schools and the essential role of music teachers there must be asserted. A primordial objective has to be to give students, in addition to music training, the learning tools necessary for developing this work. After the Bologna Plan enters into force, these specialisations will be done through a masters, which will promote awareness and motivation about entering into the field of education.

Shortages generated due to new technologies are partly covered by specialities, including the Masters in Music Composition via Technologies, the Postgraduate Course in Musical Production Technology and Technique (CTEM) or the Postgraduate in Soundtrack and Audiovisual Media Music Composition.

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