Paying It Forward to Move Your Career Forward

By Todd Apfel



As we enter the holiday season, many artists find themselves looking for new opportunities to grow their careers. Music competitions, talent contests, and showcase events often promise exposure, recognition, and the chance to reach new audiences. While there is certainly nothing wrong with pursuing opportunities that align with your goals, it may also be worth asking a different question: What if one of the best ways to advance your music career is by giving back to your community?

Some of the most meaningful performances you'll ever give won't be on a festival stage or in front of industry executives. They may take place at a nursing home, a children's hospital, a veterans' event, a Special Olympics fundraiser, a community benefit, or a local charity event. These performances rarely come with prize money or trophies, but they often provide something far more valuable: genuine connections, local recognition, positive press, networking opportunities, and the chance to use your talent to make a difference in someone's life.

Organizations across the country are using music to bring comfort, hope, and joy to people facing difficult circumstances. For example, **Musicians On Call** is a nonprofit organization that brings live and recorded music directly to patients, families, and caregivers in hospitals and healthcare facilities. Their mission is built on the belief that music can help promote healing and improve emotional well-being. Since 1999, the organization reports that volunteers have performed for more than 1.25 million people

through bedside performances, virtual programs, and songwriting initiatives. https://www.musiciansoncall.org/

The holiday season offers a perfect opportunity to reflect on how we can use our gifts to help others. Whether it's donating your time to a local fundraiser, performing at a community event, supporting a nonprofit organization, or simply sharing your music where it's needed most, giving back can have a powerful impact on both your community and your career. The exposure may not come from a contest leaderboard, but from the reputation you build as an artist who cares.

At Rock Dog Music Foundation, we believe that success isn't measured only by streams, followers, awards, or chart positions. It's also measured by the lives you touch, the communities you support, and the difference you make along the way. This holiday season, consider finding a cause that matters to you and asking a simple question:

How can I use my music to make someone's day a little brighter?

You might be surprised where that opportunity leads.