

>>Snapshot

Tamara Stein

Soprano

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What do you like most about your work?

For me art is communication, creating a connection by sharing moments that are more felt than understood. Busking is perfect for me because I particularly love a small, diverse audience who can get really close. The feedback is immediate and obvious, and I love that. I can connect to people, who are often from other cultures. I have had many experiences where people who don't share a common language with me have still managed to share their experience of the moment through facial expressions, mime and even dance.

What are the biggest challenges of maintaining a freelance career?

You never know where the next pay cheque is coming from. You always have to be willing to try something else. I think you have to be independent, disciplined and flexible. You really need to be your own biggest fan. All of these things are challenging.

Have you added new work/skills to your portfolio over time?

Over the years I have learned to be a TV presenter, actor and opera singer. I have studied contemporary dance and Shakespeare. I've learned languages as an opera singer and of course I have had to learn business skills including business planning for funding.

What is the biggest challenge of learning the skills that you need?

With my health issues, getting out of the house can be a major issue so the fact that the FEU Training workshops have gone online this year has been a real benefit to me. Also, the fact that they are free is outstanding. Business courses that are generally available are not usually a good fit for a creative freelance, whereas FEU Training workshops are specifically tailored to our needs.

What FEU Training courses have you attended?

- Build your creative brand to win work
- Get started on Instagram
- Mobile video kickstarter

What are the most important things that you've learned?

The 'Build your Brand' workshop was great. It not only

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reminded me that as creative freelances, we are also a business, it helped me think and focus on what I really want to do. For the first time I was really clear about what I wanted and how I was going to achieve it.

It's all about the audience for me and the workshops have helped me explore new avenues to perform. The 'Build your Brand' workshop inspired me to create online music with my friend, so we created our YouTube account to create a shop window to showcase our work.

I am going to take all that I learned on this course and use it to create a solid business plan. This workshop was so in depth and I was so excited by the end of the day by all that I had learned.

While I have missed the connection I get from busking, I feel that the workshops prepared me to work in the current climate and have given me the skills to connect in new ways in non-ideal conditions.

What has encouraged you to attend FEU training sessions?

I thought the topics of the workshops were relevant and had great themes. This is such an invaluable resource. The quality is so good, if I had to, I would pay for the courses, and they are targeted at exactly what the members of the four unions need.

The courses going online has meant that I am able to join the training when I just couldn't have managed to attend in person due to my illness. This had been a life-saver for me, especially now when I have to self-isolate for the foreseeable future. I have been really impressed by the quality and I have recommended them to others.

I love that we come together with members from the other unions and so meet people from different fields in the creative industry. To be honest, when I am on stage as an opera singer, I have more in common with actors, than for example a trombone player in the pit, so this mixing is very welcome and exciting.

I think FEU Training is marvellous and I wish I had found you earlier.