





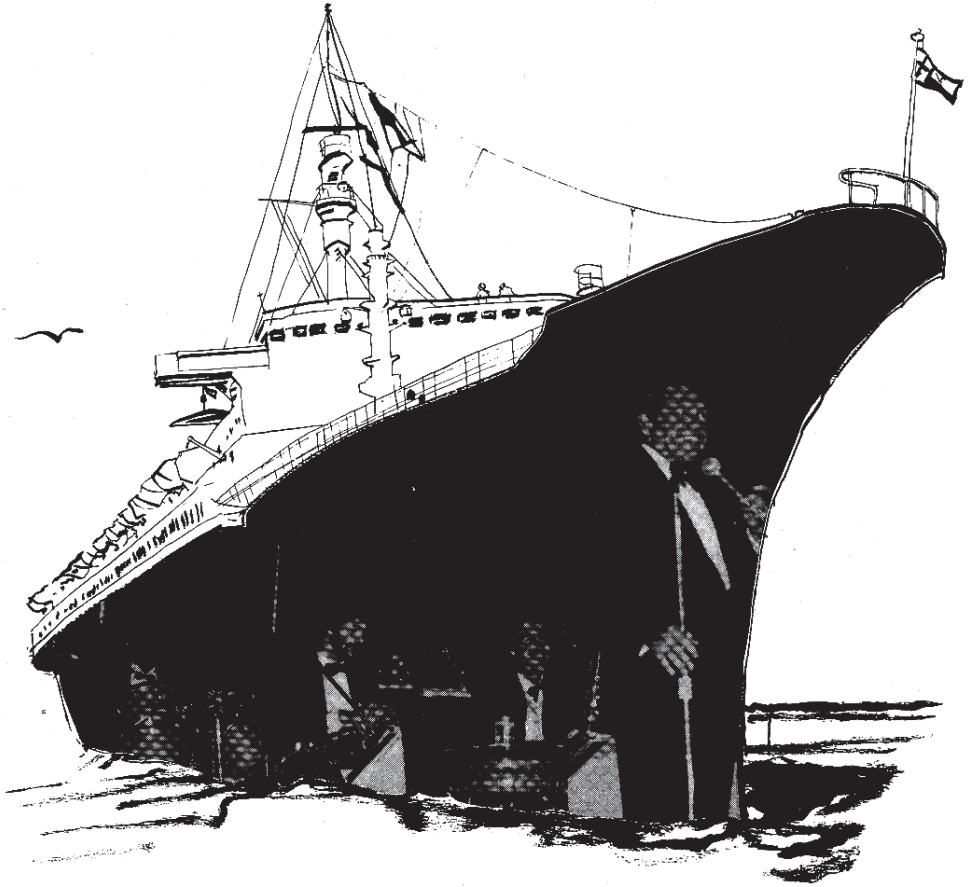
# JAZZING IT UP ON THE

Instead of going on the road in order to survive, more and more musicians agree that the nicest and most popular gig is the cruise ship — the new “night club” at sea. Traveling to ports throughout the world, cruise ship tours can extend from seven days to a world cruise of three months. These ships offer the young musician a great opportunity to earn a good salary, work with well-known entertainers, and enjoy parts of the world they might not otherwise be able to see.

## What to Expect

Most of the major cruise lines begin first-time musicians with a salary of about \$300 per week, an amount that is usually increased with each contract renewal. Most contracts last about three months, but the range is from four weeks to four months. The cruise company provides round trip air transportation and medical insurance and care for the duration of the contract, as well as the clothing necessary for performances. You need to supply a tuxedo because there are three nights on board that require formal wear. You'll be well fed — caviar, lobster, steak — and share a cabin with another musician. Interestingly enough, the company doesn't take taxes out of pay checks (that's your job).

Most cruise ships have two or three bands for different parts of the ship. A small trio plus vocalist — versatile in pop, jazz, rock, and country standards — can be playing in a lounge at the



Alan King provides the comedy. Playing for top entertainers is all in a day's work.

back of the ship while a solo pianist in the midship lounge performs passenger requests and popular favorites. The show band, usually with 9-15 musicians, works in the front of the ship, backs up all entertainment, and plays for the captain's parties.

## All in a Day's Work

A typical day for the musician depends on his performing group. The trio plus vocalist, for example, doesn't play until 5 P.M. After two 30-minute dinner sets, the group is free. However, their regular gig extends from 9:30 P.M. to 1:00 A.M. (45 minutes on, 15 minutes off). The solo pianist plays two 30-minute dinner sets, then a regular gig from 9 to 11:30 P.M.

Working in the show band is much like performing in a Las Vegas house band. If there's an act that night, rehearsal begins at 1:00 in the afternoon and lasts as long as an hour and 45 minutes. Then, the evening performance includes two, one-hour shows in front of a total of 900 people.

I've performed on several cruises and have had the opportunity to meet and work with such popular entertainers as Tony Bennett, Alan King, Robert Merrill, Rita Moreno, and June Allyson. It's not uncommon to find Mel Torme, Jack Jones, or Vic Damone performing on a cruise ship, and in a business where it's hard to get your foot in the door, having some popular entertainers brought to you is nice.

*Percussionist/composer Dave Black attended California State University, Northridge where he studied with Joel Leach and Louie Bellson. He has traveled to many parts of the world with a wide variety of entertainers and shows.*

# HIGH SEAS

Dave Black

The pressure is on, however, when working in this kind of situation. Often there isn't enough time to go through every number, note for note, and the artist just talks you through unrehearsed material. This means that you don't get a feel for the show until it is performed, live, that evening. You have to be extremely alert. Players need to have their chops together, and work well under pressure. The only relief comes when an entertainer brings his own pianist/conductor and perhaps a drummer. The pressure decreases because these people are familiar with the show and help pull you along.

## How to Start

If you are interested in working on a cruise ship, send a res-

umé and a cassette recording of your playing to the cruise company. If you are contacted and called in for an audition, be prepared to play several examples of the type of music you'll be playing while on board the ship. Everyone who works in the show band must be an exceptional reader. Woodwind players must be able to double on a variety of woodwind instruments and a percussionist must be able to play in any style.

The company will be checking for personality traits, because fun as the gig may seem, there are built in problems that can test anyone's patience. Instead of going home to a family or friends after eight hours of work, cruise ship members work with the same people seven days a week, eat in the same dining room, and share cabins when not performing. Some cruise lines give musicians passenger status while others restrict the musicians (no street clothes during the day and you cannot dance or use the swimming pools and passenger sun decks).

## Good Training Helps

For this kind of job, I believe that a good educational background gives musicians the ability and confidence necessary to correct musical problems when an entertainer cannot help you. Part of the job includes playing from music that is poorly copied, possibly with unclear chord symbols, and there are always half-a-dozen other problems that require know-how to solve. Because many entertainers either don't read music or are not technically trained, you're on your own to answer the musical questions that only a solid background can provide.

Working on cruise liners has helped me as a performer. It has sharpened my senses and taught me how to work with other musicians while under the pressure of preparing for a show in a short amount of time. Playing on a cruise ship can be a good opportunity for young musicians; those given the opportunity should take advantage of it. *Bon Voyage.* ■

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### FOR TEACHERS/PROFESSIONALS

- **Music In Early Childhood** June 18-22  
Clinicians: Diane Cummings, early childhood education specialist. Joyce Jordan, general music/early childhood specialist; researcher of developmental music skills of preschool children.
- **Choral Conducting Workshop** June 18-22  
Clinician: Lee Kjelson, recognized choral authority; assisted by UM choral staff.  
For elementary, junior & senior high, university and church choir directors.
- **Woodwind Instrument Repair** June 18-22  
Clinician: Arthur Bean, nationally known master craftsman of instrument repair.
- **Band Directors Workshop** June 25-29  
Clinicians: William Russell, conductor of UM's Band of the Hour.  
Nicholas DeCarbo, instrumental education specialist; assisted by UM instrumental staff.
- **Computer Applications in Music Teaching** July 9-13  
Clinician: William R. Higgins, nationally recognized authority on computer-assisted music instruction.

### FOR JUNIOR/SENIOR HIGH STUDENTS

- **Choral Music Camp** June 17-23  
All styles — classical, pop, jazz and choreography.
- **Instrumental Music Institute** June 24-30  
Experiences in Band, Orchestra, Jazz Band, Improvisation, Chamber Music and private lessons.

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