

Christopher Sampson and Dave Black



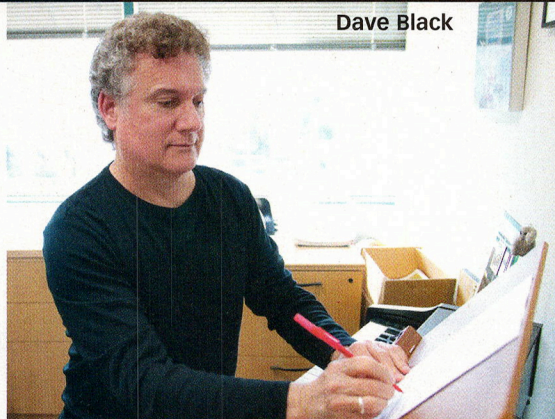
Christopher Sampson

JOB TITLES: Christopher Sampson, founding director of the Popular Music program at USC's Thornton School of Music. Dave Black, editor-in-chief for Alfred Music Publishing's School Methods Strategy.

WHAT THEY DO: Both Sampson and Black are authors of books on music.

MOST YOUNG MUSICIANS don't necessarily imagine writing books as a part of their career journey. Christopher Sampson and Dave Black certainly didn't plan to become authors when they were honing their craft as musicians, but the opportunity eventually presented itself. For Sampson—founding director of the Popular Music program at the University of Southern California's Thornton School of Music—publishing was part of the territory when he became a professor. Black, who is vice president and editor-in-chief of School & Church Publications for Alfred Music Publishing, realized that writing was an opportunity to stay involved in the music industry while having a steadier income than he might just as a gigging artist. Sampson and Black are now both authors of books that are helping to change the way music is being taught.

Sampson started out as a traditional blues guitarist. But his book *Careers Through Music: Building Employable Skills in Your Music Class*—written for educators from a



Dave Black

GRAMMY Museum concept and published in 2018 by Alfred Music—is about how skills learned in music class can transfer to a career beyond music. He explains that classes in music can be much more than just mastering instrumental technique and performance skills, pointing out that “you get to learn leadership, creative problem-solving, teamwork, collaboration.” Having had music students who have gone onto careers in business or law, Sampson says: “They hold on to these lessons and experiences and draw from them almost every day in their jobs.”

For Black, his musical experience as a percussionist and composer-arranger fed

directly into his writing: “A lot of what I write are percussion books, so the training I had as a percussionist all my life has a great deal to do with the subject matter of those books: how I approached the teaching, how I approached the methodology.” He has written more than 30 percussion books for Alfred, but his favorite is *Alfred's Drum Method—Book 1*, which has sold some 650,000 copies since its release in 1987. “The success of that book was something we hoped for, but didn't expect, so it's been an incredible journey for that—it became the best-selling drum book in the world,” he says. “It added a lot of really cool things. We were the first publication that ever had a VHS tape that accompanied a book, the video included performances of all the solos, and an actual lesson was taught live on camera. It was a game-changer.”

A key aspect of most any writing is coming up with an original idea. When it came to *Careers Through Music*, Sampson knew that he didn't just want to duplicate something that was already on the marketplace. “You want to make sure that you're enhancing the knowledge base that's out there,” he says. Black agrees, explaining that he was attracted by the chance to “help change the direction of music publishing” with his innovative book/video combo, because he knew that it could—as it did—“directly affect hundreds of thousands of students around the world.”

REAGAN PRIEST is a junior at Mountain View High School in Meridian, Idaho. She is an alumnus of GRAMMY Camp, in the music journalism career track.

CAREERS THROUGH MUSIC ● School districts want their graduates to be career and college ready, and a music education contributes to that goal. The 15 lesson plans in *Careers Through Music*—written by Chris Sampson from a concept by David Sears of the GRAMMY Museum and published by Alfred Music—provide tangible evidence of that contribution. Ensemble classes teach vital skills that are beneficial for careers in music and beyond, such as problem-solving, networking, interdependence and teamwork. ● Each lesson plan can be delivered using only eight minutes of rehearsal time, leaving the rest of the period for honing performance skills. Teachers need to purchase only one book, as doing so gives permission to photocopy the lessons; purchase of the book also enables access to video interviews of music and non-music professionals discussing the benefits of these skill sets.