



MUSIC TEACHERS NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

## **Meet the Entrepreneur: Josh Wright**

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#### TRANSCRIPT:

Hi everyone. I'm Josh Wright and I'm delighted to be presenting for MTNA Business Digest. Karen Thickstun wrote to me and asked if I could answer three questions for the segment entitled Meet the Entrepreneur.

The first question she asked me to answer is, "Describe your current business, studio and career." My career consists currently of three elements: online courses and piano instruction, private teaching (both online and in-person) and performing. I notice all three of those are critical for my own happiness and fulfillment. I notice that if I'm not performing very much, I don't feel as inspired in my private teaching and online courses. Similarly, if I'm only performing, I feel like there is an element missing. I love teaching, and I love teaching via those two mediums of private instruction (one-on-one instruction) and then also to the masses with my online courses and videos.

I have two video series—one of them is a free video series on YouTube called Josh Wright Piano TV. We're currently up to around 500 videos that I've made over the last decade, answering questions from pianists and students around the world. They've just written to me. I include my email address at the end of nearly every video, if anyone has any questions. And that has been an extremely fulfilling project. About five years into that project, students started writing to me saying, "Can you please cover repertoire and exercises really in depth? Even if it's a paid endeavor, we'd happily pay for your advice on these pieces." So, I started an online course called ProPractice which goes into depth with technical exercises and repertoire from all eras; and each of those videos is generally around 30–70 minutes, and we're up to about 400 videos in the ProPractice library. That's an ongoing project that I look forward to doing for many years to come. It's a great way to help as many pianists as I can, that I couldn't take one-on-one. So, it's been a very fulfilling career, something I never imagined I would be doing but something I'm very happy doing.

The second question is, "What are key steps or experiences that helped guide you to where you are now?" I like to think of five people...well I guess it would be six. My mom and dad would be the first. They gave me the very best instruction they could through taking me to the best

teachers I could. My grandma was my first teacher, she was brilliant. Then I went to Dr. Susan Duehlmeier when I was nine years old. She continues to inspire me to this day. I still see her four or five times a year for lessons just to brush up on things I'm getting ready to perform. I was also very privileged to study privately with Sergei Babayan. Many of you may know that he is Daniel Trifonov's teacher. And, finally, I did my doctoral studies with Dr. Logan Skelton at University of Michigan. That is the most key step—surrounding yourself with brilliant people who are much better than me and who have helped shape my career. My wife is also a brilliant concert pianist and has one of the best ears I have ever witnessed, and she helps me so much both in my music and also with a lot of career decisions that I've made over the years. She's been a guiding light.

Other things that I've done that have helped to shape my career are listening to other entrepreneurs and other business leaders. I have a good friend who made a very successful online videography course and I kind of followed his recipe for how he did things—and that helped me launch my own online courses more successfully. So, I think surrounding yourself with the most brilliant people you can, whether it's in-person or through podcasts or YouTube videos or online courses—that would be the key step for becoming successful in your career, in my opinion.

The third and final question Karen asked me to answer was, "What advice do you have for others who may hope to follow a similar path?" Beyond what I said in the previous question of surrounding yourself with brilliant people, two things that I would suggest:

First, find a niche or a need that you could fill. So, there are a lot of different paths that one can take as a musician, but people often think, "Oh, I either have to teach privately or I have to concertize. And how do I concertize? I either get an agent or win a big competition or both and then my career is set." In today's world, that seems to be the case less and less, and people are becoming more and more creative with how they can reach people, how they can influence others and most of all, how they can serve and help others. I've always had the mentality that if I can serve and add value to others, then the career will shape itself. And that has certainly been the case with private teaching, with getting concerts and certainly with online courses. I provide so much instruction and information with Josh Wright Piano TV that when people started asking for ProPractice, and I said, "You know, I simply don't have the time to make these videos for free, it would take all my time and I wouldn't be able to support my family," they were willing to step up and support me by purchasing those courses—those followers who had followed me for years—and then it continued to grow.

So, I think adding value and following the advice of brilliant people in your field and finding a niche that you can fulfill—what's something that hasn't been done or what is something that has been done but that you might be able to do in your own unique way to make the field of music a little bit better.

I hope these words have been inspiring and helpful. If any of you have any questions or would like to get in contact, my email is [josh@joshwrightpiano.com](mailto:josh@joshwrightpiano.com). Thank you so much for tuning in,

and I hope you all have a great week of practicing and wish you all the best in your music careers.