



Music and the Creative Class: A Fruit Fly Industry



(Part 1) Richard Florida and his 2005 bestseller [*The Rise of the Creative Class: And How It's Transforming Work, Leisure, Community and Everyday Life*](#) gave voice to a movement to revitalize cities by attracting and nurturing the "creative class" - a socioeconomic group of 40 million that makes up 30% of the US workforce. There is no shortage of evidence of the power of the creative class to transform post-industrial cities, but how music, along with the companies that follow and feed it, contribute to the Creative Class is just beginning to get special attention.

Musicians make up a small subset of the Creative Class which also includes artists, scientists, engineers, educators, [programmers](#)

, researchers, designers and media workers as part of a "super creative core" that accounts for just 2% of US jobs. Knowledge based workers in professions like health-care, business and finance, the legal sector, and education that "draw on complex bodies of knowledge to solve specific problems" make up a larger group of creative professionals.

But music is now being recognized as a fruit-fly industry - an early indicator of new technologies, new business models, and the economy in general. "Music is a highly competitive business - a hyper-competitive market in miniature... where competition for sonic, technological, and talent advantage spurs rapid evolution and change." [says Florida](#). "New recording and [network technology](#) means that barriers to entry are lower than ever."

Just days before the 5th anniversary of [Napster](#), economist and social scientist Florida reminds us that "music is often the first sector to experience the full force of disruptive technology. It was the first industry to face the file-sharing crisis, and other industries like film and publishing are now learning from its experience."

Florida concludes that "musicians are quintessential examples of free-agent workers, mixing income and seeking out affordable, creative places to do their work. And the concentration of musical talent and firms into clusters and scenes - in an industry which requires little in the way of capital infrastructure and fixed costs - can help us better understand geographic clustering across a wide variety of fields".