

# CHERIE Z. HU

**Researcher, founder, and educator**

forging new paths in

**music, tech, and business.**

*Curriculum vitae*

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## EDUCATION

### Harvard University

*Bachelor of Arts: Major in Statistics, Minor in Music • Cambridge, MA, USA • Sep 2013 – May 2017*

- Coursework in financial statistics, accounting, political journalism, social network analysis.
- Arts columnist, *Harvard Political Review* (Jan 2016 – May 2017) and *Harvard Crimson* (Feb 2015 – May 2016); staff writer, *Harvard Arts Blog* (Sep 2016 – May 2017).
- Study-abroad coursework in Aix-en-Provence on postcolonial theory, Franco-Arab history and literature (Jun 2014 – Aug 2014).

### The Juilliard School

*Pre-College Diploma: Piano Performance • New York, NY, USA • Sep 2009 – May 2013*

- Studied piano under Yoheved Kaplinsky, Susan W. Rose Chair of Juilliard's Piano Department and Artistic Director of Juilliard's Pre-College Division.
- Advanced coursework in music theory, composition, conducting, music history.

## PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE (INDUSTRY)

### Water & Music

*Founder • New York, NY, USA • Feb 2019 – Present*

- Lead the editorial and business vision for one of the leading independent music-industry newsletters, with earned media citations in *Fortune*, *Bloomberg*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Billboard*, *Financial Times*, *WIRED*.
- Grow business to \$400,000+ annual revenue and 2,000+ paying customers across media subscriptions, events, consulting, and education on music-tech trends.
- Jan 2022 – present: Launch and curate Water & Music Academy series of online courses on topics including data-driven marketing, artist team-building, digital community strategy, and global music rights, serving 250+ paying students from 20+ countries to date.
- Sep 2022 – May 2023: Guided and executed programming and sponsorships for inaugural Wavelengths Summit on music and tech in Brooklyn, NY, attracting 250+ paying attendees.

- Oct 2021 – Feb 2023: Architected and supervised large-scale, crowdsourced research projects on emerging music-tech trends (AI, Web3, metaverse), collaborating with cross-disciplinary teams of 50+ industry contributors.

### **Seed Club Accelerator**

*Mentor, Cohort Member • Virtual • Sep 2021 – Dec 2022*

- As Mentor (Oct – Dec 2022): Advised Web3 startup founders on community design, research coordination, and media strategy as part of the Seed Club accelerator, which provides education and mentorship for communities building their own social tokens.
- As Accelerator Member (Sep – Oct 2021): Selected through highly competitive process to take part in Cohort 3 of the accelerator as a founder. Designed a token strategy for incentivizing collaboration and knowledge-sharing among music-industry professionals, setting the strategic foundation for 60% growth in Water & Music’s membership over the following year.

### **Billboard**

*Tech Contributor, Interim Business Editor • New York, NY, USA • Jul 2017 – Oct 2019*

- As Contributor: Wrote 100+ online and print articles featuring original reporting and analysis on tech trends in the music industry. Advised on and contributed biographies to several major annual lists, including Digital Power Players, Top Music Lawyers, Branding Power Players.
- As Interim Business Editor: Pitched, wrote, and copy-edited up to 10 online news articles a week. Curated daily Billboard.biz email bulletin.

### **Zack Greenburg / Little, Brown and Company**

*Fact-checker • New York, NY, USA • Sep 2017 – Dec 2019*

- Official credited fact-checker for former Forbes Senior Editor Zack Greenburg’s books *3 Kings: Diddy, Dr. Dre, Jay-Z, and Hip-Hop's Multibillion-Dollar Rise* (published Mar 2018) and *A-List Angels: How a Band of Actors, Artists and Athletes Hacked Silicon Valley* (published Mar 2020).

### **Forbes Media LLC**

*Entertainment Contributor, Editorial Intern • New York, NY, USA • Nov 2015 – Feb 2019*

- As Contributor: Wrote 100+ articles on music-business trends, attracting 800,000+ pageviews to date.
- As Editorial Intern (May – Aug 2016): Researched and fact-checked earnings for 20+ celebrities on 2016 Forbes Celebrity 100 list, using a combination of interviews, proprietary formulas, and third-party data from Nielsen, Pollstar, Songkick. Formal training in fact-checking.

### **Ticketmaster**

*Intern, Distributed Commerce • Los Angeles, CA, USA • Jun 2017 – Aug 2017*

- Analyzed performance of Ticketmaster’s API integration with Facebook, consolidating multiple data sources including Impact Radius, Google Analytics, Facebook click data.
- Conducted performance study of 170 active partners across Ticketmaster’s wider Affiliate Program, recommending key opportunities for organic growth in resale and last-minute ticketing to Distributed Commerce team.

## ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE

### New York University

*Adjunct Professor, Researcher • New York, NY, USA • Mar 2018 – May 2021*

- As Adjunct Professor (Jan – May 2021): Designed and taught advanced elective on music and gaming at the Clive Davis Institute of Recorded Music.
- As Researcher (Mar 2018 – Dec 2018): Conducted qualitative research study on digital transformation and community engagement lessons from the music industry at the Arthur L. Carter Journalism Institute, as part of the Membership Puzzle Project.

### Harvard Business School

*Research Assistant • Cambridge, MA, USA • Jun 2015 – Sep 2015*

- One of 17 undergraduates selected to participate in highly competitive Program for Research in Markets and Organizations (PRIMO) at Harvard Business School.
- Worked with Professor Karim Lakhani to identify opportunities for innovative business models in digital music, as part of the project “Music and Media: Surviving, Transforming and Thriving in the Digital Age.”
- Conducted and transcribed interviews with 25 artists, label executives, startup CEOs.
- Modeled macro financial trends in the music industry, with findings published in official HBS case study on BandPage.

## SELECT PUBLICATIONS

### *Water & Music*

*My primary role at Water & Music from 2020 – present has been as an editor and strategist, rather than a writer. As editor, I have curated the selected works below to reflect the depth of research we conduct at Water & Music, across multiple technologies (e.g. AI, Web3, gaming, metaverse, streaming) and industry functions (e.g. marketing, A&R, fan engagement, rights, distribution).*

- **Data in the music industry: An introductory series** (Jan 2020 – Apr 2021)
- **Starter Pack: Music streaming platform models** (Jul 2023)
- **The evolution of artist analytics on music streaming platforms** (Sep 2023)
- **AI and music copyright: A field guide for artists and developers** (Feb 2023)
- **The state of music AI tools** (Feb 2023)
- **Mapping the fan journey in music and Web3** (Mar 2023)
- **Music NFT sales in 2021: What we learned** (May 2022)
- **A new modular music NFT contract framework** (Mar 2022)
- **The state of music DAOs** (Mar 2022)

- **Choose your own adventure: A music metaverse path finder** (Jul 2022)
- **Licensing opportunities for independent artists in video games** (Oct 2022)
- **The gamification of the global music business** (Dec 2019)

Water & Music's full research catalog can be found at <https://www.waterandmusic.com/archive/>.

## ***Freelance writing***

- ***Billboard*** – [Author page](#)
- ***Columbia Journalism Review*** – "[In a world of 'algorithmic culture,' music critics fight for relevance](#)"
- ***Complex*** – "[The Life of Pablo' Reinvented the Album As We Know It. Why Has No One Followed Suit?](#)"
- ***DJ Mag*** – "[The future of gaming in electronic music](#)"
- ***Forbes*** – [Author page](#)
- ***Music Ally*** – "[A new breed of music accelerators – for startups and artists alike](#)"
- ***Music Business Worldwide*** – [Author page](#)
- ***NPR Music*** – "[Chinese Tech Giant Tencent Wants A Piece Of The World's Most Successful Record Label](#)"
- ***Pitchfork*** – "[Why So Many Hip-Hop Producers Are Putting Business Before Beats](#)"
- ***Variety*** – "[Fraud Has Become the Latest Hurdle for Music Streaming](#)"
- ***Vulture*** – "[Want to Promote Your Album? Make a Podcast About It](#)"

A more extensive portfolio can be found at <https://cheriehu.com/portfolio>.

## **TALKS & APPEARANCES**

### ***Invited talks: Industry***

#### **Solo keynotes:**

- **A2IM Indie Week** (Virtual) – “Emerging technologies in the music industry.” Jun 2020.
- **Changes** (Melbourne, AU) – “Are we ready for music streaming beyond the phone?” July 2018.
- **Festival CoMA** (Brasília, BR) – “Decentralized Autonomous Organizations (DAOs): A case study with Water & Music.” Aug 2022.
- **IFRRO World Congress** (Edinburgh, UK) – “The gamification of the music business.” Nov 2019.
- **MIDEM** (Cannes, FR) – “Music and Emerging Tech: The State of Play.” Jan 2023.
- **MUTEK Forum** (Virtual) – “A Silver Lining: Will the pandemic bring about positive change for the music industry?” Sep 2020.

- **Pathwaves Digital Accelerator** (Virtual) – “A Digital Industry: Navigating Business and Mental Models.” Jan 2022.
- **Primavera Pro** (Barcelona, ES) – “Music and Web3: where do we go from here?” May 2023.
- **SXSW** (Austin, TX, USA) – “Co-Creation: Lessons from a Music/Media DAO.” Mar 2022.

### Panels:

- **A3C Festival** (Atlanta, GA, USA) – “The Future of Data.” Oct 2018.
- **AIM Sync** (Virtual) – “Gaming the System – The Evolving World of Games.” Feb 2022.
- **All About Music** (Mumbai, IN) – “Apna Time Aagaya! The Rise of Non-Film Music.” Aug 2019.
- **by:Larm** (Oslo, NO) – “What makes a startup investable.” Feb 2020.
- **ETHDenver** (Denver, CO, USA) – “Music and Web3.” Feb 2022.
- **Slate’s Future Tense** (Washington, DC, USA) – “How streaming is changing music.” Jan 2019.
- **IMS Ibiza** (Ibiza, ES) – “Disruptors, No Rules.” May 2018.
- **Music Biz** (Nashville, TN, USA) – “#NEXTGEN\_NOW 2.0: Young Voices, High Industry Impact.” May 2019.
- **MIDEM** (Cannes, FR) – Keynote discussion with Troy Carter. Jun 2019.
- **Sónar+D** (Barcelona, ES) – “From accelerator to investment.” Jun 2016.
- **Sørveiv** (Kristiansand, NO) – “The Birth of Curation.” Nov 2017.
- **SXSW** (Austin, TX, USA) – “Web3 Tools for Journalists.” Mar 2022.
- **L.A. Comic Con** (Los Angeles, CA, USA) – “Music, Comic Books & Storytelling.” Oct 2017.
- **Tokyo Dance Music Event** (Tokyo, JP) – “The state of music streaming in Japan.” Dec 2017.
- **US Copyright Office** (Virtual) – “Listening session: AI in audiovisual works.” May 2023.
- **Web Summit** (Lisbon, PT) – “The future of music discovery.” Nov 2018.

### ***Invited talks: Academic***

- **Berklee Valencia** (Valencia, Spain) – “Five reasons why the future of music is the future of video games.” Solo talk to graduate students in Berklee Valencia’s Master of Arts in Global Entertainment and Music Business, as part of the program’s Music Business Seminar taught by Alexandre Perrin. Mar 2021.
- **Cornell Tech** (New York, NY, USA) – “The music-tech landscape in 2018.” Solo talk to a combination of MBA and Computer Science graduate students in Cornell Tech’s five-week course on Big Data and Marketing, taught by Visiting Professor John Deighton. Apr 2018.
- **CUNY Newmark Graduate School of Journalism** (Virtual) – “Designing a DAO for your brand.” Panel discussion on the opportunities and challenges in applying first principles around decentralized autonomous organizations (DAOs) to next-gen media companies. Jun 2023.
- **Harvard University** (Virtual) – Guest speaker to students in the course The Music of Women Creators, taught by Anne Shreffler in Harvard’s Music Department. Sep 2020.
- **New York University** (New York, NY, USA) – Guest speaker in several undergraduate courses, including:

- Digital Innovation & Crowdsourcing, taught by Natalia Levina. NYU Stern, Apr 2023.
- Music in the Media Business, taught by Jerry Del Colliano. NYU Steinhardt, Oct 2019.
- International Music Business Marketplace, taught by Ruby Marchand. NYU Steinhardt, May 2019.
- Writing About Popular Music, taught by Robert Levine. NYU Gallatin, Apr 2019.
- Concert Management, taught by Mehmet Dede. NYU Steinhardt, Dec 2017.
- **Northeastern University** (Boston, MA, USA) – “The new ‘music influencer economy’: Case studies from Asia.” Solo talk to undergraduate students in Northeastern University’s Music Industry program, as part of the institution’s Global Music Industries in Context course taught by Rebekah E. Moore. Oct 2019.
- **University of Oregon** (Eugene, OR, USA) – “Why the music business is a petri dish for innovation in journalism.” Solo talk to undergraduate and graduate students in the University of Oregon’s School of Journalism and Communication, as part of the institution’s public Demystifying Media seminar series led by Damian Radcliffe. Feb 2019.

## **AWARDS, AFFILIATION, AND SERVICE**

### ***Awards***

#### **Reeperbahn Festival**

*International Music Business Journalist of the Year • Hamburg, DE • Sep 2017, Sep 2018*

- Consecutive two-time winner of annual award honoring highest-level work in international music business journalism, decided based on a combination of industry-insider nominations and public audience voting.

#### **Harvard University**

*Book Award, Department of Germanic Languages and Literatures • Cambridge, MA, USA • May 2016*

- Sole recipient of annual award honoring a top-performing student in a Germanic Language course.

### ***Jury and mentorship appointments***

- **Factory Berlin** (Berlin, DE) – Creative Jury Board member and mentor, Artist-in-Residence program. Aug 2019 – Feb 2020.
- **International Sound Awards** (Hamburg, DE) – Jury member. Sep 2020.
- **Product Hunt** (Virtual) – Online mentor on music-tech strategy. Aug 2020 – Mar 2021.

- **Reeperbahn Festival** (Hamburg, DE) — Board member, ANCHOR Award. Sep 2019.
- **SXSW** (Austin, TX, USA) — Judge, Startup Competition. Mar 2023.
- **Techstars Music** (Los Angeles, CA, USA) — Mentor, pitch practice. May 2019.

## ***Volunteer experience***

### **Sound Thinking NYC**

*Mentor, Guest Speaker • New York, NY, USA • Jul 2018 – present*

- Moderate and speak on annual panels introducing young high-school women to career opportunities in the music industry, in partnership with the CUNY Creative Arts Team (CAT) and the NYC Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment (MOME).

### **Scarsdale Schools Young Writers’ Workshop**

*Workshop Facilitator • Scarsdale, NY, USA • Nov 2018 – present*

- Organize and lead free, annual workshops with 30 elementary- to middle-school students on introduction to music journalism.

## **SKILLS**

- **Languages:** French (certified business fluency), Mandarin Chinese (elementary proficiency).
- **Technical & quantitative analysis:** R, Python, Gephi, Microsoft Excel, ChatGPT, Claude.
- **Content & project management:** G Suite, Notion, Airtable, WordPress, Drupal, Obsidian.
- **Social media & digital communication:** Mailchimp, ConvertKit, Twitter, Instagram, Discord.
- **Other:** Fact-checking, public speaking, editorial strategy, event planning, community design, crowdsourced research management.