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Worksheets to Sheet Music: Howie Kutcher

For many years, KPMG alumnus Howie Kutcher practiced tax accounting – and the piano.

He has since moved on to a different career as a recruiter but he is still practicing the piano and playing before audiences in his spare time.

“Live music has been a constant in my life from a very early age,” Kutcher explained. “You could say it’s in my blood.” An accomplished pianist, Kutcher means that literally - he hails from a distinguished line of professional musicians, including two uncles, his paternal grandfather, and his dad Marvin, who played drums at three presidential inaugurations.

Despite his familial bent, when it came time to choose a professional career, Kutcher opted for public accounting over public appearances. “I wanted a more stable lifestyle and secure income than is usually available to even the most gifted musicians,” he explained. “Still, it’s a great sideline - I love performing whenever the opportunity arises,” he added.

Currently Kutcher plays about five gigs a year at venues ranging from nursery schools to nursing homes. He has performed at dozens of neighborhood gatherings, business events, and parties all over Westchester County over the past 20 years.

The man referred to by *Trusted Professional* - the newsletter of the NY State CPA Society - as the ‘tax world’s resident piano man’ was initially trained in classical music. “Then I found a new piano teacher who was willing to teach me the music I love.” Kutcher’s “Sing-A-Long with Howie” repertoire today consists mostly of classic rock - Elton John, Billy Joel and the Beatles.

Kutcher graduated from Baruch College in the early 80s and later received his CPA license and master’s in taxation. After joining a number of smaller accounting firms, he landed at KPMG as part of the Main Hurdman merger in 1987. After serving a stint in the corporate tax department of a leading drug company, Kutcher changed careers and headed up the corporate tax divisions of two personnel agencies. In 1990, he opened his own recruiting business - Kutcher Tax Careers, Inc. Today, Kutcher’s firm places about 20 tax professionals in private industry and with CPA firms each year.

Throughout the years, the changes in jobs and careers, and the increasing demands of family and professional life, Kutcher has never lost his passion for music. He continues to practice, to hone his act, re-mix his repertoire, and seek out opportunities to perform.

“It makes me happy, and singing along brings people together and boosts their spirits, “ he explained.

Kutcher noted that people have asked him if his music ever detracts from career and family life.

“The truth is, it’s just the opposite. Playing the piano, especially with people enthusiastically singing along, both invigorates me and relaxes me. I sometimes describe the experience as analogous to runners’ high and that incredible feeling when the endorphins are released. That’s what music does for me. Everyone should have an outlet that combines fun, artistry and personal satisfaction and a sideline that can be enjoyed alone or shared with others.”