

CLIENT STORIES

Why the Willan Academy of Music trusts OnPay with **payroll** and **HR**

To stay focused on nurturing budding musicians and building a community, Kenji Haba needs his payroll and HR to run on autopilot.



HOW IT ALL STARTED

Setting the stage for a new kind of music academy

For Kenji Haba, running a music school wasn't always the plan. Before becoming the founder and director of the Willan Academy of Music, he started a career in accounting, but the work just didn't resonate. That realization led Kenji to put the spreadsheets aside and pursue his lifelong passion: music.

After earning his master's in guitar performance from the Manhattan School of Music, he began reimagining what a student's musical education experience could look like. What emerged was the Willan Academy of Music — a space rooted not just in personalized lessons, but in fostering a genuine, lasting love for musical discovery.

What makes Kenji's journey unique is how he's found harmony between the numbers and the notes. Rather than leaving his accounting roots behind, he used that financial foundation to build a business that is as operationally sound as it is creatively fulfilling. From managing operations to running payroll, Kenji ensures the business maintains a steady tempo. For him, even the administrative side is rewarding, because it supports the teachers and students who make the mission possible.

Even as the academy has grown, Kenji makes sure he is never far from the classroom. Over the past decade, Kenji has mentored many of his students from their very first lesson, through high school, and all the way to their college send-offs.



ABOUT THE CLIENT

Willan Academy of Music

Located in New York, NY, Willan Academy of Music blends expert training with a genuine love for music, helping students of all levels build confidence, develop their skills, and cultivate a lasting connection to their craft.

Where: New York, New York

Company Size: 25+ employees

Client Industry: Music and education

Joined OnPay: November 2015

Willan Academy of Music needed a simple way to run payroll as a new business. With OnPay, payroll and tax filings were handled seamlessly – all backed by expert support.

A screenshot of the OnPay dashboard. The top left shows the OnPay logo. The main header says "Good evening, Michelle". Below this are four circular profile pictures of employees: Marissa Richards, Douglas Riddle, Eliana Dennis, and Jessica Foley, with a plus sign icon to the right. The dashboard is divided into three main sections: "Recent pay run" showing "Feb 1st", "Pay schedule" showing a calendar grid with dates 1 through 25, and "Next pay run" showing "Feb 5th" and "Bi-Weekly". A sidebar on the left lists navigation options: Dashboard, Workers, Payroll, Reports, Filings, HR, Time, Benefits, and Company. A red badge on the right side of the dashboard reads "PC MAG.COM EDITORS' CHOICE".



THE CHALLENGE

Searching for the right payroll partner

Kenji had tried well-known providers, but the experience felt rigid, impersonal, and far from what he actually needed for his back office. Settling for a one-size-fits-all solution was not an option. He needed a partner that felt as intentional and adaptable as the community he was building. Searching for a payroll provider that could truly keep up.

He focused on a few non-negotiables:

- ✓ Flexibility to seamlessly pay and manage full-time and part-time teachers
- ✓ Automation to take the complexity out of payroll and tax filings
- ✓ Pricing that made sense for a growing business

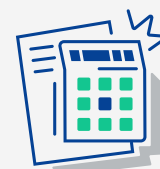
With OnPay, Willan Academy of Music:



Saves thousands a year compared to premium payroll providers



Supports full-time and part-time staff without paying extra fees



Handles tax filings and payments so costs never creep up

THE SOLUTION

Finding the right payroll partner in OnPay

Kenji compared payroll services, explored platforms, and read reviews. In the end, OnPay rose above the rest with its intuitive design, tax automation, and flexibility that actually fit his academy's operating model.

“

“OnPay is exceptionally user-friendly and facilitates seamless payroll management. For our hourly rate employees, the ability to import Excel data into OnPay significantly streamlines the process.”

Kenji H.,
Willan Academy of Music

PRESENT DAY

More time back with less admin to manage

Onboarding to OnPay was seamless. After a quick setup, Kenji no longer has to worry about tax compliance or whether his team is being paid accurately. Instead, he easily onboards new hires, and relies on a smooth integration with QuickBooks to keep his books in sync. OnPay fits naturally into his workflow, running quietly in the background.

With more time back in his day, Kenji can focus on growing his business, strengthening his marketing efforts, and making a meaningful impact in the music community.

For more information:
onpay.com

