The Engaged Musician is a passionate call to musicians, of whatever genre or discipline, to rescue themselves and us from the commercial tyrannies and dictates currently forming our musical life, and relocate it very determinedly in a meaningful social and aesthetic exchange. The book focuses on various themes typical of social, political and cultural engagement, without insisting on sectional interests.

Since his student years in London, Sam Richards - writer, musician, folklorist - has been equally devoted to experimental music and vernacular music, including the folksong revival. His sound archive of song, music and oral history recorded in the Westcountry is now housed by the British Library. Experimental music and improvisation are his core practices, focusing on music for large groups and using invented notations. He has previously written about musical democracy and the music of John Cage.