Chamber Ensembles and Web Presence: Best Practices for Creating and Presenting Online Content

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CHAMBER ENSEMBLES AND WEB PRESENCE: 
BEST PRACTICES FOR CREATING AND PRESENTING ONLINE CONTENT

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
Louisiana State University and
Agricultural and Mechanical College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts

in
The College of Music and Performing Arts

by
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I have had so much help and support during this time, it’s hard to know who to thank. Starting with my professor and mentor, Seth Orgel, for all of his help, motivation, patience, and advice during this research process. To my mother, Jenni, for encouraging me to try on "new hats," and always supporting me, no matter what path I forged. To Matt, you were there during some of the most challenging moments. You helped me power through, and helped me relax when you knew that’s what I needed most. To Mimi, I truly would have not been able to complete this paper without your help. You have provided me with the luxury of time, and I will forever be thankful for that.

To Minos the Saint and the Gargoyle Brass: I started this degree because I wanted to learn how to do everything that is necessary to have a successful chamber ensemble. As I end this degree, I am excited to apply my new skills and knowledge to help Minos the Saint grow. It is the best job in the world when you get to play music, and work with people you love and respect.
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This study is about creating an online presence for a chamber ensemble. The study takes recommendations from notable books on music entrepreneurship, articles written for classical musicians on the importance of online content for musicians, and articles from select music industry websites. The author compares and combines these recommendations with interviews from members of seven different professional chamber ensembles, and the online presence of seventeen professional chamber ensembles that are based in the United States. The purpose of this study is to introduce to newly formed chamber ensembles how current chamber ensembles are using online media, what content is being presented online, and how to create the most common content. The study organizes the collected advice from resources and interviews, as compared with the studied ensembles, to conclude with recommendations for the most common content being used online.

The study determines the most commonly used online platforms, and how they are being used. Included in this study is the use, organization and content of: Websites; Facebook; Twitter; Instagram; and YouTube. The author then goes into detail about how to create the content for these different platforms. Detailed studies are included for: organizing and choosing content for websites; collecting information and writing an ensemble biography; the attributes of a professional ensemble photo; working with a professional photographer; the different kinds of audio and video recordings and how to create these recordings; and working with a sound engineer.

The author chose to specifically focus on classical music chamber ensembles due to the absence of documentation focused specifically on this group of musicians. The studied documentation primarily focuses these discussions as they apply to solo musicians, or musicians in the pop/rock/indie music genre. The author has taken the recommendations from these different genres of music and determined how they can relate specifically to classical chamber ensembles. Through this study, the author has determined the best practices and recommendations for chamber musicians on what is needed to start their online profiles.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Musicians have been utilizing the internet, websites, and social media, to present information about their ensembles, and promote themselves for years. The question is no longer if an ensemble has an online presence, the question is how an ensemble will utilize these tools. I have focused this research on “classical” chamber ensembles because as an entity, a chamber ensemble falls between a solo, or freelance musician, a “band,” and a small business. With audiences, and funding similar to those of a solo classical musician, but with several people involved in performances, musical decisions, ensemble operations, and administrative duties are shared among the members. The intended audience for this document are young players in the early part of their professional careers who have formed a chamber ensemble with the intention of making money performing.

There are a handful of books dedicated to the self-managed, or “entrepreneurial” musician, which focus on the classical musician’s career, written by expert advisors to classical musicians. These books help aid musicians through many of the challenges of starting, and maintaining a career in music, and have been the primary resources for much of this research. These references all have some information regarding an artist website, photos, writing an artist biography, creating recordings, and online marketing strategies. From this research, I created an outline of questions to ask active chamber musicians for first hand details and advice about creating recordings, videos, and getting photos for their ensembles, how this content is used online, as well as their general philosophies on using online platforms for chamber ensemble.

Most of the primary resources contain minimal information about social media content and usage, or creating video content. These references also focus primarily on a solo musician creating his or her own career path, as opposed to a chamber ensemble working together democratically to create a career in ensemble. For more detailed, and current information on social media and website building practices, I turned to online resources for musicians of any genre. There are numerous online resources that give general recommendations on how each social media platform works, and how best to use these platforms. There are also numerous resources about creating a website for musicians, including templates with recommendations on kinds of content, and where to put certain information. The problem with many of these resources is that most of them do not provide information specifically for musicians of the “classical” genre, and even fewer have information for chamber ensembles. Content

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1 As compared to classical era music, from the late eighteenth century. In popular use, this term is used to mean any serious art music as distinct from jazz, pop, or folk. [http://www.thefreedictionary.com/classical+music](http://www.thefreedictionary.com/classical+music) (accessed 2/24/17).

2 The term “band” being used as a generic word for musical groups performing music from rock and pop culture genres, as opposed to the ensembles who perform art music.
recommendations, and templates for solo musicians, or pop/rock/indie music have limits on what can be related to a chamber ensemble, based on the differences in audiences, musical goals, and ensemble missions. All recommendations and advice from these online sources, and the primary books, are then compared with the online profiles from active chamber ensembles. These comparisons show what recommendations are being utilized, what recommendations are not being utilized, and shows how active chamber musicians are using online tools, and what kinds of content these ensembles are presenting online as compare to the research.

I interviewed members from seven chamber ensembles; four brass quintets, two wind quintets, and one string quartet. Experience levels varied for each ensemble, but all ensembles have been performing regularly for a minimum of five years, they all have a website, and they have all released a commercial album. For the purposes of this study, these ensembles, and the members are to remain anonymous. Edited transcripts of their interviews are in the appendix. Seventeen different ensembles online activity was also studied; seven brass quintets, two woodwind quintets, four string quartets, and four mixed ensembles, with the maximum number of members being ten. Their websites and social media platforms were all accessed between January 20, 2016 and February 20, 2017. I chose ensembles that were at varying levels of their careers, but all had future performances scheduled, and had released a commercial album. Additional information about these ensembles and their qualifications for this study are listed in the appendix, including the name of the ensemble, their website, social media handles, and the date the ensemble was founded.

The following chapters discuss in detail the most important content necessary for all online media and other uses. The study begins with determining what content is being presented on the ensembles’ websites and social media platforms, and how these sites are being used. With details on what online sources are recommended in the research, compared with what is currently being used by the studied ensembles. The primary purpose of the first two chapters is to determine how ensembles are utilizing online resources, and to compare what content is consistently present on all social media platforms, so the rest of this study can focus on those materials. The content studied includes: ensemble biographies, professional photographs, and audio and video recordings.

This document combines detailed recommendations from the research on the use of these materials, and how to create this content. Many of the sections include questions to consider, or the process of working with professionals in certain fields. All of this content is compared to the studied ensembles to show characteristics that are, or are not, present in professional ensembles’ biographies, photos, recordings, and videos. The purpose of this detail is to guide the reader on what content is being presented online, how it is being presented, and how to create quality content. Each chapter contains its own introduction and conclusion with further details on how studies were conducted for each subject. At the end of every chapter I have included a “Best Practices” list that summarizes the major points in the
chapter regarding what a chamber ensemble should do to create the discussed content. These lists are determined by what steps, or content was most often discussed in the research, and used by the studied chamber ensembles.
CHAPTER 2. SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL NETWORKING

Recent studies show there are more than 1.6 billion social media users worldwide, with over 160 million users in the United States (The Statistics Portal, accessed 12/22/16). Based on these statistics, the advice given by interviews, and in the research, social media is a valuable tool for chamber ensembles. “Social media is a mainstay in our world now. No other medium quite has the reach and instantaneousness that social media has.” (Ronald Interview). Ensembles can interact with fans near or far, update a large constituent of people about activities and performances, share stories, videos, and photos. In this chapter I will combine research from the recommended resources, as well as data collected from studied ensemble’s social media pages to describe the general uses of social media as it relates to chamber musicians, along with a study on specific content for certain platforms.

In most of the research, the term “Social Media” is used for both describing online networking technology and when discussing online interaction with others. However, online technology and interaction can be broken up into two different terms, “Social Media,” and “Social Networking.”

Social Media is: “Forms of electronic communication (as Web sites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (such as videos)” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, accessed 12/22/16) or, “A way of describing all the multi-sensory online tools (text, audio, images, video, widgets, application) that people are using to be ‘social.’” (Baker 2011, p. 87)

Social Networking is: “The use of dedicated websites and applications to interact with other users, or to find people with similar interests to one’s own.” (From Oxford Living Dictionaries, accessed 12/22/16) or, “A reference to the way people are interacting and communicating with each other online.” (Baker 2011, p. 87)

More people are relying on the internet for entertainment and educational resources, and get recommendations from their online friends on things they should watch or listen to (Hyatt 2012, p. 195). People access this information from different online sources, and though many people use multiple platforms, users will have preferences in what platforms they rely on to find certain information (Cutler 2010, p. 104). In addition to reaching more people through their preferred social media platform, the more platforms your ensemble has profiles on, the more “hits” your group will get in a keyword search (Beeching 2010, p. 123, Cutler 2010, p. 104). Having a website, and being active on different social media platforms helps your general online presence, and it is also a way for potential new fans to find you, see what your ensemble is about, and listen to your music (Beeching 2010, p. 123; Collard 2012, pp. 13, 38; Cutler 2010, p. 94; Passman, p. 14; Horace interview). This section will discuss the advantages
and challenges of using social media. Social media platforms change frequently, and current platforms may be replaced by something different in the next few years. The goal of this chapter is to give general guidelines for using any form of social media based on the data collected from the studied chamber ensembles and their use of current social media platforms.

Many of the studied resources, and interviews discussed the value of social media as a marketing and networking tool (Baker 2011; Beeching 2010; Collard 2012; 
Cool 2014; Cutler 2010; DeMers 2016; Hyatt 2012; Loeb 2016, Occhino 2016, Passman 2006; Smotherman n.d.; 
Cool 2014; Whitney 2013; Clara interview; Ensemble A interview; Ensemble X interview; Horace interview; Justin interview; Philip interview; and Ronald interview), and all studied ensembles use at least one major social media platform. Though the classical music resources (Beeching; Cutler; Hyatt; Whitney; and interviews) all discuss the value of social media for classical musicians, the internet resources for indie musicians (Collard; Cool; DeMers; Loeb; Occhino; Passman; Smotherman; and Cool) provided more details on how best to utilize the different social media platforms for networking and interaction. The studied ensembles did not follow all the strategies for using social media that were listed by the resources. To compare the resources’ recommendations with how ensembles are actually using social media, I studied posts from Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube, looking at quantity, frequency, and subject matter that chamber ensembles are sharing on social media. This chapter will conclude with the list of best practices for what kinds of content to post, and approximately how active an ensemble should be on social media, as it was determined through the online study and the recommendations.

Getting Started on Social Media

Before you start on any social media platform

1. Research which platforms your audience is using and be active on those (Baker 2011, p. 89-91; Whitney 2013, p. 66):
   a. Ask people who are active on social media what platforms they are using (Ronald interview), or read articles about the new platforms by people using it (Baker 2011, pp. 89-91). Find ensembles in your genre who use social media effectively and follow them (Beeching 2010, p. 126; Smotherman n.d.; Whitney 2013, p. 66).
   b. Connect your ensemble identity and goals with the types of platforms you choose (Whitney 2013, p. 66). For example, you might not want a Twitter profile if one of your ensemble’s goals is to share long narratives about the music you play, but you might want a YouTube profile if your performances emphasize the visual presentation.
2. Be a consumer on the platform: Study how ensembles similar to yours use the platform before you start using that platform. This should apply to blogs, podcasts, social networking sites, and audio or video content. (Baker 2010, pp. 89-91; Smotherman n.d.)
   a. Notice what works and doesn’t work on different platforms, or in general (Smotherman n.d.).
3. Create an efficient and strategic plan for different platforms (Whitney 2013, p. 80-81).
4. Choose the platform(s) that you feel comfortable with, and will use regularly, and don’t try to start all of them at once. (Collard 2012, p. 59; Hyatt 2012, p. 59; Whitney 2013, p. 66; Justin interview).
5. Secure the same name for your website, and other social media platforms (Beeching 2010, p. 131; Hyatt 2012, pp. 69, 90, 91):
   a. If you haven’t started using a specific platform, but intend to, make a profile or register your ensemble name to match all your other online media platforms. This will help with brand consistency, and make it easier to find your profiles on every platform, and to protect your ensemble identity from a false ensemble posting things that do not represent your group (Collard 2012, p. 58).
6. Cyber Safety: Remember that anything you put up online is available to the public. Be aware of your language, comments, and photos that are online. NEVER post phone number, birthday, home address, and other personal habits. (Beeching 2010, p. 127)
7. Protect your content: A word of warning about posting video and audio content. Protect your performances by obtaining the copyright before posting on social media. Additional information can be found in the Copyright chapter, and appendices.

General recommendations/considerations and on how and what to post

1. Everything you put on the internet should have value, whether an advertisement, helpful advice, something entertaining, or something to attract new fans (Cutler 2010, p. 93; Justin interview; Quentin from Ensemble A interview).
2. Keep your social media up-to-date, with regular posts (Hyatt 2012, p. 35; Whitney 2013, p. 66; Clara interview; Horace interview; Liza from Ensemble X interview).
3. Ensure that posts on social media are consistent with the brand identity you have created for your ensemble (Whitney 2013, p. 66; Clara interview; Ensemble X interview).
4. Quality should always be considered before quantity. Make sure your updates are relevant, and interesting to you followers (Collard 2012, p. 59; DeMers 2016; Clara interview; Ensemble A interview; Ensemble X interview).
5. All platforms should lead to the ensemble’s website, where you have complete control over content and presentation (Beeching 2010, p. 123; Cutler 2010, p. 104; Vinson 2012).
6. Post information about upcoming performances (Liza from Ensemble X interview; Justin interview; Ronald interview).

7. Promote others’ projects and share information in addition to promoting yourself (Smotherman n.d.; Whitney 2013, p. 66).

8. Respond to and interact with peers, fans, promoters, and others (Baker 2011, p. 101; Collard 2012 p. 21; Whitney 2013, p. 66).

9. Post “every day” activities. Such as “behind the scenes” photos, videos, or stories from rehearsals, recording sessions, or other activities outside of performances (Ensemble X interview; Justin interview; Ronald interview).

10. Comment on current events and relevant things, show your place in the world, rather than only post things about the ensemble, share articles, or post comments on certain current events (Collard 2012, p. 23; Justin interview).

Community, Communication and Marketing Through Social Media

“A website provides basic information about your project, social media adds a personal touch to your web presence.” (Whitney 2013, p. 64). Much of the research stresses that social media is to be social, where you can cultivate your followers, through interaction, and engagement (Beeching 2010, p. 126; Collard 2012, p. 24). Ways to interact are diverse, based on the platform, and how people choose to utilize each platform. Interaction can be conversational, where two or more parties have an online public discussion, where anyone can chime in with comments, private messages can be exchanged, or people can post one-sided messages for people to view without comment (Baker 2011, pp. 91-92; Beeching 2010, p. 126; Collard 2012, p. 25-26; Hyatt 2012, p. 52). Your ensemble can connect with hundreds or even thousands of people. You can invite them to performances, send ensemble updates, share content, ask questions to the masses, or give and get feedback about projects. There are many ways to interact (Beeching 2012, p. 125). Any online platform is essentially a community of friends, supporters, and fans. An online community is a great way to connect with people who share your interests, and can support your ensemble, no matter where in the world they live (Collard 2012, p. 24; Whitney 2013, p. 64). Hyatt observes three main kinds of online community members (below). “Community” members interact online differently. Be aware of these different types of community members, and try to ensure they are getting the attention and information they want from your ensemble (Cutler 2010, p. 104; Hyatt 2012, p. 57).

Community #1: Your super fans- Primarily your live audience, they attend your shows regularly (and may even travel), know you by name, will buy many things you have to offer (not just music), and they evangelize strongly on your behalf. If you have a street team, they are on it (Hyatt 2012, p. 56).
Community #2: Engaged Fans- These fans are your active online audience. They are the newsletter subscribers, blog readers, video watchers, etc., and active social media friends who frequently comment and engage with you on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and more (Hyatt 2012, p. 56).

Community #3: Passive Online Audience- Your social media friends who are aware of you via social media outlets, but don’t actively communicate with you, and may not have even heard your music (yet) (Hyatt 2012, p. 57).

Much of the research discusses the marketing advantages of social media, but Hyatt, Smotherman, and the musicians interviewed, stress that building an online community through interaction, socialization, and quality posts is more important than using social media only as an online “bulletin board” (Smotherman n.d.; Whitney 2013, p. 65; Justin interview; Wallace from Ensemble X interview). “We’re trying to give our fans more of a look at what we’re doing.” (Justin interview). In my interviews, and as it will show in the studied ensembles, marketing performances is less important to ensembles than sharing stories or activities. This helps the ensemble personalize themselves, and connect with fans as people rather than an organization (Clara interview; Justin interview; Wallace from Ensemble X interview). People who are invested in your ensemble will market for you with their enthusiasm, commitment, and investment in your ensemble’s success. These top fans will post and share things your ensemble is doing on their own social media sites, which will create a larger online reach, and thus create more online presence (Hyatt 2012, p. 56; Smotherman n.d.). In addition to creating a more loyal following, having an active and engaged online audience will reflect well to promoters, venues, booking agents, and journalists. Smotherman does advise to be patient when it comes to building this dedicated fan base, as it will take more time to cultivate them through interaction. Quality of performances, and consistent quality online interaction are important to these community members (Smotherman n.d.).

Quentin and Bridget are skeptical of the influence social media plays on growing their audience. They maintain different platforms, but still believe more traditional marketing, and word-of-mouth promotion is a more reliable way to build their following. They keep their social media active not to necessarily build new followers, but to keep their current fans informed about their activities. (Ensemble A interview). None of the other interviews talked about using social media specifically for finding new fans through the medium, they generally talked about using the different mediums to keep their fans engaged. Justin talked more about encouraging people at performances to follow them on Facebook (Justin interview).
Using the internet as a marketing tool

Marketing through social media has been incredibly helpful as a replacement to expensive print marketing, or as an additional marketing tool. It also has the potential to reach a larger market than traditional print marketing (Collard 2012, p. 30; Hyatt 2012, p. 195; Ronald interview). Your ensemble can invite fans to performances by setting up an “Event” on Facebook, or by simply announcing performances on your online platforms, and/or including links to purchase tickets or merchandise. In some of the research, the writers talk about using social media as a marketing tool (Collard 2012, p. 30; Cutler 2010, p. 93; Hyatt 2012, p. 195). I also asked about this use in my interviews. Most of the interviews agreed that using social media is an easy way to share events and performances, but they do not use their social media accounts solely as promotional tools (Justin interview; Liza from Ensemble X interview; Philip interview; Quentin from ensemble A interview).

Advice on using the internet as a marketing tool

1. Have a marketing strategy (Collard 2012, p. 55; Cutler 2010, p. 93).
   a. What are you selling? Performances, CDs, merchandise, or just growing your fan base (Cutler 2010, p. 93)?
   b. Who will be in charge of the posts? Will it be a group effort, or one member of the ensemble, or a PR or management (Collard 2010, p. 55; and question asked in interviews with: Clara; Horace; Justin; Philip; Ensemble A; Ensemble X)?
2. Be wary of paying for advertisement space from Facebook, or other social media sites. It is unlikely it will help with getting people to your performance (Loeb 2016).
   a. However, paid advertising with specific content for a specific performance can be useful. The main goal is to get people who haven’t heard of you looking at your Facebook page, visiting your website, and possibly going to the performance (Liza from Ensemble X interview).
3. Make sure the word gets out not only a day or two before the concert, but a couple weeks (Philip interview).
4. Use your friend network to help get the word out. Utilize “word of mouth” promotion, even on online venues (Philip interview).

Greatest challenges with social media

Benefits generally outweigh the hindrances in social media. However, in interviews and in some of the research, there were some suggestions and warnings about the use of social media. Below is a list
of challenges and considerations to take when using social media that may help when putting together your ensemble’s social media strategy.

1. Updating: The biggest challenge discussed in the interviews was that social media is time consuming, and requires constant upkeep (Beeching 2010, p. 123; Hyatt 2012, p. 56; Clara interview; Horace interview; Justin interview; Philip interview).

2. Gaining followers at performances: Remember to mention your social media networks at performances, you want to get people to follow you on your preferred networks (Justin interview).

3. Casual communication: Try to avoid using social media as a means of communication with official organizations such as venues, promoters, or media (Cool 2014, p. 27).

4. Don't over promote: Be careful about coming across as too sales-oriented. If all your ensemble posts are promotional announcements, your followers will tune you out, or even unfollow you. It’s about balancing useful information, subtle self-promotion, and insightful peeks into your life and personality (Baker 2011, pp. 108-109).
   a. Oversaturation, or the wrong kinds of posts could lead to people hiding your posts, or unfollowing you. Make sure your posts are relevant, and appropriate for the platform (Smotherman n.d.).

5. Don't invite all followers to all performances: Only invite people who live in the area where you will be performing (Baker 2011, p. 105; Justin interview).

6. A general guideline is try to retweet, reply, comment, and share relevant content from others more than you broadcast and peddle your own wares (Smotherman n.d.).

Quality over quantity

Most of the interviews stressed that you should only put up quality posts (Clara; Justin; Quentin from Ensemble A interview). There is also discussion regarding oversaturation, and how too many posts, particularly if they are not meaningful, can be annoying to the viewers (DeMers 2016; Bridget from Ensemble A interview; Clara; Justin). DeMers warns of new ways platforms are prioritizing posts, and an ensemble must consider this new method when posting. Posts are no longer being shown to viewers chronologically. The platforms have created an algorithm that sorts posts based on perceived relevance. To make your posts more “relevant” to your followers your posts will need to be more engaging, encouraging likes and clicks by viewers.

Quentin and Bridget talked about the “internet celebrity” phenomenon. The internet celebrity is a person or group that has created a large following through one, or many online platforms. They warn that many of these people put a lot of work into their online reputation, but cannot back up this “fame” in live performances. They stress that an ensemble’s live performance quality should be more of the focus than
putting out heavily edited, but striking videos (Ensemble A interview). Quality is important, but only if it is coming from the players, not the technology.

Clara recommends being thoughtful of what you are posting on the internet. Whether it’s posting a photo that is not of good quality, or reflects an image of your ensemble that doesn’t match your mission or goals. On creating any profile online: “Go about it from moment one with the approach that you are creating a brand, and you want to put up things of quality and that you are consistent.” (Clara interview).

Social Media Platforms Being Used

For this section, I referred to recommended platforms from the research, a list of top current social media sites (Moreau 2016), and then compared these with the active accounts of the studied ensembles to see which ones were most popular. There were nine platforms that I found where some or all the ensembles had profiles, or a presence. Additional platforms can be found in the appendix of this section. Ensembles were more active on some of the profiles than others.

1. 17/17 have a Facebook profile. All profiles are Musician/Band pages, with two ensembles under “Non-profit” no ensembles use the ensemble name under a personal profile.
2. 17/17 have a YouTube profile.
3. 17/17 have a MySpace profile.
4. 16/17 have an Instagram profile, one additional has been tagged by other users.
5. 16/17 have a Twitter profile, one additional has been tagged by other users.
6. 14/17 have a Google+ account.
7. 12/17 have a SoundCloud profile, and three additional ensembles who have been tagged by other users.
8. 10/17 ensembles have a LinkedIn profile, and five additional have been tagged on current or former ensemble member’s profiles.
9. 9/17 have a Wikipedia page about the ensemble.
10. 7/17 ensemble have a Vimeo profile, and six additional ensembles have been tagged by other users.
11. 5/17 have a Flickr profile.
12. 5/17 have a Vine profile.
13. 3/17 have a UStream profile.
I have chosen to discuss how the studied ensembles use Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter, and YouTube. I have chosen these platforms because they are currently the top platforms in social media world-wide, and because they are the most used by the studied ensembles (DeMers 2016). Google+, LinkedIn, and Wikipedia will not be discussed in this section as these accounts serve primarily as another place for the ensemble biography, and are not used by the ensembles in a publicly interactive manner. Information about Instagram will apply to Flickr. Vimeo and YouTube are also very similar platforms. MySpace and SoundCloud are audio-only sites, with minimal opportunities for interaction. Though not discussed directly, content on these sites would come from recordings the ensembles make. See the “Recording” chapter for further details.

Defining the Top Four Social Media Platforms, and a Comparative Study on Use

Each social media platform offers different ways to present content. The better you can tailor your content to these platforms, the more engaged the users of these platforms will become (Hyatt 2012, p. 59). Below are definitions and a general description of use for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube, followed by a list of recommendations from the resources and interviews on what content to include, followed by observations on the content the chosen ensembles.

There were a lot of common recommendations from the research on how to start each of these platforms. As mentioned above, it is best to start by being a consumer of each platform to observe the best ways to be effective on the chosen platforms. For each platform, the research recommends finding musicians and ensembles that are similar to your ensemble, as well as following users who have had a lot of success on that platform.

Recommended steps to take when setting up any social media platform

1. Make sure your profile name is the same for all platforms (Hyatt 2012, p. 69).
2. Make your profiles have the same look by use of the same, or similar photos, images, and colors.
3. Make sure all platforms have updated information, such as bio, photos, and members names.
4. All social media profiles should have a link to your website.
5. Hashtagging: Originally designed for Twitter and then Instagram, you can also search by hashtags on Facebook and YouTube. Using hashtags can help increase the number of

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3 This chapter discusses how YouTube is used as a social media site, details on the videos posted on YouTube can be found in the Recording chapter.
people who see your posts to people who aren’t following you, but search for content with specific hashtags (Baker 2011, p. 128; Hyatt 2012, p. 75; Occhino 2016).

6. Follow people/ensembles who have interesting things to say (Hyatt 2012, p. 70).
   a. You don’t have to follow everyone who follows you (Hyatt 2012, p. 66).

The study below includes definitions, recommendations on use, and a list of qualities from the studied ensembles regarding Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube. The purpose of the study below is to compare recommendations of what to post on these four sites with what the studied ensembles are actually posting. The research does not give advice as to frequency of specific posts, so I have included the average percentages of post types to understand the variety of posts, and what kind of material ensembles post more frequently, and what kinds of posts are less frequent.

Facebook

Definition of a Facebook page: “A Facebook page is a public profile specifically created for businesses, brands, celebrities, causes, and other organizations. Unlike personal profiles, pages do not gain "friends," but "fans" - which are people who choose to "like" a page. Pages can gain an unlimited number of fans, differing from personal profiles, which has had a 5,000 friend maximum put on it by Facebook. Pages work similarly to profiles, updating users with things such as status, links, events, photos and videos. This information appears on the page itself, as well as in its fans’ personal news feeds.” (http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/Facebook-page, accessed 1/8/17).

With 1.79 billion monthly users (The Statistics Portal, accessed 12/22/16), Facebook is the number one social media site that people are using. All research that discussed social media mentioned the use of Facebook (Baker 2011, pp. 101-106; Beeching 2010, p. 126; Cutler 2010, p. 104; Hyatt 2012, p. 60; Occhino 2016), and it is the most frequently used by the studied ensembles, and by the musicians interviewed (Clara interview; Horace interview; Justin interview; Liza from Ensemble X interview; Ronald interview; Quentin from Ensemble A interview). There were two ensemble members who were not themselves active on Facebook, but another member of their ensemble was (Horace interview; Bridget from Ensemble A interview). One of the biggest arguments for using Facebook is that it has a large variety of ways to communicate with people, between regular posts, event scheduling, messaging, and now Facebook Live (Clara interview; Justin interview). There are also several additional apps and widgets you can put on your page to help viewers discover more about your ensemble (Baker 2011, pp. 105-106; Collard 2012, p. 44; Hyatt 2012, p. 61).
Best practices and suggestions for Facebook posts, and uses for a chamber ensemble

   a. Personal pages max out at 5,000 likes, personal pages should be for keeping in touch with friends and family, as well as for sharing non-ensemble related content (Baker 2011, pp. 104-105; Hyatt 2012, p. 60).

2. Facebook has the option to schedule posts, so if there is some content you want to remember to post at a specific time, you can schedule it (Occhino 2015).
   a. The best times to post are Thursday and Friday, with the most shares happening around 1:00pm, and the most likes happening around 3:00pm (Occhino 2016).

3. Reference similar artists in your profile section (Baker 2011, p. 105).

4. You can invite specific people to live events (Baker 2011, p. 105, Justin interview).
   a. You can also invite all of your fans to a live streaming event (Baker 2011, p. 105).

5. You want to make your posts engaging, don’t just post text, include an attachment that’s either a photo or video (Ensemble X interview).
   a. People on Facebook love looking through photos and sharing posts they like. Create a timeline that tells a story of your ensemble’s activities (Occhino 2016).
   b. Presenters, and other people interested in your ensemble will check out your Facebook page, you want to make sure it’s active and engaging (Wallace from Ensemble X interview).

Before discussing the types of posts on ensemble pages, I wanted to give an overview of the activity, and general content of the ensembles on their Facebook page. Below is the general data from the ensembles’ Facebook pages, as of 1/09/17.

1. Average, minimum, and maximum page likes: Of all seventeen ensembles studied (as of 1/09/17) page likes varied from a minimum of 761 to a maximum of 83,735. With an average of 4,205 followers. The ensemble with 83,735 followers is over 70,000 more than the next highest number of followers, so I have not included it in the average.

2. The average number of posts in one week for each ensemble: Ensembles posted as often as six times per week, with an average of one post every 5.5 days. No ensemble posted every day. The maximum number of posts in a single day was five.

3. Does the ensemble have a current photo or logo for profile picture: 17/17 ensembles included either a group photo or a logo, and all images match those on the ensemble website.

4. Does the ensemble include short bio in profile: 17/17 ensembles include a bio in the profile section of Facebook. 11/17 ensembles included when they were founded in the “About” section of Facebook, in a section separate from their bio.When an ensemble was founded was not included
in the research, but I have included it because it was so common in the ensemble profiles.

5. Does the ensemble include member names in profile: 17/17 ensembles include member names in their profile section.

6. Does the ensemble include a website address in profile: 17/17 ensembles included their website address and link to their website.

Below is the data collected based on observations from the content I looked for in the ensemble’s posts. The data collected is from nine weeks of posts on each ensemble’s Facebook pages. Posts studied are from October 30th, 2016 to December 31st, 2016, a total of 62 days. One ensemble had no posts during the studied time frame and is not included in the below data. One ensemble only has one post, and one ensemble has only three posts during the selected dates. These three ensembles posted infrequently. Their total number of posts over the entire 2016 year was: 16, 17, and 27 times, respectively, and were primarily focused during a few months, when their ensemble was active promoting or presenting a workshop.

Below is the data on types of posts for sixteen ensembles

1. Event announcements as general posts: On average 31% of posts were for upcoming events. In the time studied, ensembles posted about events anywhere from 6.3% to 100%
   a. Event pages created: I studied any event pages that were for events happening during the dates studied. 11/16 ensembles did not have any event pages created for performances between October 31, 2016-December 31, 2016. Of the remaining ensembles, event pages varied from one to six for that time.

2. Posts that include photos: 16/16 ensembles included posts with photos during the studied dates. On average, 64% of all posts included a photo.

3. Posts that include video: 13/16 ensembles included at least one video in the studied dates. Of these ensembles, an average of 20.3% of posts are videos.

4. Posts that include links to purchase merchandise or performance tickets: 9/16 ensembles included posts with links to purchase tickets, or merchandise. Of these ensembles, an average of 24.8% of the posts were of this type.

5. Posts that have “behind the scenes” content. Content, such as photos or posts about rehearsals or recordings or posts about traveling to performances: 7/16 ensembles included behind-the-scenes posts. Of these ensembles, an average of 12.2% of posts were behind the scenes.

6. Non-music posts. Additional posts included posts about ensemble members that were not related to music, which could include “behind the scenes” posts with members at restaurants or while on
tour, not rehearsing, and other kinds of non-music posts with the ensemble members. Other posts studied did not include the ensemble, and were not related to music: 10/16 ensembles included posts that were not music related. The average percentage of non-music related posts is 16.6%.

7. Article or post shares about other musicians or ensembles: 7/16 ensembles shared only one post about another musician or ensemble on their wall. One ensemble shared more than one post (8, which was 29% of their posts) about other musician's activities. The average percentage of posts about other musicians, is 8.6%.

8. Posts on ensemble page by non-members: 12/16 ensembles have posts on their walls that are from individuals, however the majority of these posts are either from the ensemble member's personal pages, or from organizations who are hosting the ensemble's performance or masterclass. I do not think this is a valid way to judge interaction of the ensembles with individual followers.

9. Interaction with followers. Looked for ensemble or members commenting, and having public discussions on posts with fans: In general, public interaction with followers was minimal on all pages. Two ensembles ran a “give-away” competition that asked followers to comment on the post, and the first person with a correct answer to a riddle, or the first to comment would get a free album. The other primary interaction ensembles had with followers was “liking” a follower’s comment on their post.

Some of the resources discuss another advantage of Facebook. A fan page can include applications or widgets that may help promote your ensemble and your music. These apps can link to a performance calendar, video or audio player apps, merchandise sales apps and so on. Baker recommended some apps for musician’s pages (Baker 2011, pp. 105-106), and I have compared these with the apps that the studied musicians have on their pages. None of the studied ensembles used any of the recommended apps. 9/17 ensembles have at least one app, with only two that were used by more than one ensemble. Those two apps are an “Email sign-up” app, and a “Music Store” app. Most of the recommended apps/widgets from the primary research were out of date.

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Definition of Twitter: “Twitter is a free social networking microblogging service that allows registered members to broadcast short posts called tweets. Twitter members can broadcast tweets and follow other users’ tweets by using multiple platforms and devices. Tweets and replies to tweets can be sent by cell phone text message, desktop client or by posting at the Twitter.com website. The default settings for Twitter are public. Unlike Facebook or LinkedIn, where members need to approve social connections, anyone can follow anyone on public Twitter. To weave tweets into a conversation thread or connect them to a general topic, members can add hashtags to a keyword in their post. The hashtag, which acts like a meta tag, is expressed as #keyword. Tweets, which may include hyperlinks, are limited to 140 characters, due to the constraints of Twitter's Short Message Service (SMS) delivery system. Tweets are also posted on the Twitter website. They are permanent, they are searchable and they are public. Anyone can search tweets on Twitter, whether they are a member or not.”


Recent studies show Twitter has 310 million monthly active users, with 88 million of those users in the United States (The Statistics portal, Twitter accessed 1/7/17). This article says that the average Twitter user has between 1-100 followers, but celebrities often have tens of millions. In most of my interviews, ensemble members have a respect for the audience Twitter can bring, and agree it is a different audience than Facebook, however none of the ensemble are as active on Twitter as they are on Facebook (Bridget from Ensemble A interview; Clara interview; Justin interview; Horace interview; Liza from Ensemble X interview). Wallace claims that chamber ensembles should be active on Twitter, but the ensemble’s worth is not generally judged by their Twitter accounts, and presenters or venues are less likely to be concerned about this activity (Ensemble X interview). The ensemble members I interviewed had fewer recommendations on how to best utilize Twitter to build followers. Bridget is the only one who talked about their ensemble at one time actively building their following by sending public tweets to everyone who followed them, and taking time to post regularly (Ensemble A interview).

Four of the studied ensembles are not included for this section due to inactivity, or no presence. One ensemble did not have a Twitter profile, and the other three had not posted anything since 2015, or earlier (as of 1/24/17).

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Best practices and suggestions for Twitter posts, and uses for a chamber ensemble

1. Twitter is about what’s happening in the moment, and frequent posts are the most effective (Liza from Ensemble X interview).
   a. Hyatt recommends posting three times per day (Hyatt 2012, p. 71).

2. Use Twitter to alert followers about live shows, new free download samples, new blog posts, media coverage, where their singles and albums can be purchased, and more (Baker 2011, p 108; Collard 2012, p. 24; Occhino 2016).
   a. Don’t over-hype your ensemble, or only tweet promotions. People won’t follow unless you have something interesting to say (Hyatt 2012, p. 71).

3. Share, comment, send direct messages, or tag users as a way to interact with other users, or show your appreciation for what they are posting (Hyatt 2012, p. 71).
   a. Fans can feel more connected to you, and can interact directly with you through tweets, replies, and direct messages (Hyatt 2012, p. 66).

4. Share content that encourages retweets (Occhino 2016).
   a. To encourage more sharing, @mention any individuals or companies mentioned in your posts, and try including “please RT” at the beginning of your posts; studies show this generates as many as four times more retweets (Occhino, Sonicbids article).
   b. Tweet links to latest music video, Links to photos, links to other musician’s sites who are opening for you or who you discover on your travels, links to articles or blogs not written by you that your followers may find interesting (Baker 2011, p. 109).

5. Twitter is easy to link with your Facebook account to have shared posts on both platforms, and to add a feed on your website or blog to keep the website updated with the latest activities (Hyatt 2012, pp. 66, 71).
   a. Liza recommends you still re-write the content to fit the platform (Ensemble X interview).

General data about 16 studied ensemble Twitter profiles

1. Minimum, and maximum followers: The minimum number of followers was 72, the highest number of followers was 26,136. Two of the ensembles that are not active had the lowest number of followers (the third remaining inactive ensemble had an average number of followers), and two active ensembles have over 15,000, and over 26,000 followers, over 10,000 more followers than any of the other ensembles. The range for the 11 average, active ensembles was 241-4,610. The average number of followers for all 16 ensembles with profiles is 3,874. The average number of followers for the active profiles, under 5,000, is 1,817.

2. Ensembles are following: For the 13 ensembles with active profiles, the number of profiles those ensembles are following is from 142 - 2,961. Two ensembles are following more people than are
following them. On average, ensembles follow about 30% the number of people following them.

3. Does the ensemble have ensemble photo or logo for profile picture: All ensembles have either a photo or logo in their profile. Nine ensembles have a group photo, four ensembles have a logo. All thirteen studied ensembles have images that are current compared with their websites.

4. Does the ensemble include short bio in profile: Eleven ensembles include a brief bio, in their profile. Bio information varies from ensemble type, musical style, to where the ensemble is based.

5. Does the ensemble include a website address in profile: Twelve ensembles include a website address with link in their profile. One ensemble includes a link to their Facebook page.

6. The average number of posts over how many days: The dates studied for each ensemble varied. I tried to study between 15-20 posts. Only posts in 2016 were studied. One ensemble posted frequently, several times per day, and I took only a two-week sample, with over 100 posts. Three ensembles posted less than 15 times in all of 2016. For the remaining nine ensembles, posts varied from 0-3 posts per day, with an average of one post every 6 days.

Observations on content looked for in the ensembles’ posts

1. Promotional posts (events or merchandise): Promotional posts include announcements/general posts about performances/events, merchandise sales/giveaways, album release/information. All ensembles included some promotional posts. Two ensembles posted only promotional information regarding events, merchandise, or album sales.
   a. The average percentage of promotional posts is 66.5% of all posts were promotional.

2. Posts that are about what is happening “right now” or in the moment. I studied the ensemble’s posts to see if the posts were about something that was happening, or would be happening the same day the post was made, compared to posts about future events, or general posts that shared music or articles. In the moment posts include promotional posts that have a time limit on them, performances that are happening that day, and posts about what the ensemble is doing at that moment in time.
   a. The average percentage of “in the moment” posts was: 49%

3. Posts that include photos: All ensembles included photos in multiple posts. I did not include in this count photos that don’t show, but link to Instagram, or images that link to a YouTube video or are part of a headline link to an article. Average percentage of posts with photos or images: 59.7%

4. Posts that include video: 7/13 ensembles included a video directly to their Twitter page. Videos studied are ones that would play while staying on the Twitter page. This does not include ensembles who posted links to YouTube. The average percentage of posts of the ensembles that posted videos directly to Twitter, was 25.5%
   a. Six of the thirteen ensembles include posts that link to YouTube. Average percentage of posts from the six ensembles with YouTube link: 20.6%
5. Posts that include links to outside websites.
   a. Links to articles, other organization’s websites, merchandise purchasing websites, or ticket purchasing websites: Two ensembles did not include links to outside sites. Average percentage of posts with outside links from eleven ensembles: 35.9%
   b. Links to Facebook: Five ensembles included links to Facebook, with the average being 9.4% of posts link to Facebook.
   c. Links to the ensemble’s website: Six ensembles included posts that had a link to their own website.

6. Posts that have “behind the scenes” content: Posts in this count included casual photos, before or after performances, or music related posts that were not from a performance, such as a post from a rehearsal. Eight ensembles posted photos, or content that were casual photos, rehearsals, or photos that were music related, but not performing posts. The average percentage of posts from these ensembles that were behind the scenes: 19.3%

7. Non-Music posts: Seven ensembles posted tweets that were not music related. Posts were anywhere from the ensemble having dinner or drinks, to sightseeing posts while the ensemble was on tour. Average percentage of non-music posts for the seven ensembles: 18.2%

8. Re-tweets: All thirteen re-tweeted posts. Some were because they were "@mentioned" in the post, and others were interesting articles about either the ensemble, or music in general. The average percentage of posts that were re-tweets: 38.8%

9. Use of Hashtags: All ensembles used hashtags on some of their posts. On average, ensembles would use 0-5 hashtags per post, with the average number of hashtags per post being about one.

10. Use of @mention of other ensembles, musicians, or organizations: Twelve ensembles included @mention in some of their posts. On average, ensembles would use 0-6 @mentions per post. With an average of one per post.

11. Interaction with followers: Looked for ensembles commenting, and having public discussions with followers. Other than the use of re-tweets, ensembles did not appear to have much direct communication with their followers. Five of the ensembles included a response to some of the @mention tags. On average, there was less than one response per @mention post.
   a. One ensemble spent an entire day having Twitter conversations with people. There is a total of thirty-four interactions, where followers posted questions on the ensemble’s public Twitter feed, and the member answered the questions quickly.

12. Percentage of followers who “like” the ensemble’s posts: For this information I took the average number of likes for the ensemble’s page, and divided by the number of followers that ensemble had. Only two ensembles had more than 1% of the number of followers like their posts, with the lowest percentage of likes compared to followers coming from the ensembles with over 10K followers. The average percentage of likes to followers for all thirteen ensembles: 0.62%
The final items I looked at for Twitter involved ensembles linking their Twitter profile with other applications. Twitter can have Instagram photos shared, as well as linked through Facebook. I compared the Twitter posts with Instagram and Facebook. It is also possible to put a Twitter feed on your website, so the final item I researched for Twitter was how many ensembles included their Twitter feed on their website.

1. Shared photos from Instagram on Twitter: One ensemble used a shared Instagram photo for their Twitter photos. Instead of showing a photo, it was a link to their Instagram page.
2. Shared posts from Facebook on Twitter: Five ensembles included links to an event page on Facebook.

Instagram

Defining Instagram: “Instagram is a free online photo sharing and social network platform that was acquired by Facebook in 2012. Instagram allows members users to upload, edit and share photos with other members through the Instagram website, email, and social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook, Tumblr, Foursquare and Flickr. Instagram's editing features include various digital filters, one-click rotation and optional borders. From the “Home” tab, Instagram users can view photos from accounts they follow in a format similar to that of Facebook's newsfeed. From this view, users are permitted to "like" and comment on photos.”

There are approximately 500 million monthly Instagram users, with around 77.5 million in the United States (Statistics portal, Instagram). This photo share application statistically receives more hits than text-only posts on Facebook and Twitter (Occhino 2016). Besides being another way to communicate with people around the world, Instagram and Flickr both can be set up to post on your Facebook and Twitter accounts, so it’s easy to post your images on all of your chosen platforms. These sites are also photo storage apps, so any images you have on the app can be easily uploaded onto your website, or added to press materials (Baker 2011, p. 127). Vine was also compared to Instagram, more as a photo/image sharing site than a video site, since videos are only six seconds long. Only the article by Occhino discussed the use of Vine, and only five of the studied ensembles have profiles on this platform, so I will not go into detail (Occhino 2016). I have included a search on the studied ensembles Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram profiles to see if they have Vine video embedded on these sites. Additional information about Vine and Flickr can be found in the appendix.

Best practices and suggestions for Instagram posts, and uses for a chamber ensemble

1. Post photos outside of performances, such as backstage shots, candid photos, tour fun, food you’re eating on the road, cool things you see, or show pics of things you write about, or support, and other daily activities (Baker 2011, p. 127; Hyatt, pp. 74, 77; Occhino 2016).
   a. The members of Ensemble X recommend using Instagram to focus on images that tell their own story, or just include a short description of what’s happening in the photo, and share the photo to Facebook to elaborate more on the story behind the photo (Ensemble X interview).
   b. Take photos of your album artwork, and promotional materials (Baker 2011, p. 127).
2. Followers are more likely to take monetary action when asked, but only when it fits in with the kind of posts you already do. If the call to action is unrelated to the regular posts, it’s less likely to work (Ensemble X interview).
3. Instagram is one of the only social media platforms that stays very active seven days a week, with the highest post activity happening between the hours of 3:00 and 4:00 p.m. on average (Occhino 2016).
4. Instagram and Flickr can be linked to Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and Instagram can link to Flickr (Hyatt 2012, p. 76; Occhino 2016).
   a. Unlike Twitter and Facebook, Instagram does not allow to share posts from other social media sites to the Instagram site. You can post something on Instagram and share to Twitter or Facebook, but not the other way around.

The numbers of posts from the studied ensembles varied. Some ensembles were active frequently on Instagram, and others had only a few posts over the past year. As mentioned before, there is one ensemble that does not have an Instagram profile at all. In addition, there were two ensembles that had profiles but no posts, one ensemble that hadn’t posted anything to Instagram since 2013, and one ensemble that posted three times in 2016 (posts before 2016 were in 2013). I did not include these five ensembles in the study and compilation of data. For all other studied ensembles, the data was collected from posts in 2016. The study started from the most recent post in December, 2016 and going backwards. Depending on the frequency of posts, I studied either up to 15 posts, or until the first post of 2016.

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9 Note, Hyatt’s recommendations were specifically for Flickr, but the advice included can apply to both Flickr and Instagram.
General data from studied ensemble Instagram profiles from 12 ensembles

2. Average, minimum and maximum ensembles are following: 66-717. Two ensembles were following more people than were following the ensemble. The remaining ensembles followed from 50 fewer to 6,300 less than are following them.
3. Does the ensemble have ensemble photo or logo for profile picture: All ensembles have either a photo or logo in their profile. Six ensembles have a group photo, five ensembles have a logo, and one ensemble uses a photo image that is seen on their website and other social media sites.
4. Does the ensemble include a short bio in profile: 7/12 ensembles include a brief bio, in their profile. Bio information varies from ensemble type, musical style, where ensemble is based or if they are a touring ensemble, or just listing the members.
5. Does the ensemble include a website address in profile: 10/12 ensembles include a website address with link in their profile. One ensemble includes a link to the website, but does not spell out the website address.
6. The average number of posts over how many days: Posts varied from an average of one post every two days, to one post over a month and a half. The average frequency of posts was once every 11.6 days.

Below is a collection of observations on content in the ensemble’s posts. Included in this compilation are the number of ensembles that include the type of post listed, the minimum and maximum percentage of the posts that are of that type, and the average percentage of the posts from all ensembles that are of that type.

1. Promotional posts: Included posts about events, merchandise sales, album releases, or if the ensemble shared a post or news article that was about the ensemble.
   a. 12/12 ensembles included at least one image and post that promoted a show, or merchandise. Ensemble posts varied from as little as 12.5% of total posts were promotional, to 100% of posts were promotional. On average, 39% of ensemble posts were promotional.
2. Posts that include video: 10/12 ensembles have at least one video. There were between 0 and 4 videos per ensemble.
   a. Are any videos 6 second Vine videos? Videos are between 4-15 seconds, but none of them are labeled as a “Vine” specifically.
3. Posts that have “behind the scenes” content: Included photos or posts about rehearsals or recordings or posts about traveling to performances.
a. 12/12 ensembles have at least one post that is a “behind the scenes” post. Percentage of posts that are behind the scenes vary from 6%-41.7%. The average number of “behind the scenes” posts from all studied ensembles is 22.2%.

4. Non-music related posts: These posts may include members of the ensemble, but doing something in the photo music-related. Most photos from this section were from members in a restaurant, or sight-seeing while on tour.
   a. 3/12 ensembles did not post anything that was not related to music, of the ones that did the percentage of posts ranged from 6.7% up to 33.3% of posts being non-music related. The average percentage of non-music posts, from all studied ensembles is 13.75%

5. Use of Hashtags: All 12 ensembles used hashtags. Average frequency of use per ensemble varied from less than once per-post, up to an average of 18.8 hashtagged words per post. General average for all ensembles was 5 hashtagged words per post.

6. Use of @mention to tag other organizations or individuals: @mentions were less frequent. One ensemble did not use an @mention at all. The maximum average use was 1.6 times per post, but 8/12 ensembles used the @mention less than once per post.

7. Interaction with followers: Looked for ensembles commenting, or having public discussions with followers. The percentages are based on the average number of likes from the studied posts compared to the ensemble’s number of followers.
   a. Averages ranged from 3.2% to 12.6%. The average percentage of followers who will like ensemble posts: 8.4%.
      ▪ The two ensembles I studied with the most number of followers (2,000+ and 6,000+) also had the lowest percentage of “likes” on their posts.
   b. For all ensembles that have videos posted, the videos received a much higher view rate compared to their photo “like” rate. This indicates there may be a higher number of followers who look at the ensemble’s images, but do not engage the like button as frequently.
   c. Average percentage of viewers compared to followers who watch ensemble videos: 21.7%
   d. Comments: Ensembles did not get many comments on their posts. The range of total comments per ensemble over the samples being 0-13, with the average being less than one comment per post. Responses from the ensembles on comments were even fewer. On average most ensembles gave one response in the entire study of 15 posts, with the maximum number of responses being 5 (which also happens to be the ensemble that had a total of 13 comments).
   e. Number of users who tagged the ensemble name on their posts (#ensemblename): In addition to what the ensembles were posting, I also searched the hashtag keyword search for the ensemble name used in a hashtag, to determine how often the ensemble
is mentioned by other users. I did not look at every hashtag with the name search to confirm if all posts were related to the ensemble, but for most of these ensembles, there were no unrelated tags. This search also includes the five ensembles that I did not include in the rest of this study, as they were tagged by other users regardless of being present or active on the site. Some (7) ensembles were tagged under multiple variations of their name, such as #brassquintetA as well as #brass5A. In the below count, these variations were combined in the ensemble’s average number of tags.

- Hashtags of ensemble names ranged from 0-2,869. The average number of #ensemblename is 285. The 2,869 is an outlier, being over 2,200 tags more than the next highest ensemble. Without this outlier, the average is 123 #ensemblename.

8. Does the ensemble include links to other websites or social media sites on their posts?
   a. You cannot put a URL link in the text of a post. Two ensembles included their website address, or a URL that would need to be copied and pasted in the text of their posts, and two ensembles put in their posts “Follow the link in the bio.” Those links generally lead to the ensemble’s website, or a link to purchase tickets.

YouTube and Live Streaming

Definition of YouTube: “YouTube is a free video-hosting website that allows members to store and serve video content. YouTube members and website visitors can share YouTube videos on a variety of web platforms by using a link or by embedding HTML code.”  
(http://searchcio.techtarget.com/definition/YouTube, accessed 1/9/17).

Definition of Live Streaming: “Streaming video is content sent in compressed form over the Internet and displayed by the viewer in real time. With streaming video or streaming media, a Web user does not have to wait to download a file to play it. Instead, the media is sent in a continuous stream of data and is played as it arrives. The user needs a player, which is a special program that uncompresses (sic) and sends video data to the display and audio data to speakers.

A player can be either an integral part of a browser or downloaded from the software maker’s Web site.” (http://searchunifiedcommunications.techtarget.com/definition/streaming-video, accessed 1/9/17).

The average number of world-wide monthly YouTube users is 65.45 million. This source did not have data for monthly users from only the United States.  
http://www.statista.com/statistics/228659/page-visits-of-youtube-within-the-last-month-usa/). In another recent study, sources say that 66% of people use
YouTube to keep up with the latest music trends (https://www.statista.com/statistics/294657/sources-keeping-up-to-date-music-usa/).

Video content has grown in popularity over the past few years, in part because it has become a more accessible medium. Viewers can choose from high-quality produced videos, to live performances, and even stream a performance live, as it’s happening through their computer (DeMers 2016). YouTube, Facebook, UStream, among a few other sites all provide live streaming options. In this paper, I will primarily discuss general video postings as opposed to specifics of live streaming, live video content, or produced video content.

Recommendations on setting up your YouTube channel and how best to utilize this platform

1. Develop your profile page: Create a bio, and link to your website. Try to encourage people to subscribe to your page (Baker 2011, p. 113). Branding your channel well is important (Occhino 2016).
   a. Your channel name should include keywords: use words that fit your music (Hyatt 2012, pp. 90-91).
   b. Choose musician channel: In the “Settings” tab select “Musician” as the channel type (Hyatt 2012, p. 90).
   c. Choose your themes and colors: Next to “Settings” is “Channel and Design.” Here you can choose your colors and upload background and profile images, and select your text and hyperlink colors. Make sure your images and colors match your overall branding (website, FB, Twitter, etc.). Choose colors that make text easy to read, and are easy on the eyes for the sake of your visitors (white is never a bad choice) (Hyatt 2012, p. 91).
2. The highest levels of engagement activity start on Thursday and continue through Sunday (Occhino 2016).
3. Follow other musicians, leave comments and thumbs up on other pages (Baker 2011, p. 113; Hyatt 2012, p. 86).
   a. Watch what is working, and follow! Check out the top viewed videos in the music categories for a few weeks to see what they are doing to get viewed. See if you can decipher a trend or come up with an idea that might fit for you on this most-viewed chart list before you outline your own content strategy or add to it (Hyatt 2012, p. 87).
   b. Know what people are searching for: Including content that people already know is crucial, because they are already looking for it (Hyatt 2012, p. 89).
4. Titles are key: Make sure the title of each video includes your artist/band name, song title and any other relevant information (Hyatt 2012, p. 91).
a. The description box is also critical: always start with your URL hyperlink. Select the proper video category (most likely Music, but maybe Humor or Educational works too?).

For this part of the research, I studied videos posted by the ensemble on their YouTube profile page. All ensembles have performances posted by other users. I compared content the ensemble was putting up to their own pages to what is recommended from the research. For this section, I looked at the number of videos, compared number of subscribers to views, and how the ensembles organized their YouTube pages. Specific information on the different kinds of videos ensembles post can be found in the “Recording” section of this document. One ensemble did not have a YouTube page. They had a “Topic” page, and performances had been posted by other users. This ensemble’s information is not counted in this study.

General data about studied ensemble YouTube profiles

1. Average, minimum, and maximum subscribers: Subscriber numbers varied from 13, to 3,212. The average was 519 subscribers.
   a. Number of videos: Minimum of 3, maximum of 379, on average 46.5 videos.
   b. Total video views: YouTube provides most pages with an overview of how many views total their uploaded videos have gotten. This count was taken before I reviewed videos for this study. Side note, the minimum and maximum views are not for the ensembles with the minimum and maximum number of videos. Minimum number of views: 1,822 (from 13 videos), the maximum views 936,944 (from 100 videos). Average number of views is 113,138.

2. Does the ensemble have ensemble photo or logo for profile picture: All ensembles had their photo or logo in the main profile.
   a. 6/16 have a logo for their main profile image.
   b. 10/16 have an ensemble photo for their profile image.
   c. 13/16 ensembles have a photo or image in the banner.
   d. 3/16 do not have a banner image.

3. Does the ensemble include short bio in profile: 7/16 ensembles include a short ensemble description, none of them are as in-depth as their bio on their website.
   a. Members: One ensemble lists members in their bio description. Other ensembles list members in the descriptions of individual videos.
4. Does the ensemble include a website address in their profile: 7/16 ensembles include their website in their profile. Five of these have a link, two are only the text of the website address, without link.
   a. 3/16 ensembles include a secured email link.
   b. 4/16 ensembles include a Facebook link
   c. 8/16 ensembles include a Google+ link
   d. 3/16 ensembles include a Twitter link
   e. 1/16 ensembles include an Instagram link
   f. 1/16 ensembles include a link to their management’s website.

5. Frequency of posts: Consistently uploading interesting content is equally important for continued viewership and subscriber growth (Occhino 2016). Subscribers will get notifications every time the ensemble posts a new video, and may be more likely to return to watch new videos. However, there wasn’t much correlation between number of views and recent or regular posts. Ensembles’ latest posts are as recent as January 26th, 2017 (as of 1/31/17), and as long ago as April, 21st, 2014.
   a. 3 ensembles posted in 2017
   b. 10 ensembles last posted sometime in 2016
   c. 1 ensemble last posted in 2015
   d. 2 ensembles last posted in 2014

6. Following other ensembles: 4/16 ensembles had an indication on their page that they followed other pages.

7. Comments from viewers: 7/16 ensembles had comments in the “Discussion” section of their YouTube page. Ensembles have comments on some of their videos, but I did not look through these.

**Conclusion for Social Media**

From the current research, and studied ensembles’ usage and activity, the first social media site to get is a Facebook page, and grow your ensemble’s online profiles from there. If an ensemble has video or audio content, the next profile recommended is a YouTube page. YouTube has the least frequent activity, but can be more easily maintained than other social media platforms. The next most active platforms are Instagram and finally Twitter. Based on interviews, these two sites are important to have presence on, but less important for building an audience, or attracting presenters or booking agents.

Social media platforms are in constant flux. New platforms may come and go quickly, or may replace older platforms. This study has tried to prepare the reader with techniques to keep up with new platforms, as well as discuss the current platforms, and how they are being utilized by successful
ensembles. The most consistent advice regarding social media platforms is to research new platforms to see how others are using the sites before creating your own profile, and beginning use. The biggest challenge with social media is the time commitment. Creating profiles for social media platforms is easy, but building a following on those platforms takes time, and constant upkeep on the platform. Based on what the research emphasizes, social media is for interacting with users, not just for promotions, and an ensemble won’t build a following through marketing tactics alone.

Below I have created two lists for general use, and content that can work with most social media platforms. These lists were created by combining the common recommendations from resources, and the common practices from the studied ensembles. These lists are based, in part, on my observations, and opinions of what was effective on the studied ensembles’ profiles, as compared to what the resources had recommended.

Best Practices for Using Social Media Platforms

- Stay up-to-date and consistent in the profile: All platforms, whether active or inactive, should have updated, and similar, information in the profile sections. This includes consistent graphics, photos, logos, colors, biography information, and website address (or contact information). Even if posts are not current, you want visitors to that platform to know that they have found the ensemble they were looking for, and you want to direct them to another active online resource.

- Try new platforms: For different ensembles, different platforms will work better for them depending on the individual’s dedication to being on that platform. All the studied ensembles had multiple social media platforms, but many were only active on one or two of them. Upkeep can be time consuming, so know your ensemble’s limitations on social media, but experiment with the new platforms. This will help increase your online presence, and you have then secured the ensemble name for that platform, if you decide to use it more in the future.

- Frequency of posts: On average, most ensembles posted three times per week to once every two weeks on the sites of which they were active. YouTube, or other video sites currently have less frequent posts, and depend more on the ensemble’s performance activity, or resources for filming. Most ensembles were more active when they had an event coming up, and less active when they did not. This theory comes down to the “Quality over Quantity” and the posting with a purpose. Don’t post something just to put your profile in people’s feeds. If your ensemble does not have an event coming up, share interesting content without being repetitive, or annoying.
Best practices for general content to post on any social media site

- Post things that reflect your ensemble’s mission or brand identity: An ensemble can post different kinds of content, but ultimately all content should reflect your ensemble’s goals, and personality.
  - Does your ensemble want to come across as silly, and fun? Post things that are casual, accessible, or funny. Does your ensemble have an educational mission? Post teaching anecdotes, practice techniques, or other informational materials. Does your ensemble collaborate with other artists? Post information about those other artists, or information about your collaborations.
  - An ensemble posting serious performances in formal attire, and has goals to present “traditional” or formal performances may not have success from posting photos or videos of the ensemble goofing around, or talking about how they like to play basketball.
- Use images: Photos, gifs, and videos are becoming more common in posts across all current mediums.
- Images and stories should be visible on the post: If linking to another media site, make sure a teaser image is present in the post.
- Promotional posts: These should be the bulk of your posts, but not the only posts.
- Share posts: Only share something if it relates to your ensemble or your mission.
- Behind-the-scenes: These kinds of posts can show the ensemble’s personality, and personality of the members. It can also be an opportunity to show viewers what it is like to be a professional chamber ensemble, whether it is showing the group rehearsing, having fun before or after a concert, or what the group does to relax.
- Non-Music posts: These posts should be used sparingly, depending on your ensemble’s mission. Non-music posts that are about the ensemble members are more common than non-music posts that also have nothing to do with the members.
- Do not re-post the same content without other posts in between: If promoting a performance or other special event, start posting about the event at least one to three months in advance, and repost (or create new posts) frequently, but not one right after another. Instead, keep your site active with other posts in-between event reminders.
- Interaction with followers: Actual public conversation with followers was not common in the studied ensembles, regardless of the platform. Interaction on a social media site can take time. An ensemble should defer to the strengths and time commitment of ensemble members if they choose to interact with fans on any platform.
CHAPTER 3. WEBSITE

A website is a key ingredient for an effective online presence, but the organization and content for websites vary greatly, depending on an ensemble’s projects, mission, and resources for designing the website. This document will go into detail regarding the different elements of a website, including content material, and design and organization of the website.

As with social media, there are no references that specifically discuss content on a website for a chamber ensemble. The research discusses websites for individual musicians or a website for an indie/pop/rock band. In this study, I have compared these recommendations, and added or subtracted material as it relates specifically to a chamber ensemble. The visual organization and design of a website does not have to be specific to the size of a group, or the kind of music played, and relates more to the ensemble’s branding image, and desired visual aesthetics of the website. However, between the resources, and the studied websites, there are common design, or organization features that will also be discussed. There are numerous similarities and differences in the content, and the way content is presented on the websites\textsuperscript{10}. This chapter will study those similarities and differences, as compared to recommendations from the research, and conclude with the features that are most common on chamber ensemble websites.

There are some differences of opinions as to the primary purpose of a website. From the interviews, the primary reason to have a website is to increase the hits your ensemble gets in a search engine, as well as having a central place for potential employers and fans to find information about the ensemble (Ensemble A interview; Giovanni from Ensemble X interview; Horace interview; Ronald interview). From the other research the greatest advantage of having a website is the complete control of the content, layout, and personalized touch that allows you to create a site that best reflects the ensemble’s mission and is easy to prioritize the information (Beeching 2010, p. 128; Cutler 2010, p. 94; Ghosh 2015; Hyatt 2012, pp. 27-30). Some resources mention a website only in passing, without information on how to create one, but they do mention that it’s important to have this presence (Barth 2010, p. 25; Ricker 2011, p. 65; Whitney 2013, pp. 63-64).

Below is a list of arguments for having a website (Beeching 2010, pp. 128, 138; Cutler 2010, p. 94; Ghosh 2015; Hyatt 2012, p. 29; Loft 2003, p. 252; Meenaghan 2012, p. 15; Rodriquez 2012, p. 66; Whitney 2013, p. 63-64, Vinson 2012, pp. 24-27; Clara interview; Horace interview; Justin interview;)

\textsuperscript{10} Ensemble websites were studied between August 1, 2016, until September 9, 2016.
Quentin from Ensemble A interview). These reasons are based on opportunities that are possible through the website, and how a website can enhance your web presence beyond social media.

1. Mission: A website can be 100% personalized, and can clearly say what your ensemble does, where you perform, what kinds of performances, and other things about the group. This gives an ensemble the opportunity to fully realize their branding, and demonstrate what the ensemble has to offer (Beeching 2010, p. 128; Cutler 2010, p. 94; Ghosh 2015; Hyatt 2012, p. 29; Meenaghan 2012, p. 15). “A website is your opportunity to share all the information your audience needs to understand you and your project. It should clearly reflect the identity you have chosen for your project… and include basic information about you and how to contact you.” (Whitney 2013, p. 63-64).

2. Organized access to information: As discussed earlier, social media is all about current affairs, and what is happening right now. However, it is difficult to organize information on programs, initiatives, or have an easily accessible press kit. A website can provide all this information in an easy to navigate format. Fans, presenters, and media sources will visit your website for information, to learn more about your ensemble, listen to music samples, or to download photos and bios for marketing (Cool 2014, p. 3; Cutler 2010, p.94; Ghosh 2015; Loft 2003, p. 252; Horace interview; Justin interview).

3. Mailing list: A website is where viewers have the opportunity to submit their email address to you if they want to receive additional information from your ensemble (Ghosh 2015). This is an opportunity to increase your fan base, and communicate with your fans directly (Beeching 2010, p. 138; Cutler 2010, p. 94; Hyatt 2012, p. 29; Liza from Ensemble X interview).

4. Active viewers: The goal of a website is to keep viewers on the site, reading, listening, and enjoying your content. Websites should be free of outside distractions, such as ads, and links to other sites (Hyatt 2012, p. 29).

5. Search engine hits: Later in the section I will talk about Search Engine Optimization (SEO). This is a way to make certain words on your website turn up in a general internet search. The more ways people can find information about your ensemble, the better (Clara interview; Horace interview; Quentin from Ensemble A interview). "What you really want at the end of the day is as many people to see things as possible.” (Clara interview).

6. Make money: Through merchandise sales, ticket sales and promotion of performances, or through a booking agent or promoter who hires the ensemble through the website (Cool 2012, pp. 24-27). On this last point, though, Hyatt reminds her readers that a website will not get performances on its own, but a good website may tip the scales for a booking agent comparing your ensemble with others (Hyatt 2012, p. 29).
Before building a website, your ensemble should decide what you want viewers to experience on the site, and how you can best represent your ensemble’s mission and activities through the website. Think about what purpose your ensemble wants the website to serve. I have listed some recommended questions to ask as you are developing your website.

1. What kinds of performances will you offer, and what is the ensemble image you want to portray? How will you represent these on your website (Beeching 2010, p. 129)? As your ensemble develops, you should decide on an ensemble mission, including kinds of performances or projects, and the image you want to present. These decisions will determine, in part, what your ensemble image, or brand11 will be (Beeching 2010, p. 45; Cutler 2010, p. 42).

2. What is the purpose of the site? What are your goals? Do you want to sell, market, and/or develop a fan base (Beeching 2010, p. 139-140; Ghosh 2015; Slaughter and Kober 2004, p. 55)? If you’re not actively promoting something, don’t expect the site to help your career in any substantive way (Cutler 2010, p. 95-96).

3. What projects do you have that can be featured (Beeching 2010, p. 139-140; Ghosh 2015; Slaughter and Kober 2004, p. 55)?


5. What incentive is there to sign up for your mailing list, or return to your website (Beeching 2010, pp. 139-140; Cutler 2010, pp. 95-96; Slaughter and Kober 2004, p. 55)?

The Purpose of a Website for Musicians

Many resources recommend researching other organization’s websites. Some should have similar missions to yours to see how similar content is presented, and some should be well organized non-music websites, to see generally how the visual attributes, and navigation bars are organized (Beeching 2010, p. 129; Cutler 2010, p. 97; Slaughter and Kober 2004, p. 55). Beeching provided a list of questions to ask while observing other websites (Beeching 2010, p. 129). These questions have been answered for the websites of the studied ensembles. Many of these questions are subjective. I have tried to keep the standards of my observations consistent between websites, and have described what I was looking for when the question is not specific enough.

1. What image of the artist/ensemble is being conveyed (Beeching 2010, p. 129)? Observations from their photos, website colors, bios, and the information that was presented or prioritized on their website were considered. My impressions of each website are subjective. I have done my best to characterize each website by comparing the same features. It appears the ensembles that

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11 “Branding is about clarifying your identity, mission, and reputation.” (Beeching 2010, p. 46).
perform modern or non-traditional music use photos with a stronger emphasis on the setting or location, whereas the more traditional ensembles’ photos focus more on the people in the photos. Some ensembles showed the members having fun, laughing, or doing goofy things, and some used bright colors in photos, or throughout their website. Other ensembles kept their faces and postures more conservative, and used neutral colors on the website. More information about ensemble photos can be found in the photo chapter.

a. 8/17 ensembles presented professional, and conservative look to the website. They did not have anything that would indicate that they perform non-traditional music, or give performances that are meant to be silly. Their images, the general presentation, colors, and materials gave the sense that they were serious about the music, and they would present a quality performance. Some of the ensembles in this category had more casual photos than others, based on clothing, positions, and facial expressions. All the ensembles appear approachable and friendly. Only one ensemble had photos in formal dress. Musical examples indicated these ensembles performed music from the standard repertoire for their instruments, or that they did not focus specifically on one genre of music.

b. 7/17 had conveyed the message that the music they perform is contemporary, or non-traditional music. This image was achieved by use of bright, or multiple colors, or abstract backgrounds in their photos, as well as their clothing, facial expressions, and stances of the members in the photos, and even through the colors or graphics they used throughout the website. All groups also had a section in their website dedicated to their new music projects, and mentioned this mission in their bios.

c. One ensemble appears to present fun performances. Their photos showed the members laughing or doing fun activities. The colors on their website were also lighter. They specifically mentioned giving fun, interactive performances in their bio, and other material on their website.

   ▪ There were two other ensembles whose photos conveyed a very fun presentation, however, there was no indication in their other materials that part of their mission was specific to presenting amusing, or fun concerts.

d. One ensemble’s images were strongly focused on performing and action. Their homepage used a video as their backdrop, and almost all their photos were of them performing. This ensemble appeared to have a strong mission towards performance, however their website also had details on their educational outreach programs.

2. Is the site easy to navigate (Beeching 2010, p. 129)? Later in the chapter I will discuss the importance of easy navigation. While looking at the studied ensemble websites, I considered the titles of pages in the navigation bar, and if these titles made it easy to know what was on the related page. I also looked at any subheadings and if the material in the subheading related to the
main subject. I also viewed sites looking for specific items, such as videos, recordings, ensemble bio, performances, and contact information.

a. 12/17 ensemble websites were very easy to navigate. The subjects of the navigation bar were clear, and if there were any subheadings, they related to the main subject heading they were under.

b. 3/17 ensemble websites were not easy to navigate. There were some subheadings that did not make sense with the heading they were under. These websites all had a large variety of content to navigate.

c. One ensemble website was quite difficult to navigate. There were no subheadings that appeared under a title in the navigation bar, but there was a second navigation bar under some of the pages. Not all these second navigation bars corresponded to the heading they were under. It was difficult to find specific activities, or I would find an activity page without understanding how I got there.

3. Does the front page open quickly (or do “Flash” animations or other features slow it down?) (Beeching 2010, p. 129)?

a. Only one ensemble had a video as a background on their home page. The video would sometimes take longer to start, but it did not affect the rest of the page loading.

b. None of the ensembles had an “entry” page, where there was just a photo and you would need to click to get to the content.


a. “Who”: 17/17 ensembles answer the question “Who” in their homepage, and in their bio. For performances with collaborators or guests this information is answered in the details listed on the calendar of events (10 ensembles include this).

b. “What”: This question could be understood as either what the ensemble offered in terms of programs and projects, or what kinds of performances or public presentations were offered.
   ▪ 17/17 ensembles included information about projects.
   ▪ 10/17 ensembles have calendars, so included what as far as activities were upcoming.

c. “Where” and “When”: all ensembles with calendars (10) included information for where the performances would be, or included a link to the venue website.

d. “How Much”: 6/10 ensembles with performance information included price, or a link to purchase tickets. No ensembles included pricing for booking the ensemble to give a performance or educational presentation.

e. “Why (do I care)”: This question is considered in the ensemble’s mission (in the bio) and project details.
17/17 ensembles include some details as to their mission in their bio.
5/17 ensembles include details about the program on their calendar that could answer the question why.

5. If you were considering hiring this ensemble, would you find the info on the site relevant or interesting (Beeching 2010, p. 129)? All websites provide enough information through their materials or videos to give a viewer a good idea about the kind of music they play, and what could be expected at a performance. The videos are the most accurate representation for performance quality and style.
   a. 5/17 ensembles have detailed information on the educational programs they offer.
   b. 5/17 ensembles offer example performance programs, or information about their repertoire.

6. Would you visit this site again? Why or why not (Beeching 2010, p. 129)? Only Cutler speculated why someone would return to a website. He stressed one would return if they found the site interesting, entertaining, wanted to order merchandise, communicate with either the owners, or participate in a forum, or find additional information about the organization, or found useful tools to use or share (such as exercises, or informational blog updates) (Cutler 2010, p. 96). I answered this question based on Cutler’s recommendations. Including options for interacting on the website, listening or watching videos or audio tracks, read blogs or project updates, and checking performance schedules. Based on these values, I have determined which websites have a higher probability of a viewer returning to their website regularly.
   a. 17/17 ensembles have audio or video tracks for return viewers to continue to explore.
   b. 13/17 ensembles had a news or blog section that may inspire a fan to return to read these updates, however, as of 9/9/16, only 9 of the 14 have updated these sections within the past six months.
   c. 15/17 ensembles have performance calendars on their websites. At the time of this study, 11/15 have upcoming dates posted on these calendars. 3/15 only have past dates posted, and one has no past or future concerts posted. For the three without upcoming performances, it is possible that they have not yet scheduled any performances, or that they are not keeping their calendar up-to-date on their website.
   d. One ensemble has exercises for download.

The following is a discussion of the content on most of the ensembles’ websites. Every ensemble provided recordings or videos as examples of their quality, and the rest of the website was to showcase their mission, and special projects. Some websites had very basic information, such as photos, one or two audio or video examples, a biography, and a contact page. Other ensembles provided numerous recordings and videos. The ensembles with many projects or programs, such as commissioning projects,
and/or residencies or educational programs, had more content, as they were providing information on all their different programs. The resources do not provide specific recommendations as to quantity of information on the website. There was no pattern for content quantity or presentation based on how long the ensemble had been in existence, the amount of performing they did, nor if they had management, or were self-managed.

Below is the collection of recommended subjects and content to consider for the website with the counts from the studied ensembles (Beeching 2010, pp. 132, 135-138; Cool 2014, pp. 4-6, 13-15, 17-24, 26-28; Cutler 2010, pp. 96, 98-100; Ghosh 2015; Hyatt, pp. 33-35; Vinson 2012; Slaughter and Kober 2004, p. 58; Whitney 2013, pp. 63-64, 78). As you will see, not every studied ensemble has information for every recommended subject. Subjects are presented alphabetically in this section, later in the chapter will be recommendations for how to organize these subjects into a website navigation bar.

**Website Content**

1. **Biography page ("Bio"):** This is the section where the ensemble would put their bio, and information about the individual musicians. A bio page is a necessity for the website. Casual viewers, potential fans, and potential employers will all want to read about your ensemble’s achievements and activities (Beeching 2010, p. 136; Cutler 2010, p. 98-100; Cool 2014, p. 4; Whitney 2013, p. 63-64).
   a. 17/17 ensembles had a page that included their ensemble bio.
   b. 17/17 ensembles included a group photo along with bio.
   c. 14/17 ensembles included individual bios as well as the ensemble bio.
   d. Several resources recommend having a bio that is offered for download in different lengths available on the bio page (Beeching 2010, p. 136; Cool 2014, pp. 4, 13; Cutler 2010, p. 98-100), however, none of the ensembles had their bio available to download on this page. For download versions, see the section on “Press Kit.”

2. **Blog:** Short for “weblog,”¹² this is where an ensemble can talk about their activities, and update their fans on a regular basis (Cutler 2010, p. 98-100; Ronald Interview). Blogs can be used to share updates on activities, give advice for the specific interests of your audience, tell interesting stories, or to interact with readers. Blogs are often short, and entertaining or informative. Information in the blogs do not only need to be about the ensemble’s musical activities (Beeching 2010, p. 135; Cutler 2010, p. 98-100). Most of the resources for musicians did not go into detail regarding content or organization of information that should be contained in a blog. For the

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¹² Definition of blog: 1) a website that contains online personal reflections, comments, and often hyperlinks, videos, and photographs provided by the writer; also: the contents of such a site. 2) a regular feature appearing as part of an online publication that typically relates to a particular topic and consists of articles and personal commentary by one or more authors. <a technology blog> (Merriam-Webster, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/blog, accessed 2/20/17).
purposes of this study, I will only discuss which ensembles have a blog or news section with a brief description of their content. Only Hyatt discusses frequency of updating the blog, and mentions that it can also be used as a newsletter, if updated regularly (pp. 34-35). There are many articles which give advice on how to blog, some of these articles are listed in the appendix.

a. 13/17 ensembles had pages that had blog elements. The terms “Blog” and “News” and “Newsletter” were used with many of the websites I studied.

b. Ensembles who have a blog section posted updates about the ensemble’s activities and accolades, but subjects were not limited to just updates. Other blog updates varied in content and style. Some updates were personal activities of members, or silly anecdotes.

c. Two ensembles had a specific theme to their blog. One ensemble’s blog was specifically for giving tips about playing, and being a freelance performer, and one ensemble used their blog to feature historic instruments, which was part of their mission. Neither of these ensembles included updates about the ensemble’s activities in this blog section.

d. Frequency of posts: At the time of this writing, 9/13 ensembles with blog-type pages had updated their page within the past three months. 3/13 ensembles had not updated their blog in at least a year. When looking at frequency, including past activity from the ensembles that haven’t posted in a year or more, 5/13 posted at least once a month, and sometimes more frequently, 2 posted every two or three months, and 6 posted infrequently, some only once a year.

3. Calendar: A schedule of performances is useful for fans, venues, and promoters to see when and where you’re playing either for attendance purposes, or booking purposes. It is important that your performance calendar is always up to date (Cool 2014, p. 5; Cutler 2010, p. 98-100; Ghosh 2015; Whitney 2013, p. 63-64; Ronald interview). All the research agrees that the basic information to include on the calendar should be the date, time, location, ticket information, or a link to purchase tickets, a link to the venue’s website, and a link to directions (Beeching 2010, p. 136; Cool 2014, p. 17; Cutler 2010, p. 98-100; Hyatt 2012, p. 34-35). You can also list previous performance dates, similar to how they would appear on your ensemble’s resume or CV. Or include a “Call to Action” message about booking the ensemble linking to the contact page (Cool 2014, p. 18). It is also recommended to list the repertoire that will be performed and include brief program notes (Beeching 2010, p. 136, Cutler 2010, p. 98-100).

a. 16/17 ensembles have calendars on their websites. Below, I have compared the recommended calendar content to what the 16 ensembles include on their calendar page.

12 Some other suggestions of events and additional information to provide on the calendar page are: Private events, House Concerts, Conference showcases, College and University gigs, Fundraising events, or that the ensemble is recording (Cool 2014, p. 18). This document emphasized the importance of showing visitors that you are busy, or are working. Even if there are no public performances scheduled.
• Performance date: 16/16 ensembles included this on their calendar.
• Performance time: 16/16 ensembles included time on their calendar, when it was available. Some ensembles listed multi-day residencies so there were no times available.
• Performance location: 16/16 ensembles included the location name. Not all included the address.
• Ticket info (cost and/or link to purchase?): 8/16 ensembles included ticket information when it applied. Some ensembles listed non-ticketed events so there was not ticket information for those events.
• Link to venue’s website: 7/16 ensembles included a link to the venue or host’s website.
• Link with directions or a map: 8/16 ensembles included a link to an online map program.
• Program information (repertoire and/or program notes?): 5/16 ensembles included their performance program for all performances, two additional ensembles included program information for some of their performances, but not all, those same two ensembles were also included program notes linked to the calendar page. One other ensemble also included program notes linked to their event.
• Other non-public performance or activities: 9/16 ensembles included past performances either as a drop-down option to view, or at the bottom section of their calendar page. 6/16 ensembles included residencies and festivals in addition to single performance dates. One ensemble included private events such as weddings.

4. Contact info: Promoters, media, potential employers, or even admirers of your ensemble may want to contact the group, either to hire the ensemble, or with questions about your group, or just to tell you they saw, and enjoyed, your performance. It’s important for your ensemble to engage fans and potential employers to help build a good rapport. You want the contact form easy to find, and easy to send a message (Beeching 2010, p. 138; Cool 2014, pp. 6, 13; Curran 2005, p. 24; Cutler 2010, p. 98-100; Ghosh 2015; Hyatt 2012, p. 34-35; Whitney 2013, p. 63-64; Ronald interview). Most website building programs have various form options. The ensemble should have a general contact form for all visitors, but also something that says specifically for booking or media inquiries, even if it goes to the same place (Cool 2014, p. 27).
  a. 17/17 ensembles had a contact section on their website. However, one ensemble only had contact information for booking, and no way to contact the ensemble with general questions or comments. The contact page for this ensemble included a newsletter sign-up option, and email for their booking agent.
b. 11/17 ensembles had a contact form to fill out.
c. 9/17 ensembles had the email address displayed for their booking or management agency.
d. 10/17 ensembles had a generic email address displayed, such as “info@ensemblename.com”
e. 3/17 ensembles had an email address displayed for each individual member.
f. 12/17 ensembles include specific contact instructions for booking and media compared to fans and other visitors to contact. Only one ensemble listed the same form for booking and general inquiries.
g. 9/17 ensembles include a mailing address in the contact section. This may have been their management’s address, or their ensemble business address.

5. Educational pages: Only Beeching mentions adding an Educational page to your website (Beeching 2010, p. 138). Even the resources for Teaching Artists do not discuss online presence or promotion, and the resources for entrepreneurial musicians do not focus on providing educational programs as a source of income. However, most studied ensembles include educational pages on their websites with details of the programs they offer.
   a. 13/17 ensembles have an Educational page on their website. This includes ensemble performances at schools, masterclasses, residencies, seminars, and festivals.
   b. 11/13 ensembles offer educational programs where the ensemble brings their program to schools (grades K-12 or college). Programs vary from interactive and fun presentations for young audiences that cover different subjects in music or use music to apply other STEM\textsuperscript{14} subjects, or discussions about specific works (in conjunction with a performance of those pieces). They may also offer master classes, open rehearsals, or collaborative performances with the students. The remaining two ensembles offer only a festival where students must travel to the ensemble.
   c. 4/12 ensembles host seminars or festivals for young musicians

6. Homepage: As the first image a viewer sees when visiting your website, this is undoubtedly the most important page. Often people will decide to stay or leave a website based on this first impression (Cool 2014, p. 4; Cutler 2010, p. 98-100; Vinson 2012). These three resources talk specifically about creating a clean, attention-grabbing homepage that isn’t overloaded with content, but provides enough information to keep a viewer engaged, and on the site. “This is where you can help guide people to which information you want them to see, and what action you want them to take.” (Cool 2014, p. 4). Later in this section, I will go into detail with

\textsuperscript{14} “STEM is an educational program developed to prepare primary and secondary students for college and graduate study in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). In addition to subject-specific learning, STEM aims to foster inquiring minds, logical reasoning, and collaboration skills.” (http://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/STEM-science-technology-engineering-and-mathematics, accessed 2/20/17).
recommendations and observations on what to include on a Homepage, and how the information is organized.

a. 17/17 ensembles have a homepage. The homepage for all ensembles is not a page with one subject as discussed elsewhere on this list. There are a variety of ways ensembles present their content on the homepage.

7. Links: Some resources recommend including links to other related resources (Beeching 2010, p. 138; Cutler 2010, p. 98-100). These links will help in two ways: You can use these other resources to enhance your website with additional information for viewers, and when doing a keyword search, your website will turn up when someone searches for a page you have linked to your website (Cutler 2010, p. 98-100).

a. 4/17 ensembles included links to press articles about the ensemble.

b. 3/17 ensembles included links to their management or booking agency website.

c. 2/17 ensembles included a page of links to related web pages that were not a part of the ensemble’s organization.

d. 2/17 ensembles included links to the websites of the composers with whom they are collaborating.

e. Other links were to purchase pages for merchandise, or to separate sites where the ensemble hosted their residency program or their blog page.

8. Mailing list: Having a mailing list is a valuable way to send updates to your fan base. In addition to offering a mailing list sign-up sheet at performances, you should also offer a mailing list sign-up on your website. The mailing list sign-up should be easy to find, easy to fill out, and easy to opt out if the fan changes their mind about getting updates (Beeching 2010, p. 138; Cool 2014, p. 28; Curran 2005, pp. 24, 197; Cutler 2010, p. 98-100). Additional information on creating an effective newsletter can be found later in this chapter under “Correspondence.” Some of the resources recommend creating an incentive for the viewer to entice them to sign up, such as offering a free download, or exclusive content in exchange for their email address (Beeching 2010, p. 138; Collard 2012, p. 2; Cool 2014, p. 28; Hyatt 2012, pp. 36-39).

a. 12/17 ensembles have a mailing list sign up on their websites.

b. 8/12 have the mailing list sign up available on every page of their website.

c. 2/12 have the mailing list signup only available on their “Contact” page.

d. One ensemble has their mailing list signup only available on their Home page.

e. One ensemble has their mailing sign up available only under their “Subscribe” page.

f. Two ensembles offered either a regular mailing list sign up, or an option to sign up and get a free download. For one of these ensembles, the free download was only on a specific page of their website.
g. Note: I signed up for all twelve newsletters/mailing lists offered in September, 2016. 4/12 ensembles have sent newsletters between September 21, 2016-February 20, 2017. These ensembles send newsletters on average once every three weeks.

9. Merchandise: For new ensembles, this section may not immediately apply. Once the group has recorded an album, or has other merchandise to sell, items should be available on their website, as well as at performances (Cool 2014, p. 24; Curran 2005, p. 24; Cutler 2010, p. 98-100; Whitney 2013, p. 63-64). There are programs and applications that can be used to set up a purchase page on the website, or the ensemble can link to a third-party company that can take secure payments and distribute merchandise, such as CD Baby, and Amazon for physical copies, or CD Baby or iTunes for digital downloads, and Cafe Press or Zazzle for other merchandise (Beeching 2010, pp. 132, 136; Hyatt 2012, pp. 34-35).
   a. 17/17 ensembles had recordings for sale on their website.
   b. 7/17 ensembles had merchandise other than recordings available for purchase. Six ensembles offer T-shirts. Two ensembles offer sheet music in addition to their CDs for purchase. One ensemble offers ringtones to download.
   c. 15/17 had a page on their website dedicated to merchandise. Of the two remaining, one had an iTunes and an Amazon widget button, and the other had a link on their homepage to purchase the album through either iTunes, or the label’s website.
   d. 8/17 ensembles had their purchase page in-house using a secure payment company such as PayPal or Square Space.
   e. 6/17 ensembles had links to iTunes for digital download.
   f. 6/17 ensembles had links to Amazon for physical or digital downloads.
   g. 5/16 ensembles had links to purchase the album on the website of the record label their CD was released under.
   h. 4/16 ensembles used third party distribution companies such as CD Baby or BandCamp.

10. Miscellaneous: An ensemble can choose to add pages that suit their mission. Providing interactive pages, practice tips, jokes, or anything else that may not be covered in the other pages (Beeching 2010, p. 138; Cutler 2010, pp. 98-100).
   a. 6/17 ensembles have an extra page that is unique to their ensemble.
      ▪ One has a fan page where fans can post comments, photos, and sign up to be the “Fan of the Month.”
      ▪ One ensemble has a page dedicated to interesting links, this was discussed in the “Links” section.
      ▪ One ensemble has a page with warm-up routines that can be downloaded for each instrument of the ensemble.
      ▪ One ensemble has a page with the history of the ensemble, former members, and notable activities throughout the ensemble’s long history.
• One site offered their promotional posters for download.
• One site you could purchase some of their original arrangements.

a. FAQ page: Beeching recommends a “Frequently Asked Questions” page for the website. She recommends making it fun with personal information about the musicians, information about repertoire, and information about any projects the ensemble may be working on (p. 138). Only one ensemble of the 17 included a FAQ page. This FAQ page primarily addresses questions about the ensemble’s collaborations and commissioned works, along with providing links to the appropriate pages for people who may want to book the ensemble, or see when they are performing in their area.

11. Music page(s): Audio and/or video recordings are necessary for musician websites. A good recording or video could be shared by fans, motivate people to buy your albums or attend your performances, and even get reviewed by critics (Beeching 2010, p. 136; Cool 2014, p. 5; Curran 2005, pp. 24, 197; Cutler 2010, p. 98-100; Ghosh 2015; Ronald interview). The resources recommend some short clips as well as two or three complete works, they also recommend at least one good quality live video to showcase your ensemble’s visual presentation. A video can also be an interview, or promotional video (Beeching 2010, p. 137; Cool 2014, p. 19; Cutler 2010, p. 98-100; Ghosh 2015). Put only recordings that are good quality, and will showcase the ensemble’s abilities (Beeching 2010, p. 136; Cool 2014, p. 14; Cutler 2010, p. 98-100; Ghosh 2015). More information on types of audio and video recordings can be found in that chapter.

a. 9/17 ensembles have audio recordings.
   • 6/9 use an embedded MP3 player that does not provide a link to another media site.
   • 2/9 use an embedded SoundCloud player that can be either streamed on the website or linked to SoundCloud for more recordings.
   • One ensemble included links to recordings on their calendar section. These pieces were ones the ensemble had commissioned for that ensemble.

b. 17/17 ensembles have video recordings.
   • 16/17 ensembles provide at least one complete performance of a piece or movement of a piece. Videos varied from live performances, to produced performances, to promotional videos.
   • 12/17 ensembles have videos for promotion or interviews.
   • 15/17 ensembles have live performance videos
   • The number of videos ranged from one to twenty-five (including interviews, excerpts, promotional videos, and full pieces), with the average being 4-8 videos.
     • One ensemble had only one video, and only one ensemble had twenty-five videos. 6/17 ensembles had 2-4 videos, 6/17 ensembles had 6-8 videos, and 3/17 ensembles had 12-17 videos.
• 16/17 ensembles use an embedded YouTube player that can either be streamed on the website or linked to YouTube for more videos.
• 5/17 ensembles use an embedded Vimeo player that can either be streamed on the website or linked to Vimeo for more videos.
• 5/17 ensembles use both Vimeo and YouTube to view videos.

12. Non-Profit Organization information, and donation pages: This section was not mentioned in the research on website content. For some of the studied websites, there was information on their website regarding their organization details, such as board members, mission, and some even include a donation page. Not all ensembles who had a donate button are 501(c)(3) status, and not all studied ensembles who are 501(c)(3) status have donate buttons, or organizational details on their website.
   a. 7/17 ensembles include a “Donate” or “Support” button.
   b. 4/17 ensembles include a “Board of Directors” page. All ensembles have this page as a drop-down sub-header.

13. Photos: All chamber ensembles should have at least one photo that represents the ensemble (Curran 2005, p. 24; Ghosh 2015). Details on professional photos can be found in the related chapter. Photos should be used for the home page, press pages, and possibly as backgrounds for various other pages, as well as the ensemble’s social media accounts (Beeching 2010, p. 137; Curran 2005, p. 24). Also recommend, but less frequently, was to have a dedicated “Photo” page, and create different galleries for different kinds of photos as a way of organizing them, one recommended gallery was a “fan” photo page, where audience members can submit photos they have taken of the ensemble (Cool 2014, pp. 5, 20; Sivers via Curran 2005, p. 197).
   a. 17/17 have photos on their home page
      • 4/17 have multiple photos that rotate on the home page.
      • One site has a video at the top of their page, and two ensemble photos as you scroll further down the home page.
      • One site has additional photos as you scroll down the home page.
   b. 17/17 ensembles have a group photo in their “About” or Ensemble Bio section of their website.
   c. 15/17 ensembles include headshots for individual musicians, along with individual bios on their website.
      • 8 of those 15 use headshots that are likely from the same photo shoot as the ensemble photos, as determined based on clothing and background.
   d. 8/17 ensembles have a photo gallery section that include professional photos as well as performance (action) and candid shots. These galleries are generally separated into activities, such as tours or education presentations.
e. One ensemble includes a “fan photos” section, where fans can send photos they’ve taken of the ensemble that will be posted on their website.

14. Press articles and Reviews: If your ensemble has been reviewed by media or presenters, having a press page may be useful. This page can consist of links to articles from newspapers, industry magazines, or anything else (Beeching 2010, p. 137; Cutler 2010, p. 98-100; Whitney 2013, p. 73). It can also be a place where you can put quotes from performances or album reviews. If using quotes from individuals (not news articles) you should have the permission from the person you’re quoting. All quotes should include date, location, and source (Beeching 2010, p. 137).
   a. 11/17 ensembles have press pages with news articles, quotes and/or reviews.
      • 6/11 have reviews. 6/11 have quotes. 3/11 have news articles that are not limited to reviews, they may also be a feature.

15. Press Kit: Having materials available for download on the website makes it easy for presenters and media outlets to access any of your promotional materials without having to wait for you to email it, or having to search their email for the materials (Beeching 2010, p. 137; Cutler 2010, p. 98-100; Hyatt 2012, p. 34-35; Ronald interview). More information about the content of press kits can be found in the section titled “Press Kits” later in this chapter. In the online research, I noted which ensembles had all, one, or a combination of photos, quotes, and a bio available for download.
   a. 13/16 ensembles had at least one of the three press items available for download.
   b. 5 ensembles had all three elements available for download, two of which were available as a full color press packet, whereas the others had individual components for download.
   c. 5 ensembles had photos, and a bio for download.
   d. One ensemble had quotes and bio, but not photos available.
   e. 2 ensembles only had photos available for download.

16. Projects: A project description, or description of services was recommended, but content for this page is not defined in the resources. It is implied that this page would contain information about the ensemble’s mission and activities (Cutler 2010, p. 98-100 Whitney 2013, pp. 63-64). None of the ensembles have one page dedicated to outlining all of their specific services, but most have different pages for different activities or services they offer. These pages were titled “Projects” or were titled specifically with the project name. Educational pages are not counted in this commentary.
   a. 11/17 ensembles have a projects page.
   b. 6/8 ensembles have multiple projects presented. Projects consist of collaborations with other artists or composers, composition commission projects, and recording projects.

17. Repertoire list: Only Cutler recommended an ensemble list current programs, or individual pieces that a promoter can choose from to build a customized program (p. 98-100). In the “Calendar,” or “Compositions” lists, some of the ensembles list the repertoire they are currently performing.
a. 10/17 ensembles provided their current programming in their calendar of events section.

b. 8/17 ensembles listed, and described pieces they have commissioned or have been written for them.

c. One ensemble provided a complete list of standard repertoire, as well as original arrangements, that a presenter could choose from.

d. One ensemble offers sheet music to purchase that has been commissioned or arranged for the ensemble, one ensemble includes a comprehensive list of standard repertoire, listed by genre, available for them to perform by request.

e. One ensemble does not list pieces they perform for public performances, but they do include a list of works and programs for educational performances.

18. Social Media buttons: As discussed in the chapter on social media, these platforms should be connected to your website. Have the links to your ensemble’s active social media accounts to help fans follow you through the platform of their choice (Cool 2014, p. 28; Ghosh 2015; Hyatt 2012, p. 34). See the section on social media for additional information.

a. 16/17 ensembles include links to their social media accounts.

b. 15/16 have a Facebook link

c. 14/16 have a Twitter link

d. 10/16 have a YouTube link

e. 6/16 have an Instagram link

f. 2/16 have a Vimeo link

After content for the website has been chosen, the next step is to consider how to organize this information (Cutler 2010, p. 97). The site can be simple; starting with as little as one page with a photo and the ensemble biography, or it can have several pages with videos samples, audio clips, bios, galleries of photos, and numerous other things (Barth 2010, p. 25, Quentin from Ensemble A interview). I found that organizing a website can be similar to organizing a CV or resume, though content will be different from a CV.

Organizing the Navigation Bar

The research divides the website content into “Main Headings” and “Subheadings.” It is recommend to only have one subject per page, with subheading pages that appear as a dropdown menu from the related main heading (Cool 2014, pp. 4, 6; Ghosh 2015). The purpose of each page can be clear through title and content (Ghosh 2015; Hyatt 2012, p. 33; Whitney 2013, pp. 63-64). This section will cover observations made on the studied websites on the number of tabs (headings and subheadings) websites have, and some general comments on how they organize their tabs. It is recommended to have
between eight and eleven tabs in the navigation bar. If there are more than eleven, the site could become overwhelming (Cool 2014, p. 3; Ghosh 2015).

I am including these observations to show that the amount of content in a website does not directly relate to the number of headings and subheadings on the ensembles’ navigation bars.

Main Headings: The average number of headings was 9.
1. 4 ensembles had 8 main headings
2. 4 ensembles had 9 main headings
3. 4 ensembles had 10 main headings.
4. The remaining ensembles had one of each for 5, 6, 7, 11, or 13 main headings.

Subheadings: the average number of subheadings was 10-11. Number of subheadings was more varied, so I have grouped them into average numbers. In my count of subheadings, five ensembles listed members as individual subheadings. I have included this as part of the subheading count. Below is a short break-down of main and subheadings from the studied ensembles.
1. 3 ensembles had no subheadings.
2. 6 ensembles had between 5 and 10 subheadings.
3. 7 ensembles had between 11 and 20 subheadings.
4. One ensemble had 25 subheadings.

The ensembles with more programs and projects had more subheadings. Most subheadings were organized to take the viewer to specific projects, or to organize different types of performances or educational programs offered. An interesting observation, was that the three ensembles that did not have subheadings, also only had 6, 8, and 9 main headings. These ensembles, in general, had minimal content on their websites. Another observation, is that no matter the number of subheadings, none of the ensembles had subheadings under all main headings. Subheadings ranged from being under one main heading, to six main headings with subheadings, with the maximum being five subheadings out of eight main headings.

In my study of the websites, there was one website that was particularly confusing to navigate at times. This website had a small number of tabs on their navigation bar, with no apparent sub-headings. However, when you went to certain headings, there was a second navigation bar on the individual pages with the subheadings that may or may not relate to the main heading. This proved to be very challenging to find information on their projects, education initiatives, and other subjects that the website contained. The homepage also had a long scroll down with sections of content that would link to different pages in their website, but these sections only related to the main headings, and did not solve the problems of finding certain information.
Navigation bar tabs titles

The above list are also the only recommendations for navigation bar tab names the research provides. Though, not all ensembles used those generic titles for their websites. Below I have included the navigation bar titles used by the studied ensembles. I have not included every one of the subjects above in part because some of the subjects do not have a tab on the navigation bar, or because certain tabs are on 40% or less of the studied ensemble pages. The tabs I have included to list are: Biography, Blog, Calendar, Contact, Education, Home, Merchandise, Music, Press, and Projects pages from the 17 studied websites. In this study, I found that some subjects use the standard titles, and some do not. Some of the same terms are used for different subjects. The purpose of this list is to give you an idea of what titles are most commonly used for specific content, and what pages are most often listed as a main header or a sub-header in a navigation bar. It is also important to note sections that are not consistent in their title, or location and how ensembles choose to organize and present their content on their website.

Navigation bar titles

1. Biography: 17/17 ensembles have this page.
   a. 13/17 titled this page “About”
   b. One ensemble titled this page "About Us"
   c. One ensemble titled this page “Bios”
   d. One ensemble titled this page “Who We Are”
   e. One ensemble titled this page “Ensemble.”

2. Blog: 13/17 ensembles have a Blog section.
   a. 6/13 labeled this “Blog,”
   b. 6/13 labeled their blog "News" and put ensemble updates, and casual narrative on this page, and did not include press media coverage.
   c. One ensemble had a blog but had given it a specific name, as the content was not updates of the ensemble’s activities, but was specifically for advice and discussions for musicians in general, or sometimes tips for musicians who played the same instrument.

3. Calendar: 16/17 ensembles have a calendar page. All 16 ensembles use this page as a main header on their navigation bar.
   a. 5/16 ensembles titled this page “Calendar”
   b. 4/16 ensembles titled this page “Events”
   c. 2/16 ensembles titled this page “Concerts”
   d. 2/16 ensembles titled this page “Shows”
   e. One ensemble titled this page “Schedule”
   f. One ensemble titled this page “Tour”
g. One ensemble titled this page “Concert Calendar.”

4. Contact: 16/17 ensembles have a contact page. One ensemble does not have a dedicated page for contacting, but includes a contact form at the bottom of every page of their website.
   a. 11/16 ensembles titled this page “Contact.”
   b. 2/16 ensembles titled this page “Contact Us.”
   c. 2/16 ensemble titled this page “Contacts” and include a form to contact the ensemble as well as the ensemble’s mailing information, and direct email links to members.
   d. One ensemble includes their contact page as a sub-header under their “About” section, the sub-header page is titled “Contact Us.”

5. Education: 13/17 ensembles have an educational programs page. 10 of these ensembles have this page as a main header.
   a. 5/13 ensembles titled this page “Education.”
   b. Other main header titles were all different, with only one ensemble per title: Residencies, Training, (ensemble name) Presents, Summer Seminar, and For Educators.
   c. Three ensembles placed their educational programs as a sub-header.
      ▪ One was placed under “Booking” and titled the education programs page “Clinics.”
      ▪ One was placed under “Blog” and titled the education programs page “Projects.”
      ▪ One was placed under “About” and titled the education programs page “Community.”

6. Home: 17/17 ensembles have a homepage.
   a. 10/17 ensembles have a button on the navigation bar for the homepage, the remaining seven use their logo or ensemble name as a button to return to the homepage.
      ▪ 9/10 titled this page “Home”
      ▪ One ensemble titled this page “Welcome”

7. Merchandise: 16/17 ensembles have a merchandise page, and all have a main header that brings to a purchase option. The name of the purchase page was not consistent, and a few ensembles offered purchasing in more than one place on their website. One ensemble had recordings available under “Store” and “Recordings.” Two websites have purchasing links on their homepage as well as a merchandise page. The breakdown is as follows:
   a. 5/16 titled this page “Recordings”
   b. 3/16 titled this page “Store”
   c. 2/16 titled this page “Merch”
   d. 2/16 titled this page “Shop”
   e. One titled this page “Albums”
   f. One titled this page “Merchandise”
g. One titled this page “CDs”
h. One titled this page “Web Store”

8. Music Pages: 17/17 ensembles have a music page. All ensembles have a media page as a main header, though seven ensembles have a drop-down sub-header that separated audio and video pages.
   a. 16/17 ensembles have one tab for all media
      ▪ One ensemble has separate main header tabs for audio and video recordings.
   b. 6/17 titled the page “Media”
   c. 2/17 titled the page “Music”
   d. Two similarly titled pages: One “Videos,” and one “Video.”
   e. Two other similarly titled pages: One “Media Room,” and one “Media Center.”
   f. One titled the page “Video/CDs”
   g. One titled the page “Music/Videos”
   h. One titled the page “Audio” but had both video and audio samples.
   i. One ensemble did not have a dedicated music samples page, but included all videos in their “Projects” section, with videos related to the piece they were promoting in the projects.
   j. Of the seven ensembles that had subheadings to divide their media four titled their main heading as “Media,” two titled the main heading “Music,” and one titled the main heading as “Video/CDs.”
      ▪ 3/7 titled the audio recordings subheading “Albums,” one titled the audio recording page “Audio,” one titled the page “Listen”
      ▪ 4/7 titled the video subheading “Video,” one titled the video subheading “Watch,” and one titled one sub-heading with videos “Promo Videos.”
      ▪ Two ensembles had a subheading that included both audio and video samples. They did not separate these because the other subheadings were either discography lists, or other media options. One titled this subheading “Live” and included only live recordings and videos. One titled this subheading “Audio, video, photos.”

9. Press page: This page and the blog page were the most confusing in titles because “News” was used interchangeably for media coverage news and for ensemble updates (blog) news. Some ensembles had a tab just for press quotes or excerpts of reviews, others had a page with teasers and links to full news articles that were either reviews or general press coverage of the ensemble. 11/17 ensembles had pages with reviews, articles, or quotes.
   a. Of the ensembles with press reviews or articles:
      ▪ Three titled the page “Press”
      ▪ One titled the page “Acclaim”
- One titled the page “Reviews”
- One titled the page “Press Review”

b. Of the ensembles with press quotes, they titled this pages: Acclaim (2), Press/Acclaim (1), Press Quotes (1), Press (1), Acclaim (1).

c. Of the ensembles that provided news articles, they titled this page: Press Room (1), Press Articles (1), News (1).

10. Projects: 11/17 ensembles have a page for their projects. 6/11 ensembles listed their projects page in the navigation bar. Two of these ensembles included drop-down sub-headers with specific projects listed.

a. 4/11 ensembles listed their projects page as a main header in the navigation bar, and titled the page “Projects.”

b. 4/11 ensembles included their projects in a sub-header. One was under their “About” section and titled the sub-header “Projects,” one was under their “Music” page and titled the sub-header “Projects,” one was under their “Blog” page and titled the sub-header “Projects,” and one was under their “Events” page but listed all their different projects separately by name.

c. 2/11 ensembles listed their projects page as a main header in the navigation bar, and titled the page with the project name.

d. One ensemble had two different projects, listed separately in the navigation bar.

Navigation Bar tabs locations

The order of the navigation bar is important. There are some standards, such as the “Home” and “About” sections are furthest left (first), “Merchandise” and “Contact” are near the end (last). The music, calendar, photos, videos, and projects pages are in the middle, and less important in their exact position (Cool 2014, p. 6; Slaughter and Kober 2004, p. 55; studied ensembles averages). No ensemble has the same tabs on their navigation bar. Since every ensemble has different projects, and content, the organization was not consistent. Based on the research from each website, these navigation bar tabs: Home, Biography (About), Calendar, Merchandise, and Contact have the most consistent locations on all the websites. All other main headings were placed in the middle of the navigation bar, and were not consistent in their placement.
Order of main headings

1. Home: 17/17 ensembles have their “Home” page as their entry page into the website. Not all the websites have a “Home” tab on their navigation bar.
   a. 10/17 have a “Home” tab on their navigation bar, and it is first.
   b. 7/17 use their logo or ensemble name as their “Home” button.

2. Biography (“About”): 17/17 ensembles have this page as a main header on the navigation bar.
   a. Of the ensembles with a “Home” tab:
      ▪ Seven have the bio tab second
      ▪ Two have the bio tab third
      ▪ One has the bio tab fourth
   b. Of the ensembles without a “Home” tab:
      ▪ Six have the bio page tab.
      ▪ One has the bio tab third.

3. Calendar: 16/17 ensembles have a “Calendar” or “Event” page with upcoming performances listed in some form, all 16 ensembles have this button as a main header on the navigation bar. Where this subject was placed in the navigation bar was not consistent.
   a. Of the 10 ensembles with a “Home” tab:
      ▪ Three have the calendar tab fifth
      ▪ Two have the calendar tab third
      ▪ Two have the calendar tab sixth
      ▪ One has the calendar tab second
      ▪ One has the calendar tab fourth
   b. Of the 7 ensembles without a “Home” tab:
      ▪ 4/7 have the calendar tab second
      ▪ 3/7 have the calendar tab third.

4. Merchandise: 16/17 ensembles have a “Merchandise” page.
   a. 6/16 ensembles have their merchandise page in the middle of the navigation bar, and was inconsistent based on variety of number of tabs.
   b. 4/16 ensembles have their merchandise tab last.
   c. Two ensembles have their merchandise tab second to last
   d. Two ensembles have their merchandise tab third.
   e. Two ensembles included their merchandise page as part of their media page, so you could listen to, or buy the recordings.

5. Contact: 17/17 ensembles have a “Contact” page.
   a. 8/17 ensembles made the contact tab last
   b. 5/17 ensembles made the contact tab second to last.
c. One ensemble did not have a tab for their contact page, but a contact form was included at the bottom of every page of the website.

d. One ensemble only had their contact tab as a drop-down option under the “About” section.

e. The other two ensembles included the contact tab near the end of the navigation bar, but not last or second to last.

How to make your website easier to navigate

1. Don’t over-clutter the pages (Beeching 2010, p. 134; Cutler 2010, p. 97; Vinson 2012; Williams 2008, pp. 139-142).
   a. Limit the amount of text on each page.
   b. Prioritize your content by utilizing the “white space,” and have focal points for each page, or “eye anchors.”

2. Avoid a slow-loading splash page (entry page) or auto-play song that cannot be easily bypassed (Cutler 2010, p. 100; Hyatt 2012, p. 36).

3. Visual elements:
   a. The location and order of your navigation buttons should look the same on every page (Cutler 2010, p. 100).
   b. Use the same colors, logo, and general styles for every page (Hyatt 2012, p. 33, 37; Williams 2008, pp. 139-142).
   c. Fonts: Too many font styles look messy visually (Whitney 2013, p. 63-64; Williams 2008, p. 145-152). Some fonts may be changed on different systems, and will affect the spacing and organization of the website (Cutler 2010, p. 100).
   d. Use contrasting but complementary colors: Make sure words are legible against your chosen background colors (Cutler 2010, p. 100; Whitney 2013, p. 63-64; Williams 2008, 91-108).
   e. Choose color schemes wisely: They must work together, as well as represent your ensemble’s mission (Ghosh 2015; Williams 2008, pp. 91-108)

4. Update regularly: Most of the research discussed updating websites and social media (Cutler, p. 101, Hyatt 2012, p. 177; Ghosh 2015; Slaughter and Kober 2004, p. 56; Whitney 2013, p. 63-64). I discussed this potential problem in most of my interviews. The consensus was that keeping online content updated was challenging, but important (Hyatt 2012, p. 30; Clara interview; Horace interview; Justin interview; Philip interview). My interviewees gave more advice than the research on how to update, and the challenges of updating the website.
   a. Clara’s ensemble and Ensemble A both have one person in the ensemble who is specifically in charge of designing and updating their website.
b. Justin’s and Horace’s ensembles have access to all online accounts, and they post and update individually, as they feel the need, with minimal oversight or discussion.

c. Philip’s ensemble hires someone to do the design and maintenance of the website, but all the content comes from the ensemble.

d. Clara recommends hiring someone if the information isn’t getting updated often enough.

**Website Homepage**

The website’s homepage is the first contact with a viewer, and this page should entice a viewer to stay on the site. The homepage was not discussed in detail in the primary resources, but Vinson include recommendations on general content to include on the website. The amount of content and the layout of the studied websites varied, but a lot of the other recommended attributes were present. One noticeable difference was the length of homepage. Some websites were only slightly larger than the computer screen, while others would require scrolling down to view all the content, this is called a “fold.”[^1] Below is a comparison of recommended content from the studied ensembles. Also included are attributes of the homepage that are recommended by the research to be present on every page of the website.

**The Homepage**

1. **Header:** The header is at the top of the page, and should remain consistent through all pages. This usually includes the ensemble’s logo (if there is one), name, and a photo, or graphic that represents the ensemble ([Vinson](#))
    a. 15/17 ensembles have their logo or name at the top of the page as part of their header. The two ensembles that do not have their navigation bar at the top of the page, with an ensemble photo below with their logo or name, and content below the photo.
    b. 17/17 ensembles have a photo below their header and navigation bar. For most of the websites this photo changes for every page of the site, but the location does not.
    c. 2/17 ensembles have a graphic (not their logo) in addition to the ensemble name and photo.

2. **Navigation bar:** This should be on every page of the website, it should be in the same location, and look the same on every page. The location of the navigation bar is generally along the top,

[^1]: Fold: In web design terms, “fold” is the line past which someone must scroll to see more content. Everything that shows up when a page first loads is “above the fold” and “below-” or “after the fold” refers to the content further down the page. Keep in mind that the fold is different for different monitors and screen resolution ([BKmediagroup article, accessed 11/12/16, Vinson](#) 2012)
reading from left to right, either above or below the logo/name/graphics, and is part of the header, or it might be down the left-hand side of the page (Hyatt 2012, p. 33).

a. 16/17 ensembles have their navigation bar reading from left to right along the page.

b. 16/17 ensembles have their navigation bar all on one line, and one ensemble has some headers on a second line.

c. 6/15 ensembles have their navigation bar on the same line as their logo/name.

d. One ensemble has the navigation bar on the left side of the page, reading down.

e. One ensemble has their navigation bar across the page on their homepage, but all other pages has the navigation bar going from top to bottom, along the left side of the page.

f. 9/17 ensembles use a drop-down option on their navigation bar for sub-headers of some of their main headers. 4/17 have no sub-headers. 3/17 have sub-headers that appear only once you go to certain main-header pages.

3. Quotes or mission: Using a short description of your music, the ensemble's mission, or a press or fan quote may catch a visitor's interest and influence them to listen to your music, and further explore your site (Hyatt 2012, p. 33; Vinson 2012).

a. 10/17 ensembles include a press or presenter quote. Four of these ten include multiple quotes on their homepage.

b. 3/17 ensembles include a pitch or motto.

c. One ensemble includes both press quotes and their pitch.

4. Call to Action or Interactive element: A call to action is an element of a website that requires the visitor to interact somehow on the website. Calls to action can include: a newsletter sign up option, or a free download in exchange for your email posted on your homepage (Beeching 2010, p. 134; Collard 2012, p. 24; Hyatt 2012, p. 34), or a click to listen, or link to buy your latest album, or even a comments section, something that gets the viewer involved on the website (Slaughter and Kober 2004, p. 58; Vinson 2012).

a. 8/17 ensembles have a mailing list sign up on their homepage.

b. 6/17 ensembles have a link to buy an album on their homepage.

c. 2/17 ensembles have a free download in exchange for your email address.

d. One ensemble has a link to donate on their homepage (that is not part of their navigation bar).

5. Music or video player: Another type of “Call to Action” can be examples of your work either in video or audio form. In addition to a section on your website dedicated to audio and video recordings, it is recommended to have at least one clip or full piece available to view on the homepage, to get the viewer interested right away (Ghosh 2015; Vinson 2012).

a. 6/17 ensembles have an audio track available to play on their homepage.

b. 4/17 ensembles have a video that can be played.
c. Cutler advises that if an audio track that starts as soon as you enter the website, there should be an easy to find “Pause” button (Cutler 2010, p. 98-100). None of the websites have an audio or video track that start as soon as you enter the website, they all have clear “play” and “pause” buttons.

6. Latest news: Some resources recommend having small clips of the latest updates or news from the ensemble that link to the full story (Cutler 2010, p. 96; Vinson 2012), I call these links “teasers.” In addition to this, many of the studied ensembles have a brief view of their upcoming performances.
   a. 8/17 ensembles include upcoming concerts or events on their homepage.
   b. 6/17 ensembles include a teaser and link to the latest news or blog updates on their homepage.
   c. 3/17 ensembles include a Twitter feed on their homepage.

7. Social Media links: It is recommended that there are social media links on the home page, and possibly on every page to make it easy for a viewer to start following your ensemble through other mediums (Vinson 2012).
   a. 15/17 ensembles have social media links on their homepage. One ensemble that does not have the links on their homepage has a live Twitter feed in their “News” section, the other ensemble that does not have the social media link on their homepage has the links in their “Contact” section.
   b. 9/15 ensembles have their social media links in the footer for each page
   c. 6/15 ensembles have their social media links as part of their header on each page.
      i. two of these ensembles have links in both the header and the footer on each page.
   d. One ensemble has the social media links on the bottom of their home page, but vertically along the left-hand side for all other pages.

8. Footer: A footer is the bottom of a website that is present on every page of the site. The footer often contains the copyright statement, contact information, and if applicable the page author or web designer (http://webstyleguide.com/wsg3/6-page-structure/3-site-design.html, accessed 11/11/16).
   a. 17/17 ensembles have a footer.

9. Length of the homepage: I am defining length by the number of folds a homepage contains in a scroll-down format. Some websites will divide portions of their homepage with a call to action, or a “teaser” (an introductory sentence or two about a project), or photo for information about performances, or blog updates, or other information, which links to the page on the website with more information. Divisions are generally clear, with either a clear line between sections, different color backgrounds or photos, or titles to the teaser section. Specific length of the homepage is not
discussed in the research, but it goes along with the discussion of how much content to put on the homepage, and how to organize the page.

a. As noted above, all websites contained a header and a footer.
b. 7/17 ensembles contained only one section of teaser links between their photo in the header and their footer at the bottom. This would be considered a short page.
c. 3/17 ensembles did not contain any additional sections besides their header and photo, and the footer. These homepages were basically entry pages, where a viewer would need to click on the navigation bar headings to find out more about the ensemble. These are also considered short pages.
d. 3/17 ensembles contained two separate sections of teasers. One of these pages had very short teaser sections, so I would catalog this ensemble homepage as short, but the other two required a longer scroll to see all the sections, I considered these medium-length homepages.
e. One ensemble contained three separate sections of teasers.
f. Two ensembles contained four sections of teasers.
g. One ensemble contained five sections of teasers.

Conclusion for Website

Once your website is active, put the link on your social media platforms. Actively promote your site by sending out an announcement to your mailing list anytime something big is updated on your site (Beeching 2010, pp. 139-140; Cutler 2010, pp. 95-96; Slaughter and Kober, p. 55). Additional information about how to promote your site can be found in the appendix, under the resources for online marketing. Also included in the appendix is a list of recommended webhosts, terminology, and resources for further information about building a website.

It is important for a website to be well organized, up to date, and without “annoying” features (Cutler 2010, p. 100, Vinson 2012). “Annoying” features can be a bad visual design, bad color scheme, too much text or hard-to-read text, a slow-loading home page, the inability to find what they are looking for, or a music or flash player that can’t be easily stopped, or by-passed. A viewer will leave a website if there is anything that annoys them (Williams 2008, pp. 139-142). None of the websites had a Flash player, or auto-play music, or a bad color scheme. However, the way some ensembles organized their websites made navigation difficult. The information in this chapter should help an ensemble organize their content for their websites in a clear, and easily navigable way.
Below I have created three lists for websites, one with the primary advantages to having a website, and two that include the most common organization, and content to be put on a website. These lists were created by combining the common recommendations from resources, and the common practices from the studied ensembles. These lists are based, in part, on my observations, and opinions of what was effective on the studied ensembles’ websites, as compared to what the resources had recommended.

Main purposes for a website

- **100% Controlled content:** Unlike social media platforms, a website can be organized to present content the ensemble wants people to see, or is most important to them. Organization, design, and colors can be customized based on the organization’s preferences.
- **Define mission and branding:** Websites can have larger sections of text than social media, and the ensemble can clearly identify their goals either through text, or sections that focus on the ensemble’s goals. All images, and other content can be chosen by the ensemble to best represent the ensemble’s brand, and mission without the pressure to update these items frequently.
- **Present all past and present projects:** Any projects the ensemble is involved with can have detailed information, and updates, all in one central place. A viewer can follow one specific project without searching through unrelated posts (as they would need to do on social media).
- **Increase search engine hits:** Utilize the website’s ability to highlight keywords so your ensemble appears in a word search for different projects.

As discussed, some content will be determined by the ensemble’s projects, but the below lists are the most common traits among all websites, and should be the starting point for any chamber ensemble website.

**Best practices: Content to include on the website**

- Ensemble name
- Ensemble logo (if applicable)
- Ensemble bio
- Member bios
- Professional Photos
• Video recordings
• Audio recordings
• Social Media links
• Contact information
• Project or mission information
• Performance calendar (with links to ticket purchase, or venue website)
• Merchandise (if applicable)
• Mailing list sign up (only if your ensemble intends on sending updates via email)
• Educational programming (if applicable)
• Press materials: Include press quotes, or links to stories (if applicable), and downloadable bio and photos for media and presenters (EPK).

Best practices for the Navigation bar: Primary tabs to include, in order, and with recommended title options

• Home (can be a button on the navigation bar, or link the ensemble name/logo in the header to the homepage)
• About
• Music (or Audio/Video)
• Calendar
• Special Projects
• Merch (or Store)
• Press
• Contact
• Social Media buttons (should be part of the header or footer on every page)
CHAPTER 4: ENSEMBLE BIOGRAPHY

A musician biography is used for many professional, and promotional purposes. Chamber ensembles also need to have a biography specifically for the ensemble. An ensemble biography (bio), is used almost everywhere the ensemble has a presence. For the studied ensembles, it is found on the ensembles’ websites, and social media accounts, in press kits, in news articles about ensembles, and will likely be in their performance programs, and for grant applications (Beeching 2010, p. 49; Cutler 2010, p. 78; Eastman n.d.; Highstein 1991, p. 18-19; studied ensembles). Below is a list of possible uses for the chamber ensemble bio (Barth 2010, p. 25; Beeching, pp. 78-80; Conner and Laverty 2014, loc 282; Cutler 2010, p. 78; Heflick 1993, p. 14; Highstein 1991, pp. 17-19, 24; Hinckley 2015; Hyatt 2012, pp 40, 170-176; Kimpel n.d.; Loft 2003, p. 242; Ricker 2011, p. 70; Sivers via Curran 2005, pp. 193-194; Taylor 2011, p. 110; Whitney 2013, pp. 63-64).

- Competition applications
- Grant applications
- Management (if seeking)
- Performance Programs
- Press Kits
- Promoters (give to)
- Residency application
- Social media (full bios found on Facebook, short bios are found on Twitter, Instagram, YouTube)
- Website

This section will discuss how to create an outline for a resume or CV, which will be used as a reference when writing a biography (Curriculum Vita (CVs): Beeching 2010, p. 259; Cutler 2010, p. 85-86; Ricker 2011, pp. 69, 70, 73. Resumes: Beeching 2010, p. 259; Cutler 2010, pp. 83-84; Highstein 1991, pp. 18, 19; Ricker 2011, pp. 69-73; Slaughter and Kober 2004, p. 107; Whitney 2013, pp. 63-64). Once the ensemble’s history, and experiences are organized, I will then go into detail on how to write an informative and engaging biography from the collected information. Content, organization, length, and writing style recommendations from the research will be compared to the studied ensembles’ biographies and a general guideline will be given for these characteristics.

This chapter will take the recommended steps for collecting and organizing experiences for individuals, and add or remove subjects as they apply to a chamber ensemble.

Definitions for “Resume” and “Curriculum Vita” as they relate to musicians could only be found from university resources, whereas definitions for “Musician’s Biography” have many more varied resources, but no official definition from a university, or scholarly source.

Resume: “A résumé is a formal overview of your past and current professional and educational experience. It should directly and concisely list any experiences related to the teaching position you are seeking. Some description of your experiences may be appropriate, but you should be as concise as possible. Remember, a résumé is not an autobiography – it is an outline of your experiences.” (Eastman n.d., https://www.esm.rochester.edu/iml/careers/documents/resumeguide2005.pdf, accessed 10/29/16).

Curriculum Vita: “The curriculum vitae, also known as a CV or vita, is a comprehensive statement of your educational background and your teaching, performance, and research experience. It is the standard representation of credentials within academia.” (University of Illinois n.d., http://www.grad.illinois.edu/sites/default/files/pdfs/cvsampledma.pdf, accessed 10/29/16).

Biography: All the research that discusses biographies states that a biography is a narrative that should be engaging, and not just a resume in paragraph form. There are three primary goals that should be met in a biography. A biography should: 1) Create an identity. 2) Define a musical style. 3) Lead the reader directly to the music.” (Kimpel16 n.d., http://www.taxi.com/members/bios.html, accessed 10/29/16).

As noted above in the definitions, the main differences between CVs and resumes appear to be a matter of detail and length. A resume is a one or two-page document that outlines your accomplishments, whereas a CV is a document that is a detailed record of all music, and related activities, with short descriptions of the activities. A CV is only discussed for solo musicians, and would generally only be used in academia, and possibly, grant applications (Beeching 2010, p. 259; Cutler 2010, p. 85; Eastman n.d.; Ricker 2011, p. 69). The research also suggested that the content of a resume should be adjusted accordingly to fit the purpose, or intended audiences’ needs, whereas the CV would be an unabridged document that can be kept for reference when creating a biography or resume (Beeching 2010, p. 259;

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Several universities\textsuperscript{17} with well-respected music programs have released online documents that define resumes, CVs, and biographies specifically for musicians. These documents also provide instructions on how to create the CV, resume, and biography.

I did not ask in the interviews about how the ensembles created their biographies, however, all 17 studied ensembles featured ensemble biographies on their websites, and many of these bios followed similar organizational patterns as was recommended by the research for individuals. Based on this information, I have used the research’s recommendations on biographies for individuals and included the information that would pertain to a chamber ensemble biography. To do this, the ensemble should be considered a single entity and only activities of the ensemble as a whole should be included in the biography.

Some of the research recommends creating an outline of activities which could be similar to a CV or resume, and then using the content to craft the bio, resume, or CV. Though none of the studied ensembles include a resume or CV on their website or in their press kit, creating one of these documents is a good way to organize the ensemble’s activities (Beeching 2010, pp. 52-54, 259; Cutler 2010, pp. 78, 83-86; Ricker 2011, p. 69). Following these steps will be recommendations from the research on how to arrange these activities to help write an informative biography for an ensemble's website and press materials. The recommendations for bio organization will then be compared to the content and the organization of bios from the 17 studied ensembles.

Collecting and Organizing Ensemble Experiences

It is recommended during this first step to list every performance, masterclass, and other experiences that the ensemble has had from its inception. Any editing or removing of activities will come later in the process (Beeching 2010, p. 54; Boston Conservatory n.d.; Conner and Laverty 2014, Loc. 3835; Cutler 2010, p. 38; Eastman n.d.; Ricker 2011, p. 72-73).

Possible activities are listed below based on subjects discussed in the research and listed in the 17 ensemble biographies studied. Your ensemble may have other activities not listed, and there may be some suggestions your ensemble has not experienced yet. Since there is no research available specifically for the construction of a chamber ensemble resume, these activities are taken from the research and compared with the biographies of the studied ensembles. Some suggested activities have been adjusted to apply to a chamber ensemble, and some suggested activities have been removed as

they could only be related to a solo musician, and cannot be applied to chamber ensembles. This is a very detailed list; however, an ensemble may have other experiences not included. Remember to include any kinds of activities your ensemble has had, no matter how inconsequential you think it may be (Beeching 2010, p. 54; Boston Conservatory n.d.; Conner and Laverty 2014, Loc. 3835; Cutler 2010, p. 38; Eastman n.d.; Ricker 2011, p. 72-73). These steps can be used to create a CV or resume, and then take the information from the outline to create the biography. I have included the number of ensembles who mention any of these activities in their biography on their website to indicate what projects, and experiences ensembles prioritize in their bios.

Possible ensemble activities

1. Awards, grants, or scholarships: Include details on any notable awards or recognition your ensemble has received (Beeching 2010, p. 52-53; Boston Conservatory n.d.; Cutler 2010, p. 78; Eastman n.d.).
   a. 9/17 ensembles mentioned awards they have received.
   b. 4/17 ensembles mentioned grants they have received.
   c. One ensemble mentioned receiving a scholarship.

2. Collaborating musicians: Include names of ensembles, composers, or individual musicians with whom your ensemble has collaborated on projects or performed (Beeching 2010, pp. 52-53, 259; Cutler 2010, p. 78; Highstein 1991, pp. 20-24).
   a. 10/17 ensembles mentioned collaborations they have done with other musicians, composers, or other kinds of media artists.

3. Community service or volunteer work: List organizations or programs with which your ensemble has worked or done residencies, such as: senior centers, preschools, hospitals, other non-traditional venues (Beeching 2010, pp. 52-53; Boston Conservatory n.d.; Eastman n.d.).
   a. None of the ensembles included information about community services, or volunteer work. Two ensembles do mention outreach programs they do that differ from their other educational programs.

4. Competitions the ensemble has won: Include information on competitions your ensemble has participated in, and any awards received (Beeching 2010, pp. 52-53; Boston Conservatory n.d.; Cutler 2010, p. 78; Highstein 1991, pp. 20-24; Eastman n.d.).
   a. 7/17 ensembles mentioned festivals or competitions where they were winners of the top prize.

5. Educational experience: Include ensemble coaches, conductors worked with, and/or masterclasses where the ensemble was coached (Beeching 2010, pp. 52-53; Boston Conservatory n.d.; Cutler 2010, p. 78; Eastman n.d.; Highstein 1991, pp. 20-24; Ricker 2011, p. 72).
a. One ensemble mentioned past participation in a masterclass as the student ensemble.
b. 3/17 ensembles mentioned past coaches or teachers they have worked with.

6. Management: If the ensemble has worked with a management firm in the past, or is currently working with a management firm (Cutler 2010, p. 78; Eastman n.d.).
a. None of the ensemble’s bios include their management firm (if applicable).

7. Media coverage: Include information about any radio interviews or performances that were broadcasted (Eastman n.d.).
a. 6/17 ensembles mentioned being featured on a radio or television show. Most were radio shows playing their albums, or interviews.
b. None of the ensembles specifically mentioned having a news publication cover the ensemble at any point, though some used quotes from a journal or newspaper.

8. Memberships: Include current and past memberships to any arts organization held by the ensemble (Cutler 2010, p. 78; Eastman n.d.).
a. None of the ensembles mentioned their organization memberships, though some mentioned if they are affiliated with an instrument maker.

9. Performance experience: Include the name of the venue, concert series or festival, as well as the city state and country (Beeching 2010, pp. 52-53, 259; Boston Conservatory n.d.; Eastman n.d.; Highstein 1991, pp. 20-24).
a. Note if any of these performances were part of a tour (Eastman n.d.).

a. 12/17 ensembles mentioned music they had premiered, all ten of the ensembles that mentioned commissioning new works also mentioned premiering new works.
b. 12/17 ensembles mentioned their album recording activities.
c. 10/17 ensembles mentioned commissions that the ensemble has given to acquire new works from composers.

11. Residencies or fellowships: List any of these activities in which the ensemble is the presenter. Consider university or summer festival residencies. Include dates and duties performed at these residencies (Boston Conservatory n.d.; Cutler 2010, p. 78).
a. 10/17 ensembles mentioned residencies or masterclasses where they were the presenters, or the organizer of the programs.

The next step is to organize and prioritize your ensemble’s experiences. Once grouped according to similar subjects, the main headings can help organize paragraphs for the biography (Beeching 2010, p. 55; Hinckley 2015; Ricker 2011, p. 70). For a bio, you will want to choose the most interesting or relevant
activities from any of the headings (Beeching 2010, p. 54; Cutler 2010, p. 78). “It should tell someone who doesn’t know you about who you are as a musician.” (Conner and Laverty 2014, Loc. 3835). The bio must be compelling, and maintain the reader’s interest throughout (Beeching 2010, p. 50; Cutler 2010, p. 78).

Content Organization

1. Group similar items together by topic: Topics can include ensemble performances, awards and scholarships, community performances, etc. (Beeching 2010, p. 54; Boston Conservatory n.d). Do not organize only by where or when the activities took place (Beeching 2010, p. 54).
   a. Combine weak headings: If there are only one or two activities under one subject, combine with a similar subject to make sections look more full (Cutler 2010, p. 85).
   b. Once the main headings are decided, organize activities within their assigned headings in reverse chronological order, with the most recent activities first (Boston Conservatory n.d.; Eastman n.d.).
   c. For every ensemble studied, each paragraph discussed only one topic, or related topics.

2. Create strong headings first: The organization of information may vary based on the audience. For opportunities that have an application process, use the instructions on the application as your guide when arranging your resume and bio. For an online biography, or for a press kit, put the most interesting and relevant activities in the first paragraph (Beeching 2010, p. 259; Boston Conservatory n.d.; Cutler 2010, p. 85; Eastman n.d.; New England Conservatory n.d.).

3. Show benefits: Illustrate not only your projects and activities, but also the affect these activities had on the recipients (community, other musicians, etc.). This would be used in a CV, or can be part of the bio text (Cutler 2010, p. 83-84).

4. Range of repertoire: For the ensemble’s personal records, it may be useful to have a complete list of all pieces you have performed. However, listing all these pieces in a biography is not recommended (Beeching 2010, p. 54).
   a. For the bio, highlight the ensemble’s range of repertoire your ensemble has by listing four or five pieces of compositional variety, include any works that the ensemble specializes in performing (Beeching 2010, p. 54).

5. Update often: Once created, a biography is not set in stone. Be sure to add new activities as they occur, updating the bio as necessary (Beeching 2010, p. 54; Boston Conservatory n.d.; Conner and Laverty 2014, Loc. 3835; Cutler 2010, pp. 38, 80; Eastman n.d.; Kimpel n.d.; Ricker 2011, pp. 72-73). At least once a year, or when new activities and accomplishments occur, update your list, and change the bio accordingly (Hinckley).
   a. 7/17 ensembles mention their 2015/2016 projects and programs. Two ensembles were out of date, mentioning their “upcoming season” as 2014 and 2013. One ensemble’s downloadable bio was very old, including members that are no longer in the group, but
their website was up-to-date. The remaining ensembles do not mention enough specifics to determine if they have updated their bio recently.

The final outline of your ensemble’s activities could be considered an ensemble CV. It should be a complete historical record of all the ensemble’s activities, and be maintained primarily for the ensemble’s records. It can be used as a reference when creating an ensemble biography, or for a reference in the cases of grant applications, or other academic applications. For the remainder of this section, only biographies for websites, social media, and press kits will be discussed. In addition to specific activities, there are some other important items that will need to be included in an ensemble bio. Below are recommendations of additional content, as compared with what was found in the studied ensemble’s bios.

Recommended content to include in an ensemble biography

1. **Background:** Include a brief history of the ensemble, where and when it began, and the path it took to get to where it is now (Loft 2003, p. 242).
   a. 17/17 ensembles have one or more paragraphs dedicated to past performance experience, awards, residencies, or educational programs. 12/17 ensembles put some historical information as their second paragraph.
   b. Add some interesting anecdotes to personalize a biography, such as funny stories, the story of the members created the ensemble, or any hobbies they do together outside of the ensemble (Beeching 2010, pp. 52-54; Cutler 2010, p. 78). None of the studied ensembles included non-music related anecdotes in their ensemble biographies, but some bios were more formal, or more informal.

2. **Pitch/Mission:** What distinguishes your work or is important to you as an ensemble? Does the ensemble specialize in specific genres of music, unusual influences, or do you have a legacy you hope to leave behind? This should be early in the biography (Cutler 2010, p. 78; Hyatt 2012, pp. 40, 170).
   a. 10/17 ensembles include their pitch in their bio. All ten included their pitch in the first paragraph.
   b. 13/17 ensembles have a clear mission from information in their biography. 4/13 specifically use the word “mission” in the bio.

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18 Using a CV or biography for those purposes are not covered in this document. Further reading on grants and residencies can be found in Beeching and Cutler.
5/13 include a sentence that could be construed as a short mission statement. Three ensembles put this sentence in the first paragraph, and two put the sentence in the final paragraph.

8/13 ensembles break up their mission statement. Many of the ensembles focus on multiple projects. Their mission statements are broken up into paragraphs based on the project. For example, if an ensemble’s mission was “To perform new works for woodwind quintet, including holding composition competitions for young composers, and to work with young performers in masterclasses and seminars.” This mission may be broken into three separate paragraphs in the bio. One paragraph discussing their mission to perform new works, one paragraph to discuss their work with young composers, and one paragraph discussing their educational programming.

3. Quotes: Use powerful testimonies that have been written, or spoken, about your ensemble from fans or famous people, or in reference letters, or media sources (Barth 2010, p. 25; Beeching 2010, pp. 52-53; Cutler 2010, p. 78).
   a. 7/17 ensembles include at least one quote from a media source, venue promoter, or well-known musician.
   b. If using quotes from letters of recommendation or reviews get permission from the author first (Beeching 2010, pp. 52-53).
   c. If you don’t have any quotes, ask notable musicians in your field to review a recording or a performance and create a quote or review for you (Barth 2010, p. 25).

4. Describe the kind of music in which you specialize: Make it clear what services your ensemble offers at the bottom of the bio: Weddings, holiday parties, special events, recitals, master classes, educational presentations, etc. Describe the style or genre of music you perform, possibly picking some pieces that best represent your performances (Beeching 2010, pp. 65, 58; Kimpel n.d.).
   a. 17/17 ensembles provide some information on their performances and other programs. Other parts of the ensemble’s websites or press kits have further details on specific types of performances and programs.
   b. 15/17 talk about repertoire, or their musical concept and style.
   c. 7/17 ensembles have a long list of repertoire or programming available. Some of the ensembles list numerous works in their bio, which gives examples of their musical styles, others have separate lists available to peruse.
   d. If playing new music or non-traditional music, make your descriptions easy to understand, while also helping to get people to imagine what your music sounds like. Don’t be pretentious or confusing. Add a comparison to a more well-known ensemble, or choose some well-known works you perform that fit your ensemble’s style or mission (Beeching 2010, p. 66; Hyatt 2012, p. 170).
5. Do not assume the reader knows the instrumentation of the group, especially if your ensemble is not a traditional instrumentation (Beeching 2010, p. 58).
   a. 13/17 ensembles mention either their exact instrumentation, or say “String Quartet,” “Woodwind Quintet,” or “Brass Quintet,” at some point in their bio.
   b. Two ensembles I studied are larger chamber ensembles. These two groups do not mention their exact instrumentation in their biography.

Creating the Narrative

All the research agrees that the narrative biography is more than just a resume in paragraph form. It is not a laundry list of achievements. The content should reflect the ensemble’s mission, brand and personality. It should not include every activity the ensemble has done (Barth 2010, p. 25; Beeching 2010, p. 50; Cutler 2010, p. 78; Highstein 1991, pp. 19, 24). A bio should contain enough information to introduce the ensemble, reflect the integrity of the ensemble, and be interesting enough to make the reader wanting to know more, therefore taking whatever action is required based on the purpose of the bio and intended audience (such as listening to the ensemble’s music, attending a performance, providing media coverage, rewarding a grant, or hiring the ensemble for a performance booking, etc.) (Beeching 2010, pp. 50, 259; Cutler 2010, p. 83-84; Eastman n.d.; Highstein 1991, p. 24; Hinckley 2015; Kimpel n.d.; Slaughter and Kober 2004, p. 107).

Some resources recommend enlisting an outside source to do the actual writing; someone who is a good writer or storyteller that the ensemble can hire who can weave an engaging story out of the ensemble’s list of experiences. If the ensemble is interested in this option, they should ask mentors or colleagues for recommendations, or, if you read a great profile, track that writer down and ask if the person writes artist bios (Hyatt 2012, p. 170; Kimpel n.d.). However, the content discussed above still needs to be worked out, and provided to the professional writer.

The ideas in this list will be the core character of the bio. The second list gives basic writing recommendations. This will combine recommendations on organization of the bio, information to leave out, and ways present the document visually. Lastly, will be recommendations on the length of the bio, and ways to arrange the information based on the audience. When available, I have commented on certain attributes as they are presented in the studied ensembles’ bios in all sections.
Writing the narrative

Most of the research describes dividing the narrative up into three main sections. 1) An introduction, 2) Information about your upcoming projects, or performance schedule, and 3) A brief history of the ensemble, including information about recordings, other awards, and to include education and teachers, personal information, and details on management or other affiliations (Beeching 2010, p. 55; Highstein 1991, p.19; Hinckley 2015; Hyatt 2012, p. 170). Many of the resources recommend each section to be one paragraph long, however, in the study of the 17 ensemble biographies, I noticed some of the ensembles broke up their projects and histories into several paragraphs depending on the kinds of projects. While not discussed in the research, most of the studied ensembles included a fourth subject about the ensemble’s educational programs and activities.

Hinckley’s article outlines the organization of a biography that works with the studied ensemble’s bios as well as any biography examples the research provided (Hinckley 2015). I have taken her outline, and added sections based on the studied website’s biographies. Below are the recommendations from the research on how to craft the narrative, and what information to include in each section of the bio, and how the studied ensembles addresses these sections.

Outlining the content

1. Opening statement/Introduction: The opening statement needs to be the most impressive. The reader will determine if they want to continue reading based on these first few sentences, so they need to attract attention. Most of the research recommends starting with an impressive fact about your ensemble, such as some key performances, or any major awards that have been received (Barth 2010, p. 25; Beeching 2010, p. 259; Cutler 2010, p. 78; Highstein 1991, p. 19; Hinckley 2015; Hyatt 2012, p. 170). Other sources recommend to start with a bold statement. Either a statement that reflects the image you hope to project, your attitude, your style, personality, or your ensemble’s philosophy, strengths, objectives (Cutler, p. 79, 83-84, Hyatt, p. 171, Hinckley).
   a. Choosing an opener for the bio: Organize your credentials by most impressive, and most recent, and use the top points in your opening paragraph (Beeching 2010, p. 54; Cutler 2010, p. 78).
   b. “Create an intro that sums up your sound, style and attitude in a few brief sentences at the beginning.” (Hyatt 2012, pp. 170-176).
   c. Be sure you can back up any claims you make in the opening, and give specifics in later paragraphs (Beeching 2010, pp. 54-55).
   d. 17/17 ensembles have an introductory paragraph that provides only a little information.
e. 16/17 of the first paragraphs could be used alone to introduce and give a brief overview of the ensemble.

f. 15/17 ensembles had very strong opening statements. Of the two that did not, the statements were factual without an overly boastful statement.

- 4/15 were very flamboyant in their opening, and the remaining 11 made an impression based on the activities they listed, and/or by using press quotes in their opening paragraph.

2. Second Section: This section should provide information about current projects, or what the ensemble has planned for the next season (Hinckley 2015). This may include major upcoming performances, competitions, or projects that they will be implementing over the next few months. I am also adding past projects that include commissions, collaborations, and recording projects to this section, to separate these projects from past awards and competitions, because these things can still be marketed and used in present and future performances (based on study of ensemble bios).

a. 15/17 ensembles mentioned specific activities, past or upcoming.

- 7/17 ensembles talk about current or upcoming projects in their bio.
- 5/17 ensembles discuss projects, but do not include dates regarding their projects.
- 3/12 put their current and upcoming information as the second paragraph, or before any history of the ensemble.
- 4/12 ensembles put the information on their upcoming season as their last paragraph.
- 3/12 ensembles have upcoming information mentioned several times, within different paragraphs, based on subject.

b. 9/17 ensembles discuss commission, collaborations, or recording projects. 5/9 include these paragraphs shortly after the opening paragraph.

3. Third section: This is where the history of the ensemble usually goes (Highstein 1991, pp. 18-24; Hinckley 2015; analysis of examples from Beeching 2010, pp. 58-64; analysis of studied ensembles' bios).

a. 2/17 ensembles list awards immediately after their opening statement. Both ensembles have received a Grammy.

b. 17/17 ensembles have paragraphs on their history, awards or competitions they have won in the past.

4. Education Section (studied ensembles): This section is not included in any written resources, but 14/17 ensembles have sections in their bio about residencies and masterclasses the ensemble presents, educational outreach, and other past educational projects or initiatives the ensemble has organized or presented.
5. Closing statement: Some ensembles will wrap up their bios with a brief introduction to the members, or information on their management or instrument sponsors, if they have them, or some other brief closing sentence (studied bios).
   a. 2/17 ensembles close the bio with a brief introduction to the members
   b. 2/17 ensembles close the bio with the origin of their ensemble’s name.
   c. 1/17 ensembles close the bio by listing their management company or sponsors

What not to include

1. Do not start with educational credentials, or the ensemble’s origin, unless it’s a very interesting story (Beeching 2010, p. 56; Cutler 2010, p. 79; Kimpel n.d.).
   a. Do not list high school credits, unless that is the only experience you currently have (Slaughter and Kober 2004, p. 107).
      ▪ No ensembles listed any high school credits.
   b. 3/17 ensembles mention their college experiences either as participants of an educational program together, or to mention the individual's' university credentials.
   c. 3/17 ensembles mentioned past coaches or teachers they have worked with. These were all listed in the paragraph on the ensemble’s history, not in the opening paragraphs.

2. Use dates sparingly: Include dates only for ongoing jobs, orchestral experience, degrees, scholarships and awards. If dates are being used, present the activities in reverse chronological order (Barth 2010, p. 25; Beeching 2010, pp. 259, p. 57).
   a. 14/17 ensembles mention at least one activity with a date, not including when the ensemble was formed. Five of these ensembles mention one activity, and the date a program was started, or a specific award received. The remaining nine mention multiple dates, varying from initiatives the ensemble began, to recordings, awards, and programs.
   b. Four ensembles listed awards from their founding years in chronological order, but the rest of the biography was not specifically arranged this way.
   c. Most ensembles used dates sparingly compared to listings of activities. It cannot be determined if some ensemble listed awards, recordings or other activities chronologically.

3. Avoid padding the bio: Do not use clichés, hyperbole, vague statements, unattributed comparisons, praise that cannot be substantiated. The purpose of the bio is to inform, not to boast, by over-selling yourself you may set an audience up to be disappointed by a performance if you cannot back up your claims (Beeching 2010, p. 56; Highstein 1991, p. 24; Hyatt 2012, pp. 170-176; Kimpel n.d.; Slaughter and Kober 2004, p. 107). It's much better to be truthful and modest about your experiences and then deliver more than expected than to oversell and under-deliver (Hinckley 2015; Taylor 2011, p. 111). Examples of clichés or hyperbole: “The best young ensemble of 2016.” “Will provide a totally unique experience,” “leading,” “the best of…,” “world-
class,” “top,” “noted,” “amazing,” “dynamic,” “critically acclaimed,” Is destined for stardom,” “rising star,” quickly establishing themselves…”

a. These words and phrases should only be used if someone else said it, a quote from a review or well-respected source (Beeching 2010, pp. 56, 57; Hinckley 2015; Kimpel n.d.).

b. 13/17 ensembles made generalized or cliché statements about their performances or abilities as an ensemble.

c. 4/17 do not overstate themselves, and stick with facts only. All 13 ensembles back up some of their statements with factual examples.

d. Though this can be subjective, it appears only eight of the ensembles have an equal balance of grand statements backed up by facts.

4. Proofread: Fix all typos, run-on sentences, and grammatical errors. Make sure punctuation and visual presentation is unified. Double check the spelling of names, venues, and titles of works. Have other people proofread and edit (Beeching 2010, pp. 56, 259; Cutler 2010, p. 85; Kimpel n.d.). Although no spelling errors were detected, one ensemble had a couple minor grammatical errors.

Most of the studied ensembles had more than one biography on their website, whether biographies were included for each member of the ensemble, or if there was a PDF version of the bio for downloading. The research also has suggestions on additional options for presenting a bio online.

1. Individual member bios: Only Loft mentions including individual’s bios within the chamber ensemble information. “Short bios of each member of the group covers training, names of major teachers, performance experience, and recordings.” (Loft 2003, p. 242). In my interviews, only one person discussed putting individual bios on their website. He recommended they should all be written in the same style, such as making sure titles are the same across the board. Consistently using Ms. and Mr. or first names. He also recommended that the member bios should have a similar level of formality and character as the ensemble’s bio (Justin interview).

a. 15/17 ensembles included bios for individual members on their website.

2. For download and/or printing: If you include a bio for download, make sure your contact information is on the document. Include the ensemble letterhead, with the ensemble name, logo, address, email, and phone number (or contact info of your organization/manager) is on the bio (Beeching 2010, p. 56; Cutler 2010, p. 80; Highstein 1991, p. 24; Slaughter and Kober 2004, p. 107).

a. If made available for printing, the document should be in PDF form. Word, or any other format may not transfer properly, and you may lose the visual organization (Beeching 2010, p. 259).
10/17 ensembles have their bio available to download.
6/10 ensembles provide a PDF document for download, 3/10 a Word document, and one that provides both pdf and word
6/10 downloadable bios included a logo and contact information.
2/10 bios included some contact information, but no logo.
5/10 downloadable bios do not have any kind of letterhead or contact information on the page.

b. The bio should be easy to read, whether being read on the website or being printed. The layout of the document should be attractive, with clear sections, and a comfortable font (Highstein 1991, p. 24; Slaughter and Kober 2004, p. 107).

3. Multiple lengths: Precise lengths are not agreed upon, but there is a general average of anywhere from one paragraph up to two pages. Hyatt suggests having something as short as ten words that sum up the ensemble’s mission, or pitch, for use on Twitter (p. 40). Though, most sources recommend performers have three or four different lengths that vary from about 100 words, 250 words, one full page, and with a two-page maximum (Beeching 2010, p. 50; Cutler 2010, p. 80; Hyatt 2012, p. 40; Ricker 2011, p. 70; Sivers via Curran 2005, pp. 193-194; Slaughter and Kober 2004, p. 107).

   a. In the studied ensembles, only one ensemble had multiple lengths of their bio for download, one was posted under their management company’s heading, and three versions that were different than the one with the management heading, but were similar to each other in content and presentation but in different lengths.

   a. Word count: Highest, lowest, and average: This includes all versions from the ensembles, a total of 22 bios. Highest word count: 1,313. Lowest word count: 175. Average word count: 472.

   b. Number of paragraphs in the bios: Maximum was 10, minimum was one, average was 5.

   c. Ensembles also had differing lengths for their bio on their social media platforms. Twitter and Instagram both had the shortest bios. Facebook often had a similar length to the website.

2. Multiple versions, prioritizing information differently: Many of the resources recommend having different versions of the biography to be provided for different purposes. Have one version to be used by presenters, press, and others who may distribute information about you. This version should be written with the purpose of attracting media and potential audiences. It will likely focus on the ensemble’s performance experience and programming. Other versions may also include: Grant applications, residency applications, or for educational performances (Beeching 2010, pp. 50, 79, 259; Highstein 1991, p. 19). These versions will have more of a focus on the ensemble’s educational experiences, projects, and goals, or there may be other versions that vary based on the application or performance opportunity.
a. Biographies on ensemble’s websites only varied in content based on length. Two ensembles had a completely different bio on their website versus what was in the download version.

b. For the purposes of this study, I could not determine if ensembles put different content in their bios for different purposes.

Conclusion for Biographies

There were some differences in what the research recommended when writing a biography, and what the studied ensembles are including. Some of those differences are small, such as the recommendation to add personal anecdotes to the bio, which none of the ensembles included. Some of the differences change the recommendations significantly.

The biggest difference in what the research says should be in a bio, compared to what the professional ensembles are doing is the inclusion of educational programs. 13/17 ensembles mentioned their educational programs or initiatives, and their experience as presenters for masterclasses, workshops, or residencies. The research that discusses bios rarely mentions these kinds of activities as pertinent for a bio or a resume, and the references for musicians who want to provide educational programs do not discuss the creation of a biography (Booth 2009; Heflick 1993). I conclude that educational activities are often a larger part of a chamber ensemble’s programming and mission than it is for solo musicians (Beeching 2010; Curran 2005; Cutler 2010; Highstein 1991; Hyatt 2012; Ricker 2011).

Another difference is in the organization of the information provided in the bio. All of the bios have an introduction that makes more general statements, but the way the ensembles ordered their bios following the introductions vary. As recommended in the research, the ensembles do separate their paragraphs by subject, however there does not appear to be a strong pattern with putting upcoming projects as the next section of the bio.

The final observation I made with the studied ensembles compared to the research is the availability, and presentation of a downloadable copy of the bio, and the length options. Only nine of the ensembles provided a version of their bio to download, and not all of them included letterhead, contact information, and a logo, as recommended. Only one ensemble provided multiple lengths of their bio on their website. Of the research I reviewed had mentioned these two things as being rather important, but that is not supported by the practical research. The closest comparison I could find to multiple lengths of a bio are through the rest of their online presence, and the different bios found on their social media. Having multiple lengths of the bio, and having them available for download are at the discretion of the ensemble, and not a vital part of the biography.
Biographies combine important ensemble activities with an engaging narrative that tells a story about the ensemble’s history, and should reflect the ensemble’s brand, mission, and personality. Every ensemble’s biography will be different based on their mission and their professional experiences. There is no specific way to organize a biography beyond the opening statement, as it is at the ensemble’s discretion what activities they want to prioritize, though there are some activities, and information that should be present in the bio, with the ensemble’s mission, and most prized activities being in the first paragraph. Most importantly, a biography should grab the reader’s attention, and make the reader feel like they have a relationship with the group. A story is more likely to be read, remembered, and is more likely to be printed in a newspaper, magazine, or music blog (Highstein 1991, p. 19; Kimpel n.d.). “A bio is the cement that holds your presentation together, creates an immediate identity, brands a style and leads the reader directly to the music.” (Kimpel n.d.). Below is a brief overview of how to create a biography, and what include.

Best practices for Biography writing

- Create an outline of all ensemble activities, organized by subject before writing prose.
  - Consider arranging the outline similar to the way a CV or resume would be organized. Separate activities into main subject headings, and organize in reverse chronological order. Maintain this outline, and add to it as your group gains experiences.
  - The different headings can become separate paragraphs in the biography.
- The first paragraph should be the most compelling. It should draw the reader in, and entice them to continue reading. This paragraph should also include the ensemble’s mission and/or pitch.
- Subsequent paragraphs should back up any claims in the opening paragraph with examples.
- The order of the paragraphs is determined by what information your ensemble wants to prioritize.
  - Earlier paragraphs should be the most important information you want to convey.
- The biography should be arranged so it can easily be edited down.
  - Alternatively, offer a biography in different lengths, so promoters can choose the length, and you have control over the content at any word count.
- Do not list every credential and award. Create prose, and only include details, if the award is important to the ensemble.
  - Unless the ensemble has won a national or international award, anything listed in the biography should not be more than 10 years old.
- Do not make the biography a history in chronological order.
- Do not pad the bio, or include unsubstantiated claims.
CHAPTER 5: ENSEMBLE PHOTOS

A group photo is one of the first items an ensemble will need when they begin to build any online profile. It is one of the first things asked to upload when building a website or creating a social media profile, and is important to have in a press kit for media and promoters. Almost every resource mentioned (without description), or discussed (in depth) the value of photos, and all the interviewees recommended photos as one of the first things an ensemble should get as they are establishing themselves (Barth 2010; Beeching 2010; Cool 2014; Curran 2005; Cutler 2010; Heflick 1993; Highstein 1991; Hyatt 2012; Passman 2006; Ricker 2011; Slaughter and Kober 2004; Taylor 2011; Clara interview; Ensemble A interview; Ensemble X interview; Horace interview; Justin interview; Philip interview; Ronald).

This section will discuss elements of professional quality photos19 for an ensemble. I will compare recommended elements with the professional photos found on the studied websites, and discuss the different types of professional photos that are being used by chamber ensembles, including the variety of artistic styles. After the elements of a photo are presented, I will discuss the recommended options for getting photos, from low cost options to working with a professional photographer, with advantages and disadvantages for both. Photos are used on ensemble websites and social media profiles, and could be used for many other purposes (Beeching 2010, p. 74; Cutler 2010, p. 80; Highstein 1991, p. 25; Clara interview; Ensemble X interview; Horace interview; Philip interview; Justin interview). Below is a brief list of where photos are used consistently, and where they could potentially be used.

- Album covers or promotion (optional)
- Concert posters (optional)
- Management (to get management, or for management’s uses)
- Social media
- Press Kits
- Website

Besides the quality of the image, a photo should be a work of art (Beeching 2010, p. 102; Curran 2005, p. 26; Cutler 2010, p. 81; Horace interview; Ensemble A interview; Ensemble X interview). This study will show there are some photos that are professional quality, contain all the necessary elements, and show the ensemble as they are, and there are some photos that contain these elements, but are also exceptions in their artistic aesthetic, these photos not only reflect the ensemble’s mission, but contain

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19 Do not confuse a “quality image” for a “professional quality photo.” A “quality image” is a photo that is in focus, and won’t become pixelated when printed, whereas a “professional quality photo” has artistic value, it may tell a story, and will represent your ensemble’s image.
artistic elements that stand out from the others. I will discuss the different elements of a photo, and the different options that can be considered. As an ensemble develops their musical style and goals, their photos should represent that style (Barth 2010, p. 25; Slaughter and Kober 2004, p. 104). For example, an ensemble that specializes in weddings is likely to have different photos from those that do educational concerts, which will be different than an ensemble that plays all new music.

Preparing for the First Ensemble Photo

First get an idea of the kinds of photos that are popular for musicians that perform in a musical genre similar to yours. Try to determine what qualities the most impressive photos have. Look at press photos, websites, and album covers. Ask colleagues and mentors about ensembles with good photos. Also, look in the entertainment sections of local papers, or industry magazines and see what kinds of photos are being printed (Beeching 2010, p. 68; Highstein 1991 p. 33; Ensemble A interview; Ensemble X interview; Horace interview). Beeching suggests doing a “kitchen table test” (also recommended for album covers), where you compare several photos against one another by laying them out on a table, and determine which ones stand out, and why (p. 102). Take note of the ensembles whose photos you like. Can you describe how the photos do or do not relate to the musician’s activities?

Once these qualities have been defined in other photos, think about what kind of message or mood you want your ensemble to convey. Use adjectives to help describe the personality of the photo you want as it relates to your ensemble’s mission (Beeching 2010, p. 79; Highstein 1991, p. 28). Then think about how these qualities would help convey that personality. Personalities can come through via clothing, poses, location, or facial expressions. The environment should also make the group feel comfortable, and have a connection to the group (Horace interview). For example, in the studied ensembles, there were several that perform avant-garde music, or new compositions, their photos generally have bright colors, or settings that influenced the character of the photos. In contrast, the ensembles that play more traditional music, generally have a background that is more muted, and less important to the aesthetic of the photo.

Before continuing with this study, below I have provided the data on the total number of photos studied, what kind of photos were studied, and how many photos were studied from each website.

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20 It is difficult to describe what makes these photos stand out without using the photos themselves, but for privacy purposes, I cannot include these photos. I recommend the reader visit the studied ensemble’s websites for further reference.

21 A great resource where you can see many different chamber ensembles is the Chamber Music America website (http://www.chamber-music.org).
Photo information from the seventeen ensemble websites

- There was a total of 87 photos reviewed.
- Photos were chosen first based on whether the ensemble had a press kit with photos available for download. If downloadable photos were not available, professional quality photos from throughout the website were studied.
  - 10/17 ensembles had press photos available.
  - 7/17 ensembles did not have photos available for download.
- Four ensembles had two photos.
- Two ensembles had three photos.
- Two ensembles had four photos.
- One ensemble had five photos.
- Three ensembles had six photos.
- One ensemble had seven photos.
- Two ensembles had eight photos.
- One ensemble had nine photos.
- One ensemble had ten photos.

Attributes of Ensemble Photos

Of the 17 websites visited, the style and artistic value of the photos varied greatly. Some ensembles have the group standing in a line, or close together, facing the camera straight on, with a plain background. In other photos, the group is standing more casually, at different angles from one another, even facing away from the camera, and other ensembles have photos at interesting locations, or with interesting backgrounds, which create a story with the photos. Artistic value is subjective, but I tried to look at the eighty-seven studied photos objectively based on photo styles and images that were unlike the other photos. Photos stood out based on contrasts in colors, the imagery of the location, or through a clear personality being represented by the members, or the ensemble as a whole. 28/87 photos grabbed my attention, or stood out from the other photos. Most of the photos that stood out aesthetically relied heavily on the scenery, though there were exceptional photos that did not have notable backgrounds.

There were no photos that were of poor image quality, or where the members looked uncomfortable.

Some interviewed ensembles had an artistic vision in mind for their photos, and others relied on the photographer’s artistic vision (Clara interview; Ensemble A interview; Ensemble X interview; Horace interview; Justin interview). Some groups have brought props to their photo sessions for their albums, because the props helped define the photo, and related to the title of the album (Ensemble X interview; studied ensembles). Ensemble A has received more attention with their photos than they would normally
expect with their ensemble, due to the vibrant scenery that surrounds the members, and reflects the ensemble’s musical character. “…because our pictures are so bombastic, whenever we submit an event in a newspaper calendar, they invariably print the photo, because the photos are so cool, even though we’re not super famous. The newspaper editor is going to be, like, ‘Oh, I love that picture, let’s use it.'” (Bridget from Ensemble A interview). They worked with a professional photographer, whom they found through research and recommendations from colleagues. They had some ideas of what they wanted in their photos, and found someone whose photography style was similar to what they wanted. Once connected, they spoke with their chosen photographer in depth about what they wanted to convey in their photos. The photographer then found locations and included her own artistic voice to add to the effect of the imagery (Ensemble A interview).

The information below is a guideline to help the reader during their research of studied photos, as well as help them determine what qualities they want to include in their own photos. It should be noted, that not every studied photo contains every recommended quality.

Attributes for photos: Recommendations compared with studied ensembles’ professional photos

1. Clear, and contrasting image: The photo should be light and clear, not too dark or overexposed, and should including a light or neutral background (Cutler 2010, p. 81; Hyatt 2012, p. 171; Taylor 2011, p. 110). Contrasting colors, textures, and images can also sharpen photos (Cutler 2010, p. 82).
   a. 15/17 ensembles have a light and clear photo, with a total of 65/87 light and clear photos.
   b. The two ensembles that did not have light and clear photos had photos with a darker background or lighting, this was not due to shadows, or exposure. There was still contrast in these photos.
   c. Light or neutral color background? This can apply to both a backdrop or a scenic setting, but is more likely to be a solid color background. If there was minimal scenery in an outdoor photo, I included it in this section.
      ▪ 12/17 ensembles had backgrounds that were light or neutral colors, with 42/87 photos with light backgrounds, this includes the scenic backgrounds that had minimal activity.
      ▪ I also want to note here that there were two ensembles that had artistic shadow photos, where the background was lit up in a bright color and the ensemble members were only shadows in the foreground.

2. Clothing: The ensemble should have a uniform look. Outfits don’t need to match, but the styles and level of formality should be equal. Is the ensemble’s dress formal or informal? Does the colors of the clothing contrast with skin tone, and the background? Clothing too close to the skin
tone or background can be lost, especially on black and white photos (Cutler 2010, p. 82). Accessories should be modest, and not distract from the performers. Types of accessories includes jewelry, props, and other items (Beeching 2010, p. 72; Cutler 2010, p. 82). If you’re not sure about clothing that looks good and what clothing doesn’t, get advice from friends or a “personal shopper” at a department store. They’ll help you find clothing that is flattering. Also, bring clothing options, in case a piece doesn’t work with the background, or doesn’t match the other members’ clothing. Bring two formal outfits, one of which is all black, and one semi-casual (Beeching 2010, p. 72). You will also need to consider hair and makeup.

a. Does the ensemble look coordinated? I based coordination on similar styles in their clothes, wearing all black, or coordinating colors (when not wearing all black).
   ▪ 14/17 ensembles were wearing outfits that appeared to be coordinated, with 61/87 total photos where clothing is coordinated.

b. Formal dress versus informal dress: Formal dress was determined for men if they were wearing tuxedos, or ties and suit jackets, and for women if they were wearing semi-formal dresses.
   ▪ 11/17 ensembles had formal photos, with 36/87 total photos with members wearing formal dress.
   ▪ 14/17 ensembles had informal dress, with 45/87 total photos with members in casual clothing.

c. Does clothing contrast with background and skin tone? No one was wearing clothing that matched their skin tone, however there were some photos where the clothing blended in with the background, this was generally the case when the musicians were wearing dark clothes and the background was also dark. Some ensemble’s outfits contrasted more with their setting than others, though this is a very subjective observation.
   ▪ 16/17 ensembles wore clothing that contrasted with their background, with 36/87 photos where the musicians’ clothing stood out or contrasted with the rest of the scenery in some manner.

3. Excitement and movement: Some photos should contain the appearance of action, or fun (Curran 2005, p. 26). Players should look like they are having fun, but they should also look natural. Overly posed photos will come across as insincere, or uncomfortable (Cutler 2010, p. 81-82).

a. Photos that convey motion: Movement was determined either as an “action shot” of the musicians playing their instruments, or movement where the members appear to be walking, or some sort of action happening.
   ▪ 9/17 ensembles, and only 15/87 total photos that portrayed movement.

b. Photos that convey excitement: Includes photos of the members laughing, or having fun.
• 13/17 ensembles have photos of the members laughing or having fun, 40/87 total photos with members laughing and having fun.

4. Headshot or "artistic" photo? A headshot is defined as a photo of the head and a little torso, an artistic shot is defined as a full body photo (Cutler 2010, p. 82). A single headshot does not apply to a chamber ensemble, but there were group photos of just the torso and up. In my online research, I also noticed different body positions.
   a. There were three main poses or photo types common in the studied photos, but not defined specifically in the research. The "traditional" stance has everyone in a row or group with their faces forward, possibly one or two people sitting for the purpose of a tighter group. The "casual" positions have everyone in a different pose, maybe at different angles or levels, standing more causally with their hands in their pockets, or not looking straight at the camera, or spread out, the last style are performance pictures, with the musicians appearing to be playing their instruments.
      • "Head" shots (torso and up only): 9/17 ensembles have headshots, with 12/87 total photos that are headshots.
      • "Artistic" shots, full body or mostly full-body: 17/17 ensembles have full-body photos, with a total of 70/87 total photos that are full body.
      • Traditional stance: 16/17 ensembles had at least one photo where they were standing in a traditional ensemble, with 49/87 total photos with ensemble members posed in a more traditional way.
      • Casual stance: 15/17 ensembles had photos with them posed more casually, with 34/87 total photos with members in a casual stance.
      • Performing: 6/17 ensembles included a performance photo as part of their press photos, with only 8/87 total photos with the musicians playing their instruments.
   b. Eyes: Taylor recommends that the eyes are the most important feature of a photo (Taylor 2011, p. 109).
      • 17/17 ensembles had at least one photo where you can see all the member's eyes, with 55/87 total photos where you can see all member's eyes.

5. Instruments: With or without instruments? The only comment on instruments in the photo is to make sure they are not a distraction from the people (Cutler 2010, p. 82). It should be noted that the studied string quartets did not include their instruments in their photos as often as the brass groups, woodwind quintets, or non-traditional mixed instrument chamber groups.
   a. Number of photos with instruments: 15/17 ensembles have photos with their instruments, with a total of 59/87 total photos with instruments.
b. Number of photos without instruments: 11/17 ensembles had photos without their instruments with 27/87 total photos without instruments.

6. Location: Indoor/outdoor, at a performance venue/or backdrop? I interpreted these two types as a background that is either an artistic or scenic setting as the background, or a solid color background (whether a solid wall, or backdrop). For some of the ensemble photos, focal points were on the setting. Most backgrounds appeared to be intentionally chosen to enhance the impression the photo made. Some of the backgrounds did enhance the photo in a good way, and some of the backgrounds were distracting, or made the photo less appealing.
   a. 16/17 ensembles had photos set indoors, with a total of 55/87 photos set inside. 11/17 ensembles had photos set outside, with a total of 32/87 photos set outside.
   b. 10/17 ensembles used a backdrop for their photos and 31/87 of all photos had a solid color background whether by backdrop or solid colored wall.
   c. 12/17 ensembles had a background that utilized the artistic properties of their outdoor setting as part of their photo with a total of 41/87 photos with these artistic backgrounds.

7. Tight: Members are standing/sitting close together. One reason for this is if the photo needs to be cropped for publishing (Taylor 2011, p. 109).
   a. 16/17 ensembles have photos with members close together, with 37/87 of all photos having members together in a tight group.

8. Variety: Have at least two different photos, one formal, and one casual (Highstein 1991, p. 25, Ensemble X interview).
   a. In the studied ensembles, 14/17 of the ensembles had photos in different locations, or with different backgrounds, and all (17/17) ensembles had photos with different poses.
   b. Ensemble X says they have different types of press photos based on the music they are performing, or the kind of venue they in which they are performing (Ensemble X interview).

General recommendations for photos

1. Current photos: New photos should be taken whenever there is a change in ensemble members (Justin interview; studied websites). It was advised in the interviews to have ensemble photos done at least once a year (Horace interview; Philip interview; Justin interview), but several of the studied websites had photos that were three or four years old. To determine how recent an ensemble photo was taken I looked on social media to see when the press photos first appeared on those pages. There were two ensembles who had a personnel change during the time I was researching the websites. Both ensembles changed their photos at the time the new member was announced.
a. 17/17 of the ensembles had photos that have been taken in the past 4 years, and 75/87 total photos appear to be recent. Individual headshots were not included in the overall research for this section, but I thought it should be noted that the ensembles that did included headshots of each member, not all of the headshots were up-to-date, some ensembles had old photos of the members, and two ensembles did not have headshots of newer members on their websites.

2. Look like yourselves: Wear a normal amount of makeup, if you usually wear glasses, wear them in the photos, avoid too much post-photo editing (Taylor 2011, p. 109). I compared the press photos to recent candid photos found on their Facebook page:
   a. 17/17 ensembles had at least one photo where the members looked like themselves, with 78/87 photos with minimal touching-up in the photos. As a note, of the remaining 9 photos, 5 of these photos you cannot see the musician’s faces and one photo was likely manipulated to create an action. There no photos that made the musicians look much different than they do in their candid photos from Facebook.
   b. A comment on editing: Editing should be limited to removing blemishes, shadows, or general image contrast, but should not manipulate the appearance of the people. There was one ensemble where the background was computer generated, but the people looked natural.

3. Printing photos (Highstein 1991, p. 25; Taylor 2011, p. 109): Actual prints may not be necessary; however, there are different digital size options that can be made available for press, so the images can be printed or put on a website as needed. The photo should always be available in the highest resolution possible for printing purposes.
   a. Of the photos that had the digital size available to see, their high definition photos all had pixels per inch in the thousands.
   b. 10/17 ensembles had their photos available for download, 50/87 of these photos are available for download.

Photo don’ts

1. Terrible backgrounds/Visual distractions (Highstein 1991, p. 32; Taylor 2011, p. 110): Pay attention to the background, and any accessories in the scene. Does the backdrop distract from the musicians, or enhance the imagery of the photo? There were studied photos that have the ensemble in an interesting environment, and photos where the background is a solid color. Some of the photos have a background, or other accessories that could be considered distracting.
   a. 10/17 ensembles, and 18/87 photos had distractions in the photos that took the focus off of the members of the ensembles.
2. Odd facial expressions: This can include fake smiles, or an insincere or forced expression (Highstein 1991, p. 32).
   a. Most of the ensemble members appear without smiles. Photos with members laughing or smiling appear sincere, and not forced.
   b. Horace encourages avoiding the "awkward family photo" look (Horace interview).
3. Striking but inappropriate: Make sure the photo doesn't misrepresent the kind of artists you are just to make an impression (Highstein 1991, p. 32; Taylor 2011).
   a. There were no overly sexual photos, there were three ensembles who had very silly photos, one of them this was appropriate based on their overall branding and mission. The other two ensembles’ photos show the musicians having fun, but did not directly relate to the ensembles’ overall brand or missions.
4. Problems with image: Technical problems are unacceptable. The image should not pixelate when printed, or be too large, or small, on a computer screen. If there are these problems, a presenter or media agent may not use it. To briefly explain, images need to be a minimum of 240 pixels per inch (ppi), although 300 pixels per inch is the official standard (http://www.photoshopessentials.com/essentials/image-quality/ accessed 6/21/16). Additional references can be found in the appendix.

Attributes that the most photos had in common

- Being up to date and minimally photoshopped were most common.
- Full bodies (70/87)
- Light and clear (as opposed to darker lighting, or a dark background) (65/87)
- Coordinated their clothing, to a certain degree (61/87).

Based on the above research from the studied ensembles and recommended qualities, there is not one perfect photo. None of the ensembles had photos with every quality recommended in one photo. As stated before, artistic qualities are subjective, but from my observations, there were photos that had many of the recommended qualities, and were unimpressive, and other photos which stood above the rest, but contained only a few of the recommended qualities. There were photos that made an impression, and photos that didn’t that had the same fundamental qualities. Cutler’s comment on photos that have contrast (p. 82) is probably one of the most important qualities, when done properly. The photos I deemed most notable, generally contained some level of contrast, either through contrasting colors, textures, or background. It was also my observation that ensembles with more photos of different styles were more likely to have a photo that stood out. The more variety of photos an ensemble has available,
the better chances a photo could attract people with different aesthetic preferences. Finally, only put photos online if the ensemble is happy with the photos, it is better to hold off posting a photo than to post something that misrepresents the ensemble, or is of poor quality (Heflick 1993, p. 17; Clara interview).

**Low Cost Options for Ensemble Photos**

The general consensus was to hire a professional photographer, but for ensembles that do not have the resources to do that, there are recommendations from the interviews, and the reference books on ways to get professional quality photos at low-cost (Clara interview; Horace interview; Justin interview; Ronald interview).

An ensemble may not have the resources to hire a professional photographer, or may have desire to do it themselves. The research recommends some alternatives, and I also asked in the interviews what their experiences with photographers were and what advice they would give to keep costs low for new ensembles. All interviews agreed that ensemble photos do not need to be expensive, and most of them gave suggestions for keeping costs down (Clara interview; Horace interview; Justin interview; Ronald interview). For ensembles that are forming while at a university, it was recommended to take advantage of the resources the university has to offer. Several resources recommended asking photography students (Cutler 2010, p. 80; Highstein 1991, p. 33; Clara interview; Horace interview). Asking a student will be cheaper, if not free, and the student may use those photos to add to their own portfolio. Even though recommended, students and amateurs might need more direction with your artistic ideas and your ensemble may need to know more about the kinds of photos you want, but a student or amateur may give you more time and effort, to help create your ensemble’s vision (Highstein 1991, p. 33; Horace interview).

Almost all of the ensemble members I interviewed got their first photos done through friends or referrals, and many of them still use these types of connections (Clara interview; Ensemble X interview; Horace interview; Justin interview; Ronald interview). Horace describes having his ensemble’s first photos taken by a friend. Though, he confesses that they weren’t great, in part because the ensemble didn’t know what kind of photos they wanted (Horace interview). Only Justin’s ensemble has taken photos without any assistance. He doesn’t recommend that, saying that it was very time consuming to set everything up and then check, and re-check settings during the shoot. Now they have someone “point and click” the camera, but all the artistic direction comes from the ensemble (Justin interview). If taking photos yourself, you must have the appropriate equipment for the photos. There is affordable technology now for anyone to take a quality photo, but the artistic elements of the photos require planning, and may require a trained eye (Horace interview; Justin interview). “With the iPhones, the new ones, you get great pictures even with those. Now, it’s the vision of the group.” (Horace interview).
Working with a Photographer

Just as a professional chamber music ensemble is going to play at a higher level of artistry than a student ensemble, a professional photographer will bring their expertise and knowledge to the photo shoot, and increase your chances for exceptional photos.

The research’s arguments for hiring a professional photographer

1. "When you hire a pro you are hiring someone who knows how to make you look awesome, uses their experienced artistic eye, puts you at ease, and can give you a riveting image that everyone will notice. [They] can take your vision of yourself and mold it into something eye-catching, truthful, and new.” (Susan Wilson, Boston Photographer via Beeching 2010, p. 70).
2. “Photos are vitally important. This is no place to cut corners. Contact a professional photographer whose work you like.” (Curran 2005, p. 26).
3. “A great photographer will help fill in words you don’t have.” (Derek Sivers, via Curran 2005, p. 191).
4. “Think twice about using a friend to eliminate expenses for photography. Expectations run high, and amateurish shots will count against you.” (Cutler 2010, p. 80)/
5. Hire a professional if you want professional quality (Ensemble x interview).
6. “It's better to have no photo than a bad photo. It is well worth spending the money on a professional photographer than to do it yourself and have a bad product.” (Heflick 1993, p. 17).
7. “It is an expensive investment, but a very important one. Consider the decision carefully.” (Highstein 1991, p. 33).
8. Getting a photo that really represents what you are selling is of paramount importance. It can represent your first, last, and only chance (Slaughter and Kober 2004, p. 104).

The biggest point the research tries to get across, is that not everyone has an eye for photography, and by hiring a professional, you are hiring an artist who is an expert in their field (Beeching 2010, p. 70; Curran 2005, p. 26; Cutler 2010, p. 80). Some books give instructions on hiring and working with a professional photographer (Beeching 2010, pp. 69-71; Cutler 2010, p. 80; Highstein 1991, p. 33). Most of the ensembles interviewed used personal connections to find professional, or amateur photographers (Ensemble A interview; Ensemble X interview; Horace interview; Philip interview; Ronald interview). One group had a fan of their ensemble donate a full professional session (Horace interview). In my research of the 17 ensembles, 10 of them credited a photographer to their photos, though every
one of the 17 ensembles have professional quality photos, it cannot be determined if more than the 10 of
them worked with a professional photographer.

If an ensemble has the resources or desire to hire a professional photographer, the next list gives
recommendations on how to find a suitable photographer, what to expect when working with a
photographer, and what to expect at a photo shoot. No matter if the ensemble is working with a
professional or an amateur, the ensemble should discuss with the photographer their ideas, and what
they want from the photos. Based on the research that was done above, the ensemble should have an
idea of the type of photos they like, and they should also be able to explain the kind of image they want to
portray in their photos (Beeching 2010, p. 73; Ensemble A interview; Ensemble X interview; Horace
interview). I talked with some of the interviewees about their experiences with professional
photographers, but I did not discuss the specifics of the photoshoot, costs, or other details such as what
their contract was like, or how many photos they reviewed.

Finding a photographer

1. Look local: Research photos of local musicians, either on their websites, or search through the
entertainment sections of the local newspapers (Beeching 2010, p. 68; Highstein 1991, p. 33).
Find photos that are in line with the kinds of photos you want, and contact that photographer.
Many of the resources and interviews recommended getting referrals from local musicians,
colleagues, and mentors (Beeching 2010, p. 68; Cutler 2010, p. 81; Slaughter and Kober 2004, p.
104; Ensemble A interview).
   a. Find someone who specializes in musicians, and knows current photo styles, and what is
   being used by similar ensembles (Beeching 2010, p. 68; Highstein 1991, p. 33).
   b. If getting a referral from someone, ask to see the photographer’s work to ensure it’s what
   your ensemble wants (Beeching 2010, p. 71; Slaughter and Kober 2004, p. 104).
   c. Ensemble A and Ensemble X both found photographers while they were touring, and
took photos on location during the tour. Their photographers were recommended by
colleagues, but they also research the recommended photographer’s work before
deciding.

2. Pricing and services: Know what the average rate is for your area, and ask what the
photographer will do (Beeching 2010, p. 71; Slaughter and Kober 2004, p. 104). Prices may vary
based on services the photographer provides, the amount of time spent at the photo shoot, how
many final photos are chosen. Below are recommended questions to ask when discussing prices
and services (Beeching 2010, p. 71; Cutler 2010, p. 81; Highstein 1991, p. 61; Slaughter and
a. How long is the photo session?
b. Do they have a studio, or will they scout a location for you, and take care of the logistics for that location (such as getting permission or rental paperwork)?
c. How many shots will they take, and how many different poses, or locations can they do?
d. Do they offer additional services? Some photographers may offer a hair and makeup services.
e. Retouching: Ask what they normally do and what other options they provide (such as removing blemishes, fixing lighting, up to adding or removing backgrounds, items and other things).
f. Ask about the amount of time it may take between the shoot day and delivery of the final product.
g. How many “master” photos will you get, or do they charge per final master photo?
h. Will they send you digital files and permission to reprint without additional fees. Will they give you hard copies? If so, how many?

3. Meet with the photographer: Prior to the photo shoot day, go over your ideas with the photographer. Bring the reference photos you chose earlier so they can get an idea of the style of photos your ensemble wants. The photographer should ask questions to help get the results you desire. Tell the photographer what you plan to do with the photos (Beeching 2010, pp. 71, 73).
   a. Does the photographer already have some ideas of what kind of photos to take, such as locations, or artistic quality, or will they get your ideas first before coming up with a plan (Slaughter and Kober 2004, p. 104)?
   b. Are you comfortable with the photographer? Make sure you meet, and have a good report, you want to be comfortable during the photoshoot (Highstein 1991, p. 61; Slaughter and Kober 2004, p. 104).
   c. Horace describes the first time his ensemble worked with a professional photographer. The ensemble had some ideas for the kinds of photos they wanted, and the photographer was able to take those ideas, create a storyboard to help guide the photoshoot. After the photos were done, they helped the ensemble choose the best photos, recommending the ones that were most likely to attract presenters, concert goers, contractors, and media (Horace interview).
   d. Ensemble A has used the same photographer for their last few photo sessions. The ensemble usually has a clear idea of the imagery they want to convey, and they meet with their photographer to discuss their artistic ideas, and the photographer gives them suggestions for locations, and how they can work together to achieve these ideas (Ensemble A).
The photo shoot

Scheduling time for a photo shoot is necessary whether working with a photographer or taking the photos on your own (Hyatt 2012, p. 171). You will need to have a plan for how long the photo shoot will be, where the photos will be taken, and what to bring with you (Beeching 2010, p. 73). The next step is to set up a photoshoot day. Many of the questions below can be considered whether working with a professional photographer, or taking the photos yourself.

1. Schedule the photo shoot:
   a. Justin’s group takes all their own photos, but they still set aside time for the shoot (Justin interview).
   b. Clara’s past experiences were to take photos after a rehearsal (Clara interview).
   c. “It is vital to arrange a photo shoot, and take it seriously. You will benefit from it in the long run.” (Hyatt, p. 171).

2. During the shoot (Beeching 2010, p. 73; Cutler 2010, p. 81; Horace interview):
   a. Consider the logistics: Where will the photo shoot take place, and how the ensemble will get there?
   b. Conserve your energy: Photo shoots often last between 2-4 hours, bring snacks, drink water and trust the photographer.
   c. Over prepare: Have at least two outfits, one being your performance attire, and your instruments. If you are responsible for your own hair and makeup, bring hair products and makeup. Bring any accessories or props you may think will work in the photos.
   d. Take a lot of photos: In the digital age, there is no excuse not to take a lot of photos (Horace).

3. Some tips to help take a good photo:
   a. Don’t zone out: Your thoughts are readable in your eyes, so stay focused. Think about things that evoke real feelings (Beeching 2010, p. 73).
   b. “If somebody is not comfortable in front of a camera, they should have fun at the end of a rehearsal taking pictures of that person, loosening them up. What is it going to take during the photo session to loosen this person, or these people up? Music? Certain jokes, certain words, certain stories? Have a particular person there, whatever the case is, that once the photo shoot starts, that they’re going to be comfortable, whatever it is that they need.” (Horace)

4. Check photos during the shoot: If doing the photos yourself, and using a timer, check the photos regularly for lighting, focus, and centering (Justin interview).
After the shoot

1. Review photos: If working with a photographer, they will send you the photos from the session. It may be all the photos they took and you’ll have to make the first cut, or the photographer may make the first cut and you will choose the photos you want from those (Beeching 2010, p. 73; Highstein 1991, p. 35).
   a. If you’re having trouble deciding, ask your photographer to recommend some shots (Beeching 2010, p. 73).

2. Final Masters: Once the best photos are picked, the photographer will do touch ups as needed and create the “Master” version and provide the digital copies, and whatever else was agreed upon (Beeching 2010, p. 73; Highstein 1991, p. 35).
   a. You should get digital versions for high-res for printing (8x10 inch, 300 dpi TIF) as well as a low-res file for websites and emailing (8x10 inch, 72-150 dpi JPEG) (Beeching 2010, p. 73).

3. Get a signed release: The artistic content of the photos are the photographer’s property. Get written permission from the photographer to reproduce the photos, for your records, and always credit the photographer when the photos are used (Highstein 1991, p. 34).

4. Clearly label photos: If you ever send a printed photo, make sure your name and contact info is affixed to the photos (Highstein 1991, p. 35).
   a. For digital photos, make sure photos are properly titled when downloaded, with the photographer’s name, and the name of the ensemble. Put the ensemble members’ names from left to right under the band photo to give journalists a point of reference (Hyatt 2012, p. 41).

Conclusions for Photos

Two of the studied ensembles went through personnel changes over the course of my study. For both ensembles, the first photos on their websites and social media profiles appear to have been taken at a performance, or in a more casual environment. These photos were not professional quality. Within a couple months, however, they had professional photos, that were on par with their previous professional photos. Clara also talked about her experience when going through a personnel change. Her group took some photos with the group after a couple rehearsals just to get photos of the current members, and then invested in a professional photo shoot a few months later (Clara interview). This shows that it may be acceptable to temporarily have ensemble photos online that are not professional quality, to reflect all current members of the group.
Even though current technology gives everyone a quality camera at pocket’s reach, not everyone can take a good photo. By following the above guidelines, there is still no guarantee the ensemble will have a great photo, but by taking these steps, the ensemble can have a better idea of qualities that make a good photo. For photos that the ensemble wishes to use in their press kits for promoters and media, the quality of the photo must be exceptional. Whether taking photos yourself, or using an amateur, or a student, or hiring a professional photographer, the same criteria for quality applies. “Can people tell the difference between a professional-quality photo and something less than? Absolutely.” (Beeching 2010, p. 71). Below is a break-down of the main points in this chapter for characteristics of a photo, types of photos that can be taken, and main steps when working with a photographer.

Best practices for characteristics of a photo

- Have a clear/high-definition image
- Have two to four photo options for press to choose from
- Coordinate ensemble clothing colors and level of formality
- Look comfortable
- Consider the background, and how it affects the character of the photo
- The image should be well lit, and not be in a dark setting.
- Have new photos taken every 1-4 years, and/or always after a change of membership
- Have contrast in the photo

Best practices for photo types

Include at least one of each photo type, or combine several attributes in one photo.

- One photo with members standing in a line, or group (“Traditional stance”)
- One photo where members are in casual poses
- One full-body photo (“Artistic”)
- One photo where you can see everyone’s eyes
- One photo with instruments
- One photo with a neutral background
- One photo with an artistic background (either outside, or with an interesting background)
Best practices when working with a photographer

- Research photographers to find one whose style is what you want.
- Know what kind of photos you want, in terms of specifics (above), and general imagery.
- Bring examples of photos your ensemble likes,
- Research the going rates for the kind of photo shoot you want, and have the photographer be clear about what services you get for the price.
- Discuss the photographer’s process, and all services provided.
CHAPTER 6: AUDIO AND VIDEO RECORDING

This chapter will discuss the uses, and value, of having audio and video recordings. Most of the entrepreneurial musician resources I reviewed discussed the importance of recording for all musicians (Beeching 2010; Cutler 2010; Highstein 1991; Loft 2003; Passman 2006; Potter 2015; Ricker 2011; Clara interview; Ensemble A interview; Ensemble X interview; Horace interview; Justin interview; Philip interview; Ronald interview). All studied ensembles have at least one audio and one video recording available on their websites, as well as on other online platforms. I also discussed recording in all the interviews, including advice on when and how to record. The appendix for this chapter includes a list of resources for the reader who wants to learn more about the techniques for recording and editing themselves, additional details on copyright, and definitions from the recording industry and copyright terms. Some of these resources are mentioned throughout the text, and some may be helpful resources when an ensemble is starting their recording project, or have additional questions.

The section on audio recordings will start with the different kinds of recordings that were discussed and seen on the studied ensembles’ websites, and how these different kinds of recordings have different uses. The rest of the audio recording section will discuss making an album. Creating an album can be a difficult process, and has many steps to take between thinking about making an album to having the physical album in-hand. This chapter will discuss these steps. The research discusses how to plan the making of an album, and includes details on financial considerations, working with a recording engineer, and the recording process (Beeching 2010; Cutler 2010; Passman 2006; Ricker 2011; Slaughter and Kober 2004). The interviewees had some recommendations about keeping costs down, and shared their experiences recording an album (Clara interview; Ensemble A interview; Ensemble X interview; Horace interview; Justin interview; Philip interview; Ronald interview).

Working with a label, packaging an album, and copyright laws were not discussed in interviews, but the resources provided details on these subjects. Through the study of the 17 chamber ensembles online albums, as well as an additional 15 physical albums, I determined that these subjects should be addressed during the album-making process.

There will be a short section regarding videos at the end of this chapter, with references from online resources, and a detailed study of the videos the studied ensembles have posted on their YouTube accounts. Information on creating videos for chamber musicians was absent in the primary resources studied. Some of the steps and considerations from audio recording can apply to video recordings, but there are some additional considerations. I will note certain recommendations that can apply to both audio and video throughout the chapter. Below is a list of the possible audiences whom may hear your recordings or see your videos (Beeching 2010, p. 86; Cutler 2010, p. 129; Highstein 1991, p. 52).
Audio Recording

Most of the references discussed recording types, and techniques only as they pertained to audio recording. The sections below will discuss recording experiences as it relates primarily to audio recording. However, some video recording considerations and experiences may be similar. I will reference these similarities in the video section of this chapter.

Reasons to Record

This section will discuss the different types of recordings, and the value and use of each type. Most of the discussions below were about audio recordings, however, many of the recommendations can be applied to video recordings as well. Before creating a recording for public use, the ensemble should feel their performance ability is at a high level. The musicians need to strive for the best musical product that they can provide, and need to be performing at a high level before recording (Loft 2003, p. 224; Clara interview; Ensemble A interview). Multiple resources also stressed that the ensemble should consider the purpose of the recording, and what the ensemble hopes to accomplish with the recording. The ensemble needs to think about the audience that they are trying to reach for any recording type. This will determine
the repertoire, and how much time and money they will need to invest, the ensemble may even consider multiple recordings for different purposes (Beeching 2010, pp. 95, 121; Cutler 2010, p. 133; Highstein 1991, p. 51; Horace interview). The research does not indicate a specific timeline for when to create a recording, but most of the interviewees recommended recording at least a demo early into an ensemble’s professional endeavors (Clara interview; Ensemble A interview; Ensemble X interview; Horace interview Justin interview). There are three primary recording types: The personal recording, the demo recording, and the album (Beeching 2010, p. 95).

Recording for personal improvements

The first purpose of recording is to record for personal/ensemble improvement, and only recording for the ensemble members. Only a few resources mentioned recording rehearsals or performances for personal use only, but it was a common point of discussion in the interviews. The recording does not need to be the best quality, as it is not for public consumption. Recording equipment used can be as simple as an MP3 recording device, phone, or computer. The recording is to help the ensemble members gain perspective on their playing, and make improvements as an ensemble, and as individual players (Ensemble A interview; Giovanni from Ensemble X interview; Horace interview; Justin interview). Listening to rehearsals and performances early in the ensemble’s existence not only helps the ensemble hear musical issues, but can also help the group learn more about each other and how to work together (Horace interview). Some of the research suggested recording rehearsals before recording for an album, to get used to your instruments’ sound on a recording, and to listen for extraneous noises (Beeching 2010, p. 99). All the players I interviewed did their own editing on their commercial albums, so recording the ensemble in advance may help the members hear potential issues, and can work on before they record a full album. Ensemble A also talked about recording performances to potentially share on their website or other social media, and recording every performance will give you options to choose the best performances.

Demo Recordings: How and why to create a Demo recording

The second purpose for recording is to use for demo purposes. There are a few ways to define a “Demo” recording. The Oxford Living Dictionary defines a demo recording as “A recording made to demonstrate the capabilities of a musical group or performer or as preparation for a full recording.” (https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/demo, accessed 2/7/17). A demo recording should be around 10-15 minutes, or with three or four pieces, that demonstrates variety and contrast (Beeching 2010, p. 95). Demos can be distributed, free of charge, for marketing purposes, or put in promotional kits to pursue
performance opportunities, educational residencies, potential management, or can be sent out for competitions, or with grant applications, and many other performance opportunities, with goal being making connections, and being offered opportunities (Beeching 2010, p. 85; Cutler 2010, p. 129; Highstein, p. 51). Ricker and Loft both used similar terms for how the view a demo recording, it is the “musical (or acoustic) business card.” (Loft 2003, p. 222; Ricker 201, p. 52).

There are generally three types of demo recordings that are made. One could be excerpts of standard literature arrangements of pieces that would be performed for background (“gig”) performances, for churches, weddings, or other celebrations, showcasing a variety of styles, and genres of music. This type of demo would only be for an ensemble who offers these kinds of services, and would not be for ensemble’s whose mission is to perform recitals or masterclasses. Another type of demo recording could be excerpts of repertoire for the upcoming concert season. This type of recording would be sent out to promoters or booking agents to try to book performances in different venues or cities. The final type of demo recording could be excerpts from an album recording. This demo would be used for promotional purposes, or to attract management or booking agents, or be required by the ensemble’s current management (Beeching 2010, p. 96; Loft 2003, p. 222; Justin interview). Taylor encourages updating demos more often than recording full albums, to accurately reflect what the ensemble is currently doing, and how they sound, so the ensemble should be able to record a demo quickly, easily, and cheaply (p. 70). Philip's ensemble had some personnel changes recently, so they created a demo from some live performances to use for booking purposes, while they are producing a new album with the new members. He recommends doing something like this for a demo, because people want to hear what your ensemble sounds like right now (Philip interview). All studied ensembles have recordings on their website, some of which could fall under the definition of a demo, the full details of recordings on the studied ensemble’s websites is in the next section.

Albums

The third primary recording option is to produce a full-length album. A full-length album can be used to promote the ensemble, and can be sold at performances, online, or even through retailers (Beeching 2010, pp. 86-87; Cutler 2010, pp. 125-127). In the interviews, I discovered there is no best time to record an album. Most interviewed ensembles created an album in the first one to three years of starting the group. Most of them did not advise to rush into a full-length album, but did recommend making some kind of recording for online representation (Clara interview; Ensemble X interview; Ensemble A interview; Horace interview; Justin interview; Ronald interview). Before making an album, an ensemble should have settled their mission and goals first, and then assess the value and purpose of the album. Will it help your ensemble advance, or help you move closer to your goals (Beeching 2010, p. 86; Clara interview; Horace interview)? There are some long-term advantages to a recording to be
considered. Once the recording is made, it will be around “forever” and can be sold, or listened to even if an ensemble stops performing (O’Conner 2011; Horace interview).

All of the studied ensemble had at least one commercial album available, but the number of recordings released, and the timelines in which the first recording was made varied. Below is a listing of what types of recordings ensembles have available on their websites. Additional information about recordings and videos on YouTube, SoundCloud and Spotify will be found later in this chapter.

Types of recordings found on the studied ensemble’s websites: 9/17 ensembles have audio tracks on their websites.

1. Complete movements or pieces:
   a. 8/9 ensembles provide full pieces or movements.
   b. 6/9 ensembles have at least one live audio recording.
   c. 5/9 ensembles have at least one recording that is from an album.

2. Excerpts:
   a. 4/9 ensembles have at least one recording that is only an excerpt.
   b. One of these ensembles has only one recording, and it is only an excerpt, this ensemble has a much higher number of videos.
   c. 2/9 ensembles have clips of pieces that were produced, possibly from an album, and not a live album.
   d. 5/9 ensembles have full movements or works that were performed live.

3. Complete albums available for streaming on their website:
   a. 6/17 ensembles have full albums for streaming on their website.

4. General recording quality:
   a. Many of the excerpts available were live recordings, the sound quality was not as good as a produced and mastered album recording. The lower quality is primarily determined by the balance of the ensemble, and the acoustics of the room.

5. Repertoire:
   a. 8/17 ensembles I studied had missions to promote and create under-performed, or new music, and these missions were represented in their audio samples.
   b. One ensemble had several demo recordings from the standard literature that could be played for weddings, graduations, other celebrations, or as part of a recital or educational program, another ensemble had recordings of past recital programs, and another had live recordings of original compositions they had commissioned but had yet to record. This ensemble also includes lists of standard repertoire from different time periods, and genres. This stands out, because this music is not represented on
any of their albums, whereas, other ensembles with recorded samples from the standard repertoire also have album recordings with this music.

Choosing Repertoire for a Demo or Full-length Album

It is recommended that ensembles display the variety of music they perform through excerpts on their website for potential employers (presenters) and viewers (Beeching 2010, p. 86). The studied recordings on the websites reflected what type of performances and services were offered by the ensembles. If an ensemble’s mission was to focus on new music, there were no pieces from the standard repertoire on their website. If the ensemble’s mission was to perform the “classics” or offered event music for weddings, receptions, or other events, they had recordings of the standard repertoire, and examples of music appropriate for those events. If an ensemble’s goal or mission was to play one genre, or many genres of music, they showed this variety in their recordings.

Before deciding to record an album, the ensemble must choose repertoire. As with demo recordings, the repertoire for a full-length album needs to be planned, and the ensemble’s goals need to be considered before recording (Beeching 2010, p. 86; Cutler 2010, p. 132; Ricker 2011, p. 52-54). In the interview with Philip, he recommended choosing repertoire your ensemble is excited about, something that has meaning to everyone. For two ensembles interviewed, the first recordings they posted online were pieces that had never been recorded before. These ensembles’ missions are to perform new, or under-performed 20th century music. Their first recorded works, and most of their current recorded pieces all still fall under that same mission (Ensemble A interview; Ensemble X interview). Most of the resources did not discuss in detail how to decide on repertoire, but in the interviews, I asked what kind of music the professionals would recommend for a young ensemble to consider recording. For an album, the general consensus was that a young ensemble should record what they are excited about, and feel represents the mission of the ensemble (Clara interview; Horace interview; Philip interview).

Four essential questions on choosing repertoire (Beeching 2010, p. 96)

1. What repertoire do you have ready that is polished and at a professional level?
2. Does this repertoire demonstrate your own individual voice?
3. Is the repertoire appropriate for demo needs? If intended for a competition, does your repertoire meet the requirements? If it is intended for booking concerts, is the repertoire representative of what you plan to perform in coming seasons?
4. Do you need to obtain a mechanical license before recording (this will be discussed in the Copyright section)?
Additional things to consider

1. Who is the audience for this recording? Different audiences will need different types of recordings. Recordings could be for management, presenters, competitions, grant applications, media reviews, or to attract audiences either through your website, or selling an album (Beeching 2010, p. 95; Cutler 2010, p. 132).

2. What is the intended purpose? Similar to knowing the intended audience, this question focuses your ideas on why you want to make this recording, or why you want to record the chosen repertoire. Is it to document examples of your performance program, or to fill gaps in the literature, or is it specific to certain gigs (Ricker 2011, p. 52)?

3. Do you want a live or produced recording? Sometimes this question is answered due to the time or finances an ensemble can dedicate to a recording. Other ensembles may purposely want one or the other recording type for various reasons (Beeching 2010, p. 96).

4. What is your budget for this recording project? Costs for recordings can vary from free to thousands of dollars. The ensemble’s budget may influence the kind of recording you can make (Beeching 2010, p. 96).

Recording Expenses

Once the purpose of the recording has been decided, and repertoire has been chosen, you will need to put together a financial plan, budget for recording costs, and a plan for how you are going to raise funds to pay for the recording (Beeching 2010, p. 105). The first draft of your budget should include everything you want. Start with your dream plan for the recording, such as your top choice of engineers, maximum studio rental time, renting (or buying) the best equipment. Once the dream plan is made, it can be easier to cut expenses while maintaining quality (Ricker 2011, pp. 52-54). Beeching had the most information about recording cost. She states that recording an album can cost as little as zero dollars, or somewhere between $6,000 and $10,000 (Beeching 2010, p. 105).

There is a general agreement in my interviews and in the reading, that the technology to create a good quality recording is easier and cheaper than ever, and if money is limited, an ensemble can put together a decent product themselves through borrowing equipment (Beeching 2010, p. 99; Cutler 2010, pp. 117-118; Loft 2003, p. 223), or by using modern technology such as cell phones (Clara interview; Horace interview; Justin interview). It is again important to emphasize that the performance level of the ensemble is more important than budget or equipment when recording a demo or an album. “There’s no equipment in the world that can fix a bad performance.” (Justin interview).
The resources don’t agree on how much time or money to invest specifically in a demo, or excerpts, recording. Some resources recommend creating a demo with the same recording quality as a commercial recording (Beeching 2010, p. 96; Cutler 2010, p. 131; Justin interview). Justin suggested creating the demo track from an album recording, or to take some time during the recording session to record a few extra tracks for a demo (Justin interview). Later in this chapter, I will present data on the studied ensembles’ recordings, and it will show that there is not a standard for demo recording quality for these ensembles. Ultimately, the ensemble should decide what option is best for them based on the purpose of the recording, their budget, and who their intended audience will be for the demo (Beeching 2010, p. 86).

All the resources advised to research your cost options, and create a budget based on average prices in your region (Beeching 2010, pp. 96-98; Cutler 2010, pp. 117-118; Highstein 1991, p. 55; Ricker 2011, p. 53). I did not ask in my interviews the specifics of their recording costs in part because every region has different costs based on cost of living, and resources available, but also because the ensembles had varying budgets, and connections for how they made their recordings. I did ask the interviewees to suggest low-cost options for ensembles with minimal resources. Options for low-costs were presented in most of the research, and were asked about in interviews. The most common recommendation for reducing costs was to borrow or buy the equipment, find a space with decent acoustics that you can get for free or cheap (such as a church), and doing all the work in house (Beeching 2010, p. 99; Clara interview; Ensemble A interview; Horace interview; Justin interview). If the ensemble members are in school, they should utilize the resources at the school. A university with a music department is likely to have a recording engineer and a performance space with good acoustics. The engineer, or student should have access to the equipment, but make sure you follow all the proper steps to get permission (Ensemble X interview; Horace interview; Justin interview; Ronald interview). Below are some potential expenses for the entire recording process.

On site potential expenses (Beeching 2010, p. 106; Highstein 1991, p. 55; Ensemble A interview)

- Hall or studio time rental
- Collaborating musicians (if any)
- Piano tuning (if necessary)
- Producer
- Recording Engineer (most common cost)
- Recording equipment rental or purchase (purchasing is a higher cost than renting, but can save money over time)
Post-recording expenses (Beeching, p. 106)\textsuperscript{22}

- **Album designer**
  - This includes artwork, photography, graphic design, liner notes writer or editor
- **Bar code registration**
- **Copyright registration**
- **Cost of physical CD production**
  - Even if only releasing digital albums, there can be online retail distribution fees
- **Editing** (often done by the recording engineer, additional costs for time may apply)
- **Licensing fees** (see copyright section)
- **Mastering**

Optional promotional expenses, including an album release performance (Beeching 2010, p. 106)

- **Booking fees associated with release concerts**
  - Printing costs for flyers and invitations to release concerts
- **Press material**
  - Mailing albums to radio and media for play time and possible reviews

Once costs are calculated, make a list of prospective incomes to pay for the recording fees. Beeching gives the most recommendations on where money can come from (Beeching 2010, pp. 107-111), but I also asked advice in the interviews for their recommendations, and personal experiences, on where to get money for recording an album. Two ensembles used the crowdsourcing method to raise funds for their first album and tour, which helped to kick off their career, and now they can put aside money from performances and CD sales to save for the next recording (Ensemble X interview; Justin interview). Some ensembles are non-profit organizations, and apply for grants for certain recording projects (Ensemble A interview; Ensemble X interview; Philip interview). Most of the ensembles combine multiple income streams from various fundraising, grants, savings, and invest sales from previously recorded albums into new recording projects (Ensemble A interview; Ensemble X interview; Horace interview Justin interview; Philip interview).

\textsuperscript{22} Note: Most of these fees are standardized except editing. Editing costs vary based on the amount of edits, and time spent editing. Costs for editing will be less if the ensemble requires less edits. This can be achieved by being well prepared, and playing well during the session.
Income streams options (Beeching 2010, pp. 107-111)

1. Crowdfunding: Harnessing the power of your fan base. There are several services that collect the funds, but read the requirements before you choose. These services still rely on your fan base (Justin interview).
   a. Fundraise through family, friends, and supporters, or combine these options.
   b. Suggested crowdfunding organizations can be found in the appendix.

2. Grants: Most large grant giving organizations do not give money for recordings, however, local organizations may give "professional development" grants that can be applied to a recording project. Contact your local arts council, the chamber of commerce, social service agencies, and religious organizations as potential grant givers. Reference librarians may also assist you in finding national grants that may fund your recording project.

3. Loans: If considering a loan, beware of payback time and interest, consider getting a personal loan from someone in your network instead of a bank loan.

4. Pre-sales: Can be done by mail order, online, or at performances. Have some incentive for buying in advance (invite to release party, or something). The release needs to happen within a few months of raising the money, otherwise the people will feel cheated.

5. Savings: Save income from performances, or other services the ensemble has done, to be specifically used for recording an album and other projects.

Keeping recording costs low

Most of the ensemble members I interviewed recorded their first albums or demo recordings themselves, or through their school, so the cost of their first album was very low (Clara interview; Horace interview; Justin interview; Ronald interview). By self-producing, and selling through live sales, or through a distributor that only takes a small fee, the return is very high. For promotion, most of these ensembles utilize social media, and advertising the CD at their performances, which requires no additional promotional costs (Horace interview; Justin interview). Some of them also reinvest money from album sales back into their recording projects (Horace interview; Justin interview).

With a solid performance of the music, good room acoustics, a couple microphones, and editing software on a personal computer, an ensemble can create a quality recording themselves with little to no cost (Beeching 2010, p. 99; Loft 2003; Justin interview). 23 In my interviews, many of these ensembles had a member who knew about recording and the editing process (Horace interview; Justin interview; Ronald interview). Even if an ensemble has the resources to work with a recording engineer, and

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23 When recording video, the advice in this section can also apply. Focus on a good performance, find a good hall or setting, and learn to use video equipment and editing technology yourselves.
producer, they should still expect to be involved in the editing process. The interviewees that work with professionals still choose the takes, and listen back to a lot of the recording. The only difference is that the engineer does the actual editing (Clara interview; Ensemble A interview; Ensemble X interview; Horace interview; Philip interview).

One ensemble still does everything in house, from recording and editing, to artwork, so the only cost to them is the manufacturing of the physical CD. This ensemble already owns multiple microphones, and one member has a lot of experience recording, and using Pro Tools editing software. All the members are all involved in the editing processes by listening to the tracks and choosing their own edits. During a recording session, they assign two people to be the “producers” during the session, these members take notes and mark parts during the recording that were definite “no’s” or possible “yeses.” They utilize the connections of the members for a recording space, or they record at a church for free, or for a nominal fee (Justin interview).

The Recording Session

Before the recording session

Resources agree on many of the preparation points before your initial recordings. In my interviews, I did not ask for a step-by-step account of what to do before a recording session. When talking about recording, many resources and interviews would reiterate the importance of playing well. No matter the reason for recording, or the way in which the ensemble records, the most important thing to do before recording is to prepare musically and technically, as individuals, and as an ensemble (Beeching 2010, p. 99; Loft 2003, p. 223; Clara interview; Ensemble A interview; Horace interview). Some interviewees also stress the importance of the room sound, or the acoustics in the room or being created digitally on the recording. Quentin and Bridget regret the acoustic quality of their first album, wishing they had recorded in a big hall with good natural acoustics (Ensemble A interview). In a similar vein, Clara’s ensemble made an unplanned video at a performance just because the performance hall had such nice acoustics (Clara interview).

Below is a list of steps to consider when preparing for a recording session (Beeching 2010, pp. 98-101; Highstein 1991, pp. 55-58; Ricker 2011, pp. 52-55; Justin interview). I organized these recommendations in what I believe is the most logical progression of steps. Depending on how the ensemble has decided to record not all steps will apply.

1. If using your own equipment (Beeching 2010, p. 99; Clara interview; Ensemble A interview; Justin interview):
a. Learn how to use the equipment: Record practice sessions with the equipment before the recording session, and learn how to stop and start the device(s), adjust levels, and get used to what your ensemble sounds like through this device.

b. Experiment with the equipment and space: Know how to check and adjust levels on the device. Test the acoustics of the room, and the sound of the instruments by moving mics around the room, and closer and further from the instruments. Find a room sound, and acoustic balance you all like.

c. Bring in someone with experience: Consider hiring someone with experience using the equipment. This person can be checking levels during the session, and help with the logistics of recording.

2. Have a plan (Beeching 2010, p. 101; Highstein 1991, p. 55): Plan the order of the pieces, and if you want to do full run-throughs, or sections first. Have an idea of how much time you will need to spend on each piece.

3. Prepare the physical challenges (Beeching 2010, p. 98; Highstein 1991, p. 55; Ricker 2011, p. 55):
   a. Do a practice run: Rehearse and record selections before the session in the same amount of time you have scheduled for recording. Pay attention to how that music order feels, and your general energy and endurance.
   b. Listen for other noises: Record a practice session, and listen for non-musical noises that the ensemble may be making, such as tapping feet, loud breaths, humming, page turns, and other habits that may be controlled before the recording session.
   c. Arrange your music: Put your music together to avoid fast or loud page turns, or arrange to have a page turner.
   d. Copy your music: Make copies of the score, and number all the measures. There should be a copy for the recording engineer, the producer, and the musicians. Marks or comments can be made in the scores during the recording process to help make the editing process much easier.

   a. Find a sound engineer who has experience recording your instruments. Get recommendations from colleagues and mentors.
   b. Ask the engineer what equipment is provided in their fee. Get a price quote and what that includes, does it include setup and editing?
   c. Get sound samples from the engineer, as well as provide the engineer with samples of recordings with the kind of reverb and sound you want.

5. Recording at a studio (Beeching 2010, p. 98): Know your needs.
   a. Do you need a concert-quality piano? Many recording studios do not have a grand piano in their studio.
b. Know what is included in a recording package. Ask about the cost per hour in the studio, does the studio provide the sound engineer, if the price includes time for set-up, sound check, and editing.

6. Find a producer: A producer’s responsibilities range from simply adding an outside set of ears at the session, to helping with editing, and all other aspects of the project (Highstein 1991, p. 55; Loft 2003, p. 69; Ricker 2011, p. 55).
   a. Get someone who can hear all the parts, and can help keep the ensemble on track. “If self-producing or doing your own editing, know that you may become overly judgmental in your playing. It’s a good idea to have a producer as an outside observer.” (Loft 2003, p. 69).
   b. It’s recommended to ask a colleague or mentor to do this job.

7. Bring these items with you (Beeching 2010, p. 100; Highstein 1991, p. 55): The copies of the score, a notebook (to mark good/bad takes for use during editing), a tuner, a metronome, a basic instrument repair kit, music stand lights, snacks, water, a stand, layers (in case the room is hot or cold), patience and a sense of humor.

8. On the day of the recording session (Beeching 2010, p. 101): Get a good warm-up in, but do not over-play. Save your endurance for the session.

During and after the recording session

Highstein says it takes about three hours of recording to get 30 minutes of material (Highstein 1991, p. 55), or as Beeching puts it, it takes four minutes of recording time to get one minute of music (Beeching 2010, p. 101). If you are renting the space, and/or hiring an engineer you may only have a limited time with them, or it will cost more. With this limited time, or potentially limited endurance, you want to plan your recording session efficiently.

Below are comments on how to prepare for a recording session, and what to expect during and after the session. These are ordered progressively from the start of the recording session, to what happens shortly after the recording session.

During the recording session (Beeching 2010, p. 101; Highstein 1991, p. 55; Ensemble A interview; Justin interview)

1. Discuss your plan: Talk with your sound engineer (and producer) about your plan before starting the recording session, so he/she understands your timetable and can help move the session along.
2. Set-up and levels: Setup, mic placement and sound check for levels and desired acoustic sound could take up to an hour.
   a. Make sure you are happy with the reverb levels, and the room sound before continuing to record. The engineer can change a lot more of these things while recording than after the recording.

3. Slating the takes: Before each take announce the name of the piece, the movement, and the take number.

4. Note good and bad takes: Either the producer, or one or two of the performers, should be taking notes on what takes the performers thought went well, or not well. Use these notes when going through the tracks for editing.

5. Limit your takes: It is recommended to play a maximum of three takes of a section at one time.
   a. If you don’t think you got a good take after three times, come back to it later in the session.
   b. Planning how much time to spend on each piece is especially important when you self-produce the recording, as it can be difficult to move on if a section is giving the group trouble.

After the recording session (Beeching 2010, pp. 101-103; Highstein 1991, p. 58)

1. After the recording session: Wait a few days before listening to the tracks, and try to be objective.

2. Editing and mixing: Refer to the marked score, and the notes that were taken when editing.
   a. Start with taking large sections: A good recording engineer can splice together smaller sections, but work down to that, the more editing and splicing required, the more time it takes, and therefore the more it costs.
   b. Highstein suggests you listen to all the takes to ensure your notes from the session are accurate (p. 58), whereas in my interview with Justin, who does all the editing for his ensemble, says he saves time by passing over the takes that the ensemble unanimously decided were bad at the recording session, but he will listen to sections if there were differing opinions.
   c. Balance: Refer to recordings of similar instrumentation that are well done.

3. Editing: Most ensembles I interviewed were involved in the editing process, and worked with their recording engineer on the editing (Clara interview; Ensemble A interview; Ensemble X interview; Horace interview; Philip interview), but for those who self-produced, whoever does the editing sends the best takes to each ensemble member and has them choose their favorites. Every step is confirmed with the members (Justin interview).
4. Listen again: Before and after mastering, listen to the edited recording before sending it to anyone. It is also recommended to listen to the recording on different devices, to ensure quality across mediums.

5. Mastering: If the recording is for commercial use, you need to get it mastered by a specialist, which gives the recording a polished and professional quality, for radio broadcasting. If the recording is just for demo use this is less important.
   a. Most master recordings are digital now, but if you receive a physical Master disk, do not give it away.

6. Album art: During the recording and editing process, the ensemble should be working on designing artwork for the packaging. This step is necessary for commercial recordings, but less important for demos.

7. Duplication: When duplicating your recording, always do it in real time to maintain the highest sound quality, and minimal compression.
   a. If producing an album for commercial use, there are numerous CD duplication companies that duplicate and package in bulk.

Designing the Album Packaging

This section is for the chamber ensemble that is producing their own album. If the ensemble is working with a label, much of the album design and packaging will be done by the label. More information on record labels will be found later in this chapter.

There are many kinds of designs for album covers. I did not have access to the physical CDs from all the studied ensemble, so I took a collection of fifteen other similar chamber ensemble CDs, three of which are from the studied ensembles, all albums were published after 2004. The designs vary, and there is no one kind of design that seems more common than any other. Photos of the ensemble were used, photos of scenery or other items were used, original artwork that ranged from realistic to abstract was used, and logos were used.

Every resource that mentioned album cover design recommended hiring a professional graphic designer, and most of the interviewees had worked with a graphic designer for their albums (Beeching 2010, p. 103; Clara interview; Ensemble A interview; Ensemble X interview; Horace interview). As with working with a photographer or sound engineer, a professional artist or visual designer may help make your album stand out, and look good (Beeching 2010, p. 103). Just as you researched photographers and recording engineers, research artists who can design album art. Find artists through recommendations from your network, or through the recording studios, and get examples from anyone before you hire (Beeching 2010, p. 103; Ensemble A interview). To save money, consider hiring a design student.
Even when working with a professional artist, you want to be able to describe to the artist what you like and don't like.

The album cover, and other packaging

Most CD manufacturers will provide templates that include recommended content, and where to include it on the front and back covers (Beeching 2010, p. 103; Ricker 2011, p. 55; Discmakers, http://www.discmakers.com/templates/JewelCase.asp#; CDbaby, https://duplication.cdbaby.com/quoter/templates.aspx). If the ensemble has signed with a record label, the label may design all album artwork (Cutler 2010, p. 122; Justin interview). Many of the CDs I looked at that were produced by record labels, and the placement and organization of information was the same for multiple albums under that label. Different labels had different layouts, and self-produced albums also had different layouts. Physical location of content is less important than including the content somewhere on the front or back cover.

Attributes for an album’s front and back cover, inside booklet, and the CD artwork (Beeching 2010, pp. 102-105; Cutler 2010, pp. 134-135; and study of common attributes from 15 physical copies of chamber ensemble CDs.

1. Front Cover:
   a. Cover artwork: 11/15 CD covers were graphics and artwork. 4/15 CD covers were photos with ensemble members and/or their instruments.
   b. Ensemble/artist's name: 15/15 CD have the ensemble or artist's name on the cover.
   c. Album Title: 13/15 CDs have an album title on the cover, 2/15 either self-titled their album, or did not give a title to the album.
2. Back Cover: Also known as the “Tray Card.”
   a. Album title: 7/15 ensembles included the album title on the back cover.
   b. Ensemble/artist's name: 7/15 CDs have the ensemble name, or artists’ names on the back.

24 To get an idea of how important the visual aspect of an album can be, Beeching suggested a “Kitchen Table Test.” You take several albums from your own collection and disperse them on your kitchen table. Browse through the cover art. Take note of what stands out. Why? Consider how the artwork, colors, typeface, or graphics make an album stand out, or not stand out (p. 102). This exercise can also give you an idea of what you personally like and don't like in an album cover, which you can use examples when working with an artist.

25 A note: not all studied CDs were from the same ensembles that I have been studying. This study was conducted with physical CDs in my personal collection, some of which are from the studied ensembles, but most of which are from other popular chamber ensembles. All studied albums were produced no earlier than 2004, with most of them being produced in 2011.
c. Composer names (organized as part of the track names): 15/15 ensembles included the composer name on the back cover.

d. Track numbers: 15/15 CDs include track numbers for each track.

e. Track names: 15/15 CDs include track names (titles of pieces or movements) on the back cover.

f. Timing for each track in minutes and seconds: 11/15 CDs include timing for each track on the back cover.

g. Total timing of album: 3/15 CDs included total running time of the album on the back cover.

h. Label name (if applicable): 9/15 CDs included either name/logo or email of a label. (3 of which were from Summit, the rest from small labels). 4/15 CDs did not indicate a label, two of which were recorded at universities, and the other two which have no production information on the back cover.

i. CD copyright info26: 12/15 CDs have © One CD only has the copyright insignia and the date, 5/12 CDs have the copyright insignia, date, and label or publisher, 6/12 CDs have the copyright insignia, date, label or publisher, and a statement of copyright protection.

j. Contact info: website address and optional email of the ensemble, or management: 9/15 CDs have a website address for either the label or the ensemble.

k. Short quote/description (optional): 1/15 CDs has a short description of the album, 2/15 CDs gives a short credit of thanks, one to the funding organization, and one to individuals who provided music or instruments for the recording.

l. Credit for the recording engineer, producer(s), recording location, or studio: 4/15 CDs credit the recording engineer, producers, album designer, location, and other various assistance provided. 1/15 CDs credits the producers.

m. Credit for manager (if applicable): 0/15 CDs acknowledge a manager or management company.

n. UPC (barcode): A barcode is needed to sell your product through retailers, and helps to track sales of your album. Leave space in the album design for the barcode, though some manufacturers offer a sticker that can be put on the packaging: 15/15 CDs have a barcode, all printed in the design, not a sticker.

3. Spine label:

a. Album title: 13/15 CDs have their album title in the spine, the remaining two do not have album titles, and include their ensemble name in the spine.

b. Name of ensemble: 14/15 CDs have the ensemble or artist's name on the spine.

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26 These following phrases were found on different albums in my personal collection, and one of these should be included on the back of the album cover, as well as printed on the CD: "Unauthorized reproduction, copying, and rental of this recording is prohibited by law;" "Unauthorized duplication is a violation of applicable laws;" "Unauthorized copying, hiring, lending, public performance and broadcast of this record prohibited;" "Unauthorized reproduction of this recording is prohibited by law and subject to criminal prosecution;" or "All rights reserved."
c. Label name (if applicable): 9/15 CDs have the label name or logo on the spine.

d. Catalogue number (if applicable, will be assigned by the record label): 9/15 CDs have a catalogue number on the spine.

4. Insert Booklet: 8/15 ensembles have a booklet with additional information that is part of the cover of the CD, 7/15 CDs have the entire packaging fold out into a booklet from front to back covers, with the CD included as a page. For the folding booklets, I looked only at the sections that did not constitute the front and back covers. For the pull-out booklets, only portions of the booklet that were not the album cover were considered.

   a. Album title: 6/15 CDs include the title name somewhere in the booklet.
   
   b. Artist/ensemble name: I determined this as part of the album title again, as ensemble and artist biographies are a different section: 8/15 included the ensemble name again in the booklet.
   
   c. Biographies: Can be the full ensemble bio, or bios for individual members, and composers. 9/15 included an ensemble bio, for some (usually trios) included bios for each individual.
   
   d. Credits: Include a credit for the recording engineer, recording location/studio, photographer, graphic designer, and any reproduced artwork (along with title and permission of use notice).
      ▪ Engineer: 12/15 CDs credited the recording engineer in the booklet.
      ▪ Editor: 8/15 CDs credited the editor in the booklet.
      ▪ Producer: 10/15 CDs credited the producer in the booklet.
      ▪ Location/studio: 12/15 CDs credited the recording location, often with the dates when the recording was done.
      ▪ Graphic Designer/photographer: 9/15 CDs credited the album artwork, either who designed the entire album layout, or the photographer or graphic designer for the artwork.
   
   e. Contact information: Website URL, your label’s information and your manager’s information (if applicable): 9/15 CDs included a website for the ensemble, recording location, or label.
   
   f. Copyright notices: 4/15 CDs included copyright notices in the booklet.
   
   g. Graphics (additional): Artwork or photos:
      ▪ Artwork: 4/15 ensembles included additional graphics in the booklet (not just solid color background), the graphics for two of these were the same, or similar to the front cover artwork.
      ▪ Photos: 13/15 CDs included additional photos in the booklet. Two used photos as backgrounds, with text layered over the photo, 11 included photos of the artists, with two of these being photos from the recording session, five ensembles
included headshots of all performers, two included photos of their instruments, five CDs included a group photo of the ensemble.

h. Label name: 4/15 CDs included the label name in the booklet.

i. Performers names and the instruments they play: 14/15 CDs included the performer’s names and their instruments in the booklet.

j. Program notes, also known as Liner notes: Can be about the composers and/or the works being performed: 12/15 CDs included program notes about the works, or about the composers, one of these was a single composer, and only talked about the inspiration behind the entire album.

k. Special thanks to contributors, funders, family, and other thanks. 10/15 CDs had acknowledgements for financial, emotional, and other non-production related thanks.

l. Texts (for vocal music), with translations: Studied two albums with voice, one album provided text in the original language, and the translation.

m. Titles of composition/movement and composers (with composer dates), also include the year the piece was composed if it is known:
   - Title/composer/arranger: 11/15 CDs included Titles and composer names in the booklet.
   - Composer dates: 4/15 CDs included dates for the composers in the booklet. CDs including living composers, or early music composers were less likely to have dates.

5. To include on the Disc:
   a. Title of the album: 12/15
   b. Name of the ensemble: 13/15
   c. Contact information: Website URL: 2/15 with a website URL, no other type of contact information on any CDs.
   d. Titles of works and movements with track numbers (not on always printed on the CD): 2/15
   e. Copyright notices: 10/15 have © insignia and additional information.
   f. Name of label (if applicable): 9/15 have a label (or production company’s) name.
   g. Additional information on the studied CDs that are not listed in the research:
      - Artwork/photo: 8/15 have artwork on the entire top of the CD, 3/15 have photos imposed on the top of the CD, 3/15 have a solid color on the top of the CD, and 1/15 only has the printed text, and label logo.

6. To include in a digital copy when downloaded: Most people put their music on their computer and other digital devices. If a physical album is purchased, then downloaded onto a computer, or if tracks are purchased as a direct download, the album must contain digital tracking information. Most digital players organize CD information by: Track name, Artist, Album name by artist, and
may also include the timing of each track and the genre. It is important that the information on the
tracks are consistent in their order, and under which subjects the information falls under. Make
this information match what is on the back cover as closely as possible. The album or track
should be easy to find in a digital search.

a. Album: This should be the title of the album, and if not included in the "Artist" section, the
name of the ensemble: 15/15 digital albums included the album name here, for the two
that did not have a separate album name from their ensemble name, this was duplicated.
b. Artist: Should be the name of the performer, though some artists choose to put the
composer's name under this subject: 15/15 digital albums included the Ensemble name
(or soloist) under this section.
c. Track name: This section may include the composer and movement title, or it may only
include the title of the piece, include the year the piece was composed if the piece is new
or obscure. 15/15 digital albums had the track names under this section. 7/15 digital
albums also included the composer's name in this section.
d. Track timing by minutes and seconds: 15/15 digital albums included times.
e. ISRC Code: This code is embedded into a product as its digital fingerprint. An encoded
ISRC provides the means to automatically identify recordings for royalty payments
(https://www.usisrc.org/about/index.html, accessed 2/22/16). I determined this by seeing
if the album information automatically populated during download. 15/15 albums had their
information populate through iTunes, so it can be assumed 15/15 albums had an ISRC
code.

The last thing to do after creating the album artwork is to print physical copies of the album. You
should have a projected plan for where and how you will sell the album before recording and producing
the disks (Beeching 2010, p. 105). As with choosing a recording engineer, there are many manufacturing
and distribution options. Start by researching what distribution methods musicians with albums of similar
genres use, or with what companies sell their CDs (Beeching 2010, pp. 90, 113-114; Cutler 2001, pp.
134-135; Ricker 2011, p. 56). Four of the eight studied albums that were not through a label used an
online distribution company. Three of the studied ensembles (the 17) used CD Baby, which was also
recommended in interviews and in the references as an option for printing and distributing albums
(Beeching 2010, p. 113; Hyatt 2012, p. 24; Ensemble X interview; Justin). CD Baby, and other
manufacturing and distribution companies, can provide the services necessary to create a IRSC and UPC
barcode, but not copyright registration. These companies will also distribute your album through their
website, iTunes for streaming and purchase, and on Spotify (where the ensemble can receive a nominal
fee for every play on the site). These options were not discussed in the research in depth, but information
about services can be found on CD Baby’s website (https://members.cdbaby.com/faq). Throughout the
following sections, CD Baby will be the standard reference for album printing and production.
Distribution: Where and How to Sell the CD

Once created you will want to have physical albums to sell at performances, online, or through retailers. For the purposes of this study, I will only discuss selling albums online, and at performances. Additional recommendations of locational distribution from Beeching and Cutler can be found in the appendix section.

There are numerous online retailers that will sell CDs. Take note, if selling through established online retailers, they should take care of the logistics such as shipping and payment. Each vendor has unique policies, payment structures, and customers. Research which sites sell music of your genre, and best suit your needs (Cutler, p. 127). The lists below are recommendations from the research compared to the studied ensembles, and where their albums were available in physical and digital form (Beeching 2010, pp. 115-116; Cutler 2010, p. 125; Ricker 2011, p. 56).

Physical albums sold online

- Amazon [https://www.amazon.com/](https://www.amazon.com/)
  - 17/17 ensembles had at least one album available for purchase as a physical CD on Amazon.
- CD Baby [https://www.cdbaby.com/](https://www.cdbaby.com/)
  - 8/17 ensembles have physical albums available for purchase
- Performances (recommended as the number 1 way to sell albums in the interviews)
- Record Label website (if applicable)
- Website:
  - Most ensembles included a purchase link to one of the above sites for purchasing, some ensembles included purchase information directly on their website).
  - If taking orders directly, embed a secure link, with access to either PayPal or your account to take payment, see the chapter on Websites for more information. Send orders right away.

Digital albums (download only) sold online

- Amazon [https://www.amazon.com/](https://www.amazon.com/)
  - 13/17 ensembles have at least one album available for download on Amazon.
- CD Baby [https://www.cdbaby.com/](https://www.cdbaby.com/)
  - 10/17 ensembles have at least one album available for download on CD Baby.
  o 17/17 ensembles have at least one album available for download on iTunes.
• Magnatune [https://magnatune.com/](https://magnatune.com/)
  o None of the studied ensembles have any albums or tracks on Magnatune

In addition to selling an album, there are online resources that provide streaming services. Some companies will pay royalties based on how many times a track has been streamed. SoundCloud (studied below) is similar to social media, in that it provides an ensemble with a platform to post recordings for promotional purposes, gain followers, follow other artists, and receive comments from listeners. Below is a list of the online streaming options recommended from the research and compared with what the studied ensembles use (Beeching 2010, pp. 113-114, 125; Ricker 2011, p. 56).

Options for free streaming (without purchasing the track or album), or broadcasting an album

• Amazon: [https://www.amazon.com/](https://www.amazon.com/) Recently started a free streaming option to listen to albums.
  o 10/17 ensembles have at least one album available to stream through Amazon.
• MySpace: [https://myspace.com/](https://myspace.com/) Though not as popular for social media as it was in the past, all the studied ensembles have at least one album available for streaming on this platform.
  o 17/17 ensembles have a profile on MySpace
• Pandora (online radio play, artist should receive performance royalties) [https://www.pandora.com/](https://www.pandora.com/)
• Podcasts (free online radio, generally independently run, royalties usually not paid):
• Radio (Try the public radio station, student stations, or if there is a local station that plays the genre of music you play.)
• Sirius XM Satellite (radio, artist should get performance royalties). [https://player.siriusxm.com/](https://player.siriusxm.com/)
• SoundCloud: [https://soundcloud.com/stream](https://soundcloud.com/stream) Only counted if the ensemble has their own profile. There is no profit in this option, but can help the ensemble gain exposure.
  o 14/17 ensembles have a profile on SoundCloud, three others are tagged on other’s profiles.
• Spotify: [https://play.spotify.com/](https://play.spotify.com/)
  o 17/17 ensembles have at least one album available for streaming on Spotify
Types of recordings found on SoundCloud

1. Complete movements or pieces:
   a. From album: 7/14 ensembles have tracks from their albums: (including those with full albums available)
   b. Live: 5/14 ensembles have complete live tracks, one of which only had an interview, no live performances.

2. Excerpts:
   a. From album, or a recording that is not live: 5/14 ensembles have clips of pieces that were produced.
   b. Live: 2/14 ensembles have full movements or works that were performed live.

3. Complete albums available for streaming on their Spotify account: 4/14 ensembles have full albums for streaming on their website.

4. General recording quality: Same comment. Live recordings were only lessor quality due to balance issues.

5. Repertoire: Three ensembles created a “Demo” playlist, with excerpts or full tracks with a variety from their repertoire. One ensemble has a special audio clip project, all clips for this project are on their SoundCloud.

All ensembles have albums available to purchase online, but for those that I asked, they all said their highest sales are at performances (Ensemble X interview; Horace interview; Justin interview). Most of the resources also named performances as the best place to sell albums (Beeching 2010, pp. 114-115; Cutler 2010, p. 125). In most of the interviews, they indicated selling CDs at a performance helps augment income for performances, and also help them connect more with the audience. If the audience enjoyed the performance, they often want to take home a souvenir. To increase this connection, and encourage fond memories of the ensembles, every ensemble member I asked will personally sell CDs, merchandise, and even signs copies of the CDs, if asked (Clara interview; Ensemble X interview; Horace interview; Justin).

Record Labels and Recording Contracts

Most of what has been discussed in this chapter is designed to help an ensemble record, produce, and distribute their own albums. However, doing all of this on their own can take time between finding a recording venue, editing, album design, and distribution. To reduce some duties, or increase the album’s pool of listeners, an ensemble may decide to sign with a label. Most of the resources that talked
about record labels primarily referred to musicians in the commercial industry, such as rock, pop, and country artists (Ricker 2011; Taylor 2011). Those rules still apply to classical musicians, however, fewer major labels are signing classical musicians to their rosters. Based on the experiences of the musicians I interviewed, it is unlikely that a chamber ensemble will pursue a record contract in their first few years of performing together.

There are essentially two different types of record labels. The division is primarily based on the label’s resources. The first type, “major” labels. There are only a few major record labels, and the rest fall under the independent category. There are three major record labels: Warner Music Group, Sony BMG, Universal Music Group. These organizations may spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on their artists, advancing the money to pay for recording, producing, and promoting an album. The other type of record labels are generically smaller, called “Independent” or “Indie” labels (Beeching 2010, p. 88; Cutler 2010, p. 121). Indie labels range from large distributors, with numerous artists on their roster, such as Naxos, to small, one-employee, companies who only have one or two artists on their roster, or even labels that the artist created for only their albums.

Researched ensembles latest album releases

- 10/17 ensembles have a recent album released through an Indie label.
- 3/17 ensembles have a recent album released under their own ensemble name
- 4/17 ensembles have a recent album released through a CD distribution company such as CD Baby.

Three of the ensembles I interviewed released their latest album under different labels, and one is still under contract. I did not discuss the financial arrangements they had with their labels or why they chose to work with the labels. None of the musicians I interviewed receive, nor expect, much profit from CD sales. They all expressed the two primary goals for CDs sales are to get people to take a piece of them home with them as a memento and any income from album sales tend to fund more recording projects, and perhaps cover some overhead costs (Ensemble X interview; Horace interview; Justin interview). When signing with a record label, the first goals should be similar; first, to break even financially, and second, to expand your fan base.

27 Such cases of this happening are with Summit Records, which was started by the Summit Brass (http://www.summitrecords.com/about-us/), and now is a label for a number of chamber ensembles and solo musicians. Some interviewees mentioned Summit Records as being the most popular record label for chamber and solo classical musicians (Horace interview; Philip interview).

28 CD distribution companies will assist with registrations, and album printing and distribution. The distribution company does not have any influence on the recording process, or artwork (but will provide templates for original artwork).
There are advantages and disadvantages with a record label, and labels provide different services. I did not discuss advantages and disadvantages of using a record label in the interviews, since only one ensemble was currently under contract with a record label (Philip interview), the other ensembles either set up recording production on their own, or worked with their management (Horace interview). To avoid serious disadvantages, read the contract with the label carefully, know what services they provide, and how the financing works. It is recommended to work with a lawyer whenever a contract is written (Beeching 2010, p. 89-90; Cutler 2010, p. 119).

Advantages to signing with a label (Cutler 2010, pp. 122-124)

- The label may provide album design and production.
- The label will do a lot of the bookkeeping, keeping track of sales, and product distribution.
- Depending on the financial agreement, the label may be taking more risks with an unknown ensemble.
- With a label, there may be a potential for higher sales. Many labels have more connections and a larger distribution network than the ensemble.
- Releasing through a label connects your ensemble to their brand, their prestige, and their reputation, which again, will add to the number of potential fans you could reach.

Disadvantages to signing with a label (Beeching 2010, pp. 89-90; Cutler 2010, p. 123)

- The artist may lose some artistic control over their product. The label may decide where to record, who the recording engineer will be, and may design the album art and marketing plan.
- The artist may lose control over the budget, and may be obligated to pay a percentage, or even all the recording and production costs, which will likely cost more than releasing the album on their own.
- With most Indie records, the artist still takes a financial risk if the album does not sell well.
- There is a potential for higher sales, but the artist will receive a lower percentage of those sales, so the artist could still lose money if sales aren't high.
  - Ultimately, album profits for the artist end up being only a small percentage of the album's purchase price.

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29 See Entertainment Law: Entertainment law or media law is a term referred to a field of law which focus on providing legal services to the entertainment industry. The work of an entertainment lawyer is mostly transaction or documentation based, like drafting contracts, negotiation and mediation. However, some situations may also lead to litigation or arbitration. (https://definitions.uslegal.com/e/entertainment-law/, accessed 2/6/17).
The ensemble will still be responsible for promoting and selling the album, as well as developing their fan base.

Recording Contract

In the research, Beeching, Cutler, and Passman spoke the most about recording contracts. Every contract is different. Many Indie label contracts have the musician pay for the recording, manufacturing, and publicity costs. The label handles the manufacturing, some promotion, and distribution, and some may help with album release tour or performance costs (Beeching 2010, p. 89-90; Cutler 2010, p. 119). Some labels will also provide some of the services discussed earlier in the recording and promotion section (Cutler 2010, p. 122). Know what the label is offering, and how the cost of creation compared to income works (Beeching 2010, pp. 89-90; Cutler 2010, p. 124). Research different labels that best suit your qualifications (emerging artists, genre or music). Seek feedback from artists who have worked with that label, and consult an attorney30 before signing a contract (Beeching 2010, pp. 89-90; Cutler 2010, p. 122).

Questions to ask, and consider before signing with a record label (Cutler 2010, pp. 122-124; Passman 2006, pp. 110-112)

1. Don't approach/choose a record label until you've formulated a marketing strategy, and identified your market. Find a label that has connections to this market.
2. Read the contract carefully.
   a. Look out for "Label management fees" or "career development fees" these are essentially fees you would pay a manager that the label also wants, this is especially bad if you already have a manager.
   b. What expenses will be required on your end?
   c. How is payment to the ensemble allocated?
   d. Can the contract be easily terminated?
3. How will they promote your product?
4. Consider negotiating 50% of profits instead of royalties. Make sure "profit" is defined as Net profit, not Gross profit, to avoid them marking down the "profit" after their expenses. If the album sells well the artist will make a lot more money, if the album doesn’t sell well, the artist may lose due to covering the recording costs.

30 The Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts offers legal counseling, educational programs, advocacy, and alternative dispute resolution for low income artists, and can be an excellent resource for musicians with questions about contracts see: https://vlany.org/ (accessed 2/8/17)
5. Ask if they release albums overseas. If not, make sure your contract states you have the rights to release internationally yourself.

6. Know their policy on merchandise and publishing rights, try to keep as much of these rights as possible.

7. Some labels want to choose or approve your manager, but part of the manager’s job is to put pressure on the label and you don’t want the label to have control over that person. If there is a disagreement, you don’t want the label to have the power to fire the manager for doing their job.

A final note on working with a record label

Bad labels charge the artist all kinds of fees for their services, and do not pay the artist until the label has recouped all their expenses. Other labels will have the artist pay all the expenses up front, but still claim additional expenses they put out before giving profits to the artist (http://musicians.about.com/od/releaseyourmusic/tp/Music-Industry-Myths-Four-Myths-About-Record-Labels.htm, accessed 2/21/16). This risk can be avoided by reading and understanding the contract. It is highly recommended by all resources to review any contracts with an entertainment attorney before you sign with a label.

Copyright: Original Recordings, Arrangements, and Compositions

Copyright protects recorded works and printed music from being used by others without compensation. Musicians need to protect their recordings or new compositions and ensure that they obtain the rights to record copyrighted material. In this section I will describe what copyrights are, what mechanical rights are, and how they apply to musicians. I did not ask about copyright during my interviews. Six of the resource documents I read talked about copyright (Beeching 2010, p. 91; Cutler 2010, pp. 135-136; Passman 2006, pp. 197-225, 311-312; Ricker 2011, pp.79-90; Slaughter and Kober 2004, pp. 62-67). Much of the information provided in the research, and in this document, is taken directly from the Copyright Office website (www.copyright.gov) and the Harry Fox Agency (www.harryfox.com). There are lawyers who specialize in copyright law. The resources recommend working with a copyright lawyer, primarily if there is a question of your work being used without approval (Beeching 2010, p. 91; Cutler 2010, p. 135-136).

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31 Please note, there are also performance rights that are part of the copyright laws. I am including information about performance rights in the appendix.
What can be copyrighted, and what are the owner’s rights when a work is copyrighted

Definition of Copyright: “A form of protection provided by the laws of the United States for ‘original works of authorship’, including literary, dramatic, musical, architectural, cartographic, choreographic, pantomimic, pictorial, graphic, sculptural, and audiovisual creations. ‘Copyright’ literally means the right to copy but has come to mean that body of exclusive rights granted by law to copyright owners for protection of their work. Copyright protection does not extend to any idea, procedure, process, system, title, principle, or discovery. Similarly, names, titles, short phrases, slogans, familiar symbols, mere variations of typographic ornamentation, lettering, coloring, and listings of contents or ingredients are not subject to copyright.” (From http://www.copyright.gov/help/faq/definitions.html, accessed 2/19/16).

“In general, the duration of a Copyright in a work created on or after January 1, 1978, subsists from its creation and, endures for a term consisting of the life of the author and 70 years after the author’s death.” (From http://copyright.gov/title17/92chap3.pdf, accessed 2/20/16)

For musicians, this means all original music, written or performed, must be in tangible form to be protected under copyright. Live performances do not fall under copyright unless they are recorded with video or audio (Beeching 2010, p. 91; Slaughter and Kober 2004, p. 62). Other subjects that are not covered under copyright are: Ideas; procedures; titles of songs; slogans; chord progressions (Ricker 2011, p. 80). The two important things to know about copyright laws help protect: 1) your recordings can not be used by others without the creator (your ensemble) getting compensated; 2) your ensemble can not record copyrighted works without obtaining the rights to record the work (Beeching 2010, p. 91; Cutler 2010 p. 135-136).

The research breaks down the details of copyright law and how it would apply to a soloist or ensemble that is either creating their own new music for recording, and/or performing pieces that are under copyright protection. Below is a compilation of the rights of an owner of a copyrighted work, and the importance of registering the work through the proper channels (Beeching 2010, pp. 91-95; Copyright website http://copyright.gov/title17; Cutler 2010, pp. 135-136; Passman 2006, pp. 197-225, 311-312; Ricker 2011, pp. 79-90; Slaughter and Kober 2004, pp. 62-66; Whitney, pp. 90-91).

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32 Information about copyright can be found through the United States Copyright Office, this link will take you to the full study, titled: “Copyright and the Music Marketplace”: http://copyright.gov/policy/musiclicensingstudy/copyright-and-the-music-marketplace.pdf
The full details of Copyright Law of the United States can be found at http://copyright.gov/title17/

33 Definition of Tangible: Under the Copyright Act, a work is fixed in a tangible medium of expression “when its embodiment in a copy or phonorecord, by or under the authority of the author, is sufficiently permanent or stable to permit it to be perceived, reproduced, or otherwise communicated for a period of more than transitory duration. A work consisting of sounds, images, or both, that are being transmitted, is ‘fixed’ . . . if a fixation of the work is being made simultaneously with its transmission.” See 17 U.S.C. §101. Fixation is a requirement for obtaining a copyright. (https://www.law.cornell.edu/wex/fixed_in_a_tangible_medium_of_expression, accessed 2/6/17).
Rights for the owner of the copyrighted material

1. The right to reproduce and distribute reproductions: You can make your own reproductions of the work in copies or audio recordings, and distribute the reproductions to the public by sale or other transfer of ownership, or by rental, lease, or lending.

2. The right to create variations of the work: You can prepare derivative\textsuperscript{34} works based on the original work.

3. The right to perform: This applies to musical, literary, dramatic, choreographic, pantomimes, motion pictures, and other audiovisual works. It includes the right to present performances via digital transmission (such as internet streaming, or radio broadcast).

4. The right to display work publicly: This applies to literary, dramatic, printed musical material, printed choreographic plans, and images of a motion picture or other audiovisual work.

5. The right to allow others to use the work: You have the right to provide licensing for another person or entity to do any of the above. Such as the allow another to create an arrangement (derivative), or to use your recording for a TV commercial.

Technically, your work is protected from the moment you put it into tangible form. However, it is recommended in the research, to register your copyright. Registration is a legal formality used to create a public record (Copyright website \url{http://copyright.gov/title17}; Passman 2006, pp. 197-198; Ricker 2011, p. 81; Slaughter and Kober 2004, p. 63). There are advantages to registering your work with the copyright office, and disadvantages if you do not. These are listed below.

Legal protections when officially registered (Slaughter and Kober 2004, p. 66)

1. You establish a public record of the copyright claim.
2. It is necessary in order to file an infringement suit.
3. It may be used as evidence in an infringement suit.
4. It is necessary in seeking statutory damages and attorney’s fees in court – without registration, only actual damages and profits may be sought.

\textsuperscript{34} A derivative work is a work based on or derived from one or more already existing works. Common derivative works include translations, musical arrangements, motion picture versions of literary material or plays, art reproductions, abridgments, and condensations of preexisting works. Another common type of derivative work is a “new edition” of a preexisting work in which the editorial revisions, annotations, elaborations, or other modifications represent, as a whole, an original work. To be copyrightable, a derivative work must incorporate some or all of a preexisting “work” and add new original copyrightable authorship to that work. The derivative work right is often referred to as the adaptation right. (from \url{http://copyright.gov/circs/circ14.pdf} accessed 2/19/16)
The drawbacks of not registering with the Copyright Office (Passman 2006, pp. 311-312)

1. You cannot collect compulsory license royalties
2. You cannot file an infringement action to recover damages or stop someone from using your copyright.
3. You must register within five years after the first publication of your work, or lose the legal presumption that everything in the registration is valid. Meaning: if you are registered, the court assumes everything in your registration is correct, and the infringer has the burden of proving it isn’t. If you don’t register you must prove everything in your copyright is correct.
4. You cannot recover attorneys’ fees, nor receive statutory damages.

Where to register a recording for copyright

Submit a Sound Recording form (SR) and/or a Performing Arts form (PA) for original compositions to the United States Copyright Office (www.copyright.gov). There is a “How to” guide on the Copyright Office’s website that will lead the reader through the application forms and how to answer the questions, and what to include. There is also a “FAQ” section that covers a lot of potential questions. You can submit documents online, or print the forms and mail, along with two copies of your recording, or printed composition. Additional information on registering a work for copyright can be found through the Copyright Office (https://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ56a.pdf, accessed 2/7/17). In the appendix for this section there are definitions and some additional measures to take when obtaining copyright protection.

Performing or Recording Copyrighted Music

If not performing or recording original music, be sure to obtain the rights to record the chosen works. Every musical recording has two separate copyrights: The composition, and the sound recording. If you record someone else’s composition, you own the recording, but will need to negotiate the use rights with the copyright holder of the music. Copyright is set up to help ensure that creators of original work receive proper credit and due compensation (Beeching 2010, pp. 91-93). If you want to record a written work that has not been recorded you need to negotiate the use rights with the copyright holder. Most composers are the copyright holder, you can get their contact info usually through these Performing Rights Organizations: ASCAP, BMI, or SESAC. If a work has been recorded, you will need to obtain a compulsory mechanical license. You should obtain the license before you record (Beeching 2010, p. 93).
Before recording, you must determine what type of license you will need for the piece(s), and then obtain the rights to record. The specific licenses and their definitions can be found in the terminology appendix for this chapter.

Four categories for compositions (Beeching 2010, pp. 91-93; Cutler 2010, pp. 135-136)

1. **Premier recording:** The first time a composition (not written by you) is recorded. You must obtain written permission from the publisher, composer, or estate that owns the copyright. Most composers are the copyright holder, you can get their contact info usually through these Performing Rights Organizations: ASCAP, BMI, or SESAC.

2. **Previously recorded, under copyright:** You will need to obtain a compulsory mechanical license through the Harry Fox Agency ([https://www.harryfox.com/](https://www.harryfox.com/)). There is a small fee for processing, and additional fees based on how many copies will be created.

3. **Public Domain:** Musical works published with a copyright of 1922 or earlier fall under the public domain. Public domain only applies to a written work, all sound recordings are protected under copyright law ([http://pdinfo.com/copyright-law/copyright-and-public-domain.php](http://pdinfo.com/copyright-law/copyright-and-public-domain.php), accessed 2/21/15). If you are not sure if a piece falls under public domain, you can visit the Public domain website: [www.pdinfo.com](http://www.pdinfo.com).

4. **Fair Use:** “Fair Use” of musical materials would generally be allowed if the musicians are using the music for educational purposes, or performing for competitions, or scholarship applications. Whitney recommends the book *Reclaiming Fair Use: How to Put the Balance Back in Copyright*, put out by the Center for Social Media, 2011 for further reading (Whitney 2013, p. 91). There are four factors that are considered when evaluating a question of fair use. For more details visit [http://copyright.gov/fair-use/more-info.html](http://copyright.gov/fair-use/more-info.html).

**Conclusion for Audio Recording**

An audio recording is necessary for an ensemble. However, as the study indicates, there are many options as to what and how to record. The biggest pieces of advice from the references and the interviews, is to be performing at a high level before making a recording, and to know how you want to use the recording. Through comparisons of the reference materials, interviews, and the studied ensembles’ recorded material, each ensemble has different types of recorded material (demos, albums, other), with two main ways the recordings were made (live vs. produced) available on their website and other online resources. The research on the physical albums indicates that chamber ensemble’s commercial recordings also vary. Albums are recorded in different ways, some are live, and some are edited. Some are self-produced, and others are produced through a label.
Finally, don’t post anything online that you are not happy with, whether it’s the sound quality, the room acoustics, or the performance. It is important to have audio representation online, but not if your recordings will hurt the image of the ensemble. Wait to create something good, and always remember, the quality of the performers is more important than the quality of the technology.

There are many sections to this chapter. Below, I have divided the “Best Practices” into five sections that cover the main steps between planning a recording to releasing the recording.

Best practices: Before you record

- Be performing at a high level before recording.
- Know what the intended purpose of the recording is (promotion, to sell, for management, etc.) before deciding what type (live, demo, album) you want.
- Create a demo recording only after the ensemble’s performance mission is established.
- Choose repertoire that represents what your ensemble performs either specific pieces, or the general genre and style.
  - Be thoughtful when choosing repertoire for an album, record something you want to record, and that represents your ensemble’s mission.
- Only post recordings on your website that reflect the type of music you perform.

Best Practices: Recording costs, working with a label, and copyright

- Set a budget
  - Include costs for the location, engineer, equipment rental, editing, production, and manufacturing costs.
- Research fund-raising options such as crowdfunding sites, or through
- Find low-cost options such as university or church resources.
- Learn about the recording and editing process:
  - Even when recording live, you can learn to set up cameras/microphones in the best spots for the room sound, and you can easily edit any talking, or long pauses out of the recording.
- Create your own label name, or work with a small label that will help promote the album, and provide some services for the recording, but will also give you a fair cut of the sales profits.
- If working with a record label, read the contract closely, work with an entertainment lawyer.
- Register your recording with the copyright office.
  - Get performance or mechanical rights if you are performing or recording anything that is protected under copyright law.
Best Practices: The recording session

- Plan at least 3 hours for every 30-45 min of rehearsal
- Work with a graphic designer or artist when making a commercial album
- Even when working with a professional, you will need to be involved in the editing process, listening back to find the best take of a piece.

Best Practices: The album cover

- Include your ensemble’s name, and album title on the front cover
- Include the track titles, production information (including location, date recorded, sound engineer, producer, and any other people involved in the technical aspects of the album), album designer, UPC barcode, and copyright on the back cover
- The disk should include the ensemble name, album title, and copyright. Additional artwork, and tracks are optional.
- A booklet is optional, but if your ensemble includes one, include: your ensemble name, album title, member names and instruments, an ensemble biography, production credits, and the ensemble website. You may also add liner notes about the music being performed.
- Find a CD manufacturing company that provides a template for album cover design.

Best Practices: Distribution

- If you did not record an album (and the recordings are not for sale):
  - Post your recordings on your website and YouTube pages.
- If you did record an album:
  - Post one or two tracks (up to the whole album) on your website and YouTube for streaming.
  - Post a purchase option on your website.
  - Work with a CD manufacturer that will distribute your digital to current streaming or digital purchase sites, as well as manufacture and distribute physical albums.
  - Get physical albums to sell at performances.

Video: Online Video Representation

All studied ensembles have at least one video on their website and Facebook, and YouTube. Most of the primary resources studied do not discuss video recording in detail. It may be that this form of
media has only recently become popular, and affordable enough to begin discussing recommendations on how to create video content on a budget, and with little resources. Beeching, published in 2010, provides detailed, step-by-step measures for audio recording, and content and design information for websites, only mentions video recording as it pertains to self-improvement (Beeching 2010, pp. 221, 227, 244), and does not mention using video for promotional purposes at all. Cutler, also published in 2010, only devotes one paragraph to video sites online, and his only advice is to create something “interesting” (Cutler 2010, p. 105). There are numerous online resources that discuss creating video content for YouTube, but they are not specific to classical musicians, or chamber music. Stewart French, founder of Draft Classical (http://www.draftclassical.com/), an organization that specializes in filming classical musicians’ videos has provided a blog with some recommendations on making a classical music video (https://medium.com/@Stewart_French/film-your-music-and-get-it-viewed-6bd17510ba2b#.67spwjcb). Recommendations from French, Baker, Hyatt, the interviews, and details on the videos of the studied ensembles from YouTube are the primary sources for this section.

Some additional resources for creating video content will be included in the appendix. Many of the interviewees discussed how they are also struggling with getting the kind of video content they want online, with plans on making more videos in the near future (Horace, Clara, Ensemble A).

Who might see your videos

- Videos are posted on the website, YouTube, Facebook, other social media, and may be included in an Electronic Press Kit (studied ensembles).
- Ensemble members: watch videos for personal improvement in performance, and stage presence (Beeching 2010, pp. 221, 227, 244; Hagberg 2003, pp. 17, 32, 33, 37, 101, Ensemble A interview).
- Promoters and booking agents: Create demo videos to give to promoters or booking agents at conferences (Horace interview)
- Managers: Use videos to attract management (Ensemble X interview)
- Public: Using video is another way to engage your audience and communicate who you are and what you offer as a musician (Baker 2011, p.111; Ensemble A interview; Ensemble X interview; Horace interview; Justin interview).

Musicians should consider uploading different types of content such as professional music videos, interviews, and behind-the-scenes rehearsals, promotional videos, or discussions about your music. Videos can be live or produced. (Cool 2014; Cutler 2010, p. 105; Occhino 2016; Horace interview).
Below is a study of the different types of videos ensembles posted on their YouTube page. I took recommendations from the above list, and added additional video attributes based on common videos found on the studied YouTube pages. 16/17 ensembles have a YouTube profile, with one ensemble only having a “Topic” page. Numbers of videos on their page range from three (3) to six hundred and fifty-five (655). For ensembles with over one hundred videos, only one hundred videos were studied as a sample. Three counts are presented: 1) the number of ensembles who included the described video type on their page; 2) the minimum and maximum percentage of those types of videos on their page, compared to the total number of videos on that ensemble’s page; 3) the average percentage of the type of videos as determined by the ensembles with those types of videos.

Types of videos posted on YouTube from 17 studied ensembles

1. Live videos: Live videos were determined if video was either labeled as “live” or clearly a performance (with audience in the video, or clapping), not all live videos were from a stationary camera. Some videos had a single camera moving around the stage, some had multiple cameras that were edited, but the performance is still live. Video image quality varied. Generally, the stationary camera videos were the lowest image quality, with the ensemble being unfocused, due to distance, some live videos were done on cell phones, so video image quality was not steady, or focused, and audio quality was limited based on the technology. Some live videos had good image quality, but were still distinguishable from the produced videos.
   a. 14/17 ensembles have live video on their page. Percentage of videos that were live ranged from 100% (two ensembles have only live video, one with three videos, one with seventeen videos) to 15.3% (one of seven videos). With an average of 58.8% of videos being live.
   b. 7/14 ensembles have live videos with multiple camera angles.

2. Produced performance videos: Produced videos are determined from performances where there are multiple cameras edited to get a variety of shots, and does not say “Live” on the video, or have an audience in the video, and/or the video acknowledges the producer in the credits. Videos with artwork, animation, or a still photo slideshow, performance videos where the performers are not playing continuously in video, but music is still going are also considered “produced.”
   a. 14/17 ensembles included produced videos on their page. Percentage of produced videos ranged from 3% (three videos of one hundred) to 85.7% (Six videos of seven were

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35 A “Topic” is an automatically generated channel that is created by algorithms. On these channels, you’ll see a notice in the “About” section that they’ve been auto-generated by YouTube (https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2579942?hl=en, accessed 3/9/17). All studied ensembles had a Topic page in addition to their official YouTube profile page. All Topic pages included album recordings from the ensembles, as well as some additional video content posted either by the ensemble, or posted by others, with the ensemble being the primary tag word. Except for the one ensemble whom did not have a YouTube profile, Topic pages were not studied in detail.
produced, these particular videos used an album recording with images as a slideshow). With an average of 31.5% of videos being produced.

3. Promotional videos: Promotional videos were determined when the content specifically promotes the ensemble, a tour, a performance, a special project, or when audience members, and/or ensemble members are interviewed about their ensemble or their projects. Though still a produced video, I counted this as a separate type, since it was not a music-focused video.
   a. 12/17 ensembles included a video that was promotional. Percentage promotional videos were ranged from 3% (one video of one hundred) to 29.2% (seven videos of twenty-four). With an average of 15.4% videos being promotional.
   b. 2/17 ensembles included videos with interviews of composers, or ensemble members. These were different than the other promotional videos, as they were more informative with no specific call-to-action in the video. One ensemble dedicated an entire playlist to these types of videos. One ensemble included in some of their videos a short interview with the composer before the full performance of the piece.

4. Videos that have “behind the scenes” content. Such as clips of rehearsals, shots of tour adventures, etc.:
   a. 3/17 ensembles included behind the scenes videos on their YouTube page. These videos are generally 30 seconds or less, either a short clip of a musician playing a passage, or doing something fun or funny.
      i. One video was a clip of a player performing a short solo that had been requested, another was a short clip of a player in a rehearsal playing a technically difficult passage, and one was a silly clip before a performance.
      ii. Short clips, and similar videos to these were more frequently found on ensemble’s Facebook or Twitter pages, but not on their YouTube pages.

5. Unusual formatting: The majority of the videos were filmed in a performance hall, or rehearsal space. Even most of the produced videos mimicked a performance, with the video content focused on performers playing their instruments. There were a few videos that filmed the performers in a unique style, and a few other videos that used animation, or created a video that closer resembled a “music video” where the performers were part of the video, but not always playing their instruments. These videos told a story, and included changes of scenery.
   a. 2/17 ensembles included videos using multiple “GoPro” cameras attached to instruments or players. One of the ensembles edited the cameras moving from one perspective to the other, the other ensemble created a multi-view screen, to watch all player’s camera perspectives at the same time.
   b. 4/17 ensembles used artwork and animation for some videos. For two of the ensembles, these were collaborations with artists and were part of the ensembles’ missions or special projects.
c. 3/17 ensembles included “music video” style videos, where the performers may have been playing at times, but the video had more of a storyline, or artistic quality beyond performing. These videos consistently had the best videography and image quality.

6. Videos of ensembles posted by other users:
   a. All ensembles have videos posted by other users, I did not study these videos in depth. Many of these posts are from the venues or festival hosts.
   b. It is more difficult to control audience members posting videos, Justin advises to do the best you can in every performance, but if there is something that is really hurting your ensemble’s brand you could ask the person who posted it to take it down (Justin).
   c. If a video or recording is posted without your permission, you can also take legal action: “If you believe your copyright-protected work was posted on YouTube without authorization, you may submit a copyright infringement notification. Be sure to consider whether fair use, fair dealing, or a similar exception to copyright applies before you submit. These requests should only be submitted by the copyright owner or an agent authorized to act on the owner’s behalf.” (https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2807622?hl=en) accessed 2/23/17
   d. Justin recommends stating in your contract with a venue, that any video taken by the venue is the property of the ensemble, and the ensemble should have a say in if the venue can post the video to public forums (Justin interview).


1. The purpose of video: It’s not just to get a lot of views, it’s to get people to take action, gain followers on social media, go to performances, visit your website, or donate. Include a “call to action” in the form of a request to follow on Facebook, Twitter, visit your website, sign up for your mailing list, or link to a purchase page.
   a. Studied ensembles often included a “call to action” in the promotional videos, with the action being to go see the ensemble, or participate in their workshop/festival.
   b. 15/17 ensembles include in some, or all of their videos the ensemble’s name, and website.
   c. 8/17 ensembles include their website address in the bio section of their YouTube profile.
   d. 4/17 ensembles include a link to their Facebook page in the bio section of their YouTube profile.
   e. 3/17 ensembles include a link to their Twitter page in the bio section of their YouTube profile.
2. Tag thoroughly: YouTube offers an option to add keyword tags to videos, so they will show up in a word search, such as “Chamber Music” or “Classical” or “Trumpet.” Start with keyword tags that are most important. Group words as one tag by putting them in quotes. Don’t have more than 7 or 8 tags.
   a. Some ideas: artist/band name; song name; any related artists’ names (esp. if it’s a cover); similar artists; genres of music; hometown; names of all band members; producer; themes in video, etc.
   b. There is no way to see on an ensemble’s video what keywords they included for a search. All ensembles are searchable by their name.

3. Share your video on your social media platforms:
   a. 17/17 ensembles include video links on their website, Facebook, and Twitter pages, links go to YouTube or Vimeo, but are embedded directly in the media platform.

4. Keep the videos short and engaging: Three to four minutes or less is recommended (as discussed for non-classical music videos).
   a. All studied ensembles have at least one full performances of a piece or a movement. Video lengths ranged from 30 seconds, to a full recital that is over one hour long.

5. Have an intro video: Create a video clip specifically for your website as a welcome message, greeting, or call to action.
   a. 7/17 ensembles have a video that automatically plays when you are on their YouTube page. Five of these videos are promotional videos, or introduction videos about the ensemble.

Most of the interviewees had some suggestions on recording video content with little to no money. Good camera and editing software/knowledge, is valuable, but not necessary (Baker 2011, pp. 112-113; Clara interview; Ensemble X interview; Horace interview; Justin interview; Philip interview).

Recording video on a budget

1. Have something, video quality or content is less important: Low budget video can be shots of rehearsals, studio sessions, life on the road, or interactions with fans.
   a. Some ensembles posted videos of rehearsals, or of them doing silly music things behind the scenes.

2. Use your own equipment: Try low-cost cameras, or even cell phone cameras.
   a. Justin, and Ensemble X both have done their own video recording and editing, using just a few hand-held cameras and editing software.
b. Giovanni discussed how there is a clear line between a professional quality video, and encourages learning to produced videos yourself as being “good enough.” Stressing that if the content is good, the video quality can be just below the line of professional and still be acceptable.

c. Horace talked about using two GoPro cameras, set up on the stage during performances to capture their videos.

d. Some studied ensembles have posted videos that were recorded on a cell phone, and Justin and Horace also recommend using cell phones with good cameras as a video option.

3. Make a live video: Live videos were the most common videos from the studied ensembles. Utilize the venue’s resources. The venue might have a stationary camera get their footage (from observed ensemble videos).

   a. Ensemble A told me most of their videos posted online we recorded by the venue, and they are experimenting with cell phone videos (Ensemble A). Many of the studied live videos use stationary cameras set up during performances, some of these come from the audience, and some look like they were set up by the presenter, or placed above the audience to get a good view of the stage.

4. Audio quality: Besides the different kinds of videos taken, there were three different kinds of audio qualities in the studied ensembles’ videos.

   a. Live, one take: When multiple cameras were available for a live performance, the audio was in one take, but the video content was edited together for the different angles.

   b. Album audio: The video is filmed separate from the audio track, using a mastered audio track, most often from an ensemble’s album.

      ▪ Philip recommends a good first video can be a video of your demo recording with just still images in a slideshow.

   c. Audio and video recorded and edited together: There were some videos where the audio is clearly taken from the video, generally through the presence of microphones in the video, or the acoustics of the recording relating to the location. For these recordings, the audio does not appear to be in one take, and has likely been edited along with the video takes. Justin discussed that this is the method his ensemble uses for many of their videos.

5. Video quality: All ensembles stress time and again that the ensemble’s performance is more important than the technology. For live video (and audio), quality can be affected by the acoustics in the hall, or where the camera is set up. These circumstances can’t always be controlled. If a performance is good, but the acoustics of a room, or background noises detract from the performance, it should not be used. The ensembles for Ensemble X, Justin, and Horace all create, and edit, most of their video content. They use GoPros, phones, or other video cameras.
a. Bridget recommends taking audio and video recordings of all performances and then choosing the best quality performances, and sounding halls to post online.
b. Clara recommends taking video (and audio) in a hall if the hall has great acoustics.
c. Video quality from the studied ensembles varied.
   - Live video quality was the most inconsistent. The performances of the ensembles were at a consistent level, but balance and acoustics were varied, as well as the focus on the camera. Some stationary cameras were far away, and did not get a good focus. Some cameras were filmed from the audience and had obstructions. Some cameras were hand-held so the video was shaky. Some live videos, however, were of good quality, some even had multiple cameras that were edited to get close-ups of individual performers, or to pan across the group.
   - The video and audio quality of the produced videos were better overall. Videos were in focus, and balance and acoustics of the audio were better. However, considering the comment that Giovanni made about a distinct line between professional and “just good enough,” there was some variety in quality. Some videos were exceptional in quality, and others being better than live, but not as sharp, or well-edited as the others.
   - 8/17 ensembles included videos that had excellent videography qualities. These videos were produced videos that used pre-recorded audio tracks, or were excellent quality promotional videos.

Recommendations for filming a video (Baker 2011, pp. 112-114; Cutler 2010, p. 105; French 2016; Hyatt 2012, pp. 87-88; Ensemble A interview)

1. Think outside the format box: it can be as simple as a single-shot camera in your living room, or a fully edited video.
2. Choose the piece, but film the moment: “Once your viewer has committed it’s all about making a connection with you. So film the magic of the moment. The atmosphere, your unique style or character. That will keep them engaged and coming back for more.”
3. Tell a story: Why did your ensemble choose this piece of music to record?
   a. Bridget said the first video they posted was a piece that was rarely performed, and they wanted to post it so the work itself gained exposure.
4. Set the scene and shoot it lean: Don’t get too complicated with the filming process, the video is about the music, not the scenery. Moving shots, or overly complicated imagery will distract from the music.
5. Get intimate: Film the moments when playing that bring intimacy, a sigh, eye contact with each other, your fingers during a technical passage, etc.
6. Keep it real: Edit with care. Edits may make a viewer skeptical of your performance abilities
7. Elicit a strong reaction for maximum effect: There is no guaranteed formula for a viral video, but common traits are that they are inspire a physical or emotional response from viewers.
   a. You don’t have to make a quality production to potentially become viral.
   b. Most “viral” videos are usually extreme or unusual in some way—virtuosic or wacky.

Based on recommendations from much of the research for other studied subjects, one could assume that they would recommend similar actions to be taken for video as were recommended for recording, website building, and photos.

Assumed recommendations for video

1. Research the video content from other chamber ensembles to see the kinds of videos that are being created within your ensemble’s genre.
2. Look at what videos are currently popular, and why.
3. If the ensemble has a budget for a videographer, ask mentors and colleagues for recommendations on local videographers. Or look at the resources your university offers. If there is a department for film, or videography, ask the professors, or students if they can help. It is likely that a film session would be similar to an audio recording session as well as a photo shoot.
4. If the ensemble does not have any financial resources, they should learn how to use the current video editing software.

Based on the studied ensembles, the only consistency in the videos are the quality of the performances. All other video styles varied. There are considerations in video recording that are similar to audio recording and taking ensemble photos. The similarities include deciding on repertoire and choosing a live performance versus an edited recording, and everything involved with the chosen audio option. The similarities with a photo session, are deciding on the visual elements, considering clothing, and location, and artistic qualities. These considerations may be different than the decisions made for a photo session, but the same concepts apply. An ensemble should decide which method they want to use before recording, and go through similar steps in preparation as was done for their audio recordings. Additional recommendations for creating a video are outside this paper’s parameters, based on limited recommendations from relatable resources. It was difficult to determine best practices for this section, due to the lack of recommendations from experienced sources, but I have compiled some best practices primarily based on the studied videos, and recommendations from the interviewees. Below are the
Best Practices: General points for video

- Start with posting live video: A good performance is more important than good video quality.
  - See if you can get footage from the venue, or find a spot to set up a stationary camera.
  - The sound in the video should not be distorted, or too poor.
- Make a promotional video for an upcoming season, or interviews and information about special projects.
- Make some fun, short videos to engage your audience (if it suits your ensemble’s mission or brand identity).
- Get a low-cost camera and video editing software: Learn how to edit video, and create your own produced videos.
- Include your ensemble’s name and website address on every video.
- Post videos on your website, and post either links or a direct post on your social media sites.
CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

Creating an online presence is easier than ever, however there are many challenges involved in creating quality content for online use, and challenges in using the media most effectively. Online profiles should represent the ensemble’s mission, and brand while also engaging viewers, attracting new fans, presenters, and media. Before an ensemble begins creating their online profiles, they should know what their ensemble’s mission or goals are. In addition to knowing the kind of music they want to play, they must also be happy with their performance level, and have ideas about the kinds of performances or projects they want to present. These decisions are outside of this document’s parameters, however, many of the resources referenced in this research discuss how to create a mission, vision, and brand. Other references, such as Taylor and Loft, discuss creating a specific image in performance. Once these characteristics are defined in an ensemble, the ensemble’s online presence can be focused toward those goals.

This document discussed steps to take before creating any social media profiles, and before creating a website. Detailed information was provided for creating specific content that is important to a professional ensemble, and is necessary to have for a strong online presence. Through online sources, you have more opportunities to interact regularly with fans and followers, and easily update people of your ensemble’s activities. Much of the research discusses the importance of creating content that causes viewers, readers, and fans to take some kind of action. Taking action can mean something as simple as the viewer following your ensemble on a different platform, interacting with the ensemble through an online platform, or visiting (and revisiting) your website. More advanced action can mean taking financial action by attending performances, purchasing recordings and other merchandise, donating money. For promoters/booking agents viewing your content, action can be contracting your ensemble.

By comparing recommendations from well-regarded professional music entrepreneur advisors and the online study of seventeen chamber ensembles’ profiles, four prominent types of content were chosen for detailed discussion. These discussions included how the material was used on the studied ensembles’ online profiles, and then broken down into how to create the material. The first main chapter discusses four main social media platforms, and how the studied ensembles are using these platforms. This study was intended to serve as a basis on how current chamber ensembles use different online platforms, but put similar content on these platforms. It is my opinion that, for current social media platforms, and potential new platforms, the four studied materials will likely be present. It is my opinion, based on this study, that there is no perfect system in how you build your ensemble’s online presence, but there are common traits and content within the different online platforms. Remember, that the playing
abilities, and performance quality of the ensemble is more important than any new technology, or the latest social media craze.

Below is a final overview of “Best Practices.” This list covers the main steps for creating an online presence, and what content to include as that presence is developing.

Best Practices: Putting it all together

- Have a mission: Your ensemble needs to know how they want to present themselves to the public. Decide on the kinds of performances you want to present, and what your goals are as an ensemble. Having focus will make it easier to build an audience, and keep them interested.
- Research: Before creating content, or embarking on a new online platform, research the current content being used by fellow chamber musicians. Read other ensemble bios to get an idea of how they are constructed, look at the current trends for photos and videos, be aware of how ensembles are releasing recordings, and know what current online media is being used by musicians.
- Write an ensemble biography: Keep a record of all of your ensemble’s experiences as a reference. Write a narrative that references the most notable experiences, while engaging the reader to want to know more about the ensemble. The goal is to motivate readers to “buy” your ensemble (through ticket sales, album sales, or bookings).
- Get photos: Invest early on in quality ensemble photos. A good photo can get your ensemble noticed. Keep photos up-to-date, and always with current members.
- Create recordings: Start with short recordings to send as demos, and post online for people to get a sample of the music your ensemble performs. As your resources grow, invest in creating albums.
- Create videos: Start with live videos from performances. Then start creating produced videos, videos that explain your ensemble’s mission, and videos that will keep your fans engaged.
- Create your social media profile: Once the content is created, start sharing. Social media is the fastest and most consistent way to access your network. Learn how to best use current, trending, social media platforms, and add your content.
- Build a website: Your website can be more personalized than any current social media platforms, and can be organized the way you want to prioritize content. Put any content you want to have available for the public on your website. Update as needed.
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All accessed between 1/20/16 - 3/1/17


Akropolis Quintet: mixed reed quintet. Founded in 2009, 501(c)(3). Website: http://www.akropolisquintet.com/ Facebook: Akropolis Reed Quintet, Twitter: @akropolis5tet, Instagram: akropolis5tet, YouTube: Akropolis Reed Quintet.


Genghis Barbie: horn quartet. Founded in 2010. Website: http://www.genghisbarbie.com/ Facebook: Genghis Barbie, Twitter: @GenghisBarbie, Instagram: genghisbarbie, YouTube: GenghisBarbie


The City of Tomorrow: woodwind quintet. Founded in 2012(?). Website: http://www.thecityoftomorrow.org/ Facebook: City of Tomorrow, Twitter: @TheCityofTmrrow, Instagram: thecityoftomorrow, YouTube: thecityoftomorrow.

The Triton Brass Quintet: brass quintet. Founded in 2003(?). Website: http://tritonbrass.org/, Facebook: Triton Brass, Twitter: @TritonBrass, Instagram: tritonbrass, YouTube: *no official page* Triton Brass (Topic) only.
APPENDIX A: TERMINOLOGY

A.1 Terminology for Internet, Websites, and Social Media

Primary resources for chosen terminology

- Spellman, Peter. The Musician’s Internet: Online Strategies for Success in the Music Industry.  

ACCESSIBILITY: Relates to web design/coding standards and refers to how easy it is for everyone to use your website, including people who are visually impaired or in any way physically handicapped, or limited by older or less common computers and software. These days with the smaller screen sized tablets and smart-phones, accessibility for use on all devises is important; especially with the growing number of people using smaller screen devices to go online.

ADDRESS BAR: The white bar towards the top of your computer screen. It will normally have something typed in it that starts with "http://" This is where you type in the address of a website that you want to visit.

ANCHOR TEXT: The text a link (hyperlink) uses to refer to your web page. These make a difference in your search engine results.

APPS (APPLICATIONS): Apps are tools created by 3rd party developers that cooperate with websites, and other platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. You can add apps to your page so you can display features such as music, photos, and videos. They can make your social media more customized by adding specific content or resources.

BLOG / BLOG NETWORK / BLOGOSPHERE: A blog, which is short for web log, is series of articles usually written in a slightly informal tone. A blog network is a series of blogs hosted by the same website or company. The blogosphere refers to all blogs across the Internet regardless of whether they are an individual blog or part of a blog network.
CAPTCHA. This refers to the letters and numbers you have to decipher and type in when filling out a form on the web. It is a mechanism used to prevent spam.

CHAT: In the context of the internet "chat" is a feature that allows users from all over the globe to communicate in real time or almost real time. Conventional chat is communication via typing which then appears on the recipient’s screen. There are several different programs that offer a chat option, such as Facebook Messenger, or What’s App?

DOMAIN / DOMAIN NAME: A domain is a person or organization’s unique space on the internet. In layman’s terms, it is commonly used to mean the name of your website. An example of a domain name is: www.thisismyensemblename.com (invalid link).

FOLD / BELOW THE FOLD: The fold is the line on a webpage after which visitors must scroll to see the content. The fold is different for different screens and monitors. “Below the Fold” is a carry-over term from newspaper publishing days. In newspaper terms, "below the fold" means content was on the bottom half of the page (below the physical fold in the paper). In web design terms, “below the fold” refers to the content that is generally going to be below the content first viewable to the average website visitor in their browser.

GIF (GRAPHICS INTERCHANGE FORMAT): A type of file used for images, usually animated graphics and line-drawn images (as opposed to photographs). A .gif image can be saved with a transparent background, making it ideal for graphic overlays (more information in the Photo terminology section).

GOOGLE ANALYTICS: Google offers software that analyzes the activity on your website, or social media platforms. You can choose to install as a plug-in or write it into the code. See Google’s services for more information.

HOST / HOSTING: In order for you to have an email address or a website, you must have a host site. The host site has to provide 3 things: an IP (domain) address, physical space to store the information and bandwidth that accommodates the flow of information that is taking place on your behalf. The company that provides you with these facilities is your host. Most host sites charge a fee for their services.

IP or IP ADDRESS (INTERNET PROTOCOL): The IP address refers to the numbers that a web address name translates to. (also see "domain"). The IP number is the real address, not the text domain name.

JPEG (JOINT PHOTOGRAPHIC EXPERTS GROUP): A type of file used for images, usually photographs. Images used on web pages work best as jpeg or gif. (more information about JPEG in the photography terminology).
KEYWORD or KEY PHRASE: An internet marketing term that refers to the main topics or subjects of your web pages in relation to how people would phrase them when searching for your products or services on the internet. For chamber ensembles, some recommended keywords could be “Music;” “Classical Music;” “Chamber Music;” “Woodwinds;” “Brass.”

META TAG: Does not affect how the page is displayed, but gives information about who created the page, how often it is updated, what the page is about, and which keywords represent that page’s content. Many search engines use this information when building their indices.

MOBILE 2.0: This refers to the trend of websites recognizing mobile devices and utilizing their special features, such as Facebook knowing that you have signed on with your smartphone and using the GPS to tell where you are located.

PODCAST: The distribution of audio and video "shows" across the Internet, such as a video blog or an Internet radio show. Like blogs, they can range in subject matter from personal to business and serious to entertaining. Additional details on podcasts can be found in the appendix to websites.

RSS/WEB FEEDS / REALLY SIMPLE SYNDICATION (RSS): A system of transporting articles across the internet. An RSS feed (sometimes simply called a 'web feed') contains either full or summarized articles without all the fluff contained on the website. These feeds can be read by other websites or by RSS readers.

SEO (SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION): The process of building a website and creating content in such a way that search engines will rank the web page(s) higher in their listings. SEO can target different types of searches (including image, local, video, and news). Owning your name as a domain name is the biggest part of securing your rank in searches for your name. Other components include: Title, Meta Tags, default tags, how frequently you update your website, and more.

SPAM: A somewhat controversial word which has different extremes of meaning to different people. Very simply, spam is junk mail, normally sent out in bulk and normally with no regard as to whether you want to receive it or not. Serious spammers will in fact use your protests as proof that you are seeing their emails and spam you even more.

TAG / TAG CLOUD: A 'tag' is a descriptive keyword or phrase often used to categorize a piece of content. A tag cloud is a visual representation of tags, usually with the more popular tags being shown in a larger font.

URL (UNIFORM RESOURCE LOCATOR): Allows all resources on the internet to be located in a uniform manner. A URL is a website address that has all the pertinent information for finding the exact location attached to it. http://www.myensemblename.com is this website’s home page URL and
http://www.myensemblename.com/glossary-aboutpage would be the URL page name for the “About” page of the website (notice the extra part after the .com).

VIRAL: The digital version of grassroots, ‘viral’ refers the process of an article, video or podcast becoming popular by being passed from person to person or rising to the top of popularity lists on social media websites.

WEB 2.0: While there is no set definition of Web 2.0, it generally refers to the use of the web as a more social platform where users participate by generating their own content alongside the content provided by the websites.

WEBCAST: A broadcast that takes place over the web and uses both audio and visual effects. For example, a live web-based presentation about music, with the opportunity to message comments in real-time is a webcast.

WIDGETS / GADGETS: A widget is a small piece of transportable code, for example, a calculator or a countdown to a movie’s release. Widgets can be placed on websites like a social networking profile, a custom home page or a blog. The word ‘gadget’ is often used to refer to a widget that is designed for a specific website, like iGoogle gadgets.

A.2 Terminology for Photography

Primary resource


ABERRATION: A distortion of image quality or color rendition in a photographic image caused by optical limitations of the lens used for image capture. Aberrations commonly show up in the form of halation around high-contrast portions of the image, or “smearing” of color toward the edges of the frame.

ABSOLUTE RESOLUTION: Image resolution as expressed in horizontal and vertical pixel count (e.g., 1600 x 1200 pixels is the absolute resolution, and is also expressed as 2.1 megapixels (MP), having more than 2,000,000 pixels on its sensor).

ASPECT RATIO: Aspect ratio refers to the shape, or format, of the image produced by a camera. The ratio is derived by dividing the width and height of the image by their common factor. The aspect ratio of a
35mm image (36 x 24mm) is found by dividing both numbers by their common factor: 12. So, if you divide each by 12, your resulting ratio will be 3:2. Most computer monitors and digital cameras have a 4:3 aspect ratio. Many digital cameras offer the option of switching between 4:3, 3:2, or 16:9.

AUTOFOCUS: The ability of the camera and lens to keep the subject in focus during an exposure. Autofocus can be Continuous, meaning focus is maintained regardless of where it moves within the frame, or Single, meaning the point of focus is locked regardless of where the subject may move.

AWB (AUTO WHITE BALANCE): An in-camera function that automatically adjusts the chromatic balance of the scene to a neutral setting, regardless of the color characteristics of the ambient light source. Although AWB generally does an acceptable job of cleaning up the color balance of a scene, there are times when AWB should not be used. Examples of times you should avoid AWB are sunrise and sunset—such scenes would lose their warm qualities with the camera set to AWB. When capturing sunrises and sunsets, the camera should be set to Daylight to maintain the warm tonalities that make dawn and dusk so visually inviting.

BIT: A bit (binary digit) is the smallest unit of digital information. Eight bits equals one byte. Digital images are often described by the number of bits used to represent each pixel, i.e., a 1-bit image is monochrome; an 8-bit image supports 256 colors or grayscales; while 24 or 32-bit images support an even greater range of color.

CMYK COLOR (CYAN, MAGENTA, YELLOW, BLACK) / RGB (RED GREEN BLUE): CMYK is the color space used for commercial offset printing. CMYK is also a common working color space for inkjet, laser, dye-sublimation, and wax thermal printers. RGB is an additive color model in which red, green and blue light are added together in various ways to reproduce a broad array of colors for representation and display as images on computers and other digital devices.

COLOR DEPTH: The number of distinct colors that can be represented by a piece of hardware or software. Color depth is sometimes referred to as “bit” depth because it is directly related to the number of bits used for each pixel. A 24-bit digital camera, for example, has a color depth of 2 (2 bits of color) to the 24th power, resulting in a dynamic range of 16,777,216 colors. Similarly, an inexpensive 8-bit color monitor can only reproduce a total of 256 colors, which is far less than the expansive range of color contained in the digital image files captured by almost all consumer digital cameras.

COLOR PALETTE: A palette is the set of available colors. For a given application, the palette may be only a subset of all the colors that can be physically displayed. For example, many computer systems can display 16 million unique colors, but a given program would use only 256 of them at a time if the display were in 256-color mode. The computer system's palette, therefore, would consist of the 16 million colors, but the program's palette would only contain the 256-color subset.
COMPRESSION / ×OSSY: A method of reducing the size of a digital image file to free up the storage capacity of memory cards and hard drives. Compression technologies are distinguished from one another by whether or not they remove detail and color from the image. Lossless (“lossy”) technologies compress image data without removing detail, while “lossy” technologies compress images by removing some detail. A JPEG is a lossy compression format supported by JPEG, PDF and PostScript language file formats. Most video formats are also lossy formats. TIFF files are not and, as such, are far more stable than JPEGs and other lossy file formats.

COLOR TEMPERATURE: A linear scale for measuring the color of ambient light with warm (yellow) light measured in lower numbers and cool (blue) light measured in higher numbers. Measured in terms of “degrees Kelvin,” daylight (midday) is approximately 5600K, a candle is approximately 800K, an incandescent lamp is approximately 2800K, a photoflood lamp is 3200 to 3400K, and a midday blue sky is approximately 10,000K.

DEPTH OF FOCUS: Depth of focus is the measurement of the area in focus within an image, from the closest point of focus to the furthest point of focus.

DYE-SUBLIMATION PRINTER: Dye-sublimation printers, or "dye-sub" printers, are a type of digital photo printer. Unlike inkjet printers, which spray fine droplets of ink on the print surface, dye-sub printers employ a cellophane ribbon that momentarily vaporizes when heated to extremely high temperatures, while being transferred to the print surface. Essentially a three-color process (cyan, magenta, yellow, and a protective over-coating), dye-sub printers are popular in commercial print shops for their ability to output durable, high-quality photographic prints quickly and relatively inexpensively.

DPI (DOTS PER INCH): Printing term for resolution. Also referred to as ppi (pixels per inch) when describing monitor resolution. The higher the ppi/dpi, the higher the resolution of the resulting image will be. For viewing images at magnifications of up to life size on a computer screen, you only need 72 dpi. For offset printing, the image must be set to 300 dpi at the desired print size, and for inkjet prints, anywhere from 180 to 360 dpi at the desired print size, preferably with a number divisible by 3. Dpi settings above 400 can diminish the quality of inkjet output.

EFFECTIVE PIXELS: Effective Pixels is a measurement of the number of pixels that actively record the photographic image within a sensor. As an example, a camera might hold a sensor containing 10.5 megapixels, but they have an effective pixel count of 10.2 megapixels. This discrepancy is due to the fact that digital imaging sensors have to dedicate a certain percentage of available pixels to establish a black reference point. These pixels are usually arranged frame-like, along the edge of the sensor, out of range of the recorded image.
FILE FORMAT: The way an image is saved to a digital camera's memory. JPEG, TIFF, and raw (DNG or other proprietary file formats) are the most common file formats found in digital cameras.

ICC PROFILE (INTERNATIONAL COLOR CONSORTIUM PROFILE): A universally recognized color-management standard for specifying the color attributes of digital imaging devices (scanners, digital cameras, monitors, and printers) to maintain accurate color consistency of an image from the point of capture through the output stage.

JPEG (JOINT PHOTOGRAPHIC EXPERTS GROUP): The de facto standard for image compression in digital imaging devices. JPEG is a “lossy” compression format, capable of reducing a digital image file to about 5% of its normal size. The resulting decompression of the file can cause "blockiness," "jaggies," or "pixelization" in certain digital images. The greater the compression levels, the more of a chance pixelization or "blockiness" will occur. The greater the pixel count, the less of a chance pixelization will occur.

MEGABYTE: 1,024 Kilobytes, written MB, is used to refer to the size of files or media, such as hard drives. The number refers to the amount of information or image data in a file or how much information can be contained on a memory card, CD or DVD, hard drive or disk.

MEGAPIXEL: A megapixel contains 1,000,000 pixels and is the unit of measure used to describe the size of the sensor in a digital camera.

NOISE: Noise is the appearance of color artifacts in a digital image. Mostly noticeable in the shadow areas of images captured at higher ISO ratings, the image processors used in many current digital cameras utilize noise-suppression software to minimize the appearance of noise artifacts. Heat build-up due to continuous shooting in hot environments can also cause noise artifacts within digital images. Noise is considered the digital version of grain in film negatives.

NOISE REDUCTION: A process in a digital camera's image processor in which the artifacts caused by "pushed" ISO ratings or other electrical or heat-related artifacts are suppressed or eliminated in an image.

OVEREXPOSURE: The result of recording too much light when taking a picture, which results in a lighter image. In digital imaging, overexposure can usually be corrected to a certain extent by the use of image-editing software, depending on the degree to which an image is overexposed. Raw files offer more latitude than JPEGs and TIFFs for correcting overexposure.

PIXEL / PIXELIZATION: Short for picture element, pixels are the tiny components that capture the digital image data recorded by your camera. Pixels are also the individual components that collectively recreate the image captured with your digital camera on a computer monitor. The more pixels there are, the higher the screen or image resolution will be. Pixelization is the breakup of a digital image file that has been
scaled up (enlarged) to a point where the pixels no longer blend together to form a smooth image. Pixelization can also appear in the form of step-like or choppy curves and angled lines (also known as the jaggies). As a rule, the greater the number of pixels contained in an image, the less likely it will be to experience pixelization in the image.

PNG (PORTABLE NETWORK GRAPHICS): Developed as a patent-free alternative to GIF, this format is used for lossless compression for purposes of displaying images on the World Wide Web. Adopted by the WWW consortium as a replacement for GIF, some older versions of Web browsers may not support PNG images.

SATURATION: Saturation is the depth of the colors within a photographic image. Photographs with deep levels of color are described as being heavily saturated. A photograph with lighter levels of saturation is described as having a muted color palette. A totally desaturated color photograph becomes monotone—or black and white.

WATERMARK: Traditionally, a watermark is an image or icon that is embedded into paper for security purposes (American paper currency has a watermark). In digital photography, a watermark refers to information that is embedded in the image data to protect the copyrights of the image.

A.3 Terminology for Audio / Video Recording

Primary resources


ADVANCE: Loaned money to the artist to complete a project. Money is paid back with the profits from the project (record sales, concert ticket sales, etc.) before the artist makes any money. If the project doesn't make money, most advances are nonreturnable, meaning the record company took a risk advancing the money, and it will not get back the advance (the artist is not responsible to pay out of pocket).
ALBUM: A full-length (80-90 minutes) recording intended for public distribution. Albums be in the form of CDs, LP records, tapes, or digital versions of the material.

BAR CODE / UPC (universal product code): A bar code or UPC is needed to sell your product through retailers, and also helps to track sales of your album.

BUDGET: A plan used to decide the amount of money that can be spent, and how it will be spent. May also include projected income. Projected expenses and income should balance, or show profit.

DAT: Digital audiotape: DAT recorders work by translating sound digitally into the binary language of numbers: zeros and ones.

DEMO: Demonstration Recording: Samples of the artist’s work. Usually a short (5-15 minute) recording of examples of the types of music an ensemble performs. Often a demo is not produced, and is not for public purchase. Can be sent to producers, record labels, management, promoters, and venues, or used on the artist’s website for promotional purposes.

DISTRIBUTOR: Company that distributes recordings to retail outlets. Major labels have their own distribution companies. There are independent distributors as well, some large national ones and other smaller regional companies. This also includes online companies that sell directly to the consumer, such as Amazon or CD Baby.

ENGINEER: The skilled professional who transfers your live performance to tape. Recording engineers choose the appropriate equipment, place mics, check levels and balance, and may do the mixing and editing.

INDEPENDENCE (INDIE): Record companies that aren’t owned by a major label. Some Indie labels will help you record, but then work in conjunction with a large label to do everything else. True Indie labels do not work with major labels at all and are financed by its owners and/or investors.

INTERNATIONAL STANDARD RECORDING CODE (ISRC): The ISRC (International Standard Recording Code) is the international identification system for sound recordings and music video recordings. Each ISRC is a unique and permanent identifier for a specific recording, independent of the format on which it appears (CD, audio file, etc) or the rights holders involved. Only one ISRC should be issued to a track, and an ISRC can never represent more than one unique recording. ISRCs are widely used in digital commerce by download sites and collecting societies. An ISRC can also be permanently encoded into a product as its digital fingerprint. Encoded ISRC provide the means to automatically identify recordings for royalty payments (https://www.usisrc.org/about/index.html, accessed 2/22/16).
MANUFACTURER: Company that produces CDs from a master recording; it may also print and assemble the graphics, and package, shrink-wrap, and ship CDs to you, or a distributor.

MARKETING: advertising, publicity, album cover artwork, promo videos, etc.

MASTER: The first generation of your recording, the original from which duplicates are made. Note: Send only copies, never your master! Master: Has two meanings:

1. The original recording made in the studio, though now most tracks are done digitally, so these are less defined. Recordings are generally made with each instrument recorded on separate tracks. The master is created when the recording is finished, edited (cutting a splicing), mixed (getting the right levels for each track), and equalized (bass, mid-range, and treble are each adjusted to the right level). The multitrack is then reduced down to a two-track stereophonic master, which is ready for duplication.

2. The word “master” also means a recording of one particular song, so if a person says their album has 10 Masters, it means the album has 10 tracks. These individual recordings are also called “cuts.”

MASTERING: The final process after editing to complete a professional-quality recording. Mastering should be done only by an experienced professional, usually someone hired specifically just for this step. The mastering engineer runs the tape through multiple processors to adjust the dynamic range, equalize or add reverberation, and create consistency from one cut to the next, conforming to the standards of radio broadcasting and professional labels.

MIXING: The blending of recorded tracks to perfect balance and volume; used for multitrack recording sessions (in which more than two stereo mics are being used).

PHONORECORD / RECORD: A material object in which sounds are fixed and from which the sounds can be perceived, reproduced, or otherwise communicated either directly or with the aid of a machine or device. A phonorecord may include a cassette tape, an LP vinyl disc, a compact disc, or other means of fixing sounds. This does not include sounds accompanying a motion picture or other audiovisual work.

PRODUCED RECORDING: A recording that has gone through the mixing, editing, balancing, and mastering process.

PRODUCTION: Manufacturing, cover printing, assembling, and shipping to distributors.

PROMOTION: Can go along with Marketing, but also includes getting your music played/heard on radio stations.
PROMOTERS: Often used interchangeably with Presenters: Persons who hire entertainment for venues, conferences, or concert series.

RETAILERS: Companies that sell recordings. Can include major vendors, or independent stores interested in selling local artists' CDs on consignment.

RECORD CONTRACT OR RECORD DEAL: Is a legally binding agreement between an artist and a Record Label regarding an artist making one or more records under the supervision, and guidance of the Record Label. Contracts vary widely among labels.

RECORD LABEL: Also known as “Label.” Record labels are companies that manufacture and distribute recorded music and promote that music (or at least hire people to handle the promotion). There are two kinds of record labels independent (indie labels) and major labels (aka big four labels). Indie record labels are independent companies that do not have a corporate backer. Major labels are large corporations often owned by a parent company.

RECORD PRODUCER: A person who controls recording sessions, coaching and guiding musicians, organizing and scheduling production budgets and resources, and supervising the recording, mixing and mastering processes.

A.4 Terminology for Copyright

Primary resources

- Websites of Creative Commons (https://creativecommons.org/).
BLANKET LICENSE: This license means a user (usually a venue) pays a set annual fee to the affiliate PROs, which covers all compositions controlled by publishers who are a part of that organization. Fees vary based on the size of the venue, or the approximate number of listeners they reach. This is the kind of license a university or performance hall would pay. It is generally considered easier to do this than to pay a fee for every composition or performance that is performed in the hall.

COMPULSORY LICENSES: A compulsory license includes the right of the compulsory licensee (the holder of the copyright) to make and distribute, or to authorize the making and distribution of, a phonorecord of a nondramatic musical work by means of a digital transmission, which constitutes a digital phonorecord delivery. A compulsory license is available to anyone as soon as “phonorecords of a nondramatic musical work have been distributed to the public in the United States and its territories under the authority of the copyright owner.” (http://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ73.pdf). Note: you still get royalties, see the Mechanical Copyright Royalty Rates at www.copyright.gov/licensing/m200a.pdf or contact the Licensing Division of the Copyright Office. Passman breaks down ways your recording can be played that requires you to issue a license to someone who wants to use your work for these circumstances:

- Cable television rebroadcast: Allows cable companies to rebroadcast programs.
- Public Broadcasting System: PBS programs are under a compulsory license.
- Jukeboxes: Pay a set fee to have records in them.
- Digital performance of records: Allows performances on digital radio and webcasting.
- Digital distribution of records: Requires the owner of the song to allow the downloading of records over the internet, telephone lines, satellites, etc.

COPYRIGHT: A form of protection provided by the laws of the United States for “original works of authorship”, including literary, dramatic, musical, architectural, cartographic, choreographic, pantomimic, pictorial, graphic, sculptural, and audiovisual creations. "Copyright" literally means the right to copy but has come to mean that body of exclusive rights granted by law to copyright owners for protection of their work. Copyright protection does not extend to any idea, procedure, process, system, title, principle, or discovery. Similarly, names, titles, short phrases, slogans, familiar symbols, mere variations of typographic ornamentation, lettering, coloring, and listings of contents or ingredients are not subject to copyright.

COPYRIGHT INSIGNIA: “©” or “copyright” along with the first year of publication and name of the owner of the copyright should be included on all copyrighted material. © is the copyright for text and artwork. Other insignia that may be included on your works for copyright: © is the copyright for the recording, ℗ is if the copyright is for use under creative commons (see the Creative Commons site https://creativecommons.org/ for more information). Be sure to credit the composer and any other copyright holders whose work is incorporated on the album.
CREATIVE COMMONS LICENSING: enables works to freely circulate on a legal basis, while preserving the owner’s copyright. Allows legal downloading, and file sharing for creative use of original work. Often used for creative experimental use of works (Beeching, p. 94). Creative Commons is a nonprofit organization that enables the sharing and use of creativity and knowledge through free legal tools. Provides a standardized way to give the public permission to share and use your creative work — on conditions of your choice. Licenses let you easily change your copyright terms from the default of “all rights reserved” to “some rights reserved.” Creative Commons licenses are not an alternative to copyright. They work alongside copyright and modify copyright terms to best suit the needs of the artist. For more information on works that are under the Creative Commons licensing see https://creativecommons.org/.

FAIR USE: A legal doctrine that promotes freedom of expression by permitting the unlicensed use of copyright-protected works in certain circumstances. Section 107 of the Copyright Act provides the statutory framework for determining whether something is a fair use and identifies certain types of uses—such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching, scholarship, and research—as examples of activities that may qualify as fair use” (http://copyright.gov/fair-use/more-info.html). For musicians, Fair Use of musical materials would generally be allowed if the musicians are using the music for educational purposes, or performing for competitions, or scholarship applications. Reclaiming Fair Use: How to Put the Balance Back in Copyright, put out by the Center for Social Media, 2011 is recommended for further reading (Whitney, p. 91). There are four factors that are considered when evaluating a question of fair use.

- The purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of commercial nature or is for nonprofit, educational purposes.
- The nature of the copyrighted work.
- The amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole.
- The effect of the use upon the potential market for, or value of, the copyrighted work.

MECHANICAL RIGHTS: A mechanical license grants the rights to reproduce and distribute copyrighted musical compositions (songs) on CDs, records, tapes, ringtones, permanent digital downloads, interactive streams and other digital configurations supporting various business models, including locker-based music services and bundled music offerings. If you want to record and distribute a song that you don’t own or control, you need to obtain a mechanical license. The Harry Fox Agency is the leading company to issue mechanical licensing, collections, and distributes royalties on behalf of US publishers (www.harryfox.com). Mechanical rights can also be distributed directly by the owner of the copyright.

PERFORMANCE RIGHTS: The copyright owner of a recording receives royalties when their works are not only recorded, but also when they are performed live, or when a recording is played (Ricker, p. 85). If a composer is registered with a Performing Rights Society then the society will collect performance royalties and distribute earnings to the composer.
PERFORMING RIGHTS ORGANIZATIONS (PROs): ASCAP, BMI, and SESAC are the three PROs in the United States. Most composers are registered with one of these organizations, if the composer is not registered, usually the publishers of the composer’s work will be registered with one organization. PROs provide various different types of licenses depending upon the nature of the use. Anyone who publicly performs a musical work may obtain a license from a PRO, including terrestrial, satellite and internet radio stations, broadcast and cable television stations, online services, bars, restaurants, live performance venues, and commercial establishments that play background music.

PUBLIC DOMAIN: Musical works published with a copyright of 1922 or earlier fall under the public domain. Public domain only applies to the written work, all sound recordings are protected under copyright law. If you are not sure if a piece falls under public domain, you can visit the Public domain website: www.pdinfo.com.

ROYALTIES: Royalties are profits made from selling recordings. Copyrights, Rights, Patents and Trademarks: If you create something, it is yours, and you have the right to be compensated if others use it. Ways we can receive royalties: print rights, mechanical rights, performance rights, and synch rights.

SOURCE LICENSE: Users of the copyrighted material can also license music directly from the music publisher, composer, or copyright holder. Though most commonly used by film producers, it can be an option for musicians who have connections with the composer whose work they want to perform.

TRADEMARK: Protects the name of the ensemble, and their logo. You can trademark a word, phrase, symbol, or a design, or a combination of words, phrases, symbols or designs, that identifies and distinguishes the source of the goods of one party from those of others. A service mark is the same thing, but distinguishes a service rather than a product. The symbols to use are: ® or “TM” and the symbol “SM” if the application is pending. The US Patent Office offers different options for registering Trademark or Copyright.
APPENDIX B: GENERAL MUSIC INDUSTRY RESOURCES

B.1 Music Industry Web Resources - Multiple Uses (all accessed 2/27/17)

- Angela Myles Beeching website: [http://angelabeeching.com](http://angelabeeching.com) Beeching's book has been a major contributor to this document. Her website offers additional information regarding most topics, as well as links to other sites for further reference.

- Bandzoogle Blog: [https://bandzoogle.com/blog](https://bandzoogle.com/blog) A blog series that includes resource and information on making a CD, copyright, booking concerts, photos. Primarily a resource for indie bands, a lot of the information provided here can be applied to a chamber ensemble.

- Chamber Music America: [http://www.chamber-music.org](http://www.chamber-music.org) A resource for chamber musicians. Includes lists of ensembles who are members of the organization, announcements about funding opportunities, workshops, and conferences. Also includes a newsletter and video series with different subjects of interest for chamber musicians.


- CyberPR: [http://cyberprmusic.com](http://cyberprmusic.com) Offers information, blogs, and other resources specifically for helping musicians utilize online promotional tools.

- DIY Musician: [http://diymusician.cdbaby.com](http://diymusician.cdbaby.com) A blog series that offers information, and advice about many aspects of self-managing a band or ensemble. Primarily focused in the indie music industry, but many of the resources can be applied to chamber music.

- Musical America: [www.musicalamerica.com](http://www.musicalamerica.com) A directory to find musicians, promoters, conferences, and other networking opportunities.

- Music Industry, How To: [https://www.musicindustryhowto.com](https://www.musicindustryhowto.com) Provides articles on promotion, making money, increasing your fan base and more. Must become a member, membership is free.

- Sonic bids: [http://blog.sonicbids.com](http://blog.sonicbids.com) Their blog series helps musicians with recording, and promotion, and other information. Some services require a paid subscription, but the blog can be accessed by anyone.

- The Balance: Music Careers: [https://www.thebalance.com/musicians-4073990](https://www.thebalance.com/musicians-4073990) Offers information about the music industry, recording, and contracts. Primarily for indie bands, but some information can apply to chamber musicians.
B.2 Legal Assistance

- Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts provides cheap or free legal advice regarding contract reviewing/writing, etc. www.vlany.org
APPENDIX C: APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 2: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

C.1 Other Recommended Social Media Platforms (all accessed 2/28/17) (individually cited with resources that recommended the platform)

Flickr: [https://www.flickr.com/](https://www.flickr.com/) An online photo management site. It’s easy to post photos, and share on your other social media sites (Hyatt 2012, p. 211).

LinkedIn: [https://www.linkedin.com/](https://www.linkedin.com/) Make business connections with promoters, venue owners, booking agents, and people who run music companies. Tips for making the most of LinkedIn: Complete your profile, show your personality, you don’t have to be serious and dry. Utilize keywords, and be descriptive with titles. Consider a company and a personal profile. Join targeted groups related to your interests and musical genre. Find some connections you know. Give and get recommendations- recommendations make your profile look good, give and you shall receive. Ask questions and give answers. Look through questions asked by your community, and if you have an answer, respond. Or, if you have a question, pose it to your community. Promote your events (Baker 2011, pp. 133-134).

MySpace: [https://myspace.com/](https://myspace.com/) Myspace was launched in August 2003 and was the most visited social networking site until Facebook overtook it in 2008. MySpace reached its lowest point of membership in 2010. They lost half of their monthly visitors in just one year. The site has recently re-vamped their music player, and started seeing more activity. The company has full licensing deals with thousands of record labels, and has a library of 53 million tracks and 13K songs, uploaded daily; far more than new competitors such as Spotify or Rhapsody. “We went from zero signups per day to 40,000,” said Chris Vanderhook, the company’s chief operating officer ([http://startupbros.com/myspace-the-rise-fall-and-rise-again-infographic/](http://startupbros.com/myspace-the-rise-fall-and-rise-again-infographic/) 2015, accessed 1/9/17).

Baker is the only resource that discussed MySpace as still being a valid social media outlet (Baker 2011, pp. 117-118). Though MySpace is not as popular as it once was, all the studied ensembles have profiles on this platform. A study done in 2014 showed that there are still around 32 million monthly users, watching around 300 million videos ([http://www.statisticbrain.com/myspace-statistics/](http://www.statisticbrain.com/myspace-statistics/), accessed 1/9/17). Below are the recommendations from Baker on using MySpace followed by my observations how the ensembles currently utilize this platform.
Advice from Baker for your MySpace page (Baker 2011, pp. 117-118):

- Make an updated profile, with new photos, bio, and newest music and videos.
- Require your approval before comments can be posted, to avoid “band spam.”
- Seek out “active” fans of similar artists.
  - Make a list of the top five to ten artists whose fan base overlaps with yours, friend them on MySpace, and observe which fans are leaving genuine comments. Message those fans with a personal message about their involvement with the other band, and to check out your page.
- Check in once or twice a week.

Ning: https://www.ning.com/what-is-ning/ Ning is a social network designed around creating social networks, part social media, part webhost. It invites users to create their own social networks by going through a series of easy steps that include naming their social network, selecting a color scheme, allowing for unique profile questions, and even including their own ads if they want them. In some ways, Ning is a portal to mini-social networks since you can choose to join any of the thousands of user-created networks, and in other ways, it is a social network development platform.

- Why You Should Use Ning Instead of Other Social Networks?

  Ning offers more customizing options than any other social media site. Not only do you gain more control over your Ning network, you also get all the tools you need to build a network, and watch it grow. Ning claims to have helped people build over two million communities. People have used the site for creating fan pages for artists, or a family network to communicate only with family, or as a place to organize a class reunion, or anything else you want. The open-ended nature of Ning makes the possibilities limited only by your own imagination (Nations 2016, accessed 2/28/17).

Periscope: https://www.periscope.tv/ Recently purchased by Twitter, Periscope basically enables users to create a live audio and video broadcast from their mobile device anytime and anywhere. It also incorporates notifications and location features along with social sharing, live discussions, and feedback. It's a truly interactive experience, gaining a lot of traction with musicians, celebrities, and businesses alike looking to give fans an inside look into their world. Bonus tip: Make sure to come up with a catchy title. This is key since unlike other similar live broadcast platforms, Periscope hosts the stream for 24 hours, so you'll want the title to draw as much attention as possible to result in the most shares for the stream (Occhino 2016).

Snapchat: http://www.snaphotmobi.com/login Snapchat is a messaging app where the messages self-destruct after a certain pre-determined period of time. Users can take photos, record videos, add text and drawings, and send them to a controlled list of recipients that can view them for anywhere between 1-10 seconds before they disappear forever. Though Snapchat used to have a primarily different purpose for
young people, it has now grown to over 400 million “snaps” a day, with 77 percent of college students using the app daily. Snapchat is all about honest, fast content that feels personal. That's what makes it such a great app for musicians, because it can be used as a marketing tool without making users feel like they're being hit with obvious advertising. One study even showed that nearly half the users surveyed would open a snap from a brand they hadn't heard of before, which is a great way to attract new fans! Bonus tip: If you don't want your content to completely disappear after 24 hours, you can save your story to your phone to upload to a different social media platform later (Occhino 2016).

Vimeo: https://vimeo.com/ Vimeo is a video sharing platform that was launched in 2004 by a group of filmmakers. Since then, the platform has grown to over 14 million members – most of them artists in film, animation, music and other works of art – who’ve been able to use Vimeo as a way to share and promote their work. It differs largely from YouTube because of its “artsy” distinctiveness. That's not to say that there aren't any great artists promoting their work on YouTube – because they're definitely there as well – but YouTube is so huge that it encompasses everything you could point a camera at. Vimeo, on the other hand, is very much known specifically for creative artistry (Moreau 2016).

Vine: https://vine.co/ Vine is an app that allows users to share snippets of video in a super-digestible format. The video can be up to six seconds long and instantly plays on a loop once it's landed on or scrolled across. The main difference between this and Instagram is that Vine is for only videos, and it's mainly used to share life experiences with friends as they happen since all Vine videos can only be recorded in-app at that very moment. It's also worth mentioning that as of the top of this year, Vine hit a record 1.5 billion loops per day with over 40 million users! Most users of this app also share interchangeably with other social media apps, specifically Instagram. Some great ways that musicians and bands utilize this quick video app are by capturing memorable studio moments, glossing over show marketing materials, shooting soundcheck or load-in video before a performance, showing off awesome gear, and sharing cool views from the stage. Bonus tip: You can embed your Vine into pretty much any website. (Occhino, Sonicbids article)

C.2 Crowdfunding

Crowdfunding is a financing method that involves funding a project with relatively modest contributions from a large group of individuals, rather than seeking substantial sums from a small number of investors. The funding campaign and transactions are typically conducted online through dedicated crowdfunding sites, often in conjunction with social networking sites. Depending on the project, campaign contributors may be essentially making donations, investing for a potential future return on investment (ROI), or prepaying for a product or service.
Similar to crowdsourcing, the concept from which it developed, crowdfunding's success relies upon the ability to canvass a sufficiently large group of potential contributors. The idea is the same as many fundraising campaigns: convincing enough people to contribute to reach a target figure. Crowdfunding sites are sometimes referred to as platforms because they provide a venue for all aspects of a campaign, such as creation of the public interface, campaign and project tracking, a payment mechanism and disbursement of funds (Rouse, WhatIs.com article, updated June 2012, accessed 2/28/17).

Recommended crowdfunding sites (from online research, all accessed 2/28/17):

- ArtistShare: https://www.artistshare.com/v4/ musician members can have their projects posted through this site, and viewers can choose which projects to fund.
- GoFundMe: https://www.gofundme.com/
- IndieGoGo: https://www.indiegogo.com/#/picks_for_you
- Kickstarter: https://www.kickstarter.com/
- Rockethub: https://www.rockethub.com/

C.3 Non-Traditional Online Opportunities for Presence or Promotion

- Craigslist: Post free listings to promote your shows, book private shows, find new band members, buy and sell gear, and more (Baker 2011, p. 135).
- Internet Registries: Catalogue just about every musical business imaginable. Most allow you to provide your name, contact info, and description of services offered. Don’t pay for one (Cutler 2010, p. 106-107).
- Location Based Services: By checking into places for gigs, or having your fans do so, can promote to people in that area to let them know you are there. Or you can offer free downloads, or discount coupons, to fans who check in at your concert (Baker 2011, p. 140).
- Meetup: A Meetup event could get people who just want to socialize to your shows. Make a profile, and post events in social or music Meetup clubs. This resource is not only for promotions, but it’s about connecting with the community (Baker 2011, p. 137-138).
- Organizations sites: ensembles, universities, companies, and arts associations often post individual pages on employees or members. These are opportunities! (Cutler 2011, p. 106-107).
C.4 Additional Resources for Using Social Media as a Marketing Tool

  - Bob Baker also has a website with blogs and podcasts with up-to-date advice, and resources for online marketing. [http://bob-baker.com/buzz/](http://bob-baker.com/buzz/) (accessed 2/28/17).


  - Seth Godin also has a website and blog with up-to-date advice, strategies, and resources for online marketing. [http://www.sethgodin.com/sg/](http://www.sethgodin.com/sg/) (accessed 2/28/17).


APPENDIX D: APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 3: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR WEBSITES

D.1 Web Design (from online research)

- Creative Bloq: [http://www.creativebloq.com/tag/web-design](http://www.creativebloq.com/tag/web-design) a resource for graphic design, illustration, art, web design, 3D, typography, digital art and VFX. Includes articles with recommendations on how to design a website to be visually stunning (accessed 2/28/17).

D.2 Webhosts (online research, all accessed 2/27/17)

- Bandzoogle: [https://bandzoogle.com/](https://bandzoogle.com/)
- Wordpress: [https://wordpress.com/com-vs-org/](https://wordpress.com/com-vs-org/)

D.3 Blogs


Top 7 reasons every musician should blog (Hyatt 2012, pp. 103-104; Baker 2011, pp. 118-119)

1. Blogging is a fabulous way of keeping your fans connected to you. Regular updates and new content give fans a reason to return to your blog, more so than a static website. Deeper than 140 characters on Twitter, or a bunch of photos.
2. Search Engine Optimization: If set up properly, you'll be indexed on Google for anything and everything you write about.
3. Blogging puts you on a level playing field with other bloggers: Bloggers read other blogs, especially those pertaining to subjects they write about. And they will trust you more if you understand the world of blogging.

4. Starting a blogroll adds to your credibility with other bloggers. Add bloggers who acknowledge you onto your blogroll, which is a list of links to the other blogs you like or recommend. It’s critical to associate yourself with other blogs and communities of people with whom you would like to connect and with bloggers and communities that want to connect with you.

5. A blog allows you to invite your fans backstage and into your life so that they can see all sides of you. But remember, you are in control of the content.

6. You can syndicate your blog posts all over the internet: link it to ReverbNation, Twitter, Facebook, your website, etc.

7. Blogging gets you community feedback fast. Not sure about something, ask your fans to weigh in with their opinions.

Getting started with Blogs (Baker 2011, p. 120; Cutler 2010, pp. 106-107; Hyatt 2012, pp. 101-102)

1. Start by finding blogs that discuss your type of music, read these blogs, and possibly start commenting. Don’t comment with “Check out my music” add something to the discussion. Do leave your name and a link to your website, though.

2. The next step is to connect with bloggers. Make a database of the ones you think best relate to your music, and occasionally send them compliments, links to music sites that might interest them, or news about something you are working on. Be helpful, don’t just send self-promotional messages. You want to build a relationship.

Using a blog to promote your music (Baker 2011, pp. 120-122; Hyatt, pp. 99 -105)

1. Basic use is to just post about your activities, upcoming shows, new songs or albums you released, etc.

2. You can also use a blog to share your creative journey, such as your writing process, recording or tour adventures, and other experiences you have while playing, or with your music.

3. Promote your projects as they are being created, not just a finished product. Regular updates on a project can build regular buzz. Content doesn’t have to only be about music, it can be anything.

4. Post often, and regularly. Choose a frequency that works for you, and stick with it. Baker recommend once a week, or more, but it’s more important that you keep doing it regularly.
5. Post stuff about other, similar, bands/musicians. Do reviews, or add links to other musician’s sites, and music. Let that musician know, and they might share the review. This may also up the traffic on your blog if someone does a search for that artist.

6. Have blog titles that pop.

Resources for where to post a blog (Hyatt 2012, p. 105). (All accessed 2/28/17)

Many of these blogs can be installed into your website, or many webhosts offer a blog page that can be easily updated.

- Blogger.com: www.blogger.com
- Wordpress: www.wordpress.com
- Tumblr: www.tumblr.com
- Typepad: http://www.typepad.com/
- Movabletype: https://www.movabletype.org/

D.4 Newsletters and Mailing Lists

- Previously mentioned sites: DIY Musician, SonicBids, and CyberPR also provide resources for writing effective newsletters.

Companies to help organize your mailing lists

- Constant Contact: https://www.constantcontact.com/index.jsp Constant Contact is an email marketing software that stores email names and lists, allows you to create email/newsletter templates and scheduled emails (accessed 2/28/17).
- MailChimp: https://mailchimp.com/ MailChimp is a simple email marketing software (EMS) which gives you a number of easy options for designing, sending and saving templates of your emails. MailChimp allows you to easily create newsletters of varying types and then provides simple options for sharing them on social networks such as Twitter or Facebook, making it your own personal platform for publishing your newsletter (from the website) (accessed 2/28/17).
Plaxo: https://www.plaxo.com/ Plaxo is a smart, secure, and synchronized address book. The Plaxo address book imports all your contacts across multiple sites, services, and devices; organizes and securely backs up your contacts in the cloud; and syncs with the communication tools you use every day for a consistent, comprehensive address book wherever you are (from the website) (accessed 2/28/17).

D.5 Music Podcasts and Internet Radio

A podcast is essentially an audio blog with links to MP3 files (and sometimes video). An audio podcast can include music or spoken-word content and often features both. (Baker 2011, p. 97). It is unlikely you will receive royalty payments for anything played on podcasts, but the exposure could be worthwhile (Hyatt 2012, p. 79).

Four podcast promotion ideas (Baker 2011, pp. 99-101; Hyatt 2012, p. 81)

1. Send CDs or links to your digital album for airplay. Email the host first before sending anything. Better to make contact first than sending something blindly.
2. Offer yourself as a podcast guest. Seek out podcasts that feature a talk-show format related to some aspect of your music. Contact the host with a bio, link to your music, and a pitch for why your music and unique perspective are worth covering.
3. Submit audio comments (can also submit written, but audio will stand out more.
4. Record podcast show ids: Make an audio intro that identifies you, and the podcast.

How to Podcast (Baker 2011, p. 123-125)

1. Do regular shows to build an audience.
2. Share your newest songs, demos, song ideas, and more. Play live versions of your songs- from recent shows.
3. Add spoken-word commentary- tell some stories about the music, or the experience recording. Or share amusing stories or stage banter from shows, rehearsals, or interactions with fans.
4. Or, base your Podcast around your musical genre, and play other artists your fans would enjoy. Become a resource for your genre. Interview people, or have someone interview you on the show.
5. The show titles should grab people’s attention.
6. Know your tech: You must be familiar with microphones, audio editing software, bit rates, etc. Make sure all the right information is displayed on digital media players (Title, artist, album info)

Additional references on podcasting


Recommended podcasts for musicians


Podcast host sites

Recommended from Hyatt 2012, p. 79, and online research

- Pod Bean: [www.podbean.com](http://www.podbean.com) Post your own, or listen to podcasts (accessed 3/1/17).
- Podcast Alley: [www.podcastalley.com](http://www.podcastalley.com), a resource to find podcasts.
APPENDIX E: APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 4: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR WRITING AND BIOGRAPHIES

E.1 Advice on Improving Writing Skills for Online Communications

Writing skills are important for creating written content on a website, writing a biography, sending newsletters, and even crafting effective social media posts. These sources give pointers on how to be a better writer.


E.2 Sample Musician Biography Resources

APPENDIX F: APPENDIX TO CHAPTER 5: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND TOOLS FOR PHOTOGRAPHY

F.1 Advice on Taking Professional Photos (online research)

- Previously mentioned sites: DIY Musician, The Balance, and Bandzoogle all have articles regarding taking professional photos.
- Band Photo School: https://bandphotoschool.com/ site include blog articles about taking band photos, including style, and poses, and offers tutorials on editing (accessed 2/28/17).
- Digital Photography School: Offers articles, advice, resources, and recommendations on gear. https://digital-photography-school.com/ includes an article specifically for bands:

F.2 Photo Editing Software


- Adobe Photoshop: complete photo editor. No presets.
- Adobe Lightroom: Image cataloguing, limited editing features, includes raw conversion tools.
- Cyberlink PhotoDirector 6: Image cataloging, limited editing features, includes raw conversion tools.
- DxO Optics Pro 10: Minimal editing features, but excellent raw conversion tools.
- ON1 Photo 10: Image cataloging, retouching, preset enhancements and effects, include raw conversion tools.
- PhaseOne Capture One Pro 9: Image cataloguing, editing, and preset effects, with raw conversion tools.
G.1 Locational Album Sales

Potential non-traditional locations to sell albums. Reach out to the managers, play a part of your recording and see if they would be interested in playing the album in the store, and selling the album at the counter. Have a written agreement: The store pays you only for what is sold, the store gets a percentage of the sales, and how long the CDs will be in the store (Beeching 2011, p. 116).

- Art galleries
- Bookstores
- Boutiques
- Cafés
- Record stores (with local music section)
- Tourist info centers

G.2 Web Resources to Find Record Labels

Recommendations to find record labels (Cutler 2010, p. 122; Ricker 2011, p. 56).

- Musical America: http://www.musicalamerica.com/datalistings/index.cfm You will need to subscribe to the organization for a complete list (accessed 3/1/17).

G.3 CD Manufacturing and Distribution

Recommended manufacturers and album distributors (accessed 3/1/17).

- Discmakers: http://www.discmakers.com/templates/JewelCase.asp#

Both offer downloadable templates. Both companies’ templates can be used in a number of programs, such as Adobe Photoshop, Adobe InDesign, Adobe Illustrator, Quark X Press, and CorelDRAW, and offer a number of template page options, including basic front and back designs, and designs for numerous pages, and even disk cover designs. Through both of these sites you can design your CD and packaging yourself, and they will manufacture everything.
G.4 Audio Editing Software

Recommended audio editing software (Justin interview)

- ProTools editing software: Audio and Video editing features, but one of the most expensive options. http://www.avid.com/pro-tools (accessed 3/1/17).

A study on the top audio editing software available for purchase (from online research)


A study on free audio editing software (from online research)


G.5 Additional Information for Copyright

Web sources for further research on copyright


Articles about copyright infringement on social media (Online research and the Music Index):

- Williart, Allen. “New Business Model = Same Demons” International Musician, p. 5 (no date or volume)
G.6 Advice on Making a Professional Video

The previously recommended sources - Music Industry, How To? and The Balance have information on creating a music video.


Examples of classical music videos that have gone “viral.”


G.7 Video Editing Software

A study on the top video editing software


Recommended video editing software (Justin interview, online research)

- YouTube offers a free video editor, that has basic cutting options: https://www.youtube.com/editor (accessed 3/1/17).
● Adobe Premiere: http://www.adobe.com/products/premiere.html?sdid=KKQPE&kw=semgeneric&mv=search&s_kwcid=AL!3085!3!87275282362!e!!g!!adobe%20premiere&ef_id=VSgE2QAAAPIUWYSD:20170301182834:s


● ProTools: http://www.avid.com/pro-tools
APPENDIX H: IRB DOCUMENTS AND INTERVIEWS

H. 1 IRB Letter for Exemption

*The pages below were what was sent to the IRB for exemption.

Arisia Gilmore, Application for IRB exemption, additional documents. This document contains all information I wish to gain regarding any research subjects. Including: templates of email contact I will make, a list of information I wish to find that are found online, and publicly available, for each subject, and the questionnaire template that I will using to interview subjects. Within the email texts I have included the information about their anonymity and a description of the consent.

Title (in progress): CHAMBER ENSEMBLES AND WEB PRESENCE: A STUDY OF CHAMBER ENSEMBLES’ PRESENCE ONLINE. PRESENTING RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ONLINE CONTENT, AND HOW TO CREATE CONTENT FOR ONLINE PRESENTATION FROM LEADING AUTHORS ON MUSIC ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND INTERVIEWS WITH PROFESSIONAL CHAMBER MUSICIANS. WITH COMPARISONS AND PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS FROM SEVENTEEN CHAMBER ENSEMBLES’ ONLINE ACTIVITY.

Professional Chamber Ensemble Experience Questionnaire.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine the challenges of starting a chamber ensemble based on the experiences of successful chamber musicians. In order to do this, advice will be gathered from successful chamber ensembles pertaining to specific situations and challenges. Data will be gathered through web research and personal interviews of 15-25 professional musicians. The goal is to determine if there are common practices amongst successful chamber musicians, and what advice they would give to help new ensembles achieve success. For this study success is defined by chamber ensembles whose members work well together, can perform non-musical duties that help the ensemble, and ensembles that are paid, and are connected to their audience base.

Questions will attempt to answer points from the document outline. I have organized the questions to match the outline, with questions to ask that pertain to each section.
There are two parts to this questionnaire:

Part 1: Before interviewing the ensembles, initial research will be done to determine many aspects of the ensemble. I will be looking for information on their: mission, programming (repertoire, types of performances, and frequency), if they have administrative staff (and their titles), bios and activities of the members, kinds of recordings (audio and video) available, what kind of business status they have (LLC, 501(c)3, or other or none), the overall design and content of their website, and social media activity (what they use and how). This data will be collected in order to discover how different ensembles present themselves online, and to see what similarities and differences there are.

Part 2: Contact with members of the ensemble will be made to secure agreement for an interview. Once IRB approval has been given this information will be inserted in here. I will send the outline of subject material to be discussed, so the individuals can plan ahead for the interview, and then schedule a 2-3 hour block of time to do the interview. The individuals will be given the option of completing the survey themselves, if they would prefer that method. There will be a standard list of questions that I wish to be answered, as well as specific questions for each individual or ensemble based on my research from Part 1. Questions may vary depending on the answers and the direction in which the discussion goes. This interview will be recorded, and a transcript will be available in the appendix. Interview subject’s identities will be anonymous as per IRB standards, unless the subject signs a waiver to release their name.

Below is the introduction template email sent to all musicians whom I hope to interview. This will be the first contact I make with individuals. A copy of each email for musicians who were interviewed will be included in the final document as part of the transcript from the interview.

Email sent: Date:

Subject: Researching how to be a successful chamber ensemble, and _______ recommended I interview you!

Dear _____

My name is Arisia Gilmore, ___________ (personal contact, or resource where I found this individual or ensemble) recommended I contact you to see if you would be interested in participating in my doctoral dissertation research. ____________________ (something personal) ___________ I am working on my Doctorate of Musical Arts at Louisiana State University, and it would be great if you could help me by participating in an interview.
I am creating a guidebook and series of presentations on non-performance related challenges when starting a chamber ensemble. The goal is to make performers aware of what administrative activities about which they should know that will help them become more successful, and how to do it at low cost. Subjects include: learning to design and do their own marketing and promotion at low cost, including building a website and utilizing social media; getting performance bookings or creating their own performance opportunities; building a fan base; creating interesting programs and considering their stage presence; organizing their finances; and ultimately make money with their chamber group.

I am contacting you because of _______(something specific about the individual’s work)__________. Your advice, insight, and experience as a performer and a teacher would be very helpful to me as I organize my own presentations.

If you are interested in sharing your experiences and being a part of my research please respond to this email. I will send you information on the subjects I wish to ask you about, as well as information about your privacy. After reviewing this information please let me know if you would like to participate, I would like to schedule an interview with you either over the phone, or via Skype. I will be recording the discussion to transcribe at a later date. If you would like to participate, but would prefer to answer questions on your own time in writing, I can email you the questions to be answered at your convenience.

Please let me know of your interest in participating in my research.

Thank you for your time, I hope to talk with you soon!

Kindest regards,
Arisia Gilmore
Phone: 303.877.6187
Skype: arisia42
Email: arisia42@gmail.com

Below is the information to be sent to interviewees for their preparation.

Dear, ____________,

Thank you so much for agreeing to participate in my research! Attached is a participation consent form with information on how your answers will be used, and how your privacy will be protected. Please review this form, and if you agree to the terms sign the document and return to me in PDF form. Due to
rules I must follow from the Institutional Review Board, I must first have you sign a consent form that explains the research clearly and promises your anonymity. If you are willing to be acknowledged, or referenced in the final document I will send you a release consent form to sign after we complete the interview. Without this information release form your name will not appear anywhere in the final document. If you agree to participate you will receive a PDF copy of the final research document. If you have any questions about your rights to privacy now, or at any time during the interview please ask. I will also go over your privacy rights at the beginning of our interview.

Below is an outline of the content of the interview. During the interview I have specific questions that I want to ask in order to collect quantitative data. However, this will be an open discussion as well, any advice you have that may not be part of the questionnaire will be valued. I anticipate the interview taking between 2-3 hours. We can arrange Skype, or a phone call, or if you would prefer to answer the questions on your own time I can email you the questions and you can respond in writing, and I will respond with any follow-up questions based on your answers.

As you know, there is much more to running a successful chamber ensemble than just playing well. The purpose of this interview is to collect valuable advice from experienced chamber musicians, which can be added to my other research and compiled into a guidebook and projects with the intention of teaching young ensembles how to be more prepared for the responsibilities, expectations, and challenges of running a professional chamber ensemble.

Please consider your answers based on the experiences you have had, and what advice you would give for new groups when they are first starting an ensemble. Think about what is most important for new ensembles to work on, do, or consider in their early stages that are not related to their playing abilities. ____________________________ (something specific about their experience I want to talk about)

Since my research focuses on new ensembles, I want to include advice on keeping costs low, but still maintain quality. As part of a more experienced and successful ensemble, you may have a number of professional associates who do your recordings, marketing, and finances. I am interested in what services you have either done on your own (Do-it-yourself, aka DIY), or at a very low cost, as well as services you recommend to hire a professional, regardless of cost, due to the value of a professionally created product. I may have questions specifically for you based on your ensemble, and experiences, which will be included in our discussion. Please feel free to add anything you believe to be valuable information for chamber musicians to know to our discussion.

Section 1: personnel, audience, sound, and image: picking your players, professionalism, creating a public image, photos, and audio and visual recording:
1. Players: challenges faced with personnel, personality, and responsibilities. Choosing members based on playing ability, personality, non-musical skills and/or interests, and commitment level.

2. Public image: professional behavior within the ensemble and in public; programming; considering your audience before, during, and after performances.

3. Recording and Photos: creating a promotional recording or video and still photos, while also trying to keep costs low. Choosing between doing the work yourself (DIY) or hiring a professional. What your ensemble has done, and recommendations for keeping costs down.

Section 2: administrative duties: marketing, promotion, online presence, finances, and business models. What can be done by members in the early stages of ensemble development, and when should professionals be hired.

I. Administrative duties that members perform (past or present), and duties that require a professional. Advantages and disadvantages of DIY administration.
   a. Types of administrative duties needed for success.

II. Booking gigs, and management
   b. Management: if and when to get a manager, manager’s duties, and other options for types of representation.

III. Networking, marketing, building a website, social media, and other web presence
   a. Building your network: how do you collect and organize network information?
   b. Identifying your audience/market: is it based on programming and goals?
   c. Marketing: recommended design programs and low cost marketing options, and how to best utilize these outlets.

IV. Building your web presence
   b. Social media and other web presence: recommended options, and how to utilize to promote your ensemble and your performances.

V. Mission, business plans, and finances
   a. Creating a mission statement, making goals, and putting together a business plan.
   b. Considering a business designation: if and when to incorporate, what your ensemble did, and recommendations for other options.
   c. Finances: setting fees, paying your members, expected annual income, and saving for future projects.
i. Keeping records
ii. Recommendations on when and how to raise money for projects, apply for grants, start a fundraising campaign, and utilize crowdsourcing.

   d. Filing Taxes: recommendations on how to make it easier.

After reviewing the above outline, please respond with some times that will work for you to schedule the interview.

Regards,

Arisia

303.877.6187
ACTION ON EXEMPTION APPROVAL REQUEST

TO: Arisia Gilmore
Music

FROM: Dennis Landin
Chair, Institutional Review Board

DATE: November 17, 2015

RE: IRB# E9670

TITLE: Starting a chamber ensemble and learning all duties required as well as how to do it yourself at low cost: A guide to choosing personal, considering stage presence, presentation, learning administrative duties, marketing, financial responsibilities, booking performances, networking, and building audience base


Review Date: 11/17/2015

Approved X Disapproved

Approval Date: 11/17/2015 Approval Expiration Date: 11/16/2018

Exemption Category/Paragraph: 2b

Signed Consent Waived?: Yes for phone or skype interviews; No for in-person

Re-review frequency: (three years unless otherwise stated)

LSU Proposal Number (if applicable): 

Protocol Matches Scope of Work in Grant proposal: (if applicable)

By: Dennis Landin, Chairman

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING –

Continuing approval is CONDITIONAL on:

1. Adherence to the approved protocol, familiarity with, and adherence to the ethical standards of the Belmont Report, and LSU’s Assurance of Compliance with DHHS regulations for the protection of human subjects
2. Prior approval of a change in protocol, including revision of the consent documents or an increase in the number of subjects over that approved
3. Obtaining renewed approval (or submittal of a termination report), prior to the approval expiration date, upon request by the IRB office (irrespective of when the project actually begins); notification of project termination
4. Retention of documentation of informed consent and study records for at least 3 years after the study ends
5. Continuing attention to the physical and psychological well-being of informed subjects, including notification of new information that might affect consent
6. A prompt report to the IRB of any adverse event affecting a participant potentially arising from the study
7. Notification of the IRB of a serious compliance failure

SPECIAL NOTE: When emailing more than one recipient, make sure you use bcc.

*All investigators and support staff have access to copies of the Belmont Report, LSU’s Assurance with DHHS, DHHS (45 CFR 46) and FDA regulations governing use of human subjects, and other relevant documents in print in this office or on our World Wide Web site at http://www.lsu.edu/irb
H. 3 Interview Research Outline and Questionnaire

Part 1: To be answered prior to contact with the ensemble members, based on Website information, and other online searching.

Information to look for: mission, programming (repertoire, types of performances, and frequency), if they have administrative staff (and their titles), bios and activities of the members, kinds of recordings (audio and video) available, what kind of business status they have (LLC, 501(c)3, or other or none), the overall design and content of their website, and social media activity (what they use and how).

1. How long has the ensemble been in existence?
2. What is the ensemble’s mission, and/or business plan? (Include mission statement, and information about the ensemble in research documents.)
3. How many performances are scheduled in the upcoming year?
   a. Is there information on their past performance history?
   b. What kinds of performances are these (outreach, performance series, etc.)?
4. What kind of programming does the ensemble offer?
   a. In what kind of venues does the ensemble perform?
5. Describe the website’s layout and content.
   a. Can I tell who the server is, if it is a free web-service (with or without ads)?
   b. Is there information as to who designed or maintains the website?
6. What is the quality and style of photos on their website?
7. Does the ensemble have a press kit available on their website?
8. What other kinds of online presence does the ensemble have? (Facebook, Twitter, a blog, etc.)
   a. Which one(s) appear to be the most up-to-date, or the ensemble is the most active?
   b. What sort of content appears on these other pages?
9. Does the ensemble have video and audio clips available online?
   a. What online outlets do they use to promote the videos and recordings? (Their website, YouTube, Ustream, SoundCloud, etc.)
   b. What is the quality of these recordings?
   c. What are the viewing numbers for these recordings? Are there any comments?
   d. Do they have downloadable tracks? For free, or for purchase?
   e. Do they have CDs for sale? How many, and how are they available for purchase?
10. Based on the online presence, can I tell if members in the ensemble do online promotion through their personal accounts?
    a. Is there any indication that ensemble members have non-musical duties?
11. Does the ensemble have a manager, and/or does the contact section of the website lead to someone who is not a performer in the group?
12. What makes this ensemble unique? Are their performances unique? (Relay descriptions in research.)
13. Does their website or other materials indicate a specific demographic they are trying to reach?
14. Does the ensemble state if they have a certain business designation? (such as a LLC, 501(c)3, other?)
15. Does the ensemble appear to do any fundraising, or indicate other ways of making money? (Fundraising activities, grants, donations?)

Part 2: Interview questions: To be done either by phone, Skype, or in person, or the individual may choose to answer the questions on their own, without interview. I intend to receive a minimum of 15 responses to this interview. The purpose of this interview is to gain insight, and advice on the business side, and personnel side of chamber ensembles, and apply this knowledge to young ensembles on how to be successful while keeping initial costs low.

Based on answers to the interviews I hope to discover information on performance planning and non-musical duties that are often done by members of the ensemble, especially early in their development. I also hope to gain insights and advice from experienced chamber musicians as to what duties need to be performed for success, and help new ensembles avoid time consuming trial and error, or failure due to disorganization or incorrectly assigning duties that adversely affect success.

Any question with a * by it is a question that is specific to that person being interviewed, and may not be present on all participants questionnaires.

*NOTE: THIS QUESTIONNAIRE HAS BEEN EDITED FROM THE ORIGINAL TO ELIMINATE SUBJECT MATTER THAT IS NOT INCLUDED IN THE FINAL DOCUMENT.

Section 1: Creating a public image, photos, and audio and visual recording

Recording and Photos: Creating a promotional recording or video, and still photos, while also trying to keep costs low. Doing the work yourself (DIY) or hiring a professional. What your ensemble did, and recommendations for keeping costs down.

I. What was the first recording your first “professional” ensemble created? What was the purpose of that recording?
a. How did you do this first recording, was it from a live performance, or did you use a sound engineer, and do multiple takes, and editing? Where did it take place?

b. What are some challenges to creating an audio recording? What kind of a recording would you recommend for new ensembles? (In terms of purpose, quality, distribution options, and repertoire choices and length.)

c. Can you recommend any good DIY options, such as good quality recording devices, or editing software?
   i. If you’ve done DIY recording, what are some of the challenges to this approach? What are some of the benefits?

d. What system/company do you use for production and distribution? What would you recommend for an ensemble producing their first album to use?

II. What is the value of having video recordings of your ensemble? (** only ask if the ensemble has videos available on YouTube, or their website)
   a. What are some of the challenges to making a music video, and what advice would you give new ensembles on how to most effectively create a video?
   b. When in an ensemble’s development would you recommend them to record a video?
   c. Do you have any recommendations for keeping costs low?

III. When did your ensemble first get photos?
   a. Did you hire a professional the first time your ensemble took photos?
   b. What is the difference between professionally done photos versus amateur photos?

Section 2: Administrative duties: marketing, promotion, online presence. What can be done by members in the early stages of ensemble development, and when should professionals be hired.

I. When your ensemble first started did members have any administrative duties?
   a. What kind of duties did they do? How much time do you think you (and other members) spent on their administrative duties in comparison to rehearsal time?
   b. As your ensemble became more successful do these members still perform any administrative duties? Was/Is there a written agreement or contract that states each person’s responsibilities; how did you hold each other accountable to complete any duties?

II. *Does your ensemble have a manager? (*If it is not clear on their website)
   a. If yes: What services does the management organization provide? What is their commission fee?
      i. When do you think would be an appropriate time for an ensemble to consider getting a manager?
      ii. Do you only do performances the manager books, or does your ensemble still
book performances on its own? (If the ensemble books their own performances also- What is the percentage of manager booked performances versus member booked performances?)

b. If no: What is the reason you do not have management? Do you have other representation or an administrator who helps with organizing and booking performances?

c. What are the pros and cons of having management?

III. Does your ensemble currently hire any professionals for other administrative tasks, such as marketing, promotion, website maintenance, finances, or anything else?

a. What administrative duties do you recommend for new ensembles to hire a professional? And why?

IV. What are the advantages and disadvantages to doing the work yourself versus hiring a professional for certain duties?

Networking, Marketing, Building a Website and Web Presence

I. Building your network: how do you collect and organize fan information and professional contacts information?

a. What is your system for keeping track of your network?

b. Do you have a mailing list (email or post) that you use to contact and update fans?

   i. If yes, what kinds of communications do you send, and about how often?

   ii. How do you grow this list?

c. Do you know or track about how many people in your network attend performances?

d. Do you belong to any professional music services or organizations? What are the advantages and disadvantages of being a member of these services?

II. Social media: what kinds of social media, or other online services, do you advocate, or think is most helpful to promote your ensemble?

a. How do you use social media to promote upcoming events?

b. What are some of the challenges you face by using social media?

III. Marketing and visual design (logos, posters, advertisements)

a. How did you come up with your logo (if applicable) or the design of your ensemble’s name or images related to your ensemble? Who actually created these things (i.e. did you hire someone)?

   i. Do you think these images represent your ensemble, and your ensemble’s “brand.”

b. What are your marketing and promotion techniques and process?

   i. Do you hire someone to do all of your marketing?

   ii. Who designs the marketing material?
iii. Do you keep a timeline of when and where to do present your programs?
iv. What marketing outlets do you use? (Print, online, email, etc.)
v. What are some of the challenges you’ve experienced when it comes to marketing?
c. What is some advice you can give new ensembles regarding marketing performances and promoting their ensemble?
i. Can you recommend some DIY programs for design and marketing materials that are low, or no cost? (Such as Photoshop, Microsoft or Pages templates, or any online design templates and programs for posters, flyers, and online images).

IV. Building your web presence

a. Tell me about the process you took when first getting a website.
b. Who designed your website (in terms of the technical set up as well as content decisions)?
c. How long after your group began did you start your website?
i. Did you pay for your web domain, or are you using a free service? What was the process you went through when you started your website?
d. What is the value of having a website?
i. How much traffic do you get on your website?
e. When do you recommend new ensembles to get a website?
f. What are some challenges to having and maintaining a website?
i. Do the musicians maintain the website, or do you hire someone to update the information? If you hire someone, what are their responsibilities and what is your agreement with them?
g. Can you recommend any DIY website options, or low cost website services?

H. 4 Redacted Transcripts

Alias: Clara

This interview was held over two days, January 4, 2016 and January 8, 2016. Clara was emailed a copy of the consent form for review. Consent was given verbally, over the phone. The copy of this interview has been edited to hide Clara’s identity, and has been limited to subject matter for this study.

Clara is a founding member of her ensemble. Her chamber ensemble performs part time, providing various services, including recitals, background music, residencies, and educational performances.
A: I appreciation you taking the time and being able to do the interview for me. Were you able to read the consent form?

C: No, but I’m giving you full consent to give you anything that you need to use. I’m giving you verbal consent, I was kind of hoping that was going to be sufficient.

A: Yeah, that’s actually just fine. I just want to point out the major points of this. Because this is a research project through the University, I have to guarantee your anonymity. I know most people don’t seem to mind if I’m using their names, but I have to default to the anonymity.

C: So, it’s going to be anonymous according to the laws of LSU, is that what you’re saying?

A: Yeah, according to this. I’ll redact any personal information.

C: I see, I’ll be honest, I’m doing this to help you, so if it helps you to just comply with the laws of LSU, and be anonymous.

A: Ok, great, thank you. And once I’m done with my document, you will receive a copy of it to use however you want, so that’s the benefit to participating and taking your time out.

C: Gotcha.

A: Ok. So, let’s talk about repertoire. My first question is: how do you choose your programming for the year? For the general concert program for the season?

C: Well, that too has evolved, but at the moment, that selection process is defined by our summer program. So, it’s January 4th, so, gigs are going to come up eventually for the coming months, and I may not know what they are, but I know that the end of July, beginning of August, we have to start our program. Doing an entire program of brand new music is not realistic because our ability to get together for rehearsals is such that, one, maybe two, new pieces, not five. But, that’s ok, because we know enough other stuff that we can come up with a good program based on a combination of old and new, if that makes any sense.

And because of the competition circuit that we’ve done in the past, that helped create our identity as a group musically, repertoire-wise because these competitions all required new works, as opposed to standards. So, it helps define us as a “new music” ensemble. And commissions and other things came out of that identity, that I think also affects how we choose repertoire. We gravitate more quickly towards new and different works than we do playing Monteverdi, or something. We love Monteverdi, but we’re more interested as a group in this other thing that this guy wrote, kind of thing.
A: Alright. Ok, so from that, I also want to talk a little about your public image, and how you guys think you’re being represented, and what your goal was with branding and visual entity. I think you guys have a unique group because you have one woman and the rest are men, which is actually pretty unusual, it’s usually all men, or more mixed. Is that something you guys work with, or is it not something you think too much about? So, what kind of image do you try to portray?

C: The first thing that comes to mind, is that the only thing that everyone really ever cared about is that we didn’t really take the beaten path. Image wise, anything that has ever happened either happened by accident or by no one’s design. When we originally got together, with me being the girl issue, I literally can think of two times, two very specific and terrible moments over the years where I was conscious, or uncomfortable, with being the only girl. And it had nothing to do with them, it had to do with external things, but in terms of image, totally not on the radar. But, one thing that we have always felt makes us unique as an ensemble is that we are not managed by anybody, by any external person or by any internal person. In that, our group represents individual people, and I don’t know if in our image that’s a successful venture. I have no objectivity of it, but I know that it is the only thing that anyone in the group ever gave a shit about.

A: Ok, well I definitely think that even just looking at your photo on your home page of your website is totally unique. I love the photo, nobody’s really looking at the camera, you’re all in different positions, so that was sort of the idea I had based on your photos. So, you’re doing a good job!

C: Well, that’s good. Haha. So, yeah, any other ideas, or images, there really was none. We just didn’t want to be another group. It was such a preoccupation for the group, it was an inhibitor, in terms of recording, I don’t know if you realized that we’ve been a group for over a decade, and we released our first recording just last year.

A: Ok yeah. Alright, so now let’s talk about the recording. Since I noticed you just did it. I heard that you were the one trying to promote that and stuff. I do have some specific questions about the recording process, but if you just want to talk about the motivation of why it took so long, or why you decided to do one now. I think you’ll probably answer a lot of the questions that I had.

C: Sure. Well, it’s actually not that complicated. The short answer is, we couldn’t agree on repertoire. There’s one reason why we couldn’t, but there’s also a lot of reasons. I don’t mean to sound like Yoda about it. I mentioned before with the one person wasn’t working with the group dynamic, and that created unrest and distrust internally that prohibited us from moving forward with a lot of things, and the recording was the biggest bit. If we had forced the issue on a recording, it would have destroyed the group, no question about it. And what happened was pretty amazing. Ok, I’m going to draw a parallel. I know we both know people like this: A girl and a guy are dating for like 8 years, no one pops the question, they’re dating, they’re dating, it’s going nowhere. Finally, this relationship breaks up after years and years, and
within 6 months one of them is married to somebody else. It’s a crazy phenomenon, I don’t how it happens, but it happens all the time. So, it was exactly like the same thing. We had this long relationship, one person goes away, and a new person comes in, and within one year we have new repertoire, we have a label, we have a photographer, and it took zero time. I can’t explain it, except to say that there was this dysfunction, and a difficulty that I can’t really pinpoint that existed before, and then once that change was made, it was all momentum, and it was like “Ok, we’re gonna do this this and this...” and it was great, and done.

A: Wow, ok. So, for your first recording, for the CD, can you tell me about the process, did you go to a studio and get a sound engineer? How did that all work?

C: Yes, we all knew of this guy, who is very good at sound engineering. He is someone that we’ve all known for a long time in different contexts. And he has become very experienced in recording our kinds of instruments, and we knew he would be affordable, so we approached him and after approaching him, some other issues were resolved, like space issues, because of his job, and his professional affiliations he had access to a space with really good acoustics, so that took care of that. So, that’s how we found our sound engineer, that was a no-brainer. It’s pretty remarkable, it was all a no-brainer. We were all just waiting for the pieces to fall together. We all kind of knew in the back of our minds how things were going to work. Once we knew it would happen, we knew what would happen, you know what I mean? So, that’s that.

A: Ok, and one last question on the CD, were you all involved in the editing process as well, or did you have one person do that, or just have the sound engineer and producer do that?

C: We were all involved, even though we were mostly involved remotely. So, what would happen was we got a first draft, everybody listened to it, we had google sheets, we would submit our edits, things that we heard that we could not deal with. You mark specific bars, specific beats in specific bars, and then our sound engineer would go through all of those google sheets and make those changes to the best of his ability, and then, because I was physically in the same city as him, I would physically sit with him and weigh in, because invariably issues would come up. So, there was some negotiations that needed to take place, and if I hadn’t been close by, we would have trusted him to do everything on his own, but since I could be there, I wanted to be there, so I did a lot of it. But, everybody was involved.

A: Right. So, you guys do have a few clips and stuff on your website of just your general gig music. How did you record those? Were they just live recordings? What was the process for getting those examples?

C: Oh, I think we sat down at one point and said we were going to do demo clips. So we did that, we sat in a church, put on a recorder, and uploaded them.

A: So you did that all on your own, or did you have a sound engineer for those as well?
C: No, that was back in the days of mini-disk recordings, we did it all on our own.

A: Ok. So, from that point of view, as a young ensemble. How soon do you think that they should get those demo recordings out?

C: I’d say as soon as possible. Provided you can produce something of quality, meaning, if it doesn’t sound bad, or you can find a room. If all you have at your disposal is a dorm room or a conservatory practice room that’s dead, and not going to provide a decent acoustic. You need a decent acoustic, and you need a decent group. If you don’t have those you should not at all publish anything, because the internet is forever. So, if you don’t sound good, or you’re not comfortable with your product, don’t put it out there. But as soon as you are, I would say do it as soon as you can.

A: Ok. So, for both your gig recordings, and your new CD, what do you think is the value of having these recordings?

C: The value of having the MP3 clips online as well as the CD?

A: Yeah

C: Well, the value is a couple different things. The MP3 clips is a necessity to getting gigs. The average non-musician getting married, or something, needs an example. Or the coordinator of whatever cocktail reception, or whatever. So, the MP3 clips of the general gig music on the website, the non-recital repertoire, that’s there for the non-musician general public to learn our product. To learn what it is, because for every wedding I’ve been hired to do when I’m talking to a bride or a coordinator who’s not a musician, which is like everyone, it’s overwhelming and intimidating to them because they know they want music, and they want specific music, but they don’t know what they want. So, they want to know about the songs, and it is a dizzying, overwhelming conversation. You have to teach someone about it. The clips have to be up on the website to be able to know what they are asking for. Does that make sense?

A: Yeah

C: The recording is a totally different reason. The recording is more for how we identify ourselves, what we value musically, and what we put out there. Which is not say that we don’t value the GB (Gig Book, wedding music) stuff, but it’s a different value system.

A: I think I understand, you don’t identify yourselves with just playing the general repertoire, gig book music, you have these other goals.

C: Correct.
A: Ok, so what about video recordings? You have a few things on YouTube. Is it something that you are trying to actively do, or is it the same, where you’re like, this is just what we do on video?

C: Yeah, it’s a good question, and it’s definitely a hot topic with us, the YouTube presence. We feel very much that we need to establish a YouTube presence, which we do not have. Especially the way that it has evolved, I think YouTube could open a lot of doors and windows all over the globe in terms of some kind of a presence or exposure. There’s a lot of shoddy recordings. It doesn’t have to be like Bellini, taking footage of us playing a recital, but on the other hand, if it’s a crappy microphone in a crappy room. You don’t always have control over where we perform and where we play. If it’s not going to be good, we don’t want it up, so that’s the big debate.

A: Yeah. When you perform, do you try to have control over that? Asking the audience or asking the presenter to not post anything?

C: Not so much. When we did a performance not too long ago, and I think it’s one of the few videos that up there, I put it up. It was a last minute thrown together gig, and we loved the hall so much I asked a random audience member with an iPhone, “Can you do me a huge favor, we’ll send you a CD in the mail. Can you get 40 seconds of this concert?” And she was like, “Oh, yeah, sure, no problem!” and she did it, and that’s up on YouTube. We pulled it out of our ass, it was so not a planned thing. And we’re thinking, well, I guess a camera and a tripod would have been a good thing, but we’re like, yeah, whatever. So, not so much thought goes into it sometimes, or a lot of the time. I think the YouTube thing is the next thing for us to tackle, to get some more footage up there.

A: Ok. The last thing that we’re going to talk about as far as band and music stuff, you mentioned that you just hired a professional photographer, so what did you do before that?

C: We had headshots done. We’ve done a couple different things. We had shots done initially when we were doing the competition circuit, and they were done by a friend/teacher/mentor who is also a good photographer enthusiast. So he did the shots, and they were our original shots on our website back in the day. And then when we had our personnel change we went through a series of very brief and thrown together “photo shoots.” Which was like, rehearsal’s over let’s go into the alley and take a picture. That’s what it was, it was not any kind of formal arrangement. But, for the CD, obviously, we needed a formal arrangement, and the photographer that we used for the CD was the person who came along with the company who produced our CD. So, we used their recommendation, and the photographer was great, to producer facilitated that logistically, and it was easy.

A: Ok. And you kind of already did this, but for a younger ensemble how would you recommend them get good quality photos, but keep the cost lower. What kind of photos do you think would be most valuable to them as they’re first starting?
C: What do you mean, what kind of photos?

A: You said you had good head shots beforehand, do you think headshots would be important, or do you think a straight up group photo? Or go immediately for an artistic image?

C: I think it completely depends upon what kind of image they want to create. I hate the fact that I’m about to say this, because it makes me feel ancient, but it’s very different than it was 10 years ago because social media has completely change everything. It’s so easy to create a brand now. It’s so permanent what you put out there. Well, I guess it’s interesting, because it’s permanent and less permanent, because you can change your profile picture every day for the rest of your life, if you want to, and that’s pretty heavy, being able to change your image. But, on the other hand, changing your image too often in a social media format, there’s a danger in that, because you’re never cementing your group identity in there. So, I think a group needs to decide who they are and what they want. I know, in general, the people in my group have always wanted to come across as casual as opposed to stuffy. Like, just to force adjectives, edgy as opposed to conservative.

A: Sure, so do you think these kinds of things are important to think about when a group is first starting out? Even if it changes, just to have that first identity?

C: I guess so, I think it depends on the group. I think it totally depends. I think we did somethings really quickly, where we held off on other things. Like, the CD took us forever to do, but to a large degree, people knew who we were because we did a lot of new music. I guess you pick and choose what your priorities are, and overtime priorities become evident because it’s what motivates individuals in groups.

So, certain things are going to come out as priorities over other things, and I think that becomes part of the group identity, and that forms, and helps make groups look, and seem, the way they look and seem. So, I think photography is going to be important to some people and not as important to others. And I don’t think that that’s bad, I think that it will help create a group and vibe to what they’re doing. What I will say, is groups that have formed recently, and what I mean by recently is since Facebook has become a thing, I do wonder, at the risk of sounding like a godmother of anything, because I’m not, I feel like some groups are putting things out sooner than they should. Like, “Oh, we’re a thing, and this is what we are.” And, I think if we had done that, we would have done it 50,000 times, because we grew and changed over time, and I am grateful that Facebook wasn’t a thing when we started, because we are a lot better now than we were, and we’re smarter, and we make different choices than we did. Not to make it sound all dramatic and tragic when a group submits a picture before they’re ready, but I think that the availability of social media makes us all very trigger happy. I think people put up a lot of things, when putting up fewer things would be smarter.

A: Cool. Yeah, that’s good advice.
C: (on individual’s duties). Yes. I think we officially did this at some point, we had a meeting at some point and chimed in, “Ok, who’s good at this, and who’s good at this?” let’s sort of pick out roles based on what our strengths are, which I think was a good thing to do. I put myself in charge with media and public relations, and this was before Facebook, before social media was really a thing. I was going to be the person that spoke to clients, and tried to solicit gigs.

We had pretty much universally agreed that we did not want to go the route of management, which in retrospect was a good thing, and we would do it again had we to make the decision all over again, which is why we’re still not currently managed. There are advantages and disadvantages to that, and maybe you’re going to ask that question later. It’s a big deal whether or not to go with management. And that has a lot to do with our independence, and personalities. One member is the technology person. He’s the website guy, and one guy is the money guy. Everybody just kind of chimed in. I guess those were the three major categories, Money, technology and PR. Three of us do those things and the other guys did other things, or filled in the gaps, or didn’t do anything.

A: Ok, so do those jobs still hold true now?

C: Yeah, they do. We’ve been good as a group about, overtime, doing what we know that we can do, and passing on things that we’re going to suck at. I know you’re talking to a lot of different people, I think there are groups that work more than we do because there’s one person in charge of that group. There’s one player that’s the point person for all things. We all know that although the long run may result in more gigs, the short run, one person is in charge of that group, and none of us could be in a group where one person was in charge and it wasn’t us.

A: So, how much time do you spend doing the public relations and media stuff?

C: It’s not regular, sometimes it’s a lot of time, sometimes it’s none, it depends on what else is going on. And whether I have time, or whether there is something coming.

A: Great. So, you talked about why you don’t have management. So, even though you don’t have the manager, do you hire anybody else to do anything else for you? You said you have a photographer, and somebody working on your website. What about marketing and promotion? Do you have somebody to help you out with even just as much as the design of the materials or distribution?

C: Nope. So, and in terms of distribution, I do that, but I use Mailchimp, I use things. It’s not like I’m sending out physical things, I do use them, but it’s me, not an agency.

A: Ok. So, as a new ensemble starting out, you guys don’t use anything, but if you had to advise, if they
can’t get it all done, what kinds of duties would be important for them to get done, even if they had to hire somebody out for it? If anything?

C: I think I’m missing part of that question, ask me again.

A: What administrative duties would you recommend for new ensembles to hire a professional to do, if any?

C: I would say that, the member who does the websites is amazing at doing websites, but he’s a busy guy. So, I would say, in retrospect, that we should have hired somebody to maintain the website, because our website is not updated on a regular basis, and that's a major thing. That’s a source of annoyance for the rest of us, that the website is not regularly maintained. He’s just a busy guy. So that's a no-brainer. Otherwise, I think everything else can be done in-house unless you don’t want to do it. It depends on how much time people have, and it depends on the skills of the people in the group. Or the need for control.

A: Ok, how would you recommend they present their ensemble? Do you think it would be advisable for them to have a recital ready to go to reach out to some of these, or try to sell themselves as a gig group, with basic standard repertoire, maybe do a first recital of standard repertoire to not only learn the pieces, but get out there with that stuff? Just getting started, getting their foot in the door, even if they just want to do gigs, but maybe have something to get them started.

C: Yeah, I think it’s important to be aware of two things. Be aware of your audience, and be aware of who you’re talking to... And the other side, as a group, if you’re interested in the long run of becoming a good group, starting with standard repertoire is important. We evolved eventually into playing experimental, and new music, but we started with Bach. You have to. If you want to sound good, you have to work on fundamentals, because that’s what music is. I think the playing of gigs, I don’t want to say it’s secondary, but you have to sound good. People of average intelligence will be able to tell the difference between a group that sounds good and group that doesn’t, even if they’re not musicians. I think stage presence and image can go a long way, but if you sound bad, it will be your first and last gig in that location. And I’ve seen that a lot with groups that haven’t prioritized music. That are caught up in everything. It’s an interesting phenomenon. They get a billion gigs, but none of them become regular gigs. Every group has to start somewhere, every group grows and improves, actually, no not all groups grow and improve. Only groups that work on growing and improving grow and improve. On some level, it’s gotta be about the music, and not about everything else. It’s very easy to get caught up in everything else.

A: Hmm. Good yeah, that’s great advice. So, now we’re going to talk a bit about networking, marketing, and things like that. So, how to you collect and organize your audience and fan information, as well as professional contacts. You said you use Mailchimp, is that mostly for fans, or do you use it for professional contacts as well?
C: We put out a pad of paper at our concerts that say “Please sign our guest book and join our mailing list.” Or, at all of our concerts we remind everyone that we are on Facebook and ask them to like us. To begin a mailing list, I had all the members of the group send me their entire email contacts list. Because, you can basically do that and dump it into your Mailchimp account, then you immediately have a mailing list. You can do other things to, you can go on to fact finding missions, and Google search, that’s a tremendous amount of time that I’ve never been willing to spend. Thanks to Facebook, a lot of it takes care of itself. On the other hand, there’s still immeasurable value in sending out a personal communication to publication, because, amazingly enough, people still read them. And, if you plan to advertise a concert, that’s still the first thing that you need to do.

A: Ok, yeah so, with your emails, how do your emails work? What kinds of stuff do you send out in emails, just announcements about concerts, or do you send other things out?

C: Right, no, we just do concerts that we want people to know about. A lot of groups do newsletters, and what’s new, yada yada. We’re not in the habit of doing that, and I don’t want to get in the habit of creating more spam. It’s along with the “pick your moments” philosophy.

A: Right. Since you keep your performances local, would you say your email list is different than your Facebook fans? As far as your email list is people who could actually show up to a concert, as opposed to having friends down here in Louisiana. Is that something you think about with the email list, or that you’re aware of, or anything?

C: No, I would say that we’re not really thinking on those terms. I think, with email and with Facebook, the goal is more about global and widespread exposure, as opposed to who’s going to come to our recitals. Because, in Boston, the same people come to our recitals, give or take a few people, so we can sort of rely on a certain size audience. It doesn’t really vary too much at this point.

A: Ok. So, for social media, you do use Facebook a lot, is that your primary, or what you find to be the best social media outlet for you? Or do you try to go pretty equally with Twitter or Instagram?

C: I would say Facebook is easy. You have multiple things at your disposal between information sharing, pictures and sound clips. Twitter is really valuable, but it’s a much more limited form or information sharing. But, you’re reaching different people. I’m sure you’ve notice different people use Twitter than use Facebook, and at the end of the day, you want to reach everybody. But, I’m personally speaking, I’m much better about my Facebook maintenance than my Twitter maintenance. I go on Twitter binges every now and again, and it’s easy to do a blast. But, I’m not so much in the habit of using it as I should be, but I’m not. So, I would say Facebook wins with the different ways to reach people.

A: Ok, so what are some of the challenges you have faced by using social media. Maybe just having to keep up on content, or I don’t know. Are there any other than just doing it?
C: Yeah, I think it’s the process of picking your moments. I think it’s easy to saturate. I’m pretty conscience of saturation and what you’re putting out there. If we have a gig, and we all go out to the bar after- So, do I post a picture of somebody being smashed on Facebook, because we’re out having fun and we’re a group? The short answer is, no. I’m not going to put that up, even though it’s content, and it’s fun, and it’s going to show everyone that we’re having a good time and that we love each other. It’s also going to alienate other people and affect our overall image, and I think it’s smart to monitor that, in the long run. If we were undergrads, and carefree and not thinking about all these things, it would be a different story, but we’re not. The image that we’re interested in putting out there is much more serious and professional and what it would look like to our investment of the gig. I would present that as a challenge. I think that’s important for a group to consider. It’s also important, I do put up pictures of us having fun, being happy, and candid shots, it’s not, like, curated and crafted so we seem so serious, and always playing mixed meter, stuff like that. But, you get my point. There are two issues, there’s the issue of saturation, and putting too much out there, and bombarding, and annoying social presence, and then there’s the issue of what are we doing, and what’s important to us.

A: Yeah, great. So, how about with visual design. You guys have a cool logo. I like it. How did you come up with it? Is it just a stock thing?

C: That’s hilarious. Well, here’s a question. Which logo are you referring to?

A: The one on the website, on the home page. Do you have another logo?

C: Right, ok thank you. The logo issue, that’s a long-standing debate.

A: Well it’s a big deal, logos are a big deal, that’s why I want to talk about it.

C: Yeah. So, we’re evolving from that logo to the image on our album. I think the idea is to have the album image be the new logo. But, because the website has not been updated in a long time, the old logo remains. Thank you, I’m glad you like it.

A: Well, then tell me about why you’re changing. Because, I think people don’t think too much about logos, until they start thinking about them, and then they think too much about them.

C: Yeah, I think that’s true. I think, for us it was more about streamlining our symbol. It wasn’t so much that we hate the old logo, but it was, for branding, it is important for us to be consistent, which right now we’re not consistent, because of the website maintenance. That’s a bit of a challenge. So, streamlining and consistency is almost more important than what your logo is. No matter what you pick that needs to be the thing that people see. I’m pretty sure that’s marketing 101. Even if it’s a dumb logo, if it’s the same dumb logo every time, that’s 101. I think the updated logo really kind of came as an abstract desire for us to update ourselves, and a more specific motivation from our graphic designer, the one who did our
album cover, she hated the old logo, and was very vocal about it. So, we were like, “whatever, so make something new.” And she did. So, it was a combination of factors. But, I think consistency is king.

A: Ok, great. So, we already talked a little bit about your marketing. For your recitals, other than your web presence marketing, do you put up posters, do you do any paper marketing?

C: Paper? Yeah, it’s a good question, the short answer is most of the time, no. I kind of launched this crusade to do paper and hang it in the music schools when we were doing a recital in the area, and when we did our CD party I wanted to do the same thing at the major music schools. I did make window cards. I would say, yes, we have done that to minimal success, but it’s still worth doing, I would still do it. I feel like, not everybody is as obsessed with Facebook as I am. If you’re appealing to the over 50 crowd, and window card still goes a long way. And it may change over time, I’m sure, but I maintain some paper is still good. Definitely, there’s a point in which your wasting money, but minimal is good.


C: Yeah, I think that’s essential, you gotta do it. It’s a no brainer, it’s easy, all you need is to determine who your contacts are, what email addresses to send your press release to, but you have to send them. Yes.

A: And do you do that for all of your recitals, or just when you have something big coming up?

C: We do it for all our recitals.

A: Awesome.

C: We don’t do it for traveling recitals. Like, if we were to go to LSU I would assume that LSU has its own system of doing that sort of thing.

A: Right, so you rely on the presenter to do that.

C: Exactly, if we are our own presenter, then we do it.

A: Yeah, and then, who designs all the marketing material for the stuff that you do use. Do you design it, or you’ve been working with this graphic designer? Like posters and stuff?

C: We’ve basically been recycling this material that the graphic designer came up with for the CD since we’ve gotten it, and that’s a combination of reasons. First of all, it’s good, and doing that streamlines everything and that is good, and it’s better than anything that we have designed ourselves in the past.

A: Yeah. So, then in the past did you do all your designs?
C: More or less, I have a friend who is also a graphic designer, and she’s done a couple of things for us, and she’s always done a beautiful job, and I always pay her, but I don’t always have money to pay her.

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A: I did want to hear your advice, since you guys just recently did your first album. So, I wanted to ask you what advice would you give an ensemble when going about creating their first album, as well as marketing it for selling?

C: Right, ok, what advice would I give having done it once. We talked about the fact that it’s been amazing and bizarre that we’ve been together as long as we have, and it took us as long as it has to get a CD out. And as weird as that is and a lot of problems prevented us from feeling like we could put a CD out, and a lot of problems inhibited us from feeling comfortable, and in the end, having put out a CD, I would not have done it any other way. I don’t regret waiting for a second, despite the fact that, in the scheme of ours, colleagues of ours were looking at us like, “What is your problem? Why don’t you have a CD?” A lot of people said a lot of things. People we could trust, and people who felt like they could speak to us, were like, “You have no credibility because you have no recordings out.” And it was this unspoken thing with us, that in the state that things were in… and we sounded good, we won competitions, we gave great recitals, and we knew it. We sounded great, and we knew we shouldn’t put out a recording. I can get into the sum of it all, but out of respect of the people, and respect for my existing ensemble members, and the past members. There are so many reasons. So, I would say, my advice, would translate into, follow your instincts, because that is what we did, and the product that we have, I am one thousand percent positive that we would not have released anything as cohesive and excellent as we did. Everything about it is exactly as we wanted. The pieces weren’t there, and the timing wasn’t right for it to be exactly as we wanted. So, we waited. So, I guess my advice would be, follow your instincts, and don’t settle. Had we responded to the pressure that was put on us, and the pressure that we put on ourselves, not to blame the world, but I think too many people...

We’re listening to recordings done in a hurry, done with the wrong people, done by the wrong people, wrong sound engineer, wrong acoustics, and it’s like you hear people who we know are badass players, and the quality of the recording is not great. And as head-strong, or conceited as it may sound, our recording is great. I don’t think that that’s an accident, and I think it’s largely because we waited. I think there are certain things to get gigs, like demos.

A: Yeah, we did talk about how you do have all of that stuff available.

C: Yeah, obviously, recordings help groups, there’s no question about that. And we had to compromise. We did come up with, over the years, many compilations. We decided to hang our hat, our specialty was our live performances, and it was. Because we started to draw a solid, regular audience, because we
gave good live recitals. Some groups don’t have good performance chops. We have really good performance chops, so we made that our “thing.” So, we’d come up with compilations, we’d burn CDs for presenters and promoters, concert series. And be like, “Listen to this… and guess what, it’s live, completely unedited, nothing is spliced.” That got us somewhere. It was what it was, and we were willing to compromise. So, that’s that.

A: And what about the actual process for releasing the CD, the approach you took for marketing, and announcing the CD release? I know you had a big party where you live. I know everybody’s experience is a little different. So, once an ensemble gets to a point where they want to release a CD, we talked about marketing, and trying everything, and seeing what works, and hopefully the ensemble will be established by then. But what about when you started talking about how you were going to release the CD, how it was going to be available online. What was the process, and how would you advise other ensembles based on what you did and what you learned from it?

C: Well, we, in turn, took advice from the record label we worked with. We did our own publicity, but the guy who runs the label did it to. We went with him because we think he’s smart, and he’s got a lot going on. I don’t know if you were aware that we used his company. We used each other, mutually. He was our answer to what record label to use. I’d say 85% of classical chamber ensembles use the Summit label. And doing a self-release, there’s a lot of good that can come from using a company like Summit, because they’ve done it before. But it was a similar process as in our decision not to get management. Not going with Summit was also the best thing that we’ve ever did. Because going with Summit, they weigh in heavily on your look, your style, your design.

A: Ahh, interesting.

C: And we don’t like anything that Summit has done. They have perpetuated the cookie-cutter, chamber music and geek image, and we were just not going to go there. And, unfortunately, they don’t give you a lot of freedom to do things your way, and their templates are decades old. But, they would have been the ones to facilitate iTunes, CDBaby, that stuff. We didn’t invent the wheel when it comes to that stuff. The guy we went with got the photographer, it was through him we got the graphic designer to design our cover. So, with all his people that we used, and they were great, that was another reason we went with him, because his graphic design concepts for his own material are more in the same ballpark to what we were interested in, and how we were interested in portraying ourselves.

So, I would say, groups need to explore all of the options available to them to see what will work with their style and everything else. I’m trying to think off hand groups, other than Summit records, there’s an Albany label. But, Albany is very orchestrally related, they do a lot more larger groups than smaller groups. It’s kind of like the McDonald’s vs Burger King, or Coke vs Pepsi. Summit is everyone’s first instinct. Because that’s how it’s usually been done. But, who knows, it is possible to do it individually, as
I’ve said. I guess that sort of answers your question, but maybe it’s not the answer you expected. If a group were to completely release it on their own, and produce all their own materials from scratch, then they would have to decide on their own, rather than take the advice of somebody else. We did iTunes and CD Baby because very few people are buying CDs at this point. We wanted to get it out however we could. If CD Baby were more popular it would be great, because it’s cheaper than iTunes, and doesn’t come with a bunch of red tape. Our release was delayed by months because one of the tunes on our CD was a Beatles song, and iTunes flipped out because of copyright, and it turned out that it was fine, but because of all the red tape and the bureaucratic nonsense it took a really long time. But it was fine, please release the track. So, you run into things like that. I guess that’s it.

A: Ok, that’s great. Ok, let’s go into talking about your website. You mentioned previously that your website is not being kept up as much. So, who works on your website, is it all done in-house, or did you hire someone to do the original design?

C: It’s all done in-house.

A: Ok, and what’s the service you’re using? I’m not sure if I can tell.

C: To be totally honest, I don’t know. You may or may not know this about our group, one of our members was writing code and creating websites when he was in middle school. So, he wants to do it, he can do it, but he’s also very over-committed. He’s spread very thin, and has a lot going on in his life. So, he wants to be the one to do it, but when other people have worked on the site, if somebody goes in there and changes it up they use methods that aren’t his, and if he goes in after that it creates an inconsistent approach, and it ends up messing up the website. It ends up manifesting in unexpected and pesky ways, so it makes sense for it to be consistent. He has been uncomfortable with relinquishing control of the website for that reason, but at the same time, has not been able to do as much upkeep as he would like to, and as we would like him to do. So, that’s how we do it. If things were different, and it wouldn’t offend him I would hire someone to take care of the site, and update it every four months, every two months.

Or, I would advise groups to have their website designed and then pick somebody in your group who’s going to be in charge of information updating. And at this point, you get a website up, and there’s an admin page, and web designers frequently make it easy for clients to update their information. All you have to do is go into the correct application and submit new information, and frequently you can go directly on the site, or you submit your new information to your web designer, and they update the site. There are systems in place. So, I would just say, to other groups, that you pick someone in the group who’s on top of information sharing either to the webpage itself, or to a web designer. And have that be your system. But, thank god for Facebook! If Facebook didn’t exist, I would force the issue more with our member. It seems to be less egregious because we have other communications tools at our disposal, which is great.
A: Yeah. And with that, since Facebook is obviously one of the best ways to update people immediately about what’s going on. So, what is the value of still having a website? Some people think there is a trend to not even having a website anymore. So, what do you think would be in defense of websites?

C: So, what you really want at the end of the day is as many people to see things as possible. You could run numbers and find out what the most viewed and most popular vehicle is, and only use that one thing, but I’m a believer in, even though our website is not the most cutting edge, up-to-date, awesome thing, I think it’s crucial to have something for the percentage of people who rely on that as their tool. Really, all I want to do is to let people know that we exist. So, we have the people that are addicted to Facebook, and they know about us and our goings on from Facebook, and then you have the people on Twitter, and I’m on Twitter, and then you have the people on the website, and to whatever extent I can, I update the website. All information is good information as long as it’s not vulgar and inappropriate, and inaccurate. You know what I mean? There’s no such thing as bad publicity, that’s the bottom line.

A: Yeah, I get that. So, when would you recommend an ensemble to get a website? Like, when in their development do you think would be a good idea to get it?

C: I think it depends on a lot of things. How old they are, what their goals are. I would say as soon as they feel like they’ve achieve a unified mission. As soon as they know what they want to do, or how to go about doing it, then start doing it. I think it’s one of the first steps in the process of doing it. You and I talked before about putting materials up on the internet that are not of high-quality. Either visual materials, or audio materials. I would encourage a group go ahead and get in there and do it, as long as the product is good. If you have a selfie in a dark bar, or a picture that’s not great, maybe it’s not time to put up a website. Maybe you should shell out $40 for some student photographer who can come up with a decent picture, or a free picture. So, I’d say, as soon as you have something of quality to offer the year, then go ahead and offer it up.

A: Ok, awesome, thank you.

A: Ok. Great. And then, have you started making money from your CD yet, or are you still breaking even?

C: My understanding is that we are still breaking even, and also no one expected to be making money off of the CD. Breaking even is considered a win in that category, which is sad but true.

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C: So, because of our age, crowdfunding came pretty far into the evolution of our group. And, I’m sure it’s formed our opinion of crowdfunding, but I feel like I should go on record of saying that we don’t like crowdfunding at all. I think it’s an amazing tool, and it can work really well for a lot of people who are in
need. But I also think it devalues the image for a group or ensemble. I think a group should be very cautious when pursuing crowdfunding as a viable fundraising option, because I think it makes a group look… If a group is new, if a group is brand new, crowdfund the shit out of it, make a bunch of money, but if a group wants to maintain an image of established-ness in a way. We talk about this all the time, because it’s become a viable option. There’s spins you can put on it so you don’t look needy or disorganized, but none of us, and I think it’s great and weird, that we are unanimously agreed on this fact. So. There you go.

A: Excellent. Ok, that is pretty much it. The only other question I have is if there is any basic advice that you give, or would like to give to chamber ensembles when they’re starting out for whatever. Anything that you want to make sure, if you were talking to a new chamber ensemble, what you want to make sure they know.

C: I don’t know if I have general advice.

A: Maybe something that you’ve noticed, like huge mistakes you’ve noticed younger ensembles make to try to avoid, a huge mistake that you’ve made, whatever.

C: Yeah, well you and I talked a little bit about some of that along the way. Like, I feel pretty strongly about being choosy about what you put on the internet. I think it’s too easy at this point to post things. There’s a lot of really bad playing and crummy images on the internet. My advice would be that if a group forms and creates a page, whether it’s Facebook, Myspace (if that still exists), or a webpage, or whatever, I would say, go about it from moment one with the approach that you are creating a brand, and you want to put up things of quality and that you are consistent.

A: Wonderful. Thank you so much for putting the time in, and sharing your advice and experiences. And, I also wanted to let you know that I have updated the consent form to offer the option of being in the “Thank you” section. Your interview will still remain anonymous, but if you want to have some acknowledgement, I can put you in the same place as my teacher and family and such.

C: Whatever you need.

A: Would you like to have your name and ensemble?

C: No, just my name is fine.

A: Ok, great. Thank you. And, just so you know, I will be editing your interview to take the personal experiences and advice while making it as anonymous as possible.
Ensemble A

Aliases: Quentin and Bridget two founding members of their ensemble.

This interview was conducted via Skype on January 11, 2016. Quentin was emailed a copy of the consent form for review. Consent was given verbally during the interview. The copy of this interview has been edited to hide Quentin and Bridget’s identities, and limited to subject matter for this study.

Ensemble A performs part time, specializing in new music, composed in the 20th and 21st centuries, including commissioned works.

A: Thank you so much for taking the time to do this for me. I quickly wanted to ask if you had a chance to look at the consent form?

Q: We saw it, yeah.

B: We just need to print and scan and send it to you.

A: I can also do a verbal agreement, since I am recording this.

B: Even better.

A: Ok, great. So, I guess we will jump right in and get started. So, let’s talk a little bit about performances and choice of repertoire. So, the first thing I want to ask, because you don’t all live in the same city, how do you rehearse for upcoming performances?

B: We have really well-timed rehearsal residencies. They’re either right before a tour; like, we’re going out in a month and we’re going to spend a few days at one place learning two pieces, and we rehearse 5-6 hours a day for several days in a row, or up to a week ahead of time and then we’re ready to go. And we also choose our repertoire really carefully, so we don’t learn new programs every time we go out. We learn one or two pieces at a time and we add them slowly to a program. We also have this interesting system that we just started this year. One of our members is really technologically savvy, and loves playing around with editing software. So, he makes a click track for a piece, maybe a piece we’re really concerned about, and it will have all the tempo changes, it will have maybe a ritard, he can manufacture that stuff. And then we each record our parts with this click track, and then he overlays them, which is pretty awesome, because we often play pieces that don’t have recordings, so it gives us a better sense than a midi would give us. It also ensures that we’re all up to the same tempo at the same time.

Q: And the added benefit is he goes through the trouble of making a “Music minus one” track for all of us,
so we can practice that last couple weeks before we get together with a track that has the click track and all the players besides ourselves, so you can really get a sense of how your part fits in.

B: And, of course there’s no nuance, but it probably eliminates about six hours of rehearsal figuring out what everyone has. I think it brings us together a lot quicker. Which is fun.

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B: (on choosing repertoire): We had a long concept over the last few years that we’re kind of getting to the end.

A: Yeah, I saw that with your multi-album plan. Is that where that came from?

Both: Yeah.

A: Great.

Q: And how we decided what to play, some of the things we had played before or heard before and were excited about, others, we did a lot of listening as a group, when we were all together, to listen to a bunch of things. People brought stuff, and ideas of what they might want to play, and we listened to it together.

A: Yeah. And, I saw that you commissioned a few works for these albums. Is that how you found these composers, by listening to different composers, or how did that work?

B: We’ve been working with three composers, who are also on our website. We met all of them in different, random ways. We just struck up a friendship with a composer, and wrote this grant with Chamber Music America, which ended up getting funded, and that’s how that moved forward. We’d written grants with other composers that just didn’t go anywhere, and the commission just never happened. Another composer was a friend of one of our old members, and he just got on the bandwagon, and wrote us this crazy piece that he loves. And one composer, we met on the internet. He’s a Twitter friend, and then we met him at a house party one time when we were on tour. So, he’s probably the most fun meeting story.

Q: And we didn’t even solicit that score.

B: Yeah, he just wrote it.

Q: Yeah, and we thought it was amazing.

B: He just wrote something for us, and then we paid him later.

A: Fantastic. Ok. So, I noticed that you do a little bit of different staging, and I wasn’t sure if that was
marked in the scores or if it’s a choice that you decided to do for a visual effect. So, do you consider stage presence when you’re putting together your performances? Positioning or anything like that?

B: Yeah, we do. For some of the pieces, the positioning is described in the score, one piece we performed even has a diagram in the score that’s really compelling and geometric, and our last tour we actually made that geometric shape on the stage with electrical tape, and we stood in those boxes. But, I’d say our group, which not reflected in our internet material because we have two new players this season, and these two people are so much more adventurous and willing to move, and do stage movement, so we’re doing a lot more this season than we ever have, and unfortunately, we didn’t video any of it, but we’re going to fix that. Yeah, so we really have been thinking about that. The last trip we did we did this thing where all of the pieces flowed to the next without break. And they also incorporated some movement where we walk on and off stage, or we stood up, rather, we’re standing now, which is not really something we’ve done previously, which is nice.

B: We’ve even been experimenting with lighting. Like, turning the lights off at some points, or on, higher light, lower light, audience light, direct light. So, yeah, that’s kind of a new direction for us this year.

A: Yeah, awesome. Ok, so now I want to talk a little bit about recording and other media stuff that you do, videos photos, stuff like that. So, what was the first recording your ensemble created? Was it the one you recently released?

B: Yeah, that’s the first commercial recording.

A: Ok, what did you do before that?

Q: We recorded our first recital and put one of our pieces on the internet, it was a North American premiere, we put that up right away, because we wanted to have it be up there because it’s such a cool piece, we wanted to get people excited about it.

A: Now that you’ve had some more experience recording, what are some of the challenges to creating an audio recording, and a video recording, I think most of your videos are live, so mostly with the audio applies primarily.

B: It is just so expensive. So expensive to do it right. That first album, we tried to cut some corners expense-wise. We used a guy we knew from doing some gigs in his area, he’s a musician, and a pretty decent sound engineer. He’s a sound engineer at a bunch of pop records, and classical cross-over stuff, which is not that great, but it’s out there. And he offered to do it for us in his studio for a really tiny amount of money. So, we were like, “Wow, yes, let’s do that.” So, we ended up… however, because we didn’t record in a hall, we recorded in his studio space, in a pretty small room, that was maybe not the smartest
thing to do. I think it ended up being fine, but that’s not what we plan to do the next time. We’d like to record in a nicer hall, or a room that suits our acoustic needs better.

A: So, were you guys involved in the editing process in this recording, where you all listened back and marked your parts, stuff like that?

B: Yeah, the editing process, everybody was involved, which made it great, and also chaotic. It ended up taking a really long time, and that’s another thing I think we will do differently next time.

Q: We had a producer who we hired for a little bit. He was a friend of ours, was familiar with how our instruments work, and does a lot of new music. So, he was more involved in the room with our engineer on our editing. And they would send us a draft, we would give feedback, and they would go in again. It was two stages of that kind of thing.

B: Editing is just super challenging, because if one person makes a request, it might be someone else’s favorite time doing something. So, somebody has to compromise. What is the most important part, and it’s inevitably it’s whoever is the loudest, or most vocal about their part. In the future, I think we’re almost not going to be involved, or I don’t want us to hardly be involved. Or, maybe only we give two comments, you have to have more of a hierarchy of what matters to you as a player. And also, we plan to have a producer who is more involved, and is willing to say, “No, I think we’ve got it, you sound great, stop obsessing.” One person did 20 takes of the same solo, and they all sounded great. A producer needs to be more like, “You know what, we’ve got it, that’s cool.” She did that on her own, it was literally an unaccompanied moment, where we didn’t need to be in the room, but at the same time, it was like, “Ok, just relax.”

A: So, for new ensembles, what do you think would be the most important thing to get out for a recording, or when do you think it would be appropriate for them to get something, even if it’s not a professionally produced recording, just something to put out there. Like, you said you had this piece that you wanted to get out in the world, so what do you think a new ensemble should prioritize releasing any kind of recording into the world.

B: I think they should do something as soon as they feel it sounds good enough to be out in the world. I think some groups put out terrible recordings on YouTube. I don’t know why they choose to put things out there. We’ve got a lot of recordings we don’t put on the internet. But, I think having recordings is so essential to getting booked anywhere. You need to have work samples if you’re applying for a grant, you need to have a record of what work you’ve been doing. So, as soon as you feel confident. They should record every concert just in case magic happens. We were video recording every concert we were doing until this last time, which is such a shame. We should have recorded all of our concerts in this last tour, but we didn’t. But, it gives us at least some options to go back and choose from. So, I think starting out
groups should start recording everything they do, and then be very selective about what they put on the internet.

Q: Yeah, and as an ensemble it’s very helpful to listen back to rehearsals and performances as a group, especially. I remember, on one of our tours, we were recording every night, then we would drive to our next location and listen to last night’s concert and talk about. It was really great, because we were also breaking in a new member, so he got a good idea how he sounded in performance, how the group sounded, what we were aiming for…

B: Yeah, I don’t think you can record too much, but when you decided to go in and do a commercial recording, that takes so much commitment, and so much money, that’s a little bit more of a complicated question.

A: Right. So, do you have any recommendations for keeping costs low? Either for audio or video recording? Do you own your own video or recording equipment?

B: Yeah, we have… we’re also in transition on that. We have a video camera we bought three or four years ago, but we don’t really like it. A lot of the video that’s online is video that was taken by the venue, not our own footage, because it almost invariably looks better. Right now, we’re probably… well, we have an H4 and we’ve been recording with that. And we’re going to try to figure out how to take video with an iPhone 6 next time, or something better. But, unfortunately, I don’t have something that’s amazing, it’s been difficult.

Q: Yeah, to keep costs low, there’s not really a great way. I don’t have any great advice for keeping costs low, except for if you know people, you can cultivate relationships with folks that might want to help you out. That’s the best advice I would give. If you know a videographer, keep in touch, and like we knew an engineer. We also got a lot of good advice from him about post-production stuff, and other management questions.

A: Now let’s talk about your photos. Because your photos are awesome, and I love them, and they’re beautiful. It looks like you just got them done, because I looked at your sight maybe 9 months ago, and you had different photos, which were also awesome, so tell me about the photographer you found, the process of getting these photos, and stuff like that.

Q: So, all of our photos are from one photographer, who’s credited. Initially, I contacted her, she was our very first photographer. We had our first tour that we booked ourselves. We had a couple of tours that we had done that we used our Fischoff photos from. Oh, and I guess we had Fischoff photos. When we won Fischoff they took some photos at the competition, they weren’t very good. Those we used for a little while. Then we needed some new ones. I think we had our first personnel change already. So, I looked through a bunch of photos of bands from the engineer we knew. I just kept the ones that really spoke to
me, that were on a grand scale, and they just popped in a way that I liked, and were compatible with us, those were this one photographer’s photos. And also, I heard from multiple people that she was really good to work with. So, I contacted her and we worked out a reasonable agreement, and she recommended a stylist that we’ve worked with every time as well. And then, she and I have always had an in-depth dialogue about what I’m looking for, or what the group is looking for, but it’s really just me. In terms of image, impact…

B: How the image might relate to the music we’re playing.

Q: Yeah, so, the last ones, talking to her about a very specific image. I referenced other historical art, like “Oh, we kind of want it to have this effect.” And she really responded to us, and she’s chosen all the locations, and done all the scouting and everything, and that’s always been really great.

B: Yeah, if you want to see some of the older pictures of us, if you just Google image us, you’ll find some of her older pictures, they’re really beautiful. I think that’s one of the things we’ve done really right every time. We wanted to avoid the “Everybody up against a brick wall” kind of thing. We wanted to do something really different, and what I love about those pictures is that they all identify with the region, where Quentin and I have serious roots. Yeah, so it’s true, I think we get a lot of attention because of our pictures. And because our pictures are so bombastic, whenever we submit an event in a newspaper calendar, they invariably print the photo, because the photos are so cool, even though we’re not super famous, and newspaper editor is going to be, like, “Oh, I love that picture, let’s use it.”

Q: For example, in one place, the biggest paper in the state did a Fall Arts preview, and I think we were number 20, but ours was the headlining picture, the cover photo for the article. And that’s happened since the beginning when we started using her photos.

... 

Q: (on duties): In the very beginning, I would say that the two of us, and one other player, who’s no longer with the group, the three of us were the core decision making group of the ensemble. So, us two were propelling our repertoire choices, and he did a lot of applying to stuff. I was the guy who was taking care of tech, I made our first video samples to send to competitions, and made our posters, even though that’s not really my specialty, I was just like, “Oh, I could do that.”

A: Ok. So, you mentioned briefly that when the ensemble first started out you were designing all of your marketing and promotional material. Is that still the case, or does someone else to that for you now?

Q: Let’s see, Bridget designs our website, and she’s done the website from the beginning. Now we’re on Squarespace, but before we just had a template that we had modified a billion times. She’s always done a really good job with the website. I feel like she has a really good sense of what looks good. Then with
other promotional materials, we’re getting to the point where most times the venue, or whatever will do it for us. I have designed several posters in the last couple years, but I have developed something of a template that I’ve mostly been sticking to, which looks good, and people like it. I try to keep the pictures, our photos, central to the posters because they’re so compelling. Why not just rely on those gorgeous photos? Does that answer your question?

A: Yes. Who designed your logo?

Q: Oh, the square one?

A: Yeah, the one with the arrow.

Q: This is sort of embarrassing. One of our past member’s mom did freelance design work for fun, and she was like, “You guys need a logo, here you go.”

B: And we were like, “Ok, that’s good.” Haha.

Q: That’s one of the most helpful things…

B: The best gift anyone can give you, free graphic design.

A: haha. Ok, so you talked about how you call, mail, and send personal letters to your fans and people in your network. So, how do you keep track of your network. Do you have them sign up when they come, do you have a mailing list, Mailchimp, or anything like that?

Q: We have two different networks. We have a mailing list that people sign up for, either online or at our concerts, and after every tour we just input all of those names into our list. Then we have our donor network. Which, obviously, they’ve donated. The donors are the people that are getting the handwritten stuff.

B: We don’t send that many newsletters. Occasionally, if we’re doing stuff we’ll send a newsletter. We try to keep our newsletter... you can divide the contacts by geographical location. So, we’re not going to send stuff to people in California about a show in New York. We just try not to bother people. That’s a big belief that both Quentin and I have, we’re not going to send a newsletter about nothing. Our hope is that when people get a newsletter from us they actually click on it, because so many groups send a monthly thing. I think it’s just a bad idea, it makes people not interested. Probably the best newsletter I’ve ever seen, and you should just subscribe if you’re interested, is Spektral Quartet’s. They’re really good. They’re funny, I always click on them, even though I don’t live in Chicago, they’re really fun. It makes me want to go to their concerts, I think they’re really great.

Q: Spektral with a K.
A: Yeah. Then, for your social media, Quentin said that Bridget designed the website, so who maintains the other social media? Facebook and Twitter, YouTube.

B: I’m not on Facebook at all, so Quentin has to take care of it, or other people in the group. I have done more with the Twitter this last year, and I don’t know, I think we’re just not as social media excited, which may or may not be to our benefit, I’m not really sure yet. I think some people feel a real backlash to social media in new music, because it seems like a lot of manufactured celebrity. But, at the same time, I think people like to know that we’re still alive and kicking. I think it’s balance of knowing how much to say.

A: Yeah, that’s great. And a lot of this is just getting your perspective on things, and to see how people are utilizing 21st century stuff these days. Like some people say you need have a website, but it’s just for promoters, and stuff. But, it’s interesting to talk to people and see their different ideas. I guess, but as a wrap up question for networking; what you would recommend for new ensembles to get started with their web presence and networking things? If you have recommendations for things that have been successful for you that you haven’t mentioned, or want to hone in on if you were to advise a young ensemble what to do.

B: This is a small thing, but one member started the Twitter thing, and he was really good at it, and I’m not, but the thing I noticed that he always did that seemed to increase our follow-ship, he would always tweet at them and say “thanks,” maybe ask them a question, or engage with them in some way. And he did that so much, that I think it built us some genuine followers. Now we have over 1,000 followers, I think it’s mostly because of him. I occasionally do that, if somebody follows us that I know, or somebody who sounds interesting, but I was surprised at how much of a response he got just by just engaging with people as they followed him.

I think people should get out, go to conferences. It’s a good way to meet people, and to get, to understand what people are doing right now. They should probably go to the Chamber Music America conference. Have you heard of the Savvy Musician in Action workshop? Now that that exists, that would be great, it didn’t exist when we started out, but it probably would have been helpful. That is a great opportunity for young people. There’s just so many resources that have popped up. I don’t even feel that old, but I keep using the phrase, “Oh, I wish that was around when I was young.” The first time I went to CMA conference when I was a college student, it cost me $110 to register, and now they have a deal, if you’re a student, you get to go in for $10. And I think, “Well, that would have been nice when I was going.” I think I went in 2004 or 2003. So, there’s a lot of stuff out there now, all you need to do is Google.

Q: I think my advice for a young ensemble would be to… Once you feel like you’re in a place to go for it, make your web presence cast a wide net. Get your website up and running, even if it’s small, like a one sheet thing. Put it out there, make it look good, put up your video, put up your recordings on SoundCloud. Make yourself searchable and findable, so if people hear about you, they can find you. I think that’s half
the battle, making sure that you’re findable. Then I would say, putting a lot of effort into, or maybe before this, is creating your identity as an ensemble. Our group has a real definite identity. We do a very specific thing, we’re a very specific ensemble, we have a specific image and color scheme that goes along with that. And I think the more specific, and not predicable, but consistent that you can be, that way people will know who you are immediately.

A: Alright, well that is everything that I had to ask you. If there is any final advice that you would like to give young chamber ensembles as they’re beginning, or anything else that you feel you want to put out there, go for it, otherwise, that’s all of my questions.

Q: I have one comment, this is something that Bridget and I were talking about last night. In this day and age of internet celebrity, like “Oh, put your videos out, get a ton of twitter followers…” you can create this internet celebrity just by volume, and you can be friendly and connecting with folks individually, I think it’s very important for ensembles to not just look laterally at their peers for inspiration for their level of artistic ability is. They have to be looking upwards, like buying recordings of high level groups, interacting with very good artists, going to festivals where the very best groups are performing. So you don’t keep yourself in this “internet underworld” of self-promotion.

B: I don’t know if you’ve noticed this, but there are some people who are just so prolific online, or on Twitter, or whatever, I think younger people just assume they are amazing, but really, they’re just really amazing at social media. I tell my students this at school, just because that player has a lot of videos, or just because that player is on every Instagram, or whatever, doesn’t mean that they are a great player and it doesn’t mean that they are the person they should be paying attention to, it’s actually usually that they are not. So, I would say, for younger groups, don’t get trapped in the idea that they need to become internet famous. It’s almost a waste of time. That’s almost why we don’t do as much of that. Maybe we could be more well-known if we did more, but I just don’t think there’s as much integrity in that.

Q: I don’t think that people should avoid becoming internet famous, they should know that there’s more to it than that.

A: They should have a good product first.

Q: Yeah.

A: Awesome. Well, thank you so much for taking the time to participate in this interview. I will be sending you a copy of the transcript after I’ve redacted the information. Then once the paper is done, I will send you a copy of the paper, which you can use however you want.

Q and B: Thank you.
Ensemble X:

Aliases: Giovanni, Liza, Dexter, Wallace, Xander

This interview was held in person on September 25, 2016. Ensemble X was emailed a copy of the consent form for review. Consent was given in person, and a physical copy was signed. The copy of this interview has been edited to hide the identities of all members, and limited to subject matter for this study.

Ensemble X performs frequently, primarily recitals and masterclasses. They perform contemporary music, and music from the standard repertoire.

A: I have to record this because it is for my dissertation and they want a record of it. I’m not sure if you guys all read the consent form, but it is all going to be anonymous, or as anonymous as I can make it. So, I’m going to change your names, and try to eliminate anything that directly to you. I have been researching your website as part of my research, I’ve got a big list of websites, so that will be publicly available saying that these are ensembles I’ve researched. But, again, it’s not going to be a direct correlation to you. So, if you guys have any questions.

L: So we can really get real. Haha.

A: Yeah, that’s the whole point. I want you guys to feel as comfortable as possible. There’s probably going to be a lot of things, like… “Yeah, we had this player that we really hated!” haha. So, don’t feel like you need to hold back. So, do you have any questions about your privacy, and how that works? (all shake their heads no). At some point, I will send you my edited transcription, so if there’s anything on there that you don’t want me to publish, you can let me know.

G: Yeah, I’d love to see it, I’m curious.

A: And once the document is complete, I will send you a copy of the complete document, so you can have it as a reference, or just to see what I came up with.

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(on creating a mission before starting big projects)

L: And as far as a business plan goes. We made an actual business plan, with Mission, vision, all those needs and wants, everything like that. We made one of those maybe five or so years ago. Now we have more specific focused, little mini-plans within that. So, maybe a one year fundraising plan, or one year grant plan, or three-year CD plan. You know? They’re very specific, project based goals that we maybe want to achieve over a longer period of time, since we did kind of figure out our three larger umbrellas
that we operate under. And usually now, we don’t sit down and think, “Oh, we’re gonna make a new album, does this fit within our mission?” we don’t say that. But, at the same time, usually absolutely everything that we do, it does, because that’s how we tend to operate.

…

(on income/payment structure, paying per-performance)

G: We’re still not at the point where we tour so much that you can make a living doing it. And we knew that because of the kind of music that we play. So, that was never really going to work for us. It was always going to be, like, “What can the group do to make a name for itself?” Through its innovativeness. And that’s what you saw on our website, we have all different stuff going on. So, that’s why in the beginning we were like, if we start paying by engagement now, that’s not going to be sustainable.

A: Yeah. So, then one other thing about income, do you guys make money from your recordings, royalties off YouTube and Spotify?

W: It depends on how you look at it. The CDs over a long period of time probably break even, maybe even a little more, but it’s not a big portion. Nobody’s getting paid their salary because of CD sales.

G: What’s the motivation behind that question?

A: Just to show people the goal of these things.

W: The goal is having it out there so people see it. A group with a CD…

A: Also, to see if you invested in the YouTube royalty thing, where you do the pay-per-play thing.

G: We never invested in that because, if it’s not something that’s not getting our music and our legitimacy out there in a way that represents us the way we want to be represented, and/or if it’s not making us real money, then we’re not going to do it. And I don’t think we’d ever make significant income from that. But that’s on the royalty side, but we do have our music streaming on Spotify and Amazon through the distribution process.

L: But it’s not like we see checks from that. The biggest thing for CDs is we physically sell them at concerts, and for us to be up on stage and say, “Take us home with you, if you like the concert, this is how you can support us, buy a CD.” It’s really a marketing piece at the end of the day. You have a CD so that it’s one more way you can be in someone’s space.

W: They get you gigs, too. Whether it’s us approaching a presenter, a lot of times she (their manager), or we, will use a CD or YouTube video to give a presenter a good idea of what we’re like, and what a
concert will sound like. So, like I said, it depends on which way you look at it. They definitely pay off by existing by the way you use them, but the money that they directly make is irrelevant.

G: So, if you’re a younger group, or musician. You have to find a way to separate the investment you put into the CD, $5,000… whatever cost you make it, though that number is probably pretty accurate for your first CD, from everything. There’s a moment in time where you’re going to make a great product, and blow that money. And that money is gone. And now, I’m at this point where you have a great product. And if you make $3,000 from selling it, that’s really good ancillary income. So, you probably want to find a way to help with the CD. Raise some money, get a grant, do a Kickstarter for it. Get free resources from your school to do it, get some in-kind help, and get a really great, polished, professional, well edited, good sounding, good looking product out there. And that will carry for a couple years.

L: Our first CD we made we did incredibly cheaply.

G: Yeah, we probably spent a couple grand.

L: We got the space for free, engineer was free, producers were free.

G: Artwork was not free, and duplication. We released it ourselves.

D: But then we had the product and we could do whatever with it.

W: Just a fair warning for any young group doing that, though… Especially if you’re going the cheap route, and using school resources, and other students, and stuff. Really try to dig into every area of the production that you can. Try to learn it for yourself as you go. We definitely learned some things about the recording process, and how to record, that had we known at the beginning, there would have been red flags going off. The first one, we actually had to do a little bit of recovery work to finally fix it.

G: Yeah, we had engineer issues…

L: Because of where the mics were placed in the room…

G: Yeah, I would find a shadow person, maybe a faculty advisor… to walk you through the process.

L: Somebody who’s made a CD before

G: Who just recently put one out, and start from the beginning. We can provide this to you. I can go through every step of the process, the little flags that are going to pop up every step of the way, if you want me to. Then you can be a little ahead of those things, so they’re not problems.
W: Exactly. Because, otherwise, the first time you do anything, it’s a learning experience. CDs are never as easy or direct or simple as someone will think they are to make.

G: No, the end product does not show the turbulence.

A: Haha, awesome. We might go back to recording, but I think you guys pretty much covered everything I wanted to ask about that.

A: Ok, so now that you guys have management, how have your duties changed. Or, what have you eliminated, if anything?

D: Just the booking.

G: Yeah, they handle the booking, so I don’t have to do that anymore. But I still do that anyway, because there are somethings they won’t really mess around with. That just increased the responsibility now that we have to get them what they need. You provide them with material. Videos, marketing tools.

W: I think the single best thing, and it wasn’t to get management specifically, but we did everything right to get management. We started learning to make videos, and doing online performances, video performances, creating materials, because that’s all stuff the management is going to want you to have day one.

L: We were thinking about management, and we sought out a couple of competitions to get management, but the management that we have, and have always had, found us. She was interested in us.

W: And what was the reason they found us?

L: Videos.

D: It was also the various competitions and online profiles. I think it was also the “Web-premier” series concept itself that was very appealing to them. Because it was something that I don’t think any other group is doing something like this.

G: Yeah, so you need a manager. But if you look at various manager’s rosters. And you see what they have available, how they present themselves, and you’re missing any of that, you’re not going to get that by having a manger. You have to have all of that, then you might get a manager. So, you have to self-produce first.

W: Use the time you have in the early stages.
G: At least in our universe, meaning, more contemporary music, that side of things. If you play incredibly mainstream music, whether in classical or something else, there’s a better chance that you can just be killer, and they’ll figure it out for you. Because, they’ll take the risk, because they can promote you and sell you. Yeah. You’ll still have to figure some stuff out, but from where we were, it all had to be there. Because, they were never going to be able to do that for us.

L: And a lot of groups were surprised to learn, they think that management helps make a lot of stuff for them. Like, programs, photos, or work with them on these things. They do not do any of that. They expect that you have photos.

A: Is it kind of like, they tell you want they need, and you have to figure it out?

ALL: Yeah.

L: And usually you need if from the beginning, because they’re not going to bring you on unless you have a way to showcase yourself. And then they tell you how to update those over the years. Like, they’ve told us when we need new photos.

W: We lucked out and got management that’s very consistent with our identity.

D: And that’s, like, if you’re an artist, and you’re with a manager but it’s not a good connection, then they’re not going to do as much for you. So, since they found us, that kind of spoke to us.

G: Yeah, that was a good sign.

D: There was some people who I’ll talk to and I’ll tell them about our manager, and they’ll ask me if I like our management, and I’ll say yes, we love them, they work so well for us. But then, people think that’s great, because there are some managers who just don’t do things for their artists.

L: And there are some managers that tell their artists what to play.

W: We pretty much have creative control. They’ll give us some feedback on what they’re getting from “the world out there,” and what they think would really help us. But in the end, it feels like we get veto power on any decision.

G: Some groups need more direction, because they won’t know how to make a good program, or how to sell themselves.

W: For us, our appeal is that we do it.
G: Yeah, we had kind of figured out how to appeal to audiences correctly through trial and error. So, they’re kind of hands off in that way, which is nice.

A: How long have you had the management company now?

G/W/L: This is our fourth season we’re just starting with them.

A: Ok. So, what are some other stuff? You said you do the videos, photos, and recordings. Do you now work with people that help you do this, or do you do a lot of it yourselves?

G: We still do a lot of it ourselves. As a general rule, marketing, promotion, merchandise, everything. It’s still 90% us.

L: We’ll hire a photographer to come. We won’t physically set up the camera.

G: If they’re professional press photos, we’ll get a professional photographer. If we’re putting out a professional, studio CD, hire a professional, if you’re putting out a professional studio video, hire… But, if you’re not… Everything else beneath that, which is the vast majority of what you do, you’d better figure it out, otherwise you’re just gonna spend money. So, we figured out a way to get that stuff to be like, just good enough. Where the content is legit, and the way the content is presented is good enough.

L: So, our last web video that we released. We had multiple cameras set up in the space, we did hire a recording engineer to do the physical audio, but we were running around, moving the cameras around.

G: We did the video editing.

W: It looks like there were 20 cameras shooting the video, but there were three.

L: Yeah, we just ran around a lot.

G: Well, the space was free, because we were already somewhere. The engineer was incredibly cheap, because he was already there. So, we paid, like 250 bucks for that video, and it has, like 10,000 Facebook views, and a thousand YouTube views, and it’s already been an incredible promotional tool for us. That’s just one example.

L: That was all through trial and error. We figured out how to make an acceptable product on our own. And then it got better.

A: Did you ever go to presenter conferences before you got the management.

L: Not before, no.
A: Ok.

G: Though, we could have and probably should have. You’re talking about APAP or CAA, and the locals, all that stuff? I think they’re probably not useful to go to if you don’t have a lot of those things that we mentioned to get you a manager. There are groups that go without managers to those conferences and actually will get recruited by a manager or get some gigs. But they have to be to that point, otherwise you’re just spinning your wheels, making connections that no one is going to follow up on. But, if you’re getting to that point, you probably should start hitting them up.

L: They’re also an incredible tool the same way, just attending a competition, just attending a conference, you realize just where the bar is. And you realize what you need to do because you see what everyone else is doing.

G: You’ll find out who’s got all their publicity and materials together, and then if you go to a competition, you’ll find out how you’re supposed to sound. And go out somewhere to a professional series who puts on chamber music and you’ll find out what good programming is, what audiences take in and appreciate.

L: So, we learned that also by watching others succeed where we were failing.

G: We were being very, very honest about what we needed to do to get to that point. We weren’t going to pretend like if we didn’t have successful concerts it was because people didn’t appreciate what we were doing, and that was their fault. It’s always been our job to make ourselves appealing.

W: Initially we weren’t honest, because, until you have your eyes open, you’re just sleeping and thinking everything’s cool. But then we got our butts spanked at the first competitions we went to. I remember, we played a terrible first round at a competition, we had driven the night before because we had conflicts, we got there and we sounded pretty bad. We were at the pizza bar across the street and were, like, “Yeah, maybe they see the potential...” We either felt it, or we were trying to convince ourselves pretty hard that we still… No. Unless you put yourself in the position where you go see the stuff that’s better.

G: And that applies to everything. That’s just not how you perform. Every element was what makes you a successful professional in this field.

W: Yeah, look for what’s better.

L: And they gave us feedback at these competitions. We would sit down with the judges the next day and they would just rip us apart. They would be like, “You can’t play Debussy like that. Have you listened to….” All this stuff that we never thought of, no wonder we got booted. Having that type of, not callous, but very honest feedback from people who have been professionals in your field for many years was huge for us. We had coaches at school who would tell us harsh things, but never really as clear as that.
W: You gotta be willing to burst your own bubble from time to time.

A: Ok. Yeah. Alright, so now I want to talk a little bit about your networking and marketing strategies. I signed up for your email list, but I don’t think I’ve gotten anything yet.

L: We haven’t sent anything in a few weeks.

A: So, how do you keep track of your mailing list and network?

L: We do have an online database where we keep track of not only everybody who comes in contact with us, but how they came in contact with us, in what way. Did they purchase sheet music, are they a donor, did they subscribe to our email list, did they attend a concert and leave us a business card, are they a presenter that we passed at a conference? What was the correspondence with them? We try and keep that as up to date as possible. And then, our mailing list, we’re constantly trying to grow our email mailing list. We want to get more people who are interested in hearing what we want to say in those emails. Those emails are probably 50/50 split of fun stuff and trying to do some sort of conversion. The last email we sent we did a coupon code for sheet music sales, that was 20% off and we listed the whole catalog. And the next email that we’re going to send is going to be a fun picture of all of us. It’s a nice balance between just keeping up with us because we’re doing fun stuff, and then trying to get them to take some sort of action as well.

A: Do you ever do focused marketing. You said you keep track of where you met people, so do you ever just contact specific areas or groups?

L: Yeah, since we became a non-profit, all non-profit can apply for something called a Google Ad Wares grant, which is pretty incredible. It’s $10,000 a month in free online advertising, which is the search network advertising. So, if you type our ensemble name into Google right now, an ad should pop up for our concert in this area. So, we do that basically, a month out for each location that we’re going to, I’ll make a bunch of ads. So, if somebody searches “New Orleans Jazz Tonight” ideally our ad will pop up if we’re performing in that area. That’s something that I just learned from my other job, and saw how valuable it can be. It doesn’t actually get people to the concert, but it gets people to your website. And, at the end of the day, the more people that are following us online and have some sort of digital connection with us the better.

G: So, I think you’re asking about segmenting the list, and working with different segments of our audience? We do a little bit, but the rule we follow is, we don’t send things out unless we actually have something to talk about. We don’t follow a cadence where we have a weekly or monthly thing. When we feel like we have something that’s relevant to people who care about us, we will send some stuff out. We try to keep it pretty short and concise. Though, I can pull a list for everyone who’s purchased sheet music, and we can do something for them. We can do something specific to donors, so we can pull those things
out. But everything else, we don’t do any other kind of email targeting. Our list is only about 650 people, and it’s grown very organically. So, at this point from starting about three years ago, if I asked you, or you wrote it down at a concert, or you came to the website and signed up. We try to make it the most dedicated people that we have who follow us. There’s a book I bought recently called “Nicely Said” which is kind of a style guide on writing newsletter, printing content, anything you have that involves writing. It’s kinda cool.

L: It’s fun, but eloquent, and short.

G: There’s a lot of different ways, and things to get better at when it comes to that.

L: We try and grow email marketing and contacts, but are constantly trying to grow Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Those profiles are just as important to us.

A: Yeah, that was going to be my next question, was how you treat social media differently, and how you approach social media as a different way of networking.

L: Yeah, I would say we probably have our strongest presence on Facebook. We use that to keep in touch with people, collect more people, put more desirable content out there, because that’s where we see the most return.

W: It’s the most public space. Anybody that’s interested, a presenter, anyone, they’re going to find your Facebook profile, so you want it to look active, that’s important. We experimented with different things. Sometimes you see some organizations re-post things, like articles, that might be relevant. And we tried that, but the most effective thing, is just showing us doing things. Not concert advertisements, either, those are there, but if you just show you doing things, people like that.

L: Yeah, like fun photos and videos. Like behind the scenes, how you’re getting from A to B, what you’re eating, what you’re wearing.

D: Just like the normal day-to-day things.

L: And trying to be a little bit clever, and a little bit quirky with it. Not stale in any way.

W: You do want to put a little attention to detail in your photos. Like, if you took a picture of me right now, with my shirt all wrinkly, like, “Look at Wallace at an interview.” That wouldn’t really work. Have fun.

L: We do a little bit on Facebook with ads and promotion, if it’s specific content, or specifically trying to get more content, or reach somebody in a certain area. So, when we showcased at CMA, we did Facebook ads for the fact that we were there showcasing, and we wanted to get as many people in the room as possible. I think we’ve done a couple for some other concerts. So, depending on how long we are
somewhere, we’ll do a promotion and set it to be for people in that area that don’t follow us, don’t “like” us. And the goal of that is to just get people in that part of the country to like us on Facebook, and maybe come to our concert.

**W:** What are some other outlets we use for social media?

**L:** Twitter is hard. And you have to be really quick with it. So, if you’re active on it all the time it can be really good, but if you’re just doing one thing every few days, you might get a couple likes on it.

**W:** Nobody really measures a group based on their Twitter account. With Facebook, you can see the page likes, and say, “Oh, this group’s really doing stuff, they have 5,000 likes.” Or something.

**L:** Yeah, and the stupid part of it is, is that you still need to be active on it. It is the second largest platform, and you need to just try. And something every couple days is better than nothing. And if you’re lazy, you can make your Facebook automatically go to Twitter. But, it’s better if you re-type the content, make it short and small. And Instagram is about to surpass Twitter as the second most engaged platform. So, we’re really trying to boost that. Which, Instagram is really focused on making people feel … good, I want to say, but looking at the photos. So, it’s kind of like your magazine. And the cool thing about Instagram is that it doesn’t have to be centric to what you’re doing right then. Like, with Facebook it’s very centric, like “I’m doing this right now!” Like, we’re going to post something today about a masterclass we’re doing. But Instagram is like, I took a pretty picture of this statue, and I might post it in three days.

**G:** Instagram, the entire basis of the platform is the visual stimulus of the picture you’re looking at. The story doesn’t matter like it does on Facebook. People scroll through and they literally just look at the pictures. So, you’re just trying to make whatever the most beautiful, or stimulating picture, or whatever, block that you can create.

**L:** What’s really funny, is with Instagram, is something like 45% of your followers will take an action that will result in some sort of monetary conversion. So, if we put out something on our Instagram and ask people to buy something beautiful from us, like with our CD, those people are much more likely to buy it, than if we do it on Facebook. It’s crazy.

**G:** If you make it relate to the kind of consumption that they’re doing on that platform. Something that’s obviously jiving with the things they’ve been accumulating about you. If it’s kind of unrelated, like “come to an event…” that’s probably not going to work.

**W:** But it is a good partner for Facebook. Because, if the focus on Instagram is to create as good a visual stimulus as you can, a lot of times we’ll just take that photo, and take it over to Facebook, and use Facebook to tell the story. And you never want to post anything on Facebook without an attachment.
L: Yeah, don't just write sentences.

W: Yeah, that's for your personal page. Business pages, even with Facebook, I would argue that it is a visual medium, more than just reading a post. Maybe not as much as Instagram, but they relate.

A: Ok. So, going along with some of this. You guys have just been walking down my outline. So, going along with visual designs, the main reason why I started looking at you is that somebody had directed me to you because of your photos.

L: Which photos were you looking at?

A: The ones from your first album. But, even still, now you have the newer ones, I don't know what kind of building is happening behind you, but it's pretty cool.

G: Yeah, there's supposed to be water coming down from those. And we have newer ones…

A: So, did you approach a photographer with these ideas?

L: Yes, the first photos, we came to the sight with those props, and it was Giovanni's sister who took the photos for us. So, we were definitely just gonna go for it. And, the one where we were playing on the brick building, we were going to a city and contacted a photographer and told him kind of what we were going for. The last pictures were like the first, where we came to a place with our idea and some props, and there was a photographer that just happened to be there.

G: Photos, for us, have to have a specific purpose. Either something that we know our manager can send out, and that would attract presenters, because presenters know that's something that would get their audience interested. Or, it can be something that you know directly that someone might want to come see you more than other people if they see it, because it's just more visually stimulating. There can be some direct reasons for it. Beyond that, we try to make sure that they fit into a couple of our identities. We have a few different pools we play in, we have some more traditional ones, so when we're playing on a more traditional series, and we're being presented as a traditional group, but maybe a little more maverick, we have those. If it's a new music series, we have things that play for that. And then we have things that are a little bit more avant garde, and those are for the pure “new music” crowd. That just seems to be speaking beyond traditional chamber music. That the photo is just a piece of art on its own.

L: The first photos related directly to the title of the album so we had to figure out how to visually capture this. And our third CD, was a similar idea, capturing the concept and title of the album into a photo. So, we're saying, what can we do that's a little more out there that still portrays this theme?
G: Photos are still probably the most important marketing piece you have, it’s been that way for probably a hundred years. Your press photo, headshot, whatever.

L: It’s your first impression.

G: Those first photos are still the most popular photos we’ve ever taken, and people have booked us because they like the photos. Having something that stands out. You know the box of the market you’re in, and there’s an outer box of people that are still in that market, but are a little outside of that. If you can be in that little edge between those two, that’s probably the most successful photos you’ll have.

L: It was a big part of our identity from the beginning. To do something different, and I think that holds true with a picture. If it’s a picture that nobody’s ever seen before. I think everybody’s seen the picture of a string quartet walking down the street with their cases. So, if you can come up with something that people haven’t seen before, it’s more likely to be memorable.

A: Absolutely. So, does that go along with some of your other visual images? I noticed you guys don’t have a logo. I don’t know if that’s intentional.

L: I think we have one on our Instagram. It’s not on our website.

G: There just isn’t a whole lot of utility for us for a logo. Not too much that we would do with it. If the logo is supposed to be your brand, it has to be used that way. Something that people can recognize you with, but I don’t know for us what that would be. We had one for a while. It still serves a practical purpose. You need it on like, letterhead, or someone says they need it. Sometimes for grants you’ll need one.

L: It’s kind of an archaic tool.

G: If it’s not going to be something really representative, and not something you can give to people and they’ll identify you with it immediately. It’s a waste because it’s just extra crap out there that gets in the way of things that people do identify with you. Which would be your visual image, or any other identifiers that you have. I’d say most logos in the arts are probably unnecessary. If you’ve got a killer one, and you’re seeing success with it, then go with it, but not really for us.

A: Awesome. Ok, that pretty much covers the majority of all the questions I have. If you have anything else to say. Like, if you could do it all over again, or any advice that you would give new chamber ensembles in order to be as successful as they can. Whatever you want to say to little kids, college kids, about starting a chamber group or moving into the professional realm, this is the time. If there’s anything you thought I missed.

G: Chamber music is tough to promote, monitor, and foster.
D: There’s so many moving parts.

G: And all the groups that get started, most of them, get started on their own. We didn’t talk too much about being a performer, or your skills as a musician. There’s a completely different set of performance skills from playing your instrument, and being good at your instrument, and understanding how to be a good chamber musician. You need to have people who are very unselfish. You can’t have people who listen to recordings and are concerned about how they sound above others. You want to have the most selfless musical people you can in a group, and you have to be able to honestly talk about how you sound. And how everybody inside of that needs to start working on their own musical skills to start playing in that way specifically. And whatever chamber group you have is like its own way of playing. You won’t know what that is immediately, but that's a different playing that anywhere else.

A: Cool, awesome. Anything else?

All: I think that's it.

A: Thank you so much!

All: Thank you.

_Alias: Horace_

This interview was held over the phone over two days, December 30, 2015 and January 1, 2016. Horace was emailed a copy of the consent form for review, and gave verbal consent over the phone. The copy of this interview has been edited to hide the identity of Horace and his ensemble, and has been limited to the subject matter for this study.

Horace’s ensemble performs frequently, primarily recitals and masterclasses, and other educational programs. They perform original arrangements, and music from the standard repertoire.

A: Did you have any questions about the privacy consent form?

H: No, I’m cool with all that stuff. With this stuff, it all needs to get out there. All the stuff we talk about, it’s not like it’s any secret.

…

A: Yeah, definitely. Ok, so you talked briefly about branding as an individual, so for your group, you guys
do have a pretty specific image that you draw from. Is that something that developed over time, or did you sit down and say, “This is how we want to present ourselves.” How did that come about?

H: Well, I think it kind of evolved, we had to learn from it. We came from the school of chamber music playing that most successful groups have been modeled after. So, they were teaching us some of this, but we were also learning from just seeing them. What is their brand? One, musical excellence, but we also knew the inner workings of the group. We knew the different personalities of the members. I don’t know how much you know about this group, but in terms of the branding side, there were a lot of fires that needed to be put out because of some member issues. Lots of fires. So, we saw that. I think we thought, in terms of “Branding” for a chamber group, we should be pretty low maintenance. You want to be easy to work with, that’s part of it. When it comes down to branding in terms of the performing side of stuff, it came down to, “How are we going to make our concert different from these other groups, you know? How are we going to differ ourselves?” It came down to being a producer of music, not just a consumer of music.

There were kind of two stages to my group. The first stage was, we started out as just a “gig” group, a group of friends, like most groups do. We started freelancing around the area. We played all kinds of weddings, church services, graduations, anything that we could play music for, we did. We got involved, really active, in playing at churches throughout the area, playing church services. Then we met lots of organists and music directors, so then we started getting hired for the big holidays, which also led to us doing concerts on their church concert series, just small series. And we did that throughout, all over the area. Then down the road, about 8 or 9 years later, we had a member that came in, and we decided to kind of change the direction of the group. Still freelance, but we wanted to do more and more concerts. How can we get on the road, and become a touring ensemble?

... 

A: How does your programming, and how do your rehearsals work now? Do you pretty much have the same program for an entire season? Or do you have a few in your pocket ready to go?

H: We have a program for a couple seasons. The great thing about what we do, if we get bored of a piece, or want to change something, “Well, now we’re putting this in the program.” We have three arrangers in the band, “Hey, I just arranged this.” So, we try it out, we like it, let’s play it in a masterclass, we like it, it went over well. We put it in a program, and we either make the program longer, or we take out something, or “Ok, this could be a nicer placement for this piece.” So, we can do that. But we usually have a program for a couple seasons. But then we have multiple collaborations, so we have lots of programs that we have, that we play for a season. We have a program with different chamber groups, we have dozens of pieces with large ensembles. The really cool thing, is that now we’re not just going and doing just a solo concert. Every tour now is completely different. So, we have all these different things
that we can do, which is cool, besides just our solo concerts. We have eight different kinds of masterclasses that we offer. That's one thing that's really cool in how the group has changed.

We all live in different parts of the US, so we can't rehearse 15 hours a week, but when we were rehearsing 15 hours a week, we weren't on the road 100 days out of the year. So, all of our rehearsing is done on the road, we always show up a day before our first event, whether it's a masterclass, wherever we're scheduled/contracted to be, we always show up a day before. And then we'll do a long rehearsal, and then usually sometime during the summer, usually during our camps, we'll do a ton of rehearsing.

Now, the past two years, every August we do a recording, that gets us learning new rep. And, because everything is in the band, when a guy finishes a chart, he just sends it to us, sends us a PDF, and an MP3, and we can learn the chart, and when we decide to read it, we're all familiar with it, and can get it into the mix, if we like it, pretty quickly. So, it becomes very streamline, very efficient, as opposed to years ago, where we would have to wait for the rehearsal, and get it, and sight read it, and whatever.

A: Yeah, you really couldn't know what other people's parts were supposed to be until you rehearsed. So, that's pretty cool. So, kind of moving into that, I'd like to talk a little bit about recording and photos. The first recording that your group put out, when was that? Did you do anything before you released a professional CD?

H: We're talking cassettes, hahaha, you're first CD, that's cute, haha.

A: Haha. Let's just go with "Album."

H: We're talking cassettes, 8-track, loop, reel-to-reel, and editing on that. None of this iMovie. Trying to get an edit, to splice it together so you don't hear it. And then there were "DATs." You know, we recorded early on, we did some cassettes. You just grow as a group; you learn so much about the group that you come out a better group. You learn about the personalities, because when it gets stressful… if somebody starts stressing out, how does everybody else react? Is it, "Ok, let's take a break, everything's good, don't worry about it..." or does it just ramp up, and become incredibly volatile.

A: So, these first recordings, you had a sound engineer, and you were splicing and dicing?

H: The very first recording that we did we were at a church, and we just recorded, there was no sound engineer or producer, we just did it.

A: Just live recording-style?

H: We did the takes, like, "I think we got it, I think we got it… No, let's try again..." And then you have to go and set the tape back… it was a pain in the ass. Our first CD we had a producer and a sound engineer, we had both.
A: Were you then, and currently, still involved in doing some of the editing?

H: Now, our CDs are so efficient, we do everything, in terms of: We have a place that we record, we have our producer and we have a sound engineer for our CDs now. But all the editing is done by us. We have somebody that does the final master, but yeah, we don’t rely on a company, because right now, CDs are a point of purchase sale for a concert, that’s all CDs are for, unless your Adele, or Taylor Swift, and can sell, you know 20 million copies. But, you know, what Adele did was incredible, like her or not, she was like, “No, you’re going to go out and buy my CD.” Someone who can hold the recording industry by the balls, and is like, “You want my music, this is how you’re going to get it. You’re gonna go buy my CD.” Or, what Taylor Swift did with Apple, so, some of these pop artists, you gotta hand it to them. You know the guys from Metallica, thank goodness for them. But for all of us in the Classical world, if you get a major group, like the Philadelphia Orchestra, or Boston Symphony Orchestra, if they sell a couple thousand recordings, that’s a success. So, for CDs now for chamber music groups, it’s a point of purchase sale. It’s how we operate, that’s our operating business. Our CDs pay for our overhead, they pay for car rentals, pay for gas, pays off credit cards, basically all of our overhead. We don’t have to do hotels, but if we ever have to pay for a hotel room, it pays for postage, pays for buying new CDs, pays for the recording part. So, it just kind of covers those expenses.

Again, it connects you with the audience more, they want to take something from the concert, they want to get something signed. And presenters, they want to see that you’ve made recordings. Whether it’s through a label, or just done on your own, you’re gonna have to have recordings, as well as video and all that. But, now it’s so easy, and I’m not a tech guy. It’s just so easy now for a group to make their own CDs. Plus, the cost, once a CD is done, you have your master, you can go to a company, CDBaby, and they reproduce CDs. Once you get into the reproduction side, you buy them for $1.50, $2.00 at the most, and you sell them for $20, where else can you get that return?

A: Yeah, it’s a great deal!

H: Again, it helps with our expenses, connecting us, and able for us to put more media out there, whether it’s on Facebook our website, something to talk about in interviews, “Check out our new CD, it features this, this, and this…”

A: Yeah, so for a younger ensemble, I think there’s a lot of debate about this. Since it’s fairly cheap and easy to put out a CD, what do you recommend if they’re just getting together and they’re maybe trying to just get more gigs? Would you recommend them trying to put out a whole album, or just a demo, a live recording, or something edited? How would you recommend them approach their first recording?

H: I think for a group it would depend on what the group’s current vision is. If they are a group that is just freelancing around a metropolitan area, and they’re just a standard chamber ensemble, a brass quintet,
woodwind quintet, string quartet, and they're playing weddings, they're playing graduations, just freelancing. Make a recording of that kind of music. One, they're going to go through the process of recording, whether you're recording 5 minutes or an hour's worth of music, you're going to learn a lot, and come out of it a better group for it. It doesn't necessarily need to be called a "Demo" CD, but this is music that has wedding processions, or if it's a jazz combo, a lot of standards that you would play at receptions, or a jazz club. Have some nice photos, and you know, the tunes that are on it, and all the information that needs to go on it, all that stuff.

If they're trying to get the attention of management, that's a whole other ball game. They're going to have to put more "big boy" stuff on there, put on the big boy pants, and throw on some big stuff. But, also groups have to be careful, how are they branding themselves for a group recording something standard, ok, that's nice, but… that's not interesting. It's not interesting to an audience, it's not interesting to management. Are these your own arrangements, or are they by a particular composer, or a mix of original compositions that were written for your group by this composer, plus these really cool pieces that one of the members, or somebody arranged for you, that has a theme to it? Just because you make that CD, it's not, “Now we'll be successful, we'll sell a lot of them.”

A: So, it's more about knowing what you want to use the recording for then?

H: Yeah, I would say so, if you're doing concerts, if you're trying to get management and do concerts, then you want to put on the CD the big bulk of your concert. This is what you're offering, this is what you're doing. Have a mix of everything on there. Again, you're not going to record “Ode to Joy.” There's nothing wrong with that, but it's for a certain thing. Having a brand new suite of really cool Latin tunes, for whatever ensemble is something completely different, that's for another skill set, or attracting a different audience.

A: Yeah, that's great. So, what about video? It seems like you guys mostly just have live video, not really a lot of produced stuff,

H: We'd love to; it just comes down to the cost. We have had some, and it's just a matter of who's going to pay for it, and what is the need for it?

A: Yeah, it seems like there's probably not as much of a return on investment for video. People aren't really buying DVDs.

H: No, video would be more for educational purposes. If we went into the videos, it would be more into the educational side of stuff. Maybe, I don't know. But I think, for any young group, for any group you've got to have as much video as possible,

A: At least the live performances?
H: Yeah, live performances, and even videotaping rehearsals. It’s a great experience. And, if you can get multiple camera angles. That’s the kind of stuff that we’re getting into. We just put two videos up on our Facebook page of a couple of these concerts that we did. We had two GoPros up on stage, and they came out really cool. And then our manager now wants us to do a video, there’s a camera that’s in 360, so basically, you’re looking at your phone at the video, but if you put your phone towards the ceiling, it moves, so you can just see, now you’re looking at the concert hall, you were looking at the players, now you’re seeing the hall, you’re seeing the audience, you’re seeing the ceiling, or you’re looking at the ground, or you’re looking all the way to the right, so it’s a completely 360 degree experience that you’re looking at through your phone.

A: Cool, wow.

H: Yeah, wow, it’s like, “Are you kidding me?” It completely blew me away. For this old guy here, it’s like, what? I can do what? Wait, my phone’s moving and the camera’s moving? How is that even possible? I believe it, I know it’s not magic, haha. Science. Yeah, so things like that. You know the thing with presenters, if you’re making a video for presenters, or a future contractor, it only needs to be a couple minutes, they don’t need to play a 6-minute piece. Honestly after about 10 seconds of watching a video, they say, “Yeah, this group is interesting, I’ll watch another 10 seconds…” or, “I’m out.” Unfortunately, that’s what it comes down to.

A: So, my final question for this section, I was listening to another interview that you did on a podcast, and you talked about meeting a guy who ended up giving you all of this stuff, amazing photos and things, and I wasn’t quite sure when in your ensemble’s timeline that had happened.

H: That was… probably maybe 10 years into the band.

A: So, what were you using before this? Did you have professional photos?

H: We had photos taken by a friend, they were ok, they were good, but it wasn’t… We just kind of went into his studio, and “Ok, what do you guys want to do?” and we just kind of took some pictures. But, what this photo shoot was, they had a storyboard, in terms of shots, we knew what we wanted to do ahead of time, they had somebody doing makeup, so it was like, “Ok, so you can give me eyebrows?” I still had hair back then, so I didn’t have to worry about that. Yeah, there was just a difference, the whole process, and after, they kind of went through everything, these were the best photos for us to choose from. Thinking about what is going to attract, catch the presenter, the audience, the contractor, whoever is looking at it, what they are going to actually want to look at for a couple seconds. It was just a different experience for us.

And now, you don’t have to spend thousands of dollars, and we have, we’ve spent thousands of dollars, we’ve spent hundreds of dollars on photo shoots, and you wouldn’t be able to tell the difference.
And now it’s so… even with the iPhones, the new ones, you get great pictures even with those. Now, it’s the vision of the group, “Ok, are we gonna stand there with our instruments? What is going to be the setting? Are all of us going to have instruments, no one has instruments, inside/outside, stand in a line? You know, there’s different ways to do it, formal, casual, serious, smiling, interactive, you know. Take as many photos as you can. That’s the great thing, that now-a-days, you’re not paying for the film. Now, you can take 100 or 1,000 shots, and it costs you exactly the same. You can delete or keep as many as you want.

A: Now that we can get high quality photos, but there’s still a lot of bad photos out there, where everyone looks super awkward.

H: Oh, yeah, they do. You know, there are those shows with the bad family photos, that stuff.

A: But even with ensembles, I’ve been going through a lot of websites, and everybody’s got these high-quality photos, and there’s definitely an impact that certain photos make. Do you guys still work with a professional photographer, even just for the artistic vision, or have you been doing long enough that you kind of know what things make you guys look good?

H: Our last two photo shoots we used a guy who’s a friend of some of our members. We’ve all done enough photo shoots that we kind of know what it is we need, what our management needs, what a poster needs, so we kind of have that with our personalities. It’s also got to reflect the personality of the group, you have a younger group that… with the music they play, it’s kind of unique instrumentation, then the photo should show that. Maybe they’re not even in “formal” concert wear, or the aesthetic reflects the personality of the band, and what it is they mean. At our point, we have to think, “Ok, our instrument company needs a certain photo, because they want to make a new poster, so we need this, we need it with the instruments.” With the programs that presenters make, they need a certain look with a photo, so we kind of know that, what they need.

But, there are some really creative groups out there. Then you look at Mnozil, that’s them, whatever photo, that’s those guys, that’s their personality. So, just because this group did this, doesn’t mean my group has to do that, and this group has to do this. Especially for a young group, show the personality. You want it to be serious, you don’t want everybody to be chugging beers, or smoking a cigarette in, but reflecting what the group is about in their personality. Is it a really serious group? It should reflect that. Is it a group that’s just going to be a barrel of fun the moment they get out on stage? It should reflect that. Have you ever seen Carrot Top’s photos? Check out his headshot, it’s awesome, it’s a black and white photo, but then his hair is everywhere, and it is the brightest orange/fiery red that that you could put on a photograph. Now, whether you’re a Carrot Top fan or not, that is a really cool photo. There’s a lot of individuals, and soloist in a group that have photos like that. As opposed to maybe a faculty group at a university. They may have a more traditional photo. They’re in their tuxedos, sitting
looking at the camera, because that’s sort of what the school needs or dictates, or wants. I think it’s looking at photos.

If somebody is not comfortable in front of a camera, they should have fun at the end of a rehearsal taking pictures of that person, loosening them up. What is it going to take during the photo session to loosen this person, or these people up? Music? Certain jokes, certain words, certain stories? Have a particular person there, whatever the case is, that once the photo shoot starts, that they’re going to be comfortable, whatever it is that they need. But, yeah, definitely some thought needs to go into it. We’ve had photos done in the past, and they’ve photo shopped stuff in the background, everybody does that. It’s just part of what can be done now, it’s incredible. Don’t have to worry about, “can I get some more hair on top of my head?” haha.

A: When you guys first started as an ensemble, I remember you saying in your interview on the podcast, that you were making tons and tons of phone calls getting gigs. What kind of administrative stuff did you guys do from the get-go?

H: From the very beginning, there were two of us, myself and one of the other members. We became an equal partnership right from the beginning stages. We decided that’s how were going to run the business. So, on one piece of paper we just kind of typed it out, and we signed it, this was how we were going to run the business, very simple. Two of us, myself and one other player, we kind of went after all the work, all the gigs. And, again it was different 25 years ago, 15 years ago, different 10 years ago, but we just went after and did everything. We designed a press kit, we had some cassette tapes of us playing whatever it was, wedding music, you know. We went after all those different freelance gigging markets that any metropolitan area will have.

A: Wow, so as you guys have gotten more well known, and been doing different kinds of things, what sort of duties have you decided to hire out for?

H: To hire out for… really, nothing. With having management, having an instrument sponsor, everything funnels through me, so I’m in contact with them all the time. In terms of our social media, that’s all done in-house, all the music is done in-house. So, what their strengths are, we capitalize on that. And it’s either going to be through writing or social media, you’re going to see a lot of strengths, especially with younger players now, they know how to do all the things in and around social media. And with the recording too, being able to know how to engineer, know microphones. Three of the guys in the band know all that stuff, the engineering side of the recording. They’ve been in the industry so long, they’ve experienced it, they know microphones, they know what works, what doesn’t work. So, I think that’s really important for a younger person, if they are able to work in the recording studio at their school, as an intern or just for a semester, just to get some knowledge, learn the language of it. It’s just another thing that they can put
into their musical toolbox. That they'll be able to use, whether as a teacher, or with their chamber music ensemble.

A: Right. So, what does your management do?

H: We’ve been with the same manager for going on 19 years. But, we’ve gone through five management companies with him. Whenever he leaves, we follow him. There’s different uses for a manager. Depending on how proactive the group is, is how much they’ll need a manager, and then there’s management. Our guy has been part of our management company, and then our manager. He kind of oversees everything we do. Makes sure he’s in on the whole programming, the look, the branding of the band. And we can use his expertise as much or as little as we want. Some groups need a lot, and like us, we kind of have an idea, and it’s like, “Here’s what we’re going to do,” and he’s either on board, or, “How about we do this, or that…” so it all works out. But in terms of the management, I think it’s really important for students or groups… Just because they have management does not mean they will be making $100,000 each a year, or that you’re all set. Again, it depends on how pro-active your management is, and how big the company is, how many groups they have, what their expertise is. Again, you’re relying on your manager, your management company for all of their networking expertise, because it all comes down to the relationships they have with presenters.

So, there are a lot of presenters who will only use one management company, and a certain person to book their season. And then there are others, who will go around, like in the APAC conference, and they’ll say “Yeah, that looks good…” or they’ll say, “I wanna have this group, who are they represented by? Ok, so and so, I need to make sure I go by and see their manager, and then I can book them.” And then what all the managers are doing is they’re trying to network, and are fostering relationships with all these presenters, and all the concert series around the country. And then, there’s conferences in the Fall, and the big one this month, in New York, the APAC, so they set up meetings, and they’re trying to convince presenters, “Ok, you need to have _ from our roster.”

A: So, it sounds like the con would be: if they’re not doing what their supposed to be doing, and you’re not really bothering them to do it.

H: Yeah. You don’t have the interesting program, you don’t have the materials, they’re not excited about you. And they don’t understand, you have to make them understand what you are, what the group is, and how to sell the group.

A: So, what about doing a bunch of this other stuff yourself. Maintaining your website, maintaining your social media on your own. And the other administrative things that you guys in the band do. I think I know what you’re going to say, but what are some of the disadvantages of doing that, or what are some of the advantages?
H: Well, I think if it’s rock and roll, and you’re bringing in millions of dollars a year, but in the world we are existing in, it’s what we have to do.

A: So, it’s mostly a financial reason.

H: Yeah, it’s what we have to do to survive. I’m sure there are groups that build into their expenses: “We have somebody that does our website, we have somebody that books all of our travel…” whatever the case might be, or if they have a lot of equipment, “We have somebody that drives the truck.” But, if we can all do it, why pay somebody to do it? And we have complete 100% control over it, and the money stays in house with us, so we keep our overhead little to none. With CDs before, if you wanted to do a CD it would just cost thousands of dollars, and then if you wanted to get it on the Summit label, that was great, but then they would own it. So, that was a big thing, that’s one of the reasons we started doing our own stuff. We have a number of CDs with Summit, they’re great guys, and you give them the master, and then they handle everything, they do the design, and they do a fantastic job, but then they own the master. So, well, we can do this on our own, and with all these clearing houses, with CD Baby, and places that you can make your own for half the cost, it’s like, “Ok, let’s do that.” So, it’s just a matter of survival, and keeping things afloat.

But in doing the website, we do it through Kulture Shock, you just plug in everything, everything is there. So even someone like me, who is not tech savvy, can do it, so why should we be paying somebody to do it? Now, we have a monthly fee for the website, it’s like $40, or whatever it is, but then we control all the content. It fits our needs for whatever we need, so that works out. And with Facebook, yeah we could pay somebody to do that, but a lot of that stuff is so instant, the content, a lot of it is put up while we are on the road, whether it’s a picture we had taken, or we’re about to do this concert, or something cool just happened, we just put it up there. And you know, all the younger guys have their Facebook pages, I don’t, but it’s so easy for them to do. So, we’ve just kind of really learned to streamline everything, as easy as possible.

A: Yeah, nice. So, let’s move onto Networking, or network. So, do you guys have a mailing list?

H: We don’t. We talk about it because the website that we have collects all that, we could send out a newsletter, and stuff like that. We’re talking about paying somebody to do that, that might be something to do. I just can’t take that on. We’ve talked about it, maybe having one of the guys, have a newsletter that we send out maybe once a month or quarterly, type thing. Which would be just a great thing to have, because we’re getting all these emails from our website that we collect, or through Facebook. It’s just a matter of, what’s at the top of the list that we have to do.

A: So, in order to contact fans, is it just through the social media contacts? So you just say, “Hey we’ve got this performance going on.” Or do you rely on your general marketing?
H: Well, for us now, the series that we have, the halls take care of all the advertising. Whether it’s a subscription base, or whether they advertise the concert, it’s up to them. With that being said, we do a lot of interviews, or I do a lot of interviews for upcoming events that we do. They’ll call our management and say, “Is there somebody in the group available to do an interview?” Then they’ll get in touch with me, and we’ll do an interview, so we do that a lot. Whether it’s radio, or print, that’s done all the time. We just did a festival. And where there was a noon-time news show, where we played, and talked about the concert, and interview. On Facebook, it’s more of an awareness that we’re in an area, it’s like, “Hey we’re in Baton Rouge, looking forward to our concert tonight at 7:30.” It’s not like, three weeks ahead of time, like, “Hey come to our concert in Baton Rouge.” It’s usually like, “Had a great concert in Baton Rouge last night!” Or “A great hang!” and here’s a picture of the hang afterwards with some faculty and bunch of students. And then, on the website our dates are on there, all our dates through February are on there now. So, we’re doing that. But I think that some groups are really good at that, advertising that, but I think just using it, or knowing how to use it to its fullest advantage. Whether it’s somebody in the band that can, or you pay somebody. Especially if you’re producing your own concerts. Now, if we were doing out own concerts where we were getting paid by how many people were showing up, with ticket sales, then we would be really spending a lot of our time targeting that area. Through print, through radio, TV, social media, anything. We could be contacting all the music directors in the area through middle school, high school, college, contacting them. Private teachers, music stores, we would be doing that. So, that’s where if you have a publicist, you pay a publicist to do that. But, for the most part, we rely on the halls. And some do a great job, and others… you know they dropped the ball. And you’re like, “Aww, really?” especially when you get a nice hall, it’s gonna be a fun concert to play…

A: Yeah, and not very many people show up.

H: Yeah.

A: Cool. So, let’s talk a little bit now about social media. It looks like you guys mostly use Facebook and Twitter, right?

H: Yeah

A: Who actually does most of that stuff, is it you, or another member?

H: One member does most of the YouTube Channel. Two of the other members also puts some stuff on Facebook, but It’s mostly the one member who puts most of the stuff on our Facebook page. The Twitter, I know we have a Twitter account, I don’t know how active that is. Again, I don’t do Twitter. Facebook, I’ll look at every couple days, I’ll check just to see what’s up there, if it’s any cool things, kind of look at some comments.

A: So, do you find that the Facebook and YouTube as the best outlet for you on the social media?
H: Yes. I think Facebook is the best. The website is good for presenters, looking at content, looking and programs, and bios, and getting pictures, if they need it. Getting content that they need. And just kind of looking at the schedule. But I think the day-to-day is more of Facebook.

A: Yeah, more of a fan base sort of thing.

H: Yeah, and then the other guys, they do Facebook. So, they have a lot of followers as well. Especially our younger members, with their personal Facebook pages, and the ensemble Facebook page, it’s pretty out there, and our instrument sponsor has a page. If we send them stuff, they’ll put it up there.

A: So, more opportunities through crossover.

H: Yeah, even our old management firm has a Facebook page, and I’m sure the new company will have a Facebook page with our stuff on there as well. So, that kind of gets out there. We don’t have any viral videos, unfortunately, like Mnozil, that had over a million hits. Which is great. So, just kind of keeping it at that. I don’t know what else is really out there, now. I’m sure 10 years from now it might be something completely different.

A: Yeah, who knows. Ok, so you’ve talked a lot about branding, so I wanted to talk a bit about your basic visual identity, and sort of how you came up with some of these things. You guys don’t really have a logo, do you? It doesn’t seem like you do?

H: We have a logo, we don’t use it a lot. It’s on the website. I don’t think it’s on the Facebook page. We do have a logo that is used. I know it’s on the website someplace.

A: So, for some of your visual stuff, did you work with a graphic designer to design your logo, have you worked with different visual artists?

H: We did have a designer who designed the logo.

A: Ok, and about how long ago was that.

H: The newest logo, we’ve had different logos over the years. The newest logo was probably 5 years ago. 5 or 6 years ago.

A: Ok. Oh, I think I see it’s, it’s on your latest CD. Ok, so how did that come to fruition, did you just kind of talk to the person and say, “This is what we do.” And they came up with something cool.

H: Yeah, this was one of our former members had a friend who was a graphic designer, and worked with some pretty big name people. Actually, Lance Armstrong, he worked with Lance Armstrong, and they were buddies, and he just did it for us. We showed him the logo that we had before, and he came up with
a bunch of different logos. We said, this is how much money we have, so what can you do for this, and he
gave us a bunch of logos. And, because he was a friend of one of the members, he was able to do a
really nice job, and spend the time. Whereas if we had just hired him outside, and not known him, it would
have cost a lot more. And we just decided on the one we wanted.

A: So, for you guys, from the CD cover, you’ve got your ensemble name as part of the logo. Is it
something that you would think about taking your name out and just using some of the image? Because
sometimes logos don’t have anything, no words at all.

H: Yeah, I think we’ve used them for both, I think every time we’ve used the logo it says our name, just so
there’s no guessing to it, so there’s instant brand recognition.

A: Yeah, because you think about how there are logos like the Rolling Stones has just the lips and the
tongue.

H: Yeah, obviously, there’s some really iconic logos in branding. I don’t think, in chamber music there’s
really a logo, you see it, and it doesn’t have the group's name and you think, “Oh yeah, it’s that group.”
Unless, it’s one of us. Everybody would know Rolling Stones, so unless you’re in that world.

A: Right. So how about for a lot of your other visuals. Your photos that you’re using, is it something that
you worked with your manager, getting a photographer. This image where you have the “relaxed black”
look going on.

H: Yeah, every time, it's just been, “Ok, we need new photos.” The past two photo sessions have been a
friend of the band’s, one of the members, so we were able to get a really good rate, we were in the area,
so let’s get new photos. Every photos session has been different. Sometimes our instrument sponsor paid
for it. We’ve gotten recommendations, we were going to be in this part of the country, who’s a great
photographer, because we need new photos? And we don’t know them, but we just hire them. So, we’ve
kind of had everything. The photographer we just used, does a really nice job. The photo shoot before
this most current one, we did down at a hotel, both inside and outside. We were able to get a lot of
mileage. Our poster came from that, no photoshop at all. It was outside, the pool area, that's where out
poster came. And this one, we wanted to get a new photo shoot because, one, it had been a couple
years, but we have a new CD coming out, so we wanted to get a new photo for the CD, so it was like,
“Ok, let’s get new photos.” So, now we gotta pick out photo for the CD, get that done. Again, we kind of
know what it is that we need for photos.

A: Have you ever experimented with more avant garde photos? I’ve seen a few where people are looking
off in different directions, and in strange postures.
H: Not particularly. The photo shoot we did, not this last one, but the last couple, we went to about 6 or 7 locations all around the area. And the photographer was great, a lot of them were done with no instruments at all, and a lot we were looking at the camera, like *Reservoir Dogs*, walking towards the camera in a big empty parking lot. That kind of look. We were all kind of standing in different parts of an area, all looking different directions. I thought that was really cool, and got some great shots with that.

A: Was that more of the photographer's artistic vision?

H: Yes, 100%. We were like, "Yeah, that sounds cool." You kind of hope that whoever your photographer is, you can kind of give them a basic idea, we want instruments, we don't want instruments. What we're gonna wear, these are the clothes we've got. But, hopefully they'll not be afraid to have some input, whether it's through locationsthat they'll be able to come up with, or backdrops, whatever the case is.

A: Yeah, so if you were giving advice to younger ensembles for doing their own promotion and cheaper photos, it sounds like even now, you still rely on, if you know somebody, to have them help you out? So for a younger group, just trying to get started, to get the best quality at the lowest cost, what kind of recommendations would you have for them?

H: I think, if you're talking to young musicians, they're going to have friends who are artistic, maybe they're not gonna be great photographers, but they're going to have a good eye, in the visual arts, or they're creative. Just asking around. If you sit down and have a meeting: "Ok we need a photo shoot, but none of us know a professional photographer. But, you know what, I think my mom works with a person whose husband is really into photography, he takes great photos..." I think it's just sitting down. Again, with the new iPhones, you can take great pictures, and be really creative, and then with photoshop. What young people can do with that stuff now, is amazing.

The other thing is, every school has a photography class, major... that's part of being in the arts. There's going to be plenty of people there. There's going to be somebody that works at the school who is the school's photographer. Every school has a photographer that is taking pictures at athletic events, at the graduations, wherever the president goes, there's a photographer at the school. So, you contact that person, let them know who you are, and maybe "yeah, I'll come take some pictures for you guys, that'd be awesome." Or "yeah, I'll have my assistant..." or, "I teach a photography class, maybe if you want to come by, and maybe play a piece, talk to the class and see if anyone is interested in taking some pictures." And you get it for free, because they gotta be doing that kind of stuff. You have all these incredible resources at the school, for virtually nothing. In terms of photos, web design, content, video, all that stuff. You may not know the people, but all you have to do is contact the professor, or walk over there and say, "Hey, this is what we're interested in, do you know anybody, or any students that might be able to help us?" Using those resources, the people that you already know, and with one afternoon's work, it could be incredible, especially if all the members were contributing.
A: Yeah, their contacts. With website, do you think, in this day and age of social media, that just starting out ensembles should have a website? Or do you think they could get a lot done just utilizing YouTube and Facebook?

H: Well, I think it's what they can do. If they can afford a website, they should have a website. As much stuff as they can have is important. Obviously, the Facebook and YouTube, that stuff's all free, you can have a lot of stuff on that. But getting to presenters, they check everything. They want to see video, and how does the group look and sound, will they be good? And also, looking at their website you can see what the group has done in terms of reading about the group and the individuals, having that information. That's maybe a little easier to maneuver than on Facebook. Reading about all the programming that a group has done, getting photos, looking up videos, because you have an EPK or Press kit page, that's all right there. There are websites now, like Wix.com, where you can design your website for free. I think it’s important to have both. Again, 10 years from now, websites, Facebook maybe completely obsolete, and we're using… I don't know. I wish I did!

A: Alright, that pretty much concludes all the questions I have. I'll email you if I missed anything.

H: Yeah, shoot me a text or email.

A: I really appreciate your time and your advice.

H: So, will we be able to read it?

A: Yeah, once I'm done with the complete document I'll send it to you. I may email you the transcription of the interview, but that'll be based on time. But once it’s complete I will send you the complete document, which you will be able to have and use, if you want to.

H: Yeah, I can’t wait, it's awesome being a part of this. Thank you for asking.

A: Yeah, I'm so glad you were able to take the time.

**Alias: Justin**

This interview was held over the phone on December 27, 2015. Justin was emailed a copy of the consent form for review, and gave verbal consent over the phone. The copy of this interview has been edited to hide the identities of all members, and has been limited to subject matter for this study.

Justin’s ensemble performs regularly, touring with recital and educational concerts. They perform primarily original arrangements of music from the standard repertoire.
A: I wanted to thank you again for taking your time to do this for me.

J: Absolutely, my pleasure.

A: Should be fun. Just really quick. I know you signed my release document, consent form, but I just wanted to go over everything again and make sure you don’t have any questions about your privacy. A reminder that the study is conducted in two phases. I’ve already done research on your social media and any web presence that your ensemble has on the internet, Facebook, Twitter, website. The next step is our interview. I have a template of questions to ask, I did add a few questions based on the research I found, so there will be primarily shared questions with any ensemble or individual that I interview, but you will have some individual questions that I have for you. At the end of this study, the benefit to you is a complete copy of my dissertation, that you can keep, and read, and use however you want. So, as far as risks go for you, I’m trying to keep them to a minimum. The only study risk is the inadvertent release of sensitive information found in the interview questionnaire. I will make every effort to maintain your confidentiality. All my files will be kept private, I won’t be putting anything into a cloud database that could be connected to you, to try to avoid anything like that. I will redact any personal information. If you feel like answering a specific question is going to put you at risk, either professionally or personally, you are welcome to not answer that question instead of trusting me to redact that information, you can just say “I’m not comfortable answering that question.” I don’t anticipate there being anything that is going to put you at risk, but just want to make sure that you feel comfortable answering everything. The final thing is privacy: By agreeing to participate you understand that all or part of the answers you provide will be included in a published dissertation through Louisiana State University and will be publicly available. To participate in this study, you must meet the requirements of both the inclusion and exclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria is that you are a professional musician that has experience in professional chamber ensembles. And the exclusion criteria would be responses of subject that would require the removal of the subject from the study, which there shouldn’t be anything like that, that would be if you didn’t have a professional chamber ensemble. A transcript of the interview will be included in the appendix of the document, with all the redactions, as an anonymous transcript. The only information directly related to the research will be retained in my copy of the interview. That’s pretty much it. Once everything is printed, I will destroy any stuff. Do you have any questions about your privacy?

J: Nope

…

A: Yeah. So, along with showing your ensemble’s personality and making a connection to the audience on a more personal level. Do you guys choose your repertoire based on who your audience is going to be? I know you do a lot of educational stuff, but you also do regular performances, recitals, stuff like that. So, how do you decide on your repertoire for these kinds of performances?
J: Well, our repertoire is our repertoire. First of all, we’ve never dumbed down our program because we’re going to play for kids, or for the general public. Our program is what it is. And, I think that’s a mistake that a lot of ensembles make, “Oh we’re going to play kiddie shows, so let’s play something silly.” Or dumb down what they say. Kids are smart, kids know when they’re being patronized. Kids know when you’re not on the level with them. When my first group got started way, way back, we started doing our shows in tuxedos and we sat, and we did a lot of contemporary music, and we noticed that our audiences didn’t stick around. The music wasn’t connecting with our audience, despite us talking to the audience, and trying to bring them into the music. It was just so far removed from their daily experience, that they weren’t interested. So, we changed our approach, we changed how we appeared on stage. We lost the tuxedos, we made it a little bit more casual. When we do school shows with my current group, we’re in T-shirts and jeans, whatever, to be as closely connected to the students as possible. Still giving them the best music we can make. We wear black tops and jeans to have a little different look. You know, my current and past groups, totally different ensembles. The idea was still there, to not be so far removed from the students that they couldn’t relate to us. When it comes to actual repertoire. That’s another interesting thing. There are some people who are more to the idea of presenting new music, and making sure new music gets out, and I agree, but I also think that new music has to be really good. I think the problem is that a lot of the music that’s written for my instrumentation isn’t very good. A lot of the music that’s written for newer ensembles in general isn’t very good. It’s conceptual, and there’s some interesting things out there, but it’s nothing that anyone wants to listen to. I can’t remember the exact quote, but there’s a great story about Schoenberg. He’s playing tennis in L.A. and his tennis partner found out that he’s a composer, and they ask him “Well, why haven’t you invited us to any performances of your music?” and he says, “Because I like playing tennis.” So, I think even the people who write that music are aware that it’s not a general public thing.

So, if you’re trying to reach a general audience, you have to have music that a general audience would like. If you’re trying to hit a very specific, and small academic target, then you aim your musical choices that way. My group has not flat out said that we’re not going to play contemporary music, the situation just hasn’t come up yet. We haven’t come into a situation where there was something that we needed to do, or really something that we wanted to do. We’ve talked about it, and at some point we plan on doing it. We want to record some music, we want to commission some music and do stuff like that, but it’s gotta be good. It comes back to the product, I’m not going to present music that I don’t believe in. What’s the point in that, I don’t want to perpetuate something that I think is going to be harmful to music. I choose music that I want to play. That’s how we do it in the group. We’ll sit down and start thinking about music for next season, so “What do you guys want to play?” Our kind of group has a major handicap, because we don’t have a lot of music written for us. We’re having more and more written for us, and that’s great, but again, this goes back to the quality. How good is the music, and how accessible is it? I look at that as more an advantage because then we can go through all of music history and choose the music we love. Bach didn’t write anything for our instruments, but we sure do have some great arrangements of his.
A: Yeah, I noticed you guys do a lot of your own transcriptions too, and I guess this is a big reason why, “This is just good music, let's play it!”

J: And that’s exactly what it comes down to. All the music that we perform is either done by me or one other player, and it’s because, yeah, we could play more well-known arrangements. Everybody has played those arrangements at some point in their career. And they’re good. The problem with playing those tunes is that we’re not the ensemble they were arranged for. And the things that that ensemble has done, and continue to do are maybe not the way we approach it. Their strengths are not our strengths. So, we want to make our music more personalized for our ensemble so that we can present it better. And, I think that gives you a better product also. Our arrangements are never done until we’ve played them as a group and make the changes we’re going to make. I’ve been arranging tunes for a long time, I arranged pretty much everything my last group did, and pretty much everything that my current group is doing. And, the stuff that I arranged during my old ensemble days that we play for the current group, we’ve changed, because the people are different. Things are different, it’s not going to work if our strengths aren’t really showcased in the arrangements. We need to change the arrangements which will make it a better performance, which will make the whole thing better. So, we try to make it us.

A: Cool. Now, what about your rehearsal process. You guys usually have one program that you stick to for the whole season, is that right?

J: Yeah, primarily.

A: So, how do you get ready for this? Since everybody lives in the same city, I’m sure it’s a lot different than some of these groups that have people living all over the country and get together for five days before. So, do you guys rehearse regularly, or right at the beginning of the season you’ve got all your repertoire ready to go, have a big rehearsal and then start doing the tour?

J: Again, it’s different. This season we’re not touring as much as we did last season, so our approach is a bit different. So, last season, we had to know what our program was going to be the year before. Since we had that information, we had all that time to prepare, and we rehearsed, week to week. We generally rehearse on a weekly basis. Sometimes we don’t have that luxury.

You do different things for different things. But it comes back to your product, how you present your product, how you want it to sound. How you want it to look. We don’t think enough about how things look on stage as musicians from the audience perspective.

A: That was actually one of my next questions. How you guys consider it. It sounds like you think a lot about the stage presence and the visual element.

J: Oh, yeah, you have to, you absolutely have to. Your audience could go see a movie, that is vastly more
stimulating on an audio level and a visual level than going to see an orchestra concert. Because with an orchestra it’s a very static image you see, with a great auditory stimulus with strings.

You need to have something visual, I think. And I think that can also help just in the presentation of the music. Playing a beautiful piece of music, it can be very easy to use staging in something like that to really enhance the experience. If you’re performing from memory, if you have the melody you can walk forward, and the audience can see you, and now they know to pay attention. They go, “oh, well that person is playing the melody.” And if it becomes a duet, and that person joins the person already standing forward, then now they know what to listen for. Again, in a time where music education is significantly less than it has been in the past, sometimes you gotta help your audience along. And if you can do so from a very obvious visual standpoint, that’s going to make them feel better about their experience. They’re going to go away feeling like they know more about the music than they did when they got there, and not in a way where you talked down to them, and had to lecture them on why or how, but they just instinctively knew it, and it was a better experience for them.

A: Thank you, that’s really good advice. So, as far as recording and doing photos. I was reading that you do most of your recording, it’s all you. So, how did you get into that, first of all.

J: It all goes back to my experience with my old group. One player had worked in the recording studio at his university, so he already kind of knew about all the stuff and how to go about doing it. And everything that we did was always in house. We very, very rarely went out of house for anything. I picked up stuff watching him doing it, and seeing the different things that he would do. Everyone helped out, you have to. In a small group like that everyone has to be doing something. That was his job, but I kind of helped him by setting things up, and you start to learn how to go about doing it, and you teach yourself a lot of things. The internet, while it has many, many problems associated with it, is a really amazing educational tool, if used properly, haha. I’ve turned to the internet and found some ideas on how that would happen, and it worked out pretty well. Watching him do the editing, not even being able to hear it, but just watching what he was doing. I can be a very visual person, I learn things by watching, very often. So, seeing an audio file, and being able to line those things up, that makes sense to me. Finding the patter, and doing all that, so I have no problems doing editing and all that. And yet, you learn from every experience you do, so the more we record, the more I’ve done, the more I learn. Every recording we’ve done to this point has gotten better, which is the way it should be.

I learn things about my playing just by doing recording. On my solo recordings, my first solo recording was pretty good, for where I was at the time, but I learned so much about my playing doing the recording, that the second one was significantly better. I just finished a recording, and I know exactly the things that I need to be working on in my own practice now. What were my weaknesses in that recording, what do I need to do better to have a better performance the next time? I think any musician needs to be
recording themselves on some level, because, wow, what a learning experience. The whole being able to
do it yourself is very good.

You really don’t want to trust anyone else to pick the best tracks and decide the way your music
will sound, the way to present you, I don’t. If I can learn how to do it myself, I would much rather just do it
myself. And, I haven’t gotten to a point where I haven’t been able to, yet. I love the idea of having
someone there to help. That’s one of the great things about working in chamber music. Once the
recording is done you send it out to everybody, and everybody listens to it, and then you’ve got all these
different opinions about what is the best. Everyone’s listening for similar things. I think the way we’ve
done this for my groups, was I kind of pieced what I thought was the best takes of everything, and then I
would send those tracks to everybody, and then everybody would come back to me and say, “Well, in this
section, if we could find a better this and this…” or, “I just don’t think this lines up…” or, you know,
everyone’s going to hear something and they’re going to listen to it in a slightly different way. So then, I
go back into the recordings and fix all those things, send it back out. We just kind of go back and forth like
that until we have the product that we want. Sometimes a tuning issue, or whatever, but it might just be
the best that we have, and we just have to live with that. Or, do we go back a re-record? Or, how best to
serve it. But getting everybody’s input is hugely important. I can’t just make the recording and be done
with it, without anyone else’s input. What’s the point of that?

A: I guess it would be similar to just giving it to an audio engineer, without anyone getting their say, it’s
just your product, so that makes sense. Do you sometimes have problems with people getting back to
you? Do you have a deadline? There’s got to be some challenges with that.

J: Yeah, I set deadlines depending on the situation. One of our last CDs was a Christmas album, so it had
to be available before Christmas. So, we had very specific deadlines, so it was available the day after
Thanksgiving. That was the plan. So, I would send out a draft, and would say, “I need to hear back from
you guys in two weeks.” We recorded it in July, so we had tons of time, and I think that’s part of the thing,
is to record well before you need it, so you can take the time to make the best product. That is one of the
advantages of hiring someone to do it. That’s their job, and they’ll get it done a lot faster. But you still
have the same problems where everyone has to go back and listen, and say, “Can we find a better take
of this… whatever, whatever?” But, again, I just like having it in hand. I know exactly what’s being done. I
know when I say, there really isn’t a better take of this, there really isn’t a better take. It’s not just
someone being lazy and not really wanting to go through the work. Which is entirely possible. I don’t
really have a lot of experience on the other side of it. On the very first recording that I did, my group was
just part of a larger ensemble. There was a lot going on. And thank God I didn’t have to do that, because
there was a lot of stuff. I had hoped that there had been some better takes than what was on the CD, and
maybe there were, but that’s the problem, I’ll never know. The finished product could have been better,
and I’ll just never know if there was.
A: Right, when you guys go in to record now, and it’s probably different than when you first started. So, do you play your own “Sound Engineer” even while you’re recording? Where everybody’s got their parts marked with “That was my best take.” Just to make your job a little easier going through, where there’s a “That was terrible, don’t even bother listening to that…” Or do you try to keep it a, “No, we’re just recording, and we’ll listen back later.”

J: It’s a little bit of both. We designate two people to take notes, and their notes weren’t always the same. They didn’t always agree on what was the best take. So, sometimes it worked out, sometimes it didn’t. But, regardless, I knew where I should be looking. I knew places to look for what was potentially the best take. When they both say, “Don’t bother listening to this one.” I’m not going to waste my time listening to that one.

A: Sure. Do you ever have somebody else, a non-playing set of ears listening, just observing?

J: We haven’t, we’ve talked about it and we’re definitely open to doing that. One of the harder things is to know when to stop. When can we move on? Having an outside set of ears is good for that. Just so they can say, “You’ve definitely got this one.” Or “Nope, you definitely need to work on it again.” So that’s very good. On our last CD that’s out, the recording engineer did that sometimes, he we say “No, I think you need to do that again.” Or “Yeah, you guys got that, I think you can move on.” He didn’t really take any notes, which would be very helpful. That is also one of the first times that I’ve used an outside engineer. And, I think part of the problem was that he wanted to do the whole thing, he wanted to do the recording, the editing, and that. So, I think that once he found out that he wasn’t going to be doing the rest of that, his attention level went down on the rest of that.

A: hmm.

J: He did a fantastic job. The recording that we got, with the equipment, and him doing all the levels on that was really good. It was fantastic, he did a great job. But I think he would have been more attentive to it had he been doing the rest of it.

A: Interesting.

J: Which, the only reason we didn’t is that we just didn’t have the money for him to do it, at the time.

A: Ok, that makes sense.

J: So, it wasn’t that we were saying, “Oh, we don’t trust you to do it.” He had a fantastic set of ears, he was really good at hearing stuff. But, we just didn’t have the money at the time. We were getting ready to go on tour, and we wanted the CD for the tour, all that, it just didn’t work out.
A: So, do you think you guys are kind of moving to that? Moving to getting a little bit less off your plate, finding people to do more recording, so you don’t have to take as much time to do it?

J: You know, I’ve thought about it, and I’m not sure. I’m sure at some point I might want to do that. We’re doing an experiment this year with management. I’m not entirely sure how that’s going to work out, yet.

A: Right, I get that. So, if you were giving advice to a younger ensemble, an ensemble that’s just starting out that’s considering making a first recording, what would you recommend for the kind of recording? Do you think they should dive in and make a CD, or maybe just do a demo? How would you recommend for their very first experiment in audio recording what they should do?

J: Again, it depends on what their goals are. If their goal is to find management, or just book gigs, and they just want to have something that they can show for themselves. It also depends on their budget and what they can afford to do. If at all possible, you want to make a full CD. Because, then it’s done. Depending on what your CD is, and how you set your CD up, it’s great to have a full recording. My group’s first CD is all one genre/era of music. That’s great, but if your show entails more than that, that’s not so great to use. But, if you want a CD to sell, that’s the way to do it. But if you’re trying to book gigs, and get management or any of these things, then you want the broadest spectrum of your playing possible, then a demo’s the way to go. I think for both ensembles, our very first recordings were demos.

It’s always good to have some kind of representation. Like on a website, what’s the point of a website? The point of a website is so that people can see who you are, where they can find you, and how to book you. So, you need to have something for them to have, if you have a video of you, great, if you have recordings, great, put those up. You want to show them the full picture of what you do. So, if you play jazz in your concert, but all you have are Baroque and Renaissance pieces, then you’re not selling your show. So, probably a demo, you can build from there. This last recording that we did was basically last season’s program. We recorded everything that we had on the tour. It’s an absolute representation of what you would see coming to our show. It’s not the entire program, because that’s too much music for the CD, but it’s a very good reference. If you were to do something like that, if you have the time and ability. That’s always a good thing, if you have the ability to make your demo and your actual product in the same time period, if you can kill two birds with one stone, do it.

A: Yeah. My last question for audio recording, is just what equipment do you currently use, particularly your editing software since you do so much of it yourself?

J: I use Protools for recording and editing. Our mics are not the most expensive mics you can get, but they’re really good quality. I use Audio Technica, primarily. A lot of stuff that is owned by ProTools’ parent company, we’ll use their components to try to keep everything as similar as possible.

A: And then, do you have a mixing board, or do you do it all after in editing?
J: It’s all just done in the editing. If you have a mixing board, we’re talking about having a separate engineer that’s there in sessions. Since we don’t really have that, we set levels at the beginning, and then things can be adjusted. Early recordings, we had to adjust where we positioned ourselves, because we had two mics. Since we had two mics, we adjusted balance and things like that by pointing in different directions, or moving to different places in the room. Whereas, now, everyone has individual mics, there are room mics, so we have a lot more options. We are able to adjust everyone’s individual levels at editing, and everyone has their own tracks.

A: Awesome. I’m thinking about if an ensemble were to go into record for the first time, they’re probably not going to have all of that stuff, but it’s good to see the progression.

J: Yeah, if you’re talking about recording for the very first time, it doesn’t even need to be the highest quality equipment. You could get by with a Zoom, as long as you’re getting something that sounds good. Even with bad equipment, exemplary playing will come through. So, if you’re playing is solid, and you’re really prepared from the performance perspective, even if you don’t have the very best equipment, it’s still going to come out good. There’s no equipment in the world that could fix a bad performance. If you play poorly, your recording is only ever going to be so good.

A: Yeah, I get that. Ok, so what about video stuff? Pretty much all the videos you have are all from performances and presentations and stuff like that. Do you do these videos, or are they ones that other people have done, or are they ones that other people have done and sent to you, or what is your approach to the video?

J: Primarily we do them. Sometimes people post things that they video from a performance, but more often than not, it’s all produced by us.

A: Have you ever done an “official” sort of video. I know that I saw your promotional video, but nothing that is solely music. Do you think that’s a valuable thing, or do you think it’s better to have the live video?

J: I’m totally fine with both. In fact, I’ll be honest with you, 90% of the stuff you see online is produced. It’s not live. It looks live, doesn’t it?

A: Yeah, they’re always on the stages, and stuff. Ok,

J: Good, I’ve been doing a good job on that, haha.

A: Yeah!

J: If you go to the YouTube channel and go through it, if it says “live” then that’s an actual live performance, if it doesn’t say “Live” then, we may not be playing.
A: Oh! Wow, ok, haha. Awesome.

J: We may not be playing live on the video, but obviously, it’s us. It’s a music video for the purposes for presenting us.

A: Ok. So, do you do all that stuff as well?

J: Yeah. Did you see the promotional video, the 2015 one?

A: Possibly.

J: I just posted it the other day.

A: Hmm, probably not then.

J: Yeah, probably not, but that one, we had someone come in and actually record for us. And some of the other ones we had someone come in and do the actual video of it. For the old one, all the ones in the church setting were all completely done by somebody else.

A: Oh! And those are all produced ones as well?

J: Yeah. We had a good friend who said they would be happy to do it for no money. We paid them anyway more than they would have asked for. But, clearly they did a fantastic job. This last time, we had someone come out and do the video, but there was a timing crunch because we were coming up on booking season. We needed to get things done, they had a lot on their plate, so I did the video editing, but they did the actual camera work.

A: Ok. So, what software do you use for that?

J: I use After Effects, and Adobe Premiere. And, I gotta say, from ProTools to all these Adobe suites, they’re pretty expensive. There are some other ones that other people can use that are a lot easier. This last one was really tough. We’re probably going to have the person who did the videography re-edit everything for us. Because, to do it in the time crunch that we had, we had to change the quality of the video, since everything was recorded in the HD, and the files were huge, and my poor computer couldn’t keep up. The videographer has these gaming systems, because they have the video cards that can handle this kind of process. So, we had to change the quality of it just to get and get it done. But there are plenty of options out there. Cyberlink has this thing called “Power Director” that’s really easy to use, and not terribly expensive. I’ve used that before.

A: So, similar to the audio recording, do you think it’s just as important to an ensemble to have some video representation out there? When do you think would be a good time for a new group to do some
video stuff, or do you think the audio should be a priority, or both?

J: Probably both. They’re almost equal. Today, we’ve already talked about how important the visual component is, and as I go to booking conferences in a few weeks here, everyone’s going to have DVDs. And if you don’t have a DVD, they look at you funny.

A: So, what about the quality? Particularly to save costs, if we’re talking about an ensemble that doesn’t have a lot of money. If they just put out a couple of decent quality, but live performances, where you have the static camera, that’s probably pretty distant?

J: Absolutely, that’s fine. You don’t need to have the highest quality, but if you have something that shows you from a visual aspect that’s helpful. So long as the performance is good. It’s fine. The camera and video quality in cameras are also getting good. So, everyone’s got high quality equipment these days.

A: That’s true. Do you ever try to control what is posted about you from other people? You are really consistent with the kind of videos that you post through your ensemble’s YouTube station, and stuff like that, but what about what other people post? I don’t know if there’s a way for you to control it, but I know you probably wouldn’t want something out there that was maybe not your best performance, or something.

J: There are some things out there that are definitely not my favorite. But, what can you do? Someone takes a video of you and posts it online, you have the option of contacting them and saying, “Um, is it possible for you to take this down?” You always have that option. As it stands for venues, in my performance contracts, it’s in our contracts that we own all the rights to any performance that’s done. So, no one can post something without our permission, from a venue’s perspective, but you can’t control individuals. In this day and age, where everyone has a video camera in their pocket, the best thing you can do, is just play your best every time you go out and perform. And make sure you’re doing the best possible job you can whenever you’re in public.

A: Sure, ok. The last thing, talking a little more about visual stuff are about photos. A lot of people say that the photos are really the key. Having good quality photos. You guys have great photos; you’ve obviously thought about your visual image. You’ve got the matching outfits for the girls, and a clean, but semi-casual look. But what about getting a professional photographer? Do you hire a photographer, or do you also do all this stuff yourself?

J: Nope, it’s all in-house. We’ve had people take pictures, sometimes we’ve done it completely ourselves. We’ll set up the static camera, and we set the timer and go. It’s very time consuming. We generally have someone to help point and click, but we know exactly what we want it to look like, and what we’re trying to accomplish with the pictures. We’ve tried letting other people decide, and not really ended up liking the way it worked out. So, we like to be very hands-on. We’ve definitely had people press the button. And
then when it comes down to choosing the best pics, and editing them, and whatever, that goes back in-house.

A: Ok, even though you’re doing it yourself, do you still do the whole thing with all the different lighting options with all the big umbrella reflectors, and stuff like that, or do you just find a place that has good lighting naturally?

J: We haven’t done any studio stuff, really. We mostly try to do it in well-lit areas with decent backgrounds. Our last poster, which was our main image for a while, which was the black background and just us coming out of the black. That one was done in a studio against a black backdrop. There wasn’t a whole lot going on otherwise. I just did a similar one to that. Where we were against a greyish background that just happened to be against the wall of where we were, but now we’re black. So, nothing is real. That side is completely manufactured. One of my favorite examples of this is 182, are you familiar with the group at all?

A: No

J: So, it’s a punk band. And their albums are amazing! Perfectly in tune, perfectly together, just amazing. You see them live, and you would swear they were drunk, and they very well may be. But, it’s just a mess, nothing is even close to being in tune, it’s a little sloppy, but their recordings are just amazing.

A: Yeah, a good sound engineer, I guess.

J: Yeah, and I’m sure you’ve seen the leaked un-edited audio tracks of popular singers in their shows? Which is totally accurate. You know, they say you’re getting a live show, which you kind of are, because the singer’s actually singing, they’re just not putting the actual singing through the headset. It’s just not going through the speakers at all, you’re hearing the recording track.

A: Yeah, terrible.

J: Yep, haha.

A: Ok, excellent. It sounds like you do all of your administrative stuff. Is there anything that you hire somebody to do? Whether it’s creating your promotional or marketing materials, website maintenance, even?

J: No. We’ve talked about maybe getting somebody to do social media for us, just so there was a dedicated person who was always doing it. But, everyone’s an administrator on the webpage on the Facebook, everyone’s got passwords on all the things, so someone posts something.

A: Sure. When you’re putting together this material, or when there’s big announcements, is there
somebody who’s just like, “Ok, I’m going to do this.” And just does it, or is there some sort of review process where everybody has to agree to what’s getting put out?

J: No. We all trust each other. No one’s going to do anything that’s going to hurt the group because we all want it to succeed. And, yeah, it again comes back to making sure you’re working with good people. If you’re working with someone who is all into them, then they might not be always having everyone’s best interest in mind. For videos and stuff, they get posted to a Dropbox, before they get posted online, so everyone has the opportunity to say, “Yeah, no, I don’t think this is good for us,” or “Yeah, totally fine, this is great.”

A: Ok. What about some of the larger stuff, like when you’re putting together new promotional materials? Does someone just do it, or do you get together and talk about it. Obviously, you take the photos and stuff, but is there anything you update or do you just add on to what you’ve been doing?

J: Yeah, at this point it’s just sort of adding on to what’s existing. At the beginning, I just did it because I had experience making the stuff, so I did the initial one, and everyone put their input into it. We changed some things, we adjusted some things. Everyone was responsible for doing their own bios, because, I don’t know all of the things that they do. Beyond that, this current group was weird for me because I knew one person coming into the group. We were talking one day about how I was wanting to do some chamber music again, so she was like, “Hey, let’s put one together.” And I said, “That’s great, I don’t know anybody.” “I know some people.” So, she put it all together, and I didn’t know anybody. I was kind of the odd man out. Everyone had gone to school together, or had known each other for years. I was the new guy.

So, everyone wrote their own bios, I might tweak something here or there to make the presentation all uniform. So, if someone wrote their bio using their first name all the time, and someone else did the “he, she, Mr., Mrs.” We want that to all be more or less the same, so I just sort of changed that up. But, everyone has a say in everything. I don’t think you can have a chamber ensemble without the democratic process. If you have an uneven number of people in the group, it’s great because you can’t have a tie. Sometimes quartets have big problem with that. I think what they do, especially with musical choices, when deciding how to play things, whoever brought the music gets the composer’s vote, and that’s how they break ties. Luckily, we don’t have to do that, no one gets an extra say, built in majority.

A: Right. Ok, so moving on. Let’s talk about networking. Do you guys have a fan base, and email list, or is it all through social media?

J: It’s a little of both. At all of our shows, we have a fan sheet sign up thing, so, right next to the display, we have a sheet where you can put your name, address, email, that stuff, and we add you to the list. If
there are significant things happening, we’re getting ready for a tour, CD release, anything that’s
happening, we’ll send out emails to those people. We will do promotion on social media, and try to go that
route, just because everyone’s on it these days. But, you do everything you can. Any opportunity you
have to connect with your fan base, you do it.

A: Sure. Since you do so much touring, are you so organized with your email list that you have like, “Oh,
we’re going to be in Madison, Wisconsin, and these are the people that came our show last time, and
we’re going to email just these people…” Do you ever get that into it, or is just more of a broad-based
announcement?

J: It’s generally more of a broader base. We haven’t gotten that specific though. Everything is kind of
listed that way, so in our database is just an excel sheet. We can definitely separate it by state and
locations. We just haven’t had the opportunity to do that just yet.

A: Sure. We talked a little about social media already, and how you use that for announcements for
performances and stuff like that. So, what are some of the challenges that you face with using social
media. You talked about maybe hiring somebody to take care of it all. Is it just time consuming?

J: Yeah, it’s time consuming, it’s something that you forget about. It’s funny, everyone is so connected via
social media now, I can’t remember the last time a day went past that I didn’t at least just see my
Facebook page, or my feed. It’s so integral to my life, yet, it’s the last thing I’m thinking about in a concert.
So, to remember to say something in a concert or a school show, which is the best place to do it.
Because, you’re talking to kids, and kids do social media. But, just to remember to say something about it
in a performance is the hardest thing to do. And then to make sure that you’re being engaging, to make
sure that you’re posting stuff. Because if you’re not posting stuff, you’re not reaching the people. So, even
if you have people that like your page, or are following you on Twitter or Instagram, or whatever. If you’re
not giving them something, then they’re going to stop paying attention to you. So, you have to make sure
that you’re constantly putting stuff out, just making sure that you’re active, really.

A: Yeah, so one thing I notice from looking through some of your stuff, and maybe I didn’t go back far
enough, that you are less about promoting a performance, and more about what is going on. Even though
you said it’s the last thing you’re thinking about, you have more activity, like “This is what we’re doing right
now!” as opposed to those people who post only about upcoming performances. I don’t know if that’s
something that you’ve noticed that you guys do?

J: It’s not something necessarily something we really thought out in that perspective. We probably could
do more of the getting ready for events. We try to say stuff from time-to-time, like, “Oh, hey the next thing
coming up is this thing at this university, so come see us there.” Stuff like that, though, I think is has been
more social than promotion driven. We’re trying to give our fans more of a look at what we’re doing, and
for, like, someone who saw us in New Mexico, and if we say, “Hey, come see us in Illinois!” that’s not useful to them. There was a time when that was what was happening on social media. People were dong the invitations to shows, and whatever. And, I can’t tell you how many invitations I got to people doing shows in other countries. That’s annoying, stop sending me invitations to shows in Mexico, or Switzerland, that I’m not going to. I’m very glad for you that you’re doing well, and that’s fantastic, but don’t fill up my inbox with stuff that’s completely useless to me. So, we try to make it a little less that way, because I don’t want to annoy people.

A: Yeah, people have different perspectives on how to utilize social media, so I just kind of wanted to see... some people do use it completely as a marketing tool. I like how you said that you use it more as a social thing. I like how you changed your logo based on what’s happening in the world. I think that’s really cool that that is something that you did do.

J: Yeah, you do it to show your place in the world. When bad things happen, ‘cause they do, you want to show people that you’re not so caught up in what you do that you’ve completely blocked out the rest of the world. You show people how you feel about things. At the same time, a couple weeks later and it changes, and now we’re talking about this, and we’re doing this. We had been doing this “advice column” type- thing for a long time, that we’re hopefully going to get back to in the new year, probably in a slightly different format, but still along the same lines, because we want to do something useful to, it’s not just a promotional tool; here’s something helpful, here’s something useful. We’re in talks with developing an App that would be useful to people. It’s not just a promotional thing. Band directors would find it useful, so we’ve been talking with band directors, “What kinds of things would you like to see?” Who knows, technology moves so fast, we try to stay current, but at the same time, you don’t want to spread yourself too thin.

A: Sure. So, what kind of stuff do you use primarily for marketing and promotion of your performances? What’s kind of your go-to?

J: Well, it depends, very often now, it’s the venue. They’re doing most of the promotion because they know their audience better than we do. They know how to get to their audience. They have an established series, so they know what they’re doing, we don’t have to do as much, which is good. You don’t have to promote a school show, they have to be there. You don’t have to promote a show at a big venue, because it’s a big venue with an established series. It exists. They already have their own promotion because they’re looking at making money by you being there. So, we’ll definitely post things about it, it’s on our website, our season is always there, so you can always see where we’re at.

A: Do you think that part of that is motivated because you do a lot of tours? It didn’t seem like you do a lot of “recital” type performances within your city. It looks like you do a lot of educational stuff, but not recitals.
So, when you are looking for places you book, do they all have these chamber music series, pretty much?

J: Yeah, I don’t want to have to re-invent the wheel. We’ve talked about starting a series that we would do yearly. There’s pros and cons to that, but again, it just hasn’t happened, yet. So, there’s definitely a possibility as something that we might do, but right now, it isn’t working for us. So, we’d much rather do something that’s currently in existence, instead of having to try something new. There’s nothing wrong with that, that’s kind of what my first group did the first time through, was to make our own stuff, and we publicized our stuff like crazy. The current group still does a little bit, especially for local things. Make posters and put them up in schools and music schools, things like that. Especially if we have a lot going on in the area. If we have a whole lot of things in town, we’ll try to promote that way. Then you’re going to get everybody, you know. We’re gonna get the vast majority of people who are going to see a show like that anyway. When we did a thing at the Mid-West Band and Orchestra conference, we contacted all the band directors we knew, and said, “Hey, we’re gonna be doing a thing at Mid-West band and orchestra clinic, come see us.” Things like that. Intelligent marketing instead of just blanket marketing.

A: That’s good. So, let’s talk about your website for a little bit. Did you design it?

J: Yeah

A: What is the service that you’re using?

J: We’re currently using Wix.

A: Ok, I’ve been researching the different, cheaper ones, the free to cheap, and I’m always curious to see what people are using, because it’s not always totally obvious. Had you experimented a little bit with different kinds of formatting, where you just did it and said, “That’s great!” or did you try out a bunch of different stuff?

J: We tried different things. We had been using Dynomod, so we’re trying something new with this. Using Wix is something new for us. Dynomod was great for us, and I still use it on my personal website. It’s a Flash-based website. Everything’s already pre-made, you just kind of fit stuff in the correct place. There’s a lot of customization, but Wix was just a little bit more open, you could do a few different things. And there were some things I just wanted to try to make it a bit different, see if we can get a bit more bang for out buck, and you know, see how it goes.

A: Ok, cool So, it’s pretty new, you were on it pretty recently?

J: Yeah, we just switched, a few months ago.
A: I thought it was different than the last time I looked at it a while ago. When do you think is a good time for an ensemble to get a website. Do you think it’s a right of way thing, or wait until you build a little bit more of a reputation?

J: Actually, wait until you need it. Because, you can have a Facebook page, do that, it’s free. It’s still very useful as a marketing tool, “Oh, you want to learn something about us, please check out our Facebook page.” So, you can still have all the same materials, all the same information. And, honestly, it’s probably getting to a point in the next several years, where you’re not going to need a website because everything’s going to be through social media. Things have changed so much, the recording industry has changed so much, where being on a label doesn’t exist anymore, or at least in very rare situations, and pretty soon CDs will be completely non-existent. You just have to be prepared for what’s coming. Don’t get too locked into what currently exists, because it might be different next year. Who would have thought that Instagram would be what it is? Or, Twitter? I thought with Twitter, 140 characters, what am I going to do with that? How can I possibly use that in any kind of effective manner? But, apparently it’s worked out pretty well. How can I do this marketing thing with a purely image based system, or what the hell is this “hashtagging” nonsense? But once you’re open to figuring it out, just wait and don’t be tied down, I guess would be the best thing. Use what’s available, but don’t lock yourself into anything.

A: Sure. So, for you, what’s your favorite one to work off of? What do you prefer to use as your professional social media outlet? Is it mostly Facebook, or do you have a preference?

J: I would say Facebook is my preferred method, just because there’s a bigger audience there, you have more options for communication. Twitter’s great, Instagram, all that is great. The great thing about all that, is that you can link them all, so you do one, and it gets everything. And that’s a lot of what we do. Something goes from Instagram and it just shoots across, as much as possible. Or do a Facebook, and it just shoots across. Technology is an amazing thing, when it works.

A: Yeah, that does make it easier. Ok, so I think that's all the questions I have about online, media, stuff like that.

... 

A: Ok, that’s all of my questions I have. If you have any final advice, anything that you would want to tell chamber musicians that maybe we haven’t covered.

J: And I would also say, that if you have any follow up questions, or want to clarify something, feel free to give me a call, or send me an email, and we’ll clear it up.

A: Absolutely. Thank you so much.
This interview was held over the phone on January 11, 2016. Philip was emailed a copy of the consent form for review, and gave verbal consent. The copy of this interview has been edited to hide the identity of the person being interviewed and his ensemble, and limited to the subject matter for this study.

Philip’s ensemble performs and tours regularly, but not full time. They present primarily recitals and masterclasses. They perform new arrangements, original music, and music from the standard repertoire.

A: Let’s get started, since I know your time is very precious. Did you understand everything in the consent form? Did you have any questions about that?

P: I was taking a look at that before, to see if I did. Yeah, it’s pretty straight ahead. I don’t think I have any questions about that.

A: I don’t anticipate any risks. The interview is being recorded, and no matter what, everyone will get an edited transcript, and I’ll take out any personal information that might lead back to them.

P: Ok.

A: Ok, great, excellent. So, let’s talk about recording, photos, and having an image. For an ensemble starting out, what kind of recording would you recommend they do, if they should do any? Or when?

P: I think as soon as they can get recorded material together that they’re really happy with, that represents the group, the better. The best thing you can do nowadays, still. There was just a big conference in New York, the Chamber Music America conference happened this past weekend, and another conference that’s happening, called APAC, I think this coming weekend. American Presenters of Performing Arts Organizations, or something. And our management (which is actually new management as of this fall), we’re currently finishing up our CD project, we don’t have a CD representing the current personnel of the group. Obviously, there are lots of recordings of my group from years past, we could hand to anyone, but people always want to hear what the current group sounds like. So, we put together a demo CD of live performances over the past two years the current members of the group played together. So, we sort of spliced together a CD from multiple performances, and evidently it worked well. Our management handed out dozens and dozens of CDs to presenters. And, it was really nothing fancy. We just put together a compilation. Not too long, say 3-5 minutes, excerpts of pieces that really represent you best, what your group likes to do.
I think just getting started, that’s a great place. One movement from the standard repertoire, if that’s what you play, one movement of a new work that maybe you just had written for you, because you want to play new music. I think whatever you give to a presenter make sure it represents you. Don’t sell yourself short. I think it’s a good piece of advice for artists: Don’t try to do what you think other people want to hear. Do what you do and what you feel really passionate about, and getting a demo CD together just like that is a great first step. Obviously, people are spending a lot more time than even 5-10 years ago on YouTube, so I think putting sort of similar video-type demo thing together could be just as effective. You can get the recording in video format, and just put together, even if it’s not live audio of you playing, put together some sort of visual image on a screen, for someone to see. So that would be a bit of advice that groups have to look to now, is just to get some sort of video presence as well for their demos.

A: Ok, yeah. I would imagine that you would recommend the same thing as well with getting photos?

Getting photos out in the world as soon as possible?

P: For sure, yeah. And always keeping photos updated. I know our quintet, and our management, who also sort of handle PR for us, as a separate account. But, they’re sort of encouraging us to get the website updated from every year to two years, don’t let it just sit. And get photos done every year, you can never have too many photos. A photo session can run just a couple hours, and you can get some great stuff. It doesn’t have to be an all-day expensive affair. And obviously, lots of people can do good photography. I think it’s good to always keep that stuff fresh.

A: So, what kinds of administrative stuff is it that you guys are doing?

P: Well, for example, with my current group… let me preface this by saying, if you’re in a working ensemble or a group that aspires to get going, there’s a multitude of things that need to happen, and it depends on where your group is at, but in selecting which of those administrative tasks you want to take on, you discuss this as a group. You should really only step forward, and I think I speak from experience, only step forward and do the things that you’re really passionate about, or you think that you’re best at. Because everyone has strengths in different areas of administrative tasks. Some administrative tasks are more detail oriented. Some are just place-keepers, time keepers, keeping people, keeping the whole group in line, getting to rehearsal and what they want to bring. Some are detail oriented, and doing taxes, working with an accountant. I think we all have our own strengths, so it’s important to step up. Shared responsibility, absolutely, everyone should be involved, but you should only really do what you want to and not try to pick up the pieces for other people.

We’re finishing up our recording right now, so we’re in communication with the engineer who did the recording who just sent us some first edits to listen to, they’re in Dropbox.
A: Awesome. So, on the other side of that, what kind of stuff do you hire out? So, you’ve got a manager, who you said is also doing some marketing for you, as well.

P: Yeah, so we have a management agency that you can think of as they do bookings for us, they go to conferences, they meet presenters, they have existing relationships with presenters and Arts organizations, and they book our performances for us. Now, we have, and I think most chamber musicians and most performers do as well, we all have our own personal connections as well. We’re often contacted by organizations personally, or we have a friend that runs this chamber music series, and they say, “Would you like to come perform on our chamber music series?” and we say “Absolutely!” and we steer them towards our management. There’s that obligation, we have an understanding with management, that wherever the booking comes from, they’re the ones that are going to deal with it. They obviously get their commission of the booking of whatever the fee is, and they do all the work that is involved from contract negotiation to sending us our schedule, to…

We just hired a PR firm to handle PR for us. We’re sort of in the trial period and we’ll see how it goes. The group had never done that before, but it’s very common, even in the classical music industry, and that can be anything from publicizing a New York recital to try to get the New York Times to review it, to our next CD launch, to throw a CD release party and to coordinate all that. So, that would be one thing, to think about the image of the group, and website, and the look of the group, and making sure when we do go on a tour that all the local newspapers know about it, that there’s as much information in the community out there so that we get good attendance at the concert, because if we draw a lot of people to the concert the presenter will be happy. I think we’ve learned, touring around, that some presenters do a better job than others at getting people to their concerts. We look at it this way, if we hire a PR firm to do various things for us, if one of the things that they do is also help advertise for us within the community or the town we’re in, that can only benefit the concert. We’ve often gone to venues and we didn’t see anything in the newspaper, and no flyers in the coffeehouses, or anything about the concert, and attendance was kind of weak. There were a bunch of musicians there, which is always common, but we feel like they didn’t advertise well. So, why rely fully on the presenter to do that? You can also do your own splash of advertising, not only in hard copy, but also in terms of social media. That’s what our PR firm will hopefully be doing for us in the coming year. I’m trying to think what else. We do farm out some of the responsibilities of grant writing to a professional grant writer.

A: What about your social media, and your website, and your web presence? Is that all done in-house or do the PR people do that?

P: We farmed out design and photography. We pay someone to record the group and produce the group, in terms of the old-fashioned recording. Website was designed by a professional firm, they also help us do email blasts, which we try to do monthly, just an email blast newsletter through the website. But the content of the website comes from us in terms of the text and what’s on it. To this, social media such as
the Facebook page and Twitter accounts have been handled by the members of the group, at least since I’ve been involved. But I think that could take a different route, again, since we just hired a PR firm and I think that’s kind of part of their responsibilities in a way. I imagine we won’t be relinquishing full control of that, but I think they are going to be more involved in the day-to-day working of that, and hopefully we’ll see… because as you know from your own personal social media accounts, you can go through periods where you feel like you’re doing it often, and then you can go through every few days you don’t have time to access it. And we go through that to as a group, just a couple of us spend a lot of time on it, and the other guys don’t. Again, it’s one of those interest things, we know this guy is really going to be on Twitter, getting stuff out there for us. We’d just like to see more consistent postings, and I think we’ll see that with our new hire for PR.

A: Ok, so was the primary reason for hiring a new PR person because you guys didn’t have the time to do this yourselves, or you really want to push forward and expand your network more than you were able to do it on your own?

P: Yes, yes, absolutely. I think we all feel like we can do it, and we want to do it, but like I said, even the day-to-day Twitter account just didn’t get done. There’s no fault other than everyone’s really busy and spread a bit too thin, so we want to focus as much as we can on spending our time dealing with the artistry of the ensemble. I think that’s where our strengths lie. The more time we spend on the artistic side of things, the better the group’s going to be, as opposed to getting spread in multiple directions, that maybe we’re not really experts at. And I think there’s a bunch of firms out there, and this is their business, and you have to believe that they’re complete experts in it. Why not, if you have the funds and ability to do it, and it’s seen as an investment, why not invest in that? In someone that that’s really their sole responsibility. There are professionals, just like we have a professional do our taxes, and a professional audio engineer, I think there’s plenty of room on the PR front as well. Like you said, not only to expand to different avenues, to try to do new PR approaches, but just to have a pro handle it we saw as to be most beneficial to us.

A: Yeah, great.

A: Ah, ok, great. Let’s go ahead and keep moving. How do you guys keep track of your network? What is your primary way that you keep track of your fans and contact them? Email, or social media? You said you send an email blast once a month?

P: Yeah, we have an email list, and that’s been assembled through all our personal contacts. And in some cases, presenters that we’ve been involved with. I think that’s crucial to keep presenters up-to-date on what you’re doing. So they had the group in their concert series a couple years ago, so we keep them on the email list as well, so they can see that the group is active and doing things. We sort of built up our own over the years for everyone at one time. We built our email address database. I think up until a
couple years ago, the group used to send a quarterly hard-copy newsletter through snail mail to folks. So, that did exist at one point, it’s not something the group is using now, I think it’s something that’s basically converted since we’ve gone to an electronic email newsletter. It just been converted over, probably the same contents, just through their email accounts. And I think, as we’re all trying to figure out, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are all three accounts we use to keep in touch with people when we’re on tour, or just day-to-day posting on things, like the group recorded this today, or we’re looking forward to being in Alabama next week for a concert or event. I think those are the primary ways of keeping in touch with people.

We really rely on our management, and now that we have a new management firm, they have a whole slew of contacts that we might not even have yet, so we’re excited about the prospect of changing firms, because they have their own database. For example, they were just at a couple conferences trying to sell their artists, we’re one of those artists, they probably met hundreds of people interested in booking, hopefully our group, so there’s that avenue for us as well. Our management really helps with all our contacts as well as keeping us in touch with the chamber music scene.

A: So, what kind of marketing techniques would you recommend to a younger ensemble, maybe someone who’s doing their own performances, presenting their own performances, maybe putting together a recital at a church. Do you have any recommendations of what they can do to try to promote themselves?

P: Yeah, to maybe promote their own concert?

A: Yeah

P: I think... so one thing, it might be a self-produced thing, and that’s a little different, but I think it’s always important, if for example, they’re putting on a recital, on their own, in a church, or maybe they were actually booked by the church that they work in, you want to work with the presenting organization. Where are they telling people about the concert? And hopefully they’re telling someone about the concert. So, it would be silly to take out an ad in the local newspaper or spend money putting up a flyer to advertise your concert, if the church that’s bringing you in is already doing that. So, if you’re a young group, self-managed in a way, you want to be in touch with the presenter to see what things they’re already doing to promote the concert. And if they’re not doing anything, that’s when you just start out and do it. Young musicians who maybe don’t have a tremendous amount of income coming from a brand-new chamber group are really fortunate to have social media at their disposal. Because that’s basically a free form of advertising, as much as you can stomach, maybe as much as the reader can stomach sometimes.
About promoting oneself in concerts. That's a great avenue, using that friend network, that colleague network that you already have established on your smart phone, and making sure the word gets out. Make sure the word gets out not only a day or two before, but maybe a couple weeks in advance. I think that's where people sometimes fall short in concert promotion. Is to make sure at least a couple weeks before, minimum, that word about the concert is getting out. Don't just wait until the day before, because obviously, a lot people have plans, if it's a weekend, they want to schedule things in advance to get to your performance. Those are just a couple of different things, social media and coordinating with the venue where you're playing.

A: Yeah, that's a great recommendation for sure. Do you have an opinion about Crowdsourcing fundraising?

P: I haven't had any experience with crowdsourcing personally, but I have lots of friends, and I've seen tons of campaigns. I think it's a really creative way to get at the private money, and individual donors, and we can call them donors if they give you money, whether they consider themselves that or not. But, I think it's a great way to get at it, and to utilize not only social media, but your immediate network of friends. They care about you, and they care about your artistry and want to see you thrive. However, that said, I find it really interesting, I want to look and see maybe how this started, and who the first people were to do this. It was genius. My group is a long-standing group, right? By any chamber ensemble standards. Founded in the mid-1900's. We've outlasted a lot of groups. There was a little bit of push-back from the group, we have tax-exempt status, so we apply to the NEA every year, we get money from them, we get money from big organizations. I brought up the idea of crowdsourcing, there was as little bit of hesitancy to do that, because, I think, crowdsourcing does have a stigma attached to it of being more upstarts, upstart projects. It's like, "Do we really want to get into that market, or label yourself as an upstart, or take money from other artists that might..." We all could do more work, because we would love to do more concerts, but should we really be getting involved with that, is that appropriate for us to do. There was a lot of confusion about how to deal with that. So, even at this point we still talk about it once and awhile, but we haven't explored that yet, with this particular group. And, like I said, there's kind of a stigma attached to it, and the group was confused as to how to deal with it.

A: Ok, alright. Ok, those are all the questions that I got down, I might have a couple follow ups for you. If there's anything else, any other advice, that if you were to have a chamber group starting out, that want to start performing and making money, if there's any other advice that you would give them, this is the time to give it, I would love to hear it.

P: I'll kind of think about what we spoke about, and when you send me some questions, I'll definitely give you some additional thoughts, no problem what-so-ever.

A: Ok, great. Thank you so much for your time.
P: Thanks so much, this is a really awesome study, I hope you’re going to give me a copy of it.

A: Yes, I will send you a copy of it, don’t worry.

Alias: Ronald

This interview was conducted via email, the email with Ronald’s responses was sent on January 24, 2016. Ronald was sent an outline of main discussion points and responded without follow-up questions.

Ronald was emailed a copy of the consent form for review, and returned a signed PDF copy. The copy of this interview has been edited to hide the of Ronald and his ensembles, and limited to subject matter for this study.

Ronald’s ensemble performs frequently, and holds a residency at a university. They perform music primarily from the standard repertoire.

Section 1: personnel, audience, sound, and image: picking your players, professionalism, creating a public image, photos, and audio and visual recording

Recording and Photos: creating a promotional recording or video and still photos, while also trying to keep costs low. Choosing between doing the work yourself (DIY) or hiring a professional. What your ensemble has done, and recommendations for keeping costs down. I’m especially interested in your experience recording your first album, I think I saw that you produced it yourself?

R: In the beginning, creating publicity materials can seem like a daunting task for a group as the impression it gives is that the creation of these materials require some sort of financial resources. While this is true, this is a good time for a group to figure out how efficient and resourceful it can be. No matter how successful the group is later in its career, this efficiency and resourcefulness never goes away. A career in chamber music is not a particularly rewarding one financially, so being frugal and creative is a skill needed for its members to get what they want without spending a ton of money. To give an example using our own experience: I happened to be studying recording while the ensemble was beginning, so I made our first promotional album. One member’s father is an amateur photographer, so he shot our first promotional photos. Creating a video at that time (1995) was not as easy as it is now, but groups today have no excuse for not creating some sort of video, with iPhones and iPads all having
that capability at their fingertips. And website building is a must today; there are numerous ways to get a website built for little to no money. All of these things can be done cheaply if some effort into research is used.

Section 2: administrative duties: marketing, promotion, online presence, finances, and business models. What can be done by members in the early stages of ensemble development, and when should professionals be hired.

Booking gigs, and management

Finding venues: your options, how to book, who to contact, what you need when trying to book performances.

R: These days, even with management, the world has changed to a point where the artist still is in the main curator of relationships with presenters. This is different than even 20-30 years ago. The days are gone where management just “gets” you concerts. Having said that, it cannot be understated that the relationship a group has with a potential presenter is vital. A good website, recordings, videos, well-written bios and nice looking photos are all necessary to create that attractive package that you want to present to potential employers. And if you are creating your own performance opportunities, you will undoubtedly be working with some sort of partner and the ensemble will still need these materials to help publicize and sell the event.

Management: if and when to get a manager, manager’s duties, and other options for types of representation.

R: Management and its necessity is a tricky issue; because the world is different, some groups choose to self-represent, and some find it absolutely necessary to have professional management. Whatever solution one decides to use, the important thing is that the management side be a natural extension of the group and its personalities. If working with a professional manager, you want to make sure they represent you in a way that resembles the qualities with which you want to be represented. For example, if you are a group of energetic and friendly people, you don’t want a manager that represents you as demanding, snobby and unapproachable. When searching for a manager, the group should have a list of things they would like the manager to handle, as well as qualities they would like to see in the people working at the management firm. Often making this list also enables the group’s members to learn more about each other and what is important to each one of them.
Networking, marketing, building a website, social media, and other web presence

Building your network: how do you collect and organize network information?

R: Building a network is very important in any field. The group should be internally well-organized on how it handles this information. My recommendation is that one person (possibly the most organized one!) collects this information from all of its members into some sort of database. While all members are encouraged and should be out gaining members in its network, everyone should report it back to this one main point person who collates this information into an easily-searched document.

Marketing: recommended design programs and low cost marketing options, and how to best utilize these outlets.

R: With the advent of social media, marketing has taken on a whole new dimension. One can have limitless reach with almost little to no cost. No longer does a group or artist have an excuse for not publicizing their event. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, are just several of the mainstays of social media that people use on a daily (and many times hourly!) basis. A good resource may be to simply ask a teenager what the hot new platform is and go there! If going the more traditional print route, there are many times small firms who will do a good job for little money, or better yet, give an advertising student a few dollars to help build your campaign that can easily double as a project for one of their classes.

Building your web presence:
Creating a website: if, when, and why you need one. Recommendations for DIY website building and low cost options. Recommended content.

R: Website is no longer an if. It is a necessity, and as mentioned earlier, can be had for little to no money. Wix promotes building websites easily, and kultureshock.net is one of a few targeted directly for classical artists and organizations. These websites should have digital versions of the group’s PR kit (photos, videos, recordings, bios, reviews, etc), as well as a tour calendar, interesting prose and multimedia. It should have easy ways to contact your booking entity, whether if it’s a member in the group or a third-party representative. And a blog that is updated regularly adds to the attractiveness of the site. The important thing is that the site is updated regularly, as you want visitors to come back often.

Social media and other web presence: recommended options, and how to utilize to promote your ensemble and your performances.
R: Already mentioned above, social media is a mainstay in our world now. No other medium quite has the reach and instantaneousness that social media has. Interesting things can be photos and blogs from rehearsals, anything showing the creative process, even seemingly everyday life moments from individual members can lead to web traffic that can only benefit the group as a whole. These days, fans want to know everything about a group and its members, and the more the group can share (within reason!), the better it is for everyone.

Mission, business plans, and finances:
Creating a mission statement, making goals, and putting together a business plan.

R: This is perhaps the most important aspect in this entire topic of conversation, and one thing we make our young ensembles do when studying with us. The creating of a mission statement, making goals and putting together a business plan is the first step and most important block in putting together a foundation for a group’s future. This is where the most profound discussions amongst members will take place. Why are we doing this? Who are we? What's important and meaningful for each one of us? What are our hopes and dreams? How committed is each one of us to achieving these goals? The mission statement may change over time, but we always refer to this whenever there a question about a project or event comes up.

Recommendations on when and how to raise money for projects, apply for grants, start a fundraising campaign, and utilize crowdsourcing.

R: PLAN AHEAD! Anytime a project comes down the pipeline, a plan of how much and when to raise money should be laid out and given enough time to get started, and become reality.

Everything with fundraising usually takes more time than one thinks because again, it always involves developing relationships and these take time to build. Always plan for more time than you think you will need to make a goal…and don’t be shy! If you need $10,000, why ask for only $5,000, instead of $20,000?
Arisia Gilmore is originally a native of Colorado, but has lived in Chicago, Philadelphia, London, and now Baton Rouge. She plays horn in many of the symphony orchestras and pit orchestras around Southern Louisiana and Mississippi. Arisia has been the Lecturer of Horn at Southeastern Louisiana University since 2011.

In addition to the more traditional performance opportunities of the classical music genre, she is also a member of the “Chamber Folk” band Minos the Saint, where she utilizes her “Chamber musician” skills by playing horn, and having administrative responsibilities, including tour booking, building and maintaining the band’s website, and keeping track of finances.

Arisia loves to travel, and has been fortunate enough to have played horn all over the world. She has toured China with The Hollywood Chamber Orchestra, participated in a brass concerto competition in JeJu, Korea, went to a chamber music festival in the Czech Republic, and played in two local orchestras while she lived in London.

Arisia received her Bachelor's degree in Music Performance from The University of Northern Colorado, where she studied with Jack Herrick and Marian Hesse. She received her Master's degree from DePaul University, in Chicago, studying with Oto Carrillo and Jon Boen. At Louisiana State University, Arisia has been studying horn with Seth Orgel and minored in Arts Administration. She expects to complete her Doctor of Musical Arts degree in May of 2017.