

Community-Based Chamber Ensembles:
How to Build a Career that Infuses Performance with Public Service

by

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A Research Paper Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Musical Arts

Approved November 2013 by the
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ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

December 2013

ABSTRACT

In order to cope with the decreasing availability of symphony jobs and collegiate faculty positions, many musicians are starting to pursue less traditional career paths. Also, to combat declining audiences, musicians are exploring ways to cultivate new and enthusiastic listeners through relevant and engaging performances. Due to these challenges, many community-based chamber music ensembles have been formed throughout the United States. These groups not only focus on performing classical music, but serve the needs of their communities as well. The problem, however, is that many musicians have not learned the business skills necessary to create these career opportunities.

In this document I discuss the steps ensembles must take to develop sustainable careers. I first analyze how groups build a strong foundation through getting to know their communities and creating core values. I then discuss branding and marketing so ensembles can develop a public image and learn how to publicize themselves. This is followed by an investigation of how ensembles make and organize their money. I then examine the ways groups ensure long-lasting relationships with their communities and within the ensemble. I end by presenting three case studies of professional ensembles to show how groups create and maintain successful careers.

Ensembles must develop entrepreneurship skills in addition to cultivating their artistry. These business concepts are crucial to the longevity of chamber groups. Through interviews of successful ensemble members and my own personal experiences in the Tetra String Quartet, I provide a guide for musicians to use when creating a community-based ensemble.

DEDICATION

To Chrystal, Heidi, and Louis: thank you for being my string quartet family. From Brazil to Ecuador and Bridgid to borgs, I am truly grateful for our many adventures together. I am lucky to play with such passionate, creative, and talented people.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thanks to my committee: Tom Landschoot, Ted Solis, Russell Ryan, Katherine McLin, and Bob Spring. I am indebted to you for your time and input throughout my preparation of this document. Also, I am grateful for your continuous support of the Tetra String Quartet and our endeavors throughout Arizona. Tom, thank you for believing in my cello playing and your mentorship throughout this degree.

Thank you to Rebecca Fischer, Tina Lee Hadari, Tracy Jacobson, and Alison Iven for thoughtfully answering questions for my research. Also, thank you to Ealain McCullin and EmmaLee Holmes-Hicks for providing me with a copy of their Newport Feasibility Study.

Thank you to my husband Danny. Your love and support is invaluable. I am especially grateful for your editing expertise and the surprise cupcakes you frequently brought home when I was writing.

Thank you to my family and friends for your love and encouragement. To Jaclyn: thank you for cheering me on and always believing in me. To Mom and Aria: thank you for your editing skills and your positivity. To Dad: thanks for setting the academic bar high for me many years ago—I still do not have a PhD, but a DMA is pretty close.

Again, thank you to the Tetra String Quartet for inspiring this paper and sticking by me while I finished my degree.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The twenty-first century has seen many new and exciting developments in the classical music world. From Yo Yo Ma's *Silk Road Project* to *El Sistema USA*, musicians have been expanding the possibilities for careers in music. Traditional jobs, such as orchestral and collegiate faculty positions, are highly competitive due to a decline in the number of available positions and the rise in music school graduates.¹ Audiences are declining as well, according to The League of American Orchestras' 2010 Audience Demographic Research Review.² This change in career climate has inspired musicians to create new opportunities while focusing on fostering new audiences.

Chamber musicians are doing a great deal to pave new career paths. Many successful touring ensembles still exist, such as the Julliard String Quartet, the Canadian Brass, and the Brentano String Quartet. However, I believe a rise in community-based chamber music ensembles is occurring. These groups differ from their touring counterparts by building sustainable careers in their communities.

Community-based ensembles are specifically dedicated to fostering new audiences and building relationships in the community. Many of their missions include social causes, such as the Providence String Quartet's *Community MusicWorks*. This organization offers free lessons and chamber music coachings to children in need. The Chiara String Quartet spent two years in North Dakota through Chamber Music

¹ According to the Association of Schools of Music, there were more than 110,000 students enrolled in music programs and 20,000 students that graduated in 2007-2008.

² Alex Ross, "The Fatal X," *Newyorker.com*, February 2010, under "Unquiet Thoughts," <http://www.newyorker.com/online/blogs/alexross/2010/02/more-on-audiences.html> (accessed August 28, 2013).

America's Rural Residency Program in 2000. They are now on faculty at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and have performed for children, the homeless, and college students. Two Winston-Salem Symphony woodwind groups, the Bolton and Abes Quintets, worked with children in a Massachusetts Title I elementary school from 1995-2004, twice a week, to conduct a study that analyzed how music enhanced learning.³ Community-based chamber music groups are exploring not only how to be successful artists, but how make a positive impact in their communities.

In 2010, I co-founded the Phoenix-based Tetra String Quartet. We joined forces to become a professional string quartet that performs in all parts of our community, including schools, coffee-shops, bars, and prisons. We started with a vast amount of passion, but little knowledge regarding how to develop our career. Although we collectively have nine degrees, not one of us has taken a business class. Music school prepared us to be performers, but not entrepreneurs. New England Conservatory career counselor Angela Myles Beeching writes, "It takes more than talent to succeed in music. Maybe it always has, but today's musicians need to be more creative than ever when it comes to their careers, cultivating an entrepreneurial approach to connecting with audiences and creating value in their communities."⁴ I believe chamber musicians must develop business skills in addition to cultivating relationships to be successful in their communities.

In this document, I will provide a guide that explains how to build a chamber ensemble that infuses performing with public service. My experience with Tetra has

³ Peter Perret and Janet Fox, *A Well-Tempered Mind: Using Music to Help Children Listen and Learn* (New York: Dana Press, 2006), 2.

⁴ Angela Myles Beeching, *Beyond Talent: Creating a Successful Career in Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), vii.

taught me a great deal about entrepreneurship and I am writing this for musicians who are thinking about developing an ensemble. After a brief discussion on connecting with audiences, creating value in communities, a summary of prior research and an outline of chapters, I discuss the process of creating a community-based ensemble. I then provide three case studies that explore how the Haven String Quartet, WindSync, and the Chiara String Quartet have built and maintained successful careers in their communities.

Connecting with audiences

The aforementioned quote from Beeching summarizes a change in performance practice in the classical music world. Because of declining audiences, authors, teaching artists, and performers have been analyzing how musicians can share music in relevant ways. I believe it is important for new chamber ensembles to understand how classical musicians are perceived, and what musicians are doing to change that perception.

Author Christopher Small describes how audiences may sometimes feel alienated by classical musicians:

They [the orchestra] seem in fact to inhabit a separate world from the audience, which watches them as from a distance and will in a few minutes listen to them as if through a visually and acoustically transparent but socially opaque screen at the edge of the platform...It seems to me that the message of these musicians' onstage behavior is that of their professional exclusivity, of their belonging to a world that the nonmusicians who sit beyond the edge of the stage cannot enter.⁵

He states that the separation of audience and performer is exacerbated by an absence of talking from the stage. Also, the concertgoers and musicians rarely meet face to face because they have separate entrances into the concert hall.

⁵ Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performing and Listening* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), 64-65.

The New Yorker columnist Alex Ross often writes about how classical music is presented in America. He suggests that audiences are intimidated by the serious and superior attitude that many classical musicians portray when talking about classical music. He writes, “Yet some discerning souls believe that the music should be marketed as a luxury good, one that supplants an inferior popular product. They say, in effect, ‘The music you love is trash. Listen instead to our great, arty music.’ They gesture toward the heavens, but they speak the language of high-end real estate.”⁶ However, Alex Ross states that ensembles have started to make changes to become accessible to their audiences. Many groups have started to introduce music from the stage, exchanging tuxedos for a more relaxed dress, and using lighting and special effects to create a theatrical experience. The New World Symphony projects music and video of performances onto the street outside their hall. They also present programs entitled “Pulse concerts,” which go from 10pm to 2am and include musicians performing short sets all over the building.⁷

Eric Booth is one of the nation’s leading teaching artists. A teaching artist is “the model of the twenty-first century artist and, simultaneously, a model for high-engagement learning in education”.⁸ His mission is to help musicians realize that the future of classical music relies on how musicians engage audiences. He suggests that we do this by creating powerful connections, active listening, and reflection in performances. Booth writes that all musicians, not just those interested in education, need to take more

⁶ Alex Ross, “Onward and Upward with the Arts: Listen to This,” *The New Yorker*, February 2004, 146.

⁷ Alex Ross, “Schubert on the Beach,” *Newyorker.com*, February 2011, under “Musical Events,” http://www.newyorker.com/arts/critics/musical/2011/02/14/110214crmu_music_ross (accessed August 30, 2013).

⁸ Eric Booth, *The Music Teaching Artist’s Bible: Becoming a Virtuoso Educator* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 4.

responsibility when interacting with audiences. He gives this advice to musicians who are not interested in participating:

Two comments to such musicians: (1) With that attitude, you and your ensemble are going down—smaller and smaller audiences, less income, less excitement—and taking the rest of us with you. (2) There is a role for every musician in the teaching artist’s world, even if you are not a good talker and get hives around eight-year-olds. We all need to join this work of supporting audiences’ capacity to succeed in the crucial act upon which the future of classical music depends—making personally relevant connections inside the music.

Eric Booth has built his career around teaching how to present art that will cultivate new and passionate listeners.

Creating value in communities

When I was an undergraduate student at Arizona State University (ASU), I was often blinded by my passion for classical music. I did not understand why the 3,000-seat Gammage Auditorium was sold out for *The Lion King*, but Mahler’s second symphony only attracted a few hundred people. The Phoenix community showed more support for a touring production than it did for an Arizona-based ensemble. My attitude at the time was one that is common among performers. Musicians must ask themselves: “What can I do to create excitement about my ensemble’s presence in the community?”

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines *community* as “a unified body of individuals”.⁹ For a chamber music ensemble, a community can be many things, such as a city, school, or retirement home. When an ensemble decides to build a career, they must first investigate how to align their own needs with those of their community.

⁹ *Merriam-Webster Online*, s.v. “community,” <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/community> (accessed August 30, 2013).

An opportunity to do this arose after Tetra performed for a special gala in 2010. The director of the ASU School of music at the time, Dr. Kimberly Marshall, approached us to explore a possible relationship with the music department. She scheduled a meeting with us to discuss how Tetra could help the music school and how the music school could help Tetra. ASU's need for faculty to teach classes to non-majors coincided with Tetra's desire to teach chamber music. ASU's need for student recruitment was met with Tetra's frequent visits to orchestra programs in Arizona schools. ASU also provided us with a home by giving us an office. Our position has blossomed since we first started, and we are very grateful for the opportunity. I believe this relationship is long lasting because both ASU's and Tetra's interests are aligned.

This aligned interests step is very important to think about before starting an ensemble. I believe a group will only be successful if they consider their community and audience simultaneously, in addition to honoring their own personal needs and desires.

Prior research

Due to the lack of job availability for musicians, many performers, educators, and career counselors have conducted research on entrepreneurship for musicians. These researchers are dedicated to helping students and professionals learn how to develop their own careers in music. Before continuing with the remainder of this document, I will discuss prior research and the primary sources I use to formulate my thesis.

Beyond Talent by Angela Myles Beeching examines career development for classical and jazz musicians. She offers advice for many different career paths such as soloists, teachers, chamber ensembles, and orchestras. She discusses how to build a

network, recording, branding, booking, social networking, and communication.

Numerous music programs use this book to develop courses on career development. She also includes an interactive component where the reader answers questions and brainstorms about career paths. Throughout all of my research, I found this to be the most complete and thorough career guide for musicians.

Good to Great and the Social Sectors: A Monograph to Accompany Good to Great by Jim Collins describes how organizations in the social sectors can develop success without using traditional business thinking. This provides a very interesting perspective because entrepreneurship has become a very hot word in the music world.

He states:

Most businesses—like most of anything else in life—fall somewhere between mediocre and good. Few are great. When you compare great companies with good ones, many widely practiced business norms turn out to correlate with mediocrity, not greatness. So, then why would we want to import the practices of mediocrity into the social sectors?¹⁰

He says the path to success is achieved through disciplined people, disciplined thought, disciplined action, and building greatness to last. I believe chamber music ensembles will immensely benefit from Collins' approach to building an organization.

Teaching artist Eric Booth's research is very influential to my thesis. His book *The Music Teaching Artist's Bible: Becoming a Virtuoso Educator*, his articles through *Chamber Music America*, and his Carnegie Hall lecture series videos have paved the way for education through performance. His research emphasizes that musicians need to consider their audience and learn how to inspire listeners.

¹⁰ Jim Collins, *Good to Great and the Social Sectors: A Monograph to Accompany Good to Great* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2005), 1.

Community MusicWorks invited Tetra to attend their *Institute for Musicianship and Public Service* in May 2013. We had numerous group discussions that directly inspired my thesis for this document. This conference provided me with various research sources including articles, interviews, and workshops.

In addition to the above sources, I use magazine and newspaper articles, websites, videos, and entrepreneurial books about starting careers in music. I also interview three professional chamber ensemble members for my case studies: Tina Hadari, Tracy Jacobson, and Rebecca Fischer.

My document builds on this research to provide information that is specific to chamber musicians interested in the social sectors. I offer a career guide that focuses on the logistics of creating a business and how to create longevity in communities and ensembles. Through my work with the Tetra String Quartet, I give my firsthand account of our struggles and successes to provide an honest story of what ensembles go through while building their careers.

Outline of chapters

In the remaining chapters of this paper I outline the steps an ensemble can take to build a career. In chapter 2, I discuss foundation building through finding the right people to be in an ensemble and writing a mission statement. I then outline how to develop short and long-term goals and how to build relationships. In chapter 3, I explore numerous ways ensembles can cultivate their image and get the word out about their group through branding and marketing. I investigate how to create a brand, chose a name, hire a professional designer, create a logo, build a website, take publicity photos,

write a biography, make business cards, build an electronic press kit, how to present concerts, and how to build audiences. In chapter 4, I analyze an ensemble's journey to sustainability. I propose answers to the question, "How will your ensemble make money?" through choosing a business entity, booking concerts, fundraising, grant writing, residencies, merchandise, when to say no, and creating financial goals. I review big picture concepts ensembles should consider in chapter 5. I write about becoming a teaching artist and creating a positive eco-system in an ensemble. I also explore the importance of reflection and thinking about the ensemble's trajectory. In chapter 6, I provide three case studies that give firsthand accounts of ensembles that have built successful careers while serving their communities. I explain how they created their ensembles and what they are doing to keep active careers. In the last chapter I synthesize my research and discuss the future of chamber music in America.

CHAPTER 2

CREATING THE FOUNDATION FOR AN ENSEMBLE

Choosing ensemble members

When forming a chamber music ensemble, one of the most important first steps is to find enthusiastic participants. Not only must the members perform well together and have musical chemistry, but they must also be able to run their ensemble's business. If members are not equally committed, this can affect the longevity of the ensemble. Jim Collins, author of *Good to Great and the Social Sectors*, describes this philosophy as the First Who Principle: "do whatever you can to get the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus, and the right people into the right seats."¹¹ I will apply this philosophy to musicians that are choosing individuals to be in their ensemble.

Getting the right people onto the bus: The members of an ensemble must have similar levels of dedication and passion. Abram Loft, former violinist of the Fine Arts quartet writes: "Setting up a long-term musical partnership is just as tricky as finding the one-and-only person you want to marry. It might, in fact, be even more difficult."¹² A chamber music group is similar to a marriage; through thick and thin, for better or for worse, members must be 100% committed to all of their causes. For example, if an ensemble's mission is to perform romantic string quartets for children, members must be equally committed to *both* aspects of that mission. This includes coming prepared for rehearsals and performances in addition to being enthusiastically involved in preparing for children's presentations. In this scenario, an ensemble will have a difficult time

¹¹ Collins, 14.

¹² Abram Loft, *How to Succeed in an Ensemble: Reflections on a Life in Chamber Music* (New York: Amadeus Press, 2003), 178.

functioning if one member likes rehearsing and dislikes working with kids, or vice versa.

Ensemble members also must be flexible and open to new ideas. Beeching writes: “Your criteria for selecting ensemble members must include more than simply how well they play. You need to find people who can learn new repertoire quickly, who are open to new ideas, and who can both give and receive constructive feedback.”¹³

Chamber music ensembles have equal ownership over everything that they do. Leader-based groups can make decisions faster because one person has more power than everyone else. In chamber music groups, however, all decisions must be made together. From choosing repertoire to deciding how much time to take at the end of a phrase, ensemble members must be flexible when it comes to making decisions. Otherwise, conflict may arise and take time away from the ensemble’s productivity and mental health. I will discuss this issue further in chapter 5.

Beeching also believes that ensemble members need basic business skills: “Furthermore, members need to have one or more of the non-musical skills necessary to run the group. These include administrative, computer, financial, and networking skills.”¹⁴ Ensembles have many responsibilities in addition to sounding great, such as organizational work, networking, and creating opportunities. Without both skill sets, success will be difficult to achieve. Ensembles that strive to be long lasting must take great care when choosing ensemble members. Not only must successful chamber music ensembles play beautifully, but members must also be equally committed to their mission, be flexible when making decisions as a group, and be committed to all non-musical responsibilities.

¹³ Beeching, 42.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Getting the wrong people off the bus: If an ensemble's goals and values are not unified, conflict can occur in a group. For example, a colleague of mine is a member of a string quartet in the Chicago area. She hopes that her group will become more serious, but the two violinists are taking orchestra auditions. The quartet's rehearsals and performances are always secondary to their orchestral commitments, which is frustrating for the members who wish to spend more time as a quartet. Beeching writes: "For some members, the ensemble may be top priority; for others, it may be just another casual gig. In order to adhere to a rehearsal and performance schedule, each group member needs to make a commitment to the ensemble."¹⁵ If members commit in different amounts, resentment can grow and affect the longevity of the group. When Tetra first came together, we made a decision that we would not accept freelance work that conflicted with our rehearsal schedule. Although it is sometimes difficult to turn down individual opportunities, this has allowed us to commit equally to our performances.

Getting the right people into the right seats: In a chamber music ensemble, this can be a literal necessity. For example, in a string quartet, there are two violins and in a brass quintet there can be two trumpets. Groups must discuss who will be playing first and second, or if the players will take turns in each role. Ultimately, every group must find what is right for them. In a string quartet, the first violinist's part is virtuosic and melodic, and the second violin plays a supportive role. These positions are very distinctive and require different strengths. When Tetra first started performing, our violinists Chrystal Smothers and Heidi Wright switched back and forth depending on the piece we were playing. We had only been rehearsing for a few weeks when Rebecca

¹⁵ Ibid., 43.

Fischer, the first violinist of the Chiara String Quartet, asked us why we were alternating. Since the roles are so different, she suggested that we work towards assigning the positions. It took us about six months to arrive at a decision. While both violinists brought strengths to each role, Chrystal felt more comfortable playing first violin. Once we made this decision we were able to work clearly towards finding our group sound. However, both violinists are flexible to play either roll if an unexpected situation occurs.

It is also important to get the right people to the right seats on the bus so that the ensemble's business matters can operate efficiently. To do this, ensembles start by identifying each member's individual strengths. For example, I am fast at responding to email and am good at long-range planning. So for Tetra, I am in charge of responding to emails and booking concerts. Heidi has a degree in math, so she is in charge of Tetra's finances. Chrystal is a great writer, so she is in charge of identifying and applying for grants. Louis is good at networking, so he is in charge of our social media and publicity. We have developed this balance over time to help us be more productive, but it took several tries. Chrystal used to be in charge of email and I was in charge of grants. We eventually switched roles because I had a smart phone and could respond immediately to potential opportunities, and Chrystal was better at finding interesting grants online.

I also think it is crucial for group members to enjoy their business responsibilities; otherwise it will feel like a chore and bring the overall productivity of the ensemble down. Beeching writes: "If one member of the group ends up handling all administrative and logistical tasks, this person will, inevitably, become resentful. In the long run, the groups that survive are those that have effectively divided the workload among the

members.”¹⁶ If ensemble members perform tasks that they enjoy, they are more likely to get the work done quickly and thoroughly.

Collins’ First Who principle describes the core of every successful chamber music ensemble. He writes:

The great companies...focused on getting and hanging on to the right people in the first place—those who are productively neurotic, those who are *self*-motivated and *self*-disciplined, those who wake up every day, compulsively driven to do the best they can because it is simply part of their DNA. In the social sectors, when big incentives (or compensation at all, in the case of volunteers) are simply not possible, the First Who principle becomes even more important. Lack of resources is no excuse for lack of rigor—it makes selectivity all the more vital.¹⁷

Since it usually takes ensembles years to build thriving careers and sustainable incomes, it is important that members are committed long-term from the very beginning.

Once an ensemble forms, the next vital step is to sign a contract to unify the group’s level of official commitment. Without a contract, conflict may arise. For example, there can be disputes about money, how the group makes decisions, and personal responsibilities. Contracts clarify how the group will operate. One of the most important aspects of the contract is to decide how long members will agree to be in the ensemble. For example, the Texas-based woodwind group WindSync signs a contract at the beginning of every concert season.¹⁸ They make a one-year promise to perform and renew the contract every year. This way, if someone is not happy in the ensemble, they are still obligated to complete their allotted time with the group. In the end, everyone ends up being better protected when a group contract is signed because members are stating their commitment to one another.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Collins, 15.

¹⁸ Tracy Jacobson, interview by author, through email correspondence, September 13, 2013.

Writing a mission statement

When forming an ensemble, it is important to write a mission statement. A mission statement is: “a formal summary of the aims and values of a company, organization, or individual”.¹⁹ These one to two-sentence statements reflect an ensemble’s core values and the group of people they plan on serving. Before an ensemble starts to book performances, choose repertoire, or develop programming, it is important that they unify their vision and clarify their goals. I recommend that ensembles start with brainstorming sessions to answer the following questions:

1. What are your Big Hairy Audacious Goals?
2. What makes your ensemble different from other groups?
3. How does your ensemble make your community better and affect lives?

A Big Hairy Audacious Goal (BHAG) is a concept invented by James Collins and Jerry Porras in the book *Built to Last*. According to Collins and Porras, a BHAG is “...clear and compelling and serves as a unifying focal point of effort, often creating immense team spirit...A BHAG engages people—it reaches out and grabs them in the gut. It is tangible, energizing, highly focused. People ‘get it’ right away; it takes little or no explanation.”²⁰ These goals are long-term dreams for your ensemble, something to work towards. They can be anything from developing a community music school to playing at Carnegie Hall. A non-musical example is Microsoft’s well-known BHAG. It states: “A computer on every desk and in every home, all running Microsoft software”.²¹

¹⁹ *Oxford Dictionary Online*, s.v. “mission statement,” <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/mission-statement?q=mission+statement> (accessed September 3, 2013).

²⁰ James C. Collins and Jerry I. Porras, *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2002), 94.

²¹ Nancy Lublin, “How to Write a Mission Statement that isn’t Dumb,” *Fastcompany.com*, November 1, 2009, under “Getting Funded,” <http://www.fastcompany.com/1400930/how-write-mission-statement-isnt-dumb> (accessed September 4, 2013).

This is a great aspiration for Microsoft; they don't just want to sell software, they want it in every home and on every computer. These goals are important to think about before writing a mission to ensure that the ensemble is moving in the right direction.

A mission statement must reflect what sets the group apart from similar organizations. The reader should be able to immediately identify what makes an ensemble different. To illustrate this point, I will compare two grocery store's mission statements. Trader Joe's mission: "The mission of Trader Joe's is to give our customers the best food and beverage values that they can find anywhere and to provide them with the information required to make informed buying decisions. We provide these with a dedication to the highest quality of customer satisfaction delivered with a sense of warmth, friendliness, fun, individual pride, and company spirit."²² Safeway's mission: "We earn the loyalty of the people we serve by first anticipating, then fulfilling their needs with our superior-quality products, a unique shopping experience, customer-focused service and continuous innovation, while generating long-term profitable growth for our shareholders."²³

Trader Joe's mission emphasizes *value*, and *information* to make *informed buying decisions*. They want to provide customers with great deals and give them all the information needed to decide what to buy. The second sentence states that they will give *dedicated* customer service in a *warm, friendly, and fun* way. I should go to Trader Joe's if I want to get fantastic customer service and a good deal on the food that I choose.

²² Barbara Farfan, "Trader Joe's Mission Statement-Fun, Individual Pride and Company Spirit," *About.com*, under "Retail Industry," <http://retailindustry.about.com/od/retailbestpractices/ig/Company-Mission-Statements/Trader-Joe-s-Mission-Statement.htm> (accessed September 10, 2013).

²³ Safeway Website, Why Work For Us?: Mission/Vision Statement, <http://www.careersatsafeway.com/why-work-for-us/missionvision-statement> (accessed September 4, 2013).

Safeway's mission emphasizes serving both its customers and its shareholders: *anticipating and fulfilling needs* while providing *superior-quality*, a *unique* experience, great and innovative customer service, and *long-term profitable growth*. I should go to Safeway if I want a reliable and unique shopping experience, great products, and committed customer service.

Each grocery store has slightly different priorities. As a consumer, I think that I will have a positive experience at either store. However, one important question to ask is: "How did I *feel* when reading each mission statement?" These statements are not only about *what* they are saying but *how* they are saying it. From their mission statements, I feel that *Trader Joe's* is a fun place to shop because of the detail in which they describe their customer service.²⁴ I feel that *Safeway* is a more traditional and well-rounded shopping experience; the tone of their mission statement is more serious and formal, especially in how they emphasize making money for their stockholders.

A mission statement must also reflect *who* the ensemble plans on serving. For example, when Tetra started brainstorming for our mission, we thought for a long time about the identity of our audience. We went through many different options including families, kids, everyone in Phoenix, and classical music lovers. We finally decided on every listener because we strive to make performances accessible and relevant for everyone. To help establish who the ensemble wants to serve, Eric Booth suggests writing a singles ad.²⁵ If an ensemble is trying to get a date, what kind of person is it

²⁴ Ever shopped at *Trader Joe's*? Employees wear Hawaiian shirts and the store is decorated like a tiki bar.

²⁵ Eric Booth, "Making Creative Connections, Active Listening, and Reflection," Carnegie Hall website, Adobe Flash Player, 6:03, <http://www.carnegiehall.org/ORC/Eric-Booth-on-Teaching-Artistry/> (accessed September 6, 2013).

attracting? Although this process is somewhat simplified, the exercise will help ensembles clarify the *who* in their missions.

After the brainstorming process, groups should read as many mission statements as possible. This process will help them become aware of the different styles of mission statements and the different types of content that can be included. The ensemble should explore which ones are their favorite and least favorite. Tetra had a business meeting with Brandon VanWaeyenberghe, the Houston Symphony's Institutional Giving Director, who gave some very helpful advice. He suggested that when reading and thinking about mission statements, musicians should start by reading those written by successful companies such as McDonalds and Starbucks. It might seem more relevant to start by reading other music ensemble's missions, but companies like McDonalds and Starbucks hire professionals and spend large sums of money to write their missions. Why not start with the organizations with the most resources?

CEO of *Do Something*, Nancy Lublin, writes that she thinks one of the biggest problems with most mission statements is the large amount of fluff and flowery language. She suggests:

Write a mission statement with a goal that's an action, not a sentiment; that is quantifiable, not nebulous. If you're trying to sell a product, how and how many? If you're trying to change lives, how and whose? Take your wonky mission statement and rip it to shreds. Then ponder your ambitions, and write and rewrite the thing until it reflects—in real, printable words and figures—the difference that you want to make.²⁶

A mission statement must reflect the aims and goals of an ensemble in a clear and unambiguous way. The New York City-based orchestra *The Knights* have a very clear mission. It states: "The Knights are an orchestra of friends from a broad spectrum of the

²⁶ Nancy Lublin, <http://www.fastcompany.com/1400930/how-write-mission-statement-isnt-dumb>.

New York music world who are deeply committed to creating original, engaging musical experiences. Led by an open-minded spirit of camaraderie and collaboration, we seek to engage with contemporary culture through vibrant performances that honor the classical tradition and our passion for musical discovery.”²⁷ From this mission, I know who they are (a group of open-minded New York City friends), what their goals are (to create original and engaging musical experiences), and how they are different (they engage with contemporary culture in performance while still honoring tradition).

Although mission statements are written to last a long time, nothing is set in stone. As the ensemble evolves, so will its mission. This has definitely occurred for *Community MusicWorks* (CMW) throughout its sixteen years of existence. When the program first started in 1997, founder Sebastian Ruth was not very concerned with the organization’s mission. “I had drafted a temporary mission statement (involving music education and South Providence) to produce when called for, but in my head I knew it was a placeholder, until I could put more time and thought into a statement that more fully represented my vision.”²⁸ In 1999, Ruth finally felt it was time to draft a thorough mission. He gathered with CMW board members and fellow musician Minna Choi to brainstorm. They spent an entire day writing key words and concepts on post-it notes, developing their mission statement by the end of the day. The mission they created was: “To create a cohesive urban community through music education and performance that transforms the lives of children, families, and musicians.”²⁹ This statement is still part

²⁷ The Knights Website, About: We are the Knights, <http://www.theknightsnyc.com/#!/about/> (accessed September 10, 2013).

²⁸ Sebastian Ruth, *Half Steps*, vol. 1 of *A Compendium of Writing in Community MusicWorks* (Providence: unpublished, 2009), 25.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 26.

of CMW's mission in 2013. It is a great example of how timeless some mission statements can be. However, in 2004 another sentence was added to reflect the Providence String Quartet's place in the organization: "At the center of this mission are the teaching, mentoring, program design, and performance activities of the Providence String Quartet."³⁰ Ruth explains that this addition has helped CMW "communicate the important and unique design of this organization based around a resident quartet".³¹

CMW has since expanded its number of core musicians to include more than a string quartet. Because of this, they have replaced the second sentence with: "Our model is centered around the teaching, mentoring, program design, and performance activities of our musicians-in-residence, the Community MusicWorks Players."³² Even though CMW's mission has changed over the years, its core values are still the same.

After completing a mission statement, it can then be used to describe the ambitions of the ensemble. It can also help groups make decisions when they are offered opportunities. Tetra is often presented with possible engagements, but before we say yes or no, we first ask ourselves: is this relevant to our mission? Jim Collins states: "Social sector leaders pride themselves on 'doing good' for the world, but to be of maximum service requires a ferocious focus on doing good *only* if it fits with your Hedgehog Concept."³³ To do the most good requires saying 'no' to pressures to stray, and the

³⁰ Ibid., 30.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Community MusicWorks Website, About us: Mission, <http://www.communitymusicworks.org/about.htm> (accessed September 4, 2013).

³³ According to Collins, a "Hedgehog" concept is "an operating model that reflects understanding of three intersecting circles: what you can be the best in the world at, what you are deeply passionate about, and what best drives your economic or resource engine." Collins, 34.

discipline to stop doing what does not fit.”³⁴ If often takes courage to say no to opportunities, but ensembles must stay true to their core values.

Developing short and long-term goals

Goals are integral to developing an ensemble’s mission statement. In addition to setting Big Hairy Audacious Goals, ensembles need to discuss how they will get there. Beeching suggests that musicians start with long-term goals and work backwards. She calls this *backward planning*: “The idea is to work in reverse from your desired outcome, making sure you have a manageable timeline with benchmarking goals along the way to help keep you on track.”³⁵ The first step is to create or review the ensemble’s BHAGs: groups can dream very big during this stage. There are no limitations regarding what the ensemble can potentially accomplish. The next step is to develop ten, five, and one-year goals. This way the ensemble knows where they are going and how they will get there.

Tetra made one and five-year goals in our first month of being a quartet. After only nine months together, we had accomplished most of our five-year goals. We were appointed as faculty associates to Arizona State University to teach chamber music, selected to be guest artists on a fully funded regional tour, accepted to study at a high-level chamber music festival with the St. Lawrence String Quartet, and invited to travel internationally to Brazil. When we wrote down our five-year goals, we had no idea that they were actually possible. Through establishing these long-term goals, we were able to work towards making them happen. This resulted in our goals coming to fruition much sooner than we imagined.

³⁴ Collins, 27.

³⁵ Beeching, 18.

When developing short-term goals, it is important to keep them specific. Aspirations can include performing on concert series or kids' concerts, how much money you want to make, and finding a space to rehearse. Goals can also include building specific relationships and creating enthusiasm for your ensemble. When brainstorming and developing goals as a group, write every idea down but do not judge them. Some of Tetra's brainstorming ideas seem very crazy or even goofy at times, but several eventually turn into exciting realities. However, once the group's goals are solidified Beeching suggests: "The trick in managing any project is to think strategically and realistically about what needs to be done and when."³⁶ In order to transform goals into realities, ensembles must make detailed plans regarding how they will achieve them. For example, if a group's goal is to play at more schools, the ensemble might start by making a brochure of their children's programs and mailing them to principals, teachers, and parents. It is also crucial to make deadlines and to follow up with contacts. No one wants a group to succeed more than the ensemble itself; the passion, dedication, and enthusiasm a group creates will project a contagious energy throughout their community.³⁷

Building relationships

After groups develop a mission statement and goals, it is important for them to research their communities to see what kind of impact is possible. Through this investigation, groups identify how they can cultivate a career for themselves.

Relationship building is an excellent way for ensembles to build support. Artist Jackie

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ See Appendix A, page 129, for an exercise on developing goals.

Battenfield suggests making lists of potential supporters by sorting them into four groups: *unexposed*, *exposed*, *connected*, and *core supporters*. Each group can be divided into a ring on a target. The largest ring will be the *unexposed* group. These are the individuals that have never heard of your ensemble. The next ring is the group *exposed*. This group has been briefly introduced to your group, such as visiting your website or seeing concert promotion. The *connected* group is much smaller than the previous rings: peers, friends, family, presenters, audience members, or anyone that is truly connected to the ensemble and is interested in the group's mission. The center of the target symbolizes the *core supporters*. This is the smallest group of people, but these are the individuals that will provide ensembles with the most support. *Core supporters* are interested in helping the ensemble succeed. They might be interested in things such as volunteering, fundraising, and spreading the word about the ensemble's mission.³⁸

Battenfield describes the purpose of this target: "Building long-term relationships revolves around the actions you take to move individuals from the colder, outer-relationship circles to the warm, inner core."³⁹ This concept poses the question: *what* can ensembles do to move individuals from the outside in? Regardless of an ensemble's previous relationship with a community, they can use this target-method brainstorming style. In addition, they should research a list of potential partners, supporters, and community leaders.⁴⁰ Tetra is sometimes surprised by where our biggest support comes from. We recently developed a chamber-music program at Marcos De Niza High School in Tempe. We had one meeting with the orchestra director to see if he was interested.

³⁸ Jackie Battenfield, *The Artist's Guide: How to Make a Living Doing What You Love* (Philadelphia: Da Capo Press, 2009) 143-144.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 144.

⁴⁰ See Appendix A, page 130, for a brainstorming exercise on developing a support network.

Within a few months, he had raised \$6,000 in grant money for the program. We did not participate in any of the grant writing; this great orchestra director and Tempe's district grant writer led the entire process. In this case, we moved someone from our *connected* group to our *core supporters*. Sometimes all it takes to make a new *core supporter* is to reach out and start a conversation with them.

Throughout each stage of an ensemble's career, relationship building will always be important because it is crucial to success. Newly cultivated relationships can turn into audience members, funders, and volunteers. After the initial exploratory brainstorming stage comes researching the needs of the community to see how your ensemble's mission can align. An ensemble can use their list of supporters, potential partners, and community leaders as a resource to get to know the community. I suggest taking these individuals out for coffee or lunch to discuss your ensemble's mission.⁴¹ If an ensemble wants to play engaging programs for children in schools, it is important to talk to principals, parents, PTO presidents, teachers, and other organizations that perform for kids. What do the children need? How do they think you can help teach and inspire kids? For example, teaching artists often must align their lessons with state learning standards. Classroom teachers need help teaching these concepts in new and creative ways, and teaching artists can help provide that. Eric Booth writes:

Along with many, I initially bristled at the implication that I needed to change my delicate work to accommodate legislated norms...However, in working with the standards in practice, I, like many TAs, discovered the following: they were rather benign; they aligned readily with what I wanted to teach; they prompted better conversation with teacher-partners; and they reminded me that artists themselves

⁴¹ When taking a potential supporter out to pick their brain, it is important that you always pay for their drink or lunch! This communicates appreciation and respect.

carry the highest standards and live by them—so the whole notion of applying standards was artistically authentic.⁴²

This is a great example of aligned interests in the community. Ensembles must be careful that they do not *assume* what a community needs; they must have meaningful conversations with community members to gauge how their group will have the most powerful impact.

Ensemble members must be as sincere and honest as possible when talking to community members to help them feel respected and appreciated. Negative feelings towards the ensemble, if developed, can prevent them from receiving opportunities. Many groups cultivate positivity by sending hand-written thank-you cards. It is very important to thank individuals who help the ensemble in a sincere and thoughtful manner. Tetra regularly sends out thank you notes. We sent one to former *Community MusicWorks* managing director Heath Marlow in 2010 after he answered a few questions of ours over the phone. When we met him in person in May 2013, he remembered our ensemble and our thank-you card, even though we only had one previous conversation. If a presenter asked him about us, he would only have positive things to say. Writing thank-you cards is a small way ensembles can create positive relationships in the community, and they can have a lasting effect.

Another way that ensemble members can create positivity is by being humble and gracious to everyone they meet. This includes people met unexpectedly, at the grocery store or a party, who want to learn about their group. These conversations might only be a few minutes long, but ensembles must prepare themselves on how to talk about their mission in a short period of time. Businesses call this an elevator pitch. An elevator

⁴² Booth, 10.

pitch is a “succinct and persuasive sales pitch... from the idea of having to impress a senior executive during a brief ride in a lift”.⁴³ Elevator pitches should be short, lasting for approximately thirty seconds. Beeching writes: “If you have an elevator speech at the ready, it makes it much easier to meet people...It should be conversational and personal, not a sales pitch. And it should give your conversation partner something to talk with you about—it should have conversation ‘openings.’”⁴⁴ An elevator pitch should begin with the individual’s name and the name of the ensemble. Then state a credential, such as where the ensemble is in residence or a general success of the group. This can be followed by a more detailed project that your ensemble is working on. Beeching suggests that during this step the entrepreneur should say something to get the other person engaged in the conversation: “You want them to be able to give you an idea or a contact, so you create a conversational “volley” to which your partner can respond.”⁴⁵ If the conversation continues after this step, it is appropriate to ask for their contact information.

Ensemble members can change their pitches depending on whom they meet. For a presenter, they can focus on their high-profile performances, and for a teacher, they can describe their programs for kids. Here is an example of an elevator pitch I could use when meeting the director of Young Audiences San Diego:

Hi, my name is Jenna Dalbey and I am the cellist in the Tetra String Quartet. We are Faculty Associates at Arizona State University. I wanted to introduce myself to you because we recently performed for over 2,000 kids in Nogales, Arizona through Young Audiences of Santa Cruz County. We are interested in expanding

⁴³ *Oxford Dictionary Online*, s.v. “elevator pitch,” <http://oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/elevator-pitch?q=elevator+pitch> (accessed September 7, 2013).

⁴⁴ Beeching, 33.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 34.

our reach in the Southwest, and I would love to schedule a meeting with you to see if you have any advice about setting up a tour in California.

It takes practice to get comfortable with this process. I am still working on presenting myself in a natural and sincere way when having conversations about Tetra's mission. I must practice so that I do not fumble over my words. Individuals who are new to this process might try staged elevator pitches where they practice with friends, family, and colleagues.

From the very beginning ensembles must keep track of their contacts. After long periods of time, it can be difficult to remember names. One solution is to keep a database of names, email addresses, and how the ensemble knows the contact. Many online services can help ensembles organize contacts, such as MailChimp and Constant Contact. These services allow organizations to sort their contacts into groups in order to send emails. Depending on the number of contacts an ensemble has, these services can be used for free or a small monthly fee. My favorite thing about online email marketing tools is that they provide email templates. No technical knowledge is required to send a professional looking email. Also, packages can include an email analysis that tells ensembles who opened the email, who deleted it, who forwarded it, and what links individuals clicked on in the email. This helps ensembles know the individuals they are reaching. Many ensembles also use social media to foster networks. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram give fans the option to stay up-to-date with their favorite groups. The Chicago-based ensemble Eighth Blackbird has 3,642 likes on their Facebook page.⁴⁶ Whenever the ensemble posts something, it is seen by thousands of fans. These social

⁴⁶ Eighth Blackbird's Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/eighthblackbird> (accessed September 12, 2013).

networking sites are free to ensembles and serve as a great way for groups to keep track of their fan base.

Many ensembles encourage their concertgoers, friends, and family to join their mailing lists. Tetra brings a guestbook to every concert we play to keep in touch with our audience. Many people that attend our performances do not know about the work we do with kids, so this helps us communicate all sides of our mission to our fan base. We sometimes give an incentive to add their email address by giving them a free Tetra String Quartet sticker. Our guestbook used to be a nice-looking notebook. However, we just started bringing an electronic tablet so that individuals can type their names directly into our email list. This has helped a great deal with hard-to-decipher handwriting. My advice is to *always* bring a guestbook; every concert is an opportunity to gain new supporters.

Every group approaches their introduction to a new community differently. Some ensembles that envision their work as organizational-based, such as the Providence String Quartet's involvement with *Community MusicWorks*, might start their investigation of a community with a feasibility study. This was the case with the *Newport String Project* in Newport, Rhode Island. Violinists and CMW Fellowship Program alumni EmmaLee Holmes-Hicks and Ealain McMullin launched the program in fall of 2013. From January through June in 2012, they conducted a feasibility study in Newport. In this study they researched the needs of the community, potential partners, and a variety of funding sources. They spoke with individuals from community centers, churches, universities, public schools, and other arts organizations. They also conducted two seminars: one at Community MusicWorks and one in Newport. They found that:

There is a significant unmet need for free music education for young people in Newport, particularly in the North End, which has the least resources and existing programs. We also found a number of strong community resources in the form of potential partner organizations who would support the development of new program facilities, staff, neighborhood connections, and other critical resources.⁴⁷

Their feasibility study produced informative results. This gave them plenty of time to develop a program concept and fundraise before launching the program over a year later. Some ensembles build careers as they get to know their communities, while others do research before initiating programs. Either way, this is a crucial step for groups and will ensure a strong support for them throughout their community.

⁴⁷ Ariana Falk, Robin Gilbert, EmmaLee Holmes-Hicks, and Ealain McCullin, *Community MusicWorks: Research into the Feasibility of a Free After-school Music Education Program in Newport, RI Funded with the generous support of the Prince Charitable Trust* (Providence: unpublished, 2012), 1.

CHAPTER 3

BRANDING AND MARKETING

Creating a brand

Creating a brand is an important part of establishing an ensemble. Branding describes *who* an ensemble is and what they stand for. Entrepreneurship writer Karen E. Klein describes branding as: “Your product or service is not your company's brand and neither is your logo or your business card. Your brand is the genuine ‘personality’ of your company.”⁴⁸ Everything that represents the brand of a group needs to project its mission, vibe, and values.⁴⁹ If part of a ensemble’s mission is to be fun and friendly, all of their branding materials should evoke these characteristics. Once the personality of the brand has been established, ensembles can start cultivating a unified image through their group’s name, logo, website, photography, biography, business cards, electronic press kit, how they present concerts, and build audiences. Through these materials, group unity is described conceptually and visually.

Marketing, however, is different from branding. If branding is *who* an ensemble is, then marketing is *what* an ensemble does to create publicity about their product. Marketing will only be successful if good branding has been established first. Author and branding expert Rob Frankel says that branding “is not advertising and it's not marketing or PR. Branding happens before all of those: First you create the brand, then

⁴⁸ Karen E. Klein, “A Practical Guide to Branding”, *Businessweek.com*, June 9, 2008, under “Small Business,” <http://www.businessweek.com/stories/2008-06-09/a-practical-guide-to-brandingbusinessweek-business-news-stock-market-and-financial-advice> (accessed September 5, 2013).

⁴⁹ It is important that a group has established its mission before beginning the branding process. See Chapter 2.

you raise awareness of it.”⁵⁰ In this chapter, I will discuss how to create an ensemble’s brand and how they can use their brand to market themselves.

Choosing a name

The foundation of an ensemble’s identity is its name. Names provide groups with an opportunity to describe themselves to people who do not know them yet. A name can project the energy, values, and creativity of an ensemble in addition to cultivating a first impression. Musician and entrepreneurship author David Cutler writes: “Just as people often decide whether or not to purchase a book based on the title, [your name] may be enough to attract their curiosity or turn them off...Names project an image, whether intentional or not, so reflect upon these implications.”⁵¹ Although an ensemble’s name is only one aspect of branding, this is usually the first thing someone will learn about a group. This is why it is important for ensembles to take their time and consider many options when brainstorming names.

Nellie Aklap, CEO of CorpNet.com suggests many ideas for the brainstorming process. She first recommends that businesses set the tone they want their name to have. She writes: “Your own tone can be playful or academic, edgy or professional. Just make sure it reflects what your business is and what you want it to be in the future.”⁵²

Ensembles can ask themselves: what tone will our name convey? What names do we like best? How will the tone of our ensemble’s name be different from that of other groups’?

⁵⁰ Karen E. Klein, <http://www.businessweek.com/stories/2008-06-09/a-practical-guide-to-brandingbusinessweek-business-news-stock-market-and-financial-advice>.

⁵¹ David Cutler, *The Savvy Musician: Building a Career, Earning a Living, and Making a Difference* (Pittsburgh: Helios Press, 2010), 40.

⁵² Nellie Aklap, “How to Pick the Right Name for Your Business,” *Mashable.com*, January 16, 2002, under “Social Media,” <http://mashable.com/2012/01/16/business-name-how-to/> (accessed September 5, 2013).

She also suggests that simple and descriptive names are the strongest; it is important for people to remember an ensemble's name so that they can attend future concerts and tell their friends about the group. Aklap writes: "A powerful name is easy to spell, pronounce and remember. After all, what good is word-of-mouth if your customer tells a friend, 'You really should look up my caterer for your next event. I think their name begins with an A...'"⁵³ Many ensembles choose single words to precede or proceed the type of ensemble they are. Some examples of this are the *Brentano* String Quartet, the *Copper Street* Brass, or Quintet *Latina*. In this case, one phrase describes the type of ensemble, and the other is a unique representation of the image of the ensemble. However, some ensembles choose names that are less descriptive, but pique curiosity. An example of this is the group Eighth Blackbird. Their type of ensemble is not evident from their name, but they include a thorough description on their website. It reads:

- eighth blackbird** \ 'ātth 'blāk-, bərd\ slang (orig. and chiefly U.S.).
1. verb. to act with commitment and virtuosity; to zap, zip, sock
 2. adjective. having fearless (yet irreverent) qualities.
 3. noun. a flock of songbirds, common in urban areas since 1996.⁵⁴

This is a witty way of defining a name that does not obviously describe itself. New listeners will remember the ensemble because of their name's uniqueness, even if they weren't initially clear about the type of group when reading the name.

Once an ensemble thinks they have decided on a final name, they must do research to make sure that a different group does not already have the name. Aklap writes:

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Eighth Blackbird Website, Ensemble, <http://www.eighthblackbird.org/ensemble/> (accessed September 15, 2013).

The most important lesson is not to get too attached to any one name during the brainstorming process. When inspiration strikes, it's all too tempting to start envisioning your company logo, web design, signage, business cards, etc. But you've got to make sure that perfect name is legally available for you to use—no one wants to be on the wrong end of a trademark dispute.⁵⁵

In order to legally register the name of a business, an ensemble must first check to see if it has been trademarked on the state or federal level. There are different requirements for business name registration in every state. Ensembles should thoroughly review the rules and requirements on a state and federal level to make sure that they are registering their name correctly. Also, the process of legally registering a name depends on the ensemble's business structure.⁵⁶ Please visit the U.S. Small Business Administration at sba.gov for more information. Ensembles should also check online to see if there are domain name options available. To see if a domain name is available, type the desired name into a search engine. If a .com address has been used, try searching for a .org, .net, .biz, or .info address. The .com, .org, and .net are unrestricted domains. However, anyone can register .biz, specifically meant for businesses, and a .info, specifically meant for information.⁵⁷ It is also important that an ensemble see if their name is available on social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter.

Hiring a professional designer

After an ensemble has decided on a name, the group can start to visualize what their brand will look like. At this point, groups should discuss whether to build their branding materials themselves or to hire a designer. For ensembles that are interested in

⁵⁵ Nellie Aklap, <http://mashable.com/2012/01/16/business-name-how-to/> (accessed September 5, 2013).

⁵⁶ See chapter 4.

⁵⁷ Domainregister.com, "What is the difference - .com, .org, .net, .biz & .info & all the others?," under "Domain Services," <http://www.domainregister.com/comorg.html> (accessed September 20, 2013).

working with a designer, my advice is that they research their networks for individuals to help them with the design process. When Tetra first started designing our brand, we were very overwhelmed because no one in the group is artistically or technically savvy. We researched our support network of friends and family and found Alison Iven, one of my best friends from high school. She is a New York City-based graphic designer and agreed to work at a reduced rate. As a new ensemble, we did not have very much money, but we wanted to develop a professional looking image. Iven was in the process of developing her freelance design career and wanted projects to help build her portfolio. It was an ideal situation for both Tetra and Iven because our needs were aligned. She helped us create our logo, business cards, and website. We are now able to pay Iven more money and are very grateful that she worked with our budget in the beginning.

Groups should be creative when exploring brand design. For example, Tracy Jacobson of WindSync was very imaginative when it came to developing elements of their brand. The group played a concert at a Texas prison entrepreneurship program. After the show, the director of the program asked her if they could help WindSync in any way. She replied that they needed a logo, and soon after the concert, the prisoners designed one for them.⁵⁸ If an ensemble cannot think of any design connections in their support network, bartering is also possible. Groups can trade performance services for design; perhaps a local design firm is interested in live music for their annual holiday party in exchange for a logo design. It never hurts to ask!

If a group is deciding between hiring a designer and doing work themselves, Iven offers this advice: “As a creative professional, I think a group will get the best results by

⁵⁸ WindSync now uses a new logo.

working with a professional instead of a DIY approach. Working with a designer will provide great ideas for how to convey the message of a group in interesting ways as well as keeping the design consistency throughout all collateral pieces.”⁵⁹ When ensembles are first starting out, it is important that they give a positive impression to everyone that they meet. This will help groups grow their audiences and support networks. If an ensemble has the resources, investing in professional design will pay off in the long run.

Creating a logo

Regardless of whether an ensemble will do their own design work or hire a professional, they must think about what branding material they will develop first. Iven recommends starting with the logo: “I like to start with the logo, which allows me to explore typography and color in very broad strokes. By working with the logo first, I can use whatever conclusions I’ve come to as a jumping off point for the business card, website and any other collateral pieces.”⁶⁰ Tetra started by developing our logo, which was very helpful because we later incorporated it into our website, business cards, thank you cards, stickers, newsletters, tee shirts, and letterhead. By starting with the logo, we were able to conceptualize on a smaller scale what we wanted our brand to look like.

David Cutler describes a logo as:

A logo is a visual element that represents your product. At the least, it is a presentation of your name written with a special font, design, and color. To make logos more memorable, it is helpful to include a graphic element that somehow conveys your mission, suggests the services offered, or describes the “attitude” of your business.⁶¹

⁵⁹ Alison Iven, interview by author, through email correspondence, September 9, 2013.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Cutler, 41.

Many big companies, such as Coca-Cola, Apple, and Disney, are known for their logos. These images are iconic and familiar around the world. A logo should represent the energy that ensembles want their audiences to feel. Design can project the ensemble's personality through typeface and color.

The typeface of a logo can depict many different types of energies. Tetra spoke to Iven about our mission at great lengths before we decided on a font.

In the Tetra logo and typeface used as headlines on the site (Century Gothic), it was important for me to use an 'a' that was composed of a circle and a stroke since it felt more attuned to children and teaching (children are taught in school to write an 'a' this way⁶²) without being too obvious. It also evoked a feeling of friendliness and informality.⁶³

Iven's font insights helped us choose one that conveyed our mission to make our performances relevant for every listener. Since we did not want to come across as intimidating to our audiences, our logo font projects a friendly and welcoming feeling.

The color of a logo also says a great deal about an ensemble. If an ensemble were a color, what color would it be? The business 123Print developed a logo color chart that describes what concepts colors project. For example, the color red conveys "action + energy," and it can project passion and aggression. Orange resembles "energy, friendliness, and confidence," while green signifies "nature and serenity".⁶⁴ Many logos have only one color, such as Disney, while some have multiple colors, such as Google. Tetra spent a great deal of time discussing the color of our logo before deciding on orange. We wanted to come across as warm, friendly, and welcoming. Also, because we are based in Phoenix, we wanted our logo's color to be bright and to suggest the color of

⁶² Times New Roman: "tetra string quartet" versus Century Gothic: "tetra string quartet"

⁶³ Alison Iven, interview by author, through email correspondence, September 9, 2013.

⁶⁴ Kevin Allen, "What Your Company Logo Says About Your Brand (Infographic)," *Entrepreneur.com*, August 11, 2013, <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/227766> (accessed September 10, 2013).

the sun. We narrowed it down to orange and yellow and finally decided on orange because it is less intense and easier to see visually.

Some businesses also include a visual image along with the logo to further describe their mission. An example of this is Best Buy's price tag logo. The words "Best Buy" are written on a yellow sales tag to imply that the customer is getting the best deal possible at their store.



Figure 1. Best Buy's logo.⁶⁵

Some businesses only have images and don't write out the name of the company. An example of this is Apple's logo; it is simply a gray apple with no text.



Figure 2. Apple's logo.⁶⁶

⁶⁵ "Best Buy's logo," Google image search, http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/f/f5/Best_Buy_Logo.svg/300px-Best_Buy_Logo.svg.png (accessed September 26, 2013).

⁶⁶ "Apple's logo," Google image search, <http://www.brandchannel.com/home/image.axd?picture=2011%2F10%2Fapple+silver.jpg> (accessed October 24, 2013).

Tetra decided to include a visual image along with the text “Tetra String Quartet.”

Alison gave us many different options, but one had a violin scroll underneath our name.

We felt that including a violin image helped us stay relevant to our general audience.



Figure 3. Tetra String Quartet’s logo⁶⁷

A logo serves as the heart of an ensemble’s brand. The group will be able to use their logo on all promotional materials, and it will visually describe the ensemble’s mission. Whether or not a group is using a designer, I suggest coming up with multiple design options before making a decision. Run these options by musicians and non-musicians and ask them for their honest opinions. It is especially helpful to ask people who do not know what your ensemble does so that the group can gather unbiased information. Who your ensemble is and what it does must be clear to all potential audience members.

Website

Every ensemble needs a website that will not only represent a group’s brand, but will also serve as a marketing tool. An ensemble’s brand is depicted through a website’s design, and the marketing is achieved through its content. An individual who does not know an ensemble should get a strong first impression after visiting a group’s website. The main goals for developing a website are to attract new supporters and to develop interest in the group.

⁶⁷ Image provided by the Tetra String Quartet.

I recommend starting the website building process by registering a domain name. Once a name has been registered, no one else can have the website address. This can serve as a placeholder while the ensemble is developing its website. Many different sites offer this service, including GoDaddy.com and Register.com. After the ensemble has decided on their domain name, the next step is to explore web hosting. Beeching describes what web hosting is: “Each server connected to the Internet has a unique number, called IP address. A domain name points web users to a specific IP address. In order to ‘lease’ space on a server, you need to set up a web hosting account.”⁶⁸ This hosting will give an ensemble’s website space to exist on the Internet. This space can be purchased or obtained through a variety of avenues, depending on the website’s requirements.

The design process can help dictate what type of hosting can be purchased. The first option is building a website from scratch. This means that someone must visually design and code the site. This option requires hosting to be purchased independently through companies such as GoDaddy.com or Networksolutions.com. The second option is creating a site with assistance from an online website building tool such as Weebly.com, Squarespace.com, GoDaddy.com, and Moonfruit.com. The fees for these tools include design and hosting. The third option is exploring a free site through a blogging platform such as Tumblr.com or Wordpress.com.

Ensembles can decide which design option they want based on their financial resources. Hiring a professional designer to build a site from scratch can be a large business expense. Beeching writes: “Depending on whom you hire and what is done, the

⁶⁸ Beeching, 130.

cost for an entire site can range from \$300 to \$1,000.”⁶⁹ One benefit of hiring a designer is that the group’s site can be anything they envision; the ensemble will have complete control over how their site looks. However, online website building tools are getting better and better. For example, Tetra originally hired Iven to design and code our site, but we are currently in the process of moving our website’s platform to Squarespace.com. Iven will still serve as our site’s artistic director, but through this platform, we will be able to make updates ourselves without asking Iven to code the changes. This will make things easier for Tetra and Iven. Some of these website design and hosting services are free if the group does not mind having advertising on their site or mind having the company’s name in their website’s URL. Although this is not very professional looking, it is a great place to start if a group is on a budget. Creating a website via a blogging platform is also free, but the ensemble will also need to carry the company’s name in their URL.

After an ensemble has decided on the method they will use to create their website, they should begin thinking about how they will design their site to represent their brand.

Beeching writes:

Websites can produce powerful three-dimensional impressions of musicians, both as artists and as individuals. Your website should be an extension of you and your artistic vision. It should effectively convey your personality. Everything on your site should be carefully chosen to represent you and your music: from the choice of typeface, colors, and graphics to the text, sound clips, photos, and video.⁷⁰

If a group has started the branding process by creating a logo, I recommend building on those concepts when creating the website. For example, an ensemble can take their

⁶⁹ Ibid., 131.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 128.

decisions regarding typeface, color, and design and apply them to their website. When an ensemble's website projects the same energy that its logo does, brand unity is created. Tetra used the same orange color from our logo on our website, using the typeface of our logo for the headers. Most visitors might not notice this detail, but it helps unify our site. Groups can also create brand unity through their photographs and written material. For example, because Tetra's site is orange and its typeface is friendly and approachable, we want to make sure the pictures we display have the same feeling. If our photos look extremely serious, that will contradict the other design elements on our site. The same tone should be set in our group biography and written explanations of programs. If we are writing in a dry and mechanical way, that is not consistent with what the visitor is viewing.⁷¹ I recommend that new ensembles visit many websites before deciding on how to design their own. When visiting, observe if the ensemble's personality is apparent. If it is, how is the site creating that feeling?

Beeching also suggests that musicians keep their sites simple.⁷² Websites are sometimes too cluttered, forcing the visitor to listen to music or watch a video clip. For example, when I cannot get something to load on a website, I move on. Tetra stayed away from Adobe Flash⁷³ and forced listening not only to keep things simple, but also to accommodate a variety of computers and operating systems. Cutler writes:

If your goal is to sell apple pie, just put that on the menu. Less is more. Unlike the eatery, where customers who enter almost always stay, websites have a much lower success rate. Entry is anonymous, and leaving is a cinch. If someone becomes the least bit confused, overwhelmed, or annoyed, they'll leave more quickly than you can say "mp3"...Keep it succinct, simple, and clear.⁷⁴

⁷¹ I will discuss group photos and biographies later in this chapter.

⁷² Beeching, 134.

⁷³ Adobe Flash is streaming animation for websites.

⁷⁴ Cutler, 97.

If a website is basic, it will work on all computers and not require extra programs to download. Ensembles can ask friends and family to check out their site to make sure all of its functions work on a variety of computers. Beeching also recommends: “Think of having a ‘call to action’ on each page, a goal for something you want the visitor to *do*. This might be to sign up for your newsletter, listen to a sound clip, or purchase a track, a ticket, or some merchandise.”⁷⁵ This idea encourages musicians to ponder the purpose of every webpage. I personally will probably not read a webpage with lots of text; however, I will pursue something that is visually engaging. The longer visitors stay on a site and the more they click on, the more likely they will become a supporter of the group.

The content of an ensemble’s website not only represents their brand, but it also serves as a marketing tool. Beeching recommends that musicians explore many different types of website content, including a biography, performance calendar, sounds, merchandise page, photos, videos, press, electronic press kit, frequently asked questions (FAQ) page, contact information, and mailing list.⁷⁶ These elements will describe the ensemble while advertising what the group is doing. For example, having a performance calendar will not only show website visitors what types of concerts the group plays, but also serve as advertisements for future shows. Having a link for visitors to purchase music and merchandise is a free way to encourage fans to buy the group’s products. A press page will help visitors understand the ensemble’s level of expertise. When a new group is getting started, consider asking mentors to provide quotes or write letters of recommendation for the ensemble. Having sounds and video will aurally and visually

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Beeching, 138-9.

describe the ensemble. Beeching writes, “Having examples of your music is essential! The sound clips you provide free can be ‘teasers’ to prompt listeners to purchase tracks or entire albums, and come to your live shows.”⁷⁷ Whether an ensemble is selling a CD or advertising to attract new audience members to a performance, it is important that they provide people with clips of how they sound. If an ensemble has made a CD, they can link from their website to Bandcamp, iTunes, or CDbaby so that individuals can purchase their album. Through Bandcamp, Tetra offers a free download of a track on our Holiday Album. Bandcamp also allows viewers to listen to our entire CD for free. Ensembles that have not yet made a CD can embed audio clips in their website. For all ensembles, websites like YouTube and Vimeo provide free online video hosting. These links can be embedded in a group’s website as well. Video clips allow viewers to see how the ensemble physically interacts with one another when performing. This can entice people to come to a performance. Tetra is working on a video that will serve as a commercial for our mission. This will include great clips of us performing, video of us working with kids, segments of us talking, and others talking about us. Our goal through this video is that someone can learn who we are and what we sound like in under four minutes. We will provide a link to this video on our homepage, hoping that if a website visitor only does one thing on our site, it will be to watch our video. A FAQ page can save the ensemble time answering questions. For example, does an ensemble play weddings in addition to concerts? Will the ensemble travel out of state to give performances? It is also crucial to include contact information, such as an email address, phone number, links to the ensemble’s social media pages, and a link to sign up for a mailing list so that

⁷⁷ Ibid., 136.

visitors can stay connected. I will discuss photos, biographies, and EPK's later in this chapter.

When the website design has been completed, it is important to include metadata tags in the code of the website. This will help drive traffic to an ensemble's site. For example, if someone searches "Phoenix string quartet" Tetra's website will be in the result list. Beeching says, "Think about how people might try to find you online, with your instrument or voice type, genre, ensemble, where you teach, or other projects. These items can be included in how your website is tagged to help people find you."⁷⁸ This is a small thing that an ensemble can do to get people to their site. The more tags, the more likely new people will come to a group's site. Tetra also uses Google Analytics to see what kind of traffic our site is receiving. This online resource informs website owners how many people are visiting their site, for how long, and their location. For example, Tetra taught and performed in Saarburg, Germany for two weeks in July 2013. As of September 2013, we are still receiving about twenty-five website visitors a month from Germany.⁷⁹ It is nice to know that we had a lasting impact in the area. If we were to ever go back, some individuals there will be interested in our performances.

After creating a website, ensembles should re-evaluate its content and design often. As groups evolve, their website needs to change. Updates to the website include recent accomplishments, new press, and new sound clips. Also, I recommend that ensembles redesign their sites every few years. As mentioned earlier, Tetra is in the process of redesigning our site with Iven. She writes, "When the Tetra site was designed,

⁷⁸ Ibid., 133.

⁷⁹ Tetra's private Google Analytics account, <http://www.google.com/analytics/> (accessed September 18, 2013).

mobile viewing wasn't as pervasive. So now that mobile viewing is so ubiquitous it is hard to view and navigate the site on a mobile phone.”⁸⁰ Through our use of Squarespace.com, we can generate a mobile version of our website. The intent is to increase our amount of website visitors and make it easier for people to browse our page on their phones. Ensemble's websites will look more professional if they update their design to stay current with technology and trends.

Photos

Every ensemble needs great photographs. These pictures will not only be used on their website, but also on concert invitations, in news articles, and by presenters. Pictures should represent the same brand that was developed in an ensemble's logo and website. Iven writes, “Photographs allow the viewer to grasp onto something easily. Within an ensemble, the viewer identifies quickly the makeup of the group and what events they might do.”⁸¹ For example, building on the design Tetra chose for our logo and website, we also wanted our pictures to represent friendliness and relevance. For our pictures, we aimed to achieve this feeling through our facial expressions and our clothing. We took many shots of us smiling and laughing to project our friendliness and silliness. Many classical musicians do not smile in their pictures, so we also did this in part to show that we differ from the norm. When choosing our clothing, it was important to us to dress similarly to our audience to come across as approachable and relevant. To achieve this, we wore a mixture of nice jeans, cocktail dresses, vests, and skirts. In contrast, many classical musicians wear fancy all black clothing when they perform. By dressing a bit

⁸⁰ Alison Iven, interview by author, through email correspondence, September 9, 2013.

⁸¹ Ibid.

more casually, we emphasized what made us different as an ensemble. The location of the photo shoot can also project the brand. For example, an urban location can send the message that the group performs in the community or a playground can send the message that the group does programs for kids. I suggest choosing a location with lots of possibilities. For example, Tetra's 2012 photo shoot was at the Phoenix Art Museum. We were able to get pictures outside in their tree-lined sculpture garden, against beautiful walls, inside the lobby, and with modern art. These pictures give us many options when choosing pictures for our website, concert fliers, and other promotional materials. Every ensemble should think before their photo shoot about how they want their pictures to resemble their brand. This can be achieved through facial expressions, clothing, and location.

Before the photo shoot, the ensemble should communicate with their photographer about how they want their pictures to look. Beeching writes, "Be specific about how you want to come across. Your photographer cannot read your mind, so you need to make sure to effectively communicate the image you want your photo to convey."⁸² For example, ensembles should explain the vibe they want their pictures to have. This will help the photographer pose and direct the ensemble. Also, Boston-area photographer Susan Wilson suggests, "bringing along 'reference shots.' These are photos of yourself that you either love or hate. Be ready to explain why."⁸³ Tetra learned after our first photo shoot that we do not like the way we look when being photographed from below. We now communicate this with photographers to save time and to get more

⁸² Beeching, 72.

⁸³ Ibid., 71.

shots that we like. The more the photographer knows in advance, the more they can give the ensemble the kind of pictures that they want.

Great pictures that communicate an ensemble's brand can help them attract new audiences. On a few different occasions, I have been out in the community at concerts or grocery stores and individuals have come up to me and said, "Aren't you the cellist in the Tetra String Quartet? I remember you from your picture." This was exciting for us because it meant that our pictures were memorable and were helping us become recognized throughout our community. Beeching writes, "Photos are powerful communication tools. We all make snap judgments based on first impressions...An effective photo is one that makes a memorable, positive impression and helps convey your intended image and brand."⁸⁴ After ensembles take photographs, I suggest letting friends and family pick their favorites. Ask them: what adjectives would you use to describe these pictures? Which pictures most clearly represent the mission of the ensemble? This will help groups choose the pictures that best represent them. Also, I suggest that ensembles take new photographs often. This will help keep the group's image current and up to date. In addition, having pictures from different photo shoots will give groups numerous options when selecting images.

Biography

Ensembles need biographies not only for their websites, but also for presenters, programs, and applications. This is typically the first thing an audience member will read about an ensemble, so it must represent their brand, accomplishments, and what makes

⁸⁴ Ibid., 67.

them different. Beeching writes, “Despite the name, a bio is *not* a biography: it is not a chronicle of your life history. Rather, a musician’s bio is a marketing piece consisting of background information written in paragraph form, conveying what is distinctive and compelling about you and your music.”⁸⁵ A biography is not just a laundry list of an ensemble’s accomplishments; it must tell the story of the ensemble.

The mission of a group typically appears in the first paragraph of a biography. This establishes the group’s purpose immediately. The ensemble’s brand is established by the tone of the biography. Beeching writes:

Bio writing can be a challenge. In writing bios, musicians usually have one of two problems. Either the writing is overblown and hyperbolic—far too grandiose—or else it suffers from low self-esteem...The concrete details of your actual experience will help build a comprehensive and positive impression of you as an artist at this point in your career.⁸⁶

She suggests that groups stick to facts and delete adjectives and adverbs that are over the top. Inflated biographies can come across as insincere and false. If ensembles stick to the facts, their bio will more clearly represent who they are as musicians. Beeching suggests that groups start the bio writing process by making a list of potential ideas to include. She recommends writing down all the venues the ensemble has performed in, all community and education work, any awards, scholarships, grants, or competitions that they have won, recording projects, range of repertoire, collaborations, quotes from reviews, interesting musical projects, education, and unique non-musical hobbies.⁸⁷ I recommend that ensembles add their group traveling experiences as well. From this list, the ensemble will have many different possibilities when writing their bios.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 49.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 53.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 52-53.

Beeching says the next step is to choose an opening line for the bio.⁸⁸ The first line should grab the reader and encourage them to keep reading. Groups should explore some of their biggest accomplishments in this first line. Many ensembles use quotes for the first line of their bio. For example, the first line of Tetra's bio is "Hailed for their 'engaging and energetic performances' and the 'ability to master music of any style or genre', the Tetra String Quartet continues to captivate audiences throughout the country and abroad."⁸⁹ Quotes are a great way to start because the information is not what the ensemble is saying about itself, but what others are saying about the ensemble. Once the opening line is established, she recommends that the ensemble sort their initial list of accomplishments by topic.⁹⁰ This will help the group narrow down what information is the most important. The bio should highlight the most impressive and interesting things the ensemble has accomplished. For example, Tetra used to include that we played at post offices and bars, not because it was necessarily impressive, but because it was intriguing.

After organizing the list by topic, Beeching says to write a draft.⁹¹ Readers are more interested in the importance of what an ensemble has done, not the order in which it happened, so accomplishments should be grouped by topic into separate paragraphs. Also, all statements must be backed up by specific examples.⁹² She writes, "If you use a phrase like 'is playing to rave reviews across the United States,' then the reader understandably expects your bio to include numerous press quotes from well-known

⁸⁸ Ibid., 54.

⁸⁹ Tetra String Quartet Website, About, <http://tetraquartet.org/about.html> (accessed September 17, 2013).

⁹⁰ Beeching, 55.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Ibid.

music critics throughout the country. Without these details, you lose credibility.”⁹³ Backing up statements will make an ensemble’s bio more thorough and professional. The last step that Beeching recommends is to proofread the bio.⁹⁴ Everyone in the ensemble should read the bio carefully and have friends, family, and trusted colleagues read it as well. When reading, ask: does this bio represent the group’s brand? Is there anything that should be added or taken away to help provide a clear image of the ensemble? The ensemble’s personality should shine through its bio the same way it does in its name, logo, website, and photos.

Business Cards

Business cards are a great tool to use when networking, as discussed in chapter 2. After meeting someone at a party, giving a business card is a great way for potential supporters to remember an ensemble. Business cards are yet another way for ensembles to represent their brand and to form great first impressions. Cutler writes, “Effective cards make an impression! Consider intriguing graphics, flashy fonts, glossy finishes, and/or double-sided designs.”⁹⁵ Many ensembles make their logo the main design of their business card. For example, Tetra’s business card includes our logo as the focal point. We also included an email address, phone number, and website so that we can easily be reached. To create brand unity throughout our materials, we chose to print the image in black on an orange card, in addition to using the typeface century gothic, the same font we use in our logo and website.

⁹³ Ibid., 55-56.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Cutler, 87.

Since most individuals receive business cards often, ensembles must make theirs memorable. There are many different printing options available including double-sided, matte versus glossy finishes, multiple colors, and even different shapes, such as a square or a smaller rectangle. I recommend asking friends and colleagues for their business cards for inspiration. When starting the card design process, groups should ask: what kind of business card design will represent the ensemble's brand while helping the group stand out against other cards? Some printing companies offer proofs before the printing process. This can help the ensemble visualize how their card will compare to others. There are numerous online companies that print business cards such as Vistaprint and GotPrint.

All members of the ensemble should carry business cards at all times. Cutler writes, "Always carry cards with you or risk forfeiting opportunities—Phone numbers on napkins are unimpressive and will be lost!"⁹⁶ Business cards are easy to keep in a wallet or instrument case. I recommend that ensembles carry more cards than they think they need; Tetra has run out of cards on numerous occasions. Business cards are simple and inexpensive tools that can help an ensemble build relationships and network in their communities. They also help ensembles create brand unity throughout their materials.

⁹⁶ Ibid.

Electronic Press Kit

Once an ensemble has developed their branding materials, they can be assembled into an electronic press kit (EPK). EPK's "are marketing packages containing information about musical acts. Distributed to concert presenters, managers, agents, record labels, individuals looking to hire musicians, and of course the press, they are used to acquire some kind of opportunity."⁹⁷ Press kits are now mostly electronic, but sometimes concert series can ask for physical copies of the kit's content. Tetra, however, has only been asked for electronic versions. EPKs can consist of an ensemble's biography, logo, photos, quote sheets or letters of recommendation, current programs, available educational workshops, sound clips, and a list of recent engagements.⁹⁸ This will present interested persons with everything the ensemble has to offer. For example, Tetra plans on making our EPK available on our website to save us time and project a professional image. We currently must email elements of our EPK when presenters ask for them.

Many ensembles make their EPKs downloadable from their websites. Others use press kit hosting sites such as ReverbNation and Sonicbids. Through these sites, little knowledge of website building is required, but they do charge small monthly fees. Regardless, it is very convenient for ensembles to have all of their press materials in one place so that individuals who are interested in presenting the group with opportunities can access all information quickly and easily.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 88.

⁹⁸ Beeching, 74-76.

Presenting Concerts

Concerts present opportunities for ensembles to project their brand as well as market themselves. How ensembles conduct themselves at concerts reflects their group brand as much as their branding materials. Ensembles should make sure every event they put on reflects their group's personality and energy. One of the ways this can be achieved is through what ensembles wear. This small detail can reflect an ensemble's mission. For example, Tetra's mission is to make classical music relevant to new audiences, so we dress for our performances similarly to how the audience members would dress up for a nice night on the town. We want our group look to be approachable and friendly. Sometimes we choose vibes or color pallets to coordinate our group looks such as sassy chic. Through our clothing, we hope that our mission will come across subliminally to our audiences.

A brand is also cultivated through how ensembles interact with audiences during concerts. In a traditional concert setting, the musicians rarely speak from the stage to audiences. Emotional reactions, such as clapping and cheering, is reserved only for the ends of works. If an ensemble builds their brand based around what the norms are, how will they differentiate themselves? Tetra always speaks from the stage to our audience, which builds on our mission to create relevance. We speak in between movements and encourage our audience to clap when they feel like clapping, including in between movements. We also strive to create relevance based on how we speak about the music we play. To achieve this, we use Eric Booth's audience engagement principals: making

creative connections, creating active listening, and reflecting.⁹⁹ I will discuss this topic further in chapter 5. Groups can interact with their audiences in additional ways. For example, the Attacca Quartet interacted with their audience through technology in 2012. They were performing the first half of the *Blind Ear Music* concert series in New York City. After playing a Mendelssohn string quartet, they asked their audience to text to vote on which Haydn string quartet they wanted to hear for the following piece. A press release about the event stated: “Just as television viewers vote for their favorite contestant on American Idol, the concert audience will use their cell phones to vote for the Haydn work they want the Attaccas to perform in its entirety.”¹⁰⁰ This allowed the quartet to investigate what its audience wanted to hear and gave the audience ownership over this part of the performance. Through this interaction, the quartet was able to show the audience their creativity and adventurous spirit. Regardless of how an ensemble interacts with their audience, it is important the group stays true to its mission and brand.

Ensembles can also help to cultivate their brand and marketing through setting up a table for audience members to visit during intermission or after a performance. This provides groups with a great place to sell their merchandise, such as CDs and Tee Shirts, as well as to distribute promotional materials including brochures, stickers, and posters for upcoming shows, and to collect new names for their mailing list. The table gives audience members a place to go to learn more about the ensemble and the ensemble a place to get to know their audience members. Tetra has a pre-concert checklist that we

⁹⁹ Eric Booth, “Making Creative Connections, Active Listening, and Reflection,” Carnegie Hall website, Adobe Flash Player, 0:05, <http://www.carnegiehall.org/ORC/Eric-Booth-on-Teaching-Artistry/> (accessed September 6, 2013).

¹⁰⁰ Greg Sandow, “Programming for a New Audience-More Examples,” *Artsjournal.com*, July 12, 2012, under “Posts,” <http://www.artsjournal.com/sandow/2012/07/programming-for-a-new-audience-more-examples.html> (accessed September 6, 2013).

use to set-up the table on event days so that we are not scrambling to remember what we need the day of a concert. This way we can be sure to bring our cash box, credit card processing device, promotional materials, and items to sell. We also like to designate a volunteer from our support network or two to set-up and run the table in advance. Setting up this table helps our professional image and the checklist makes setting it up less stressful on performance days.¹⁰¹

An ensemble's brand can also be established by how they interact with audiences after concerts. Many groups mingle with audiences after shows or schedule meet and greets. This provides great face time for groups to get to know who is coming to their shows. Tetra loves talking with our audiences after concerts and we use this time to find out what they liked about our group and our programming. This is also a great time to build relationships and to help move audience members closer to the group's inner circle of supporters.¹⁰² I like to write down the names of everyone I meet in my phone along with some personal information about them. This will help me connect with them in a sincere way the next time I see them at a concert. An ensemble should project the same feeling to audiences after the concert that they do when they are on stage. Audiences want to see the individual personalities of group members, so talking during or after concerts can help build long lasting relationships and unify the image of the ensemble.

Audience building

Groups must spend large amounts of time developing their brand. This same philosophy is important to consider when marketing to build new audiences. In addition

¹⁰¹ See Appendix A, page 131, for a day of concert checklist.

¹⁰² See chapter 2.

to building relationships, groups must get the word out about their concerts to a wide range of individuals. This will help the ensemble become recognized throughout the community.

One step to advertise a concert or event is developing a press release. Beeching describes a press release as “an announcement issued to the media, designed to answer the *who, what, when, where, and why* about your performance, special event, or other news. Press releases are sent to media outlets and may be used in part or used verbatim—printed or uploaded ‘as is’ to the newspaper, journal, newsletter, or webzine.”¹⁰³ This is a great way for ensembles to get the word out to many people through a variety of media sources. Beeching recommends that press releases have informative headlines, all the facts regarding the event, and why the event is happening. She also writes that the release should be written in a way that will specifically appeal to the target audience.¹⁰⁴ For example, if an ensemble is submitting press releases about an event to a children’s magazine and an online newsletter for bands, the releases can be written in different tones to appeal to specific audiences.

Ensembles can also advertise their concerts through their social media networks. Sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram will help get the word out about shows. Tetra has over 1,000 likes on our Facebook page, so when we create event invitations on the site, it will be seen by many individuals. Facebook also has a feature where groups can pay to advertise events to a wider range of networks. With prices starting at \$5.00 a day, this affordable option can help groups get new likes or even new audience members to attend their shows. Sending out mass emails to an ensemble’s mailing list with an

¹⁰³ Beeching, 185.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 186-187.

invitation to a concert will also help build an audience.¹⁰⁵ Although advertising through social media is very effective, physical promotional materials can also help attract people to concerts. Ensembles can make posters to hang up in their communities or even create personalized invitations. I am much more likely to attend a concert if I am personally asked by someone. This is because hardcopy invitations are very rare these days, especially those that are handwritten, so this technique can help ensembles build audiences by being unique.

It is also great press for ensembles to have a story written about them in the news. Beeching suggests that groups “*pitch* such a story idea by contacting journalists by phone or e-mail. Emphasize what is current and new with this topic, and why it would be compelling to their readers.”¹⁰⁶ News outlets are interested in stories that involve arts education issues and arts events for local causes. I suggest that ensembles ponder what makes their event unique and relevant before approaching a journalist for a news story. News outlets receive press releases every day, so ensembles should make sure that theirs stands out. Groups can investigate numerous kinds of media, including newspapers, TV stations, and radio stations to create a story about their event. Tetra often connects with KBAQ, our local classical music station, to advertise our upcoming concerts and CD releases.

Getting a concert reviewed can also help attract new audience members. Cutler writes, “Concert reviews by music critics put out the word and lend credibility to your efforts. Critics are extremely busy and review space is limited, so be smart when

¹⁰⁵ See chapter 2.

¹⁰⁶ Beeching, 179.

approaching them.”¹⁰⁷ Cutler goes on to suggest that ensembles approach reviewers through a personalized invitation and an offer of free tickets. This will help get the reviewer to an ensemble’s concert. The more advanced notice a group can give the reviewer, the better. Critics have busy schedules and must review numerous events throughout their community. They will notice if an ensemble is courteous and appreciative of their time.

There are many imaginative ways to get the word out about concerts. Tetra has explored creative approaches such as busing in senior citizens from retirement homes and visiting high school orchestra programs before shows. We have a pre-concert publicity checklist that we use so that we do not forget our marketing procedures. It includes details such as where to submit press releases, Facebook marketing options, and written advertisements.¹⁰⁸ A marketing routine before every concert will ensure that every show has a great audience turnout. If a group is very busy and does not have time to publicize events themselves, they can ask volunteers to help or even pay students or colleagues to do some of the advertising.

Most community-based ensembles cannot afford to hire professionals to help with marketing and branding. All of the elements I have discussed in this chapter must be developed early in an ensemble’s career, making hiring professionals difficult. However, with the above tools, ensembles can build their own brand and market themselves for a relatively small amount. Ensembles that are interested in expert advice can explore bartering and collaborating with professionals who are interested in gaining experience and willing to negotiate lower prices.

¹⁰⁷ Cutler, 70.

¹⁰⁸ See Appendix A, page 132, for the Tetra String Quartet’s publicity checklist.

CHAPTER 4

THE JOURNEY TO STABILITY

How do ensembles make money?

When students decide to be music majors in school, most of them are accepting the fact they will probably not become millionaires based on their profession. Instead, musicians choose their careers because they love what they do. Ensembles that are building careers are not only nurturing their passion for music but also serving needs in their community. Both elements serve as motivation for most community-based ensembles. However, all group members need to make money to survive. Collins suggests organizations focus not specifically on making money, but on developing *resources* relevant to their mission. These resources consist of:

...time, money and brand. “Time”...refers to how well you attract people willing to contribute their efforts for free, or at rates below what their talents would yield in business (First Who!). “Money”...refers to a sustained cash flow. “Brand”...refers to how well your organization can cultivate a deep well of emotional goodwill and mindshare of potential supporters.¹⁰⁹

His philosophy works well for ensembles because the combination of these three principles help generate long-term success. In the previous chapters, I have discussed time and branding, while this chapter explores how ensembles build financial support systems.

It takes time and dedication for ensembles to create financial support for themselves. Collins compares this process to a flywheel:

In building a great institution, there is no single defining action, no grand program, no one killer innovation, no solitary lucky break, no miracle moment. Rather, our research showed that it feels like turning a giant, heavy flywheel. Pushing with great effort—days, weeks and months of work, with almost

¹⁰⁹ Jim Collins, 18.

imperceptible progress—you finally get the flywheel to inch forward. But you don't stop. You keep pushing, and with persistent effort, you eventually get the flywheel to complete one entire turn. You don't stop. You keep pushing, in an intelligent and consistent direction, and the flywheel moves a bit faster. You keep pushing, and you get two turns...then four...then eight...the flywheel builds momentum...sixteen...you keep pushing...thirty two...it builds more momentum...a hundred...moving faster with each turn...a thousand...ten thousand...a hundred thousand. Then at some point—breakthrough! Each turn builds upon previous work, compounding your investment of effort. The flywheel flies forward with almost unstoppable momentum. This is how you build greatness.¹¹⁰

This analogy clearly depicts how long it takes for ensembles to start to see revenue. In Tetra's first year working as an ensemble, we barely broke even.¹¹¹ This was discouraging for all of us, and we were unsure of how we would start to make money. However, we soon learned the more time we spent cultivating our mission, the more money we made, and the more support we had from our fan base. Collins writes that the success of the flywheel principle will “attract resources and commitment, which you use to build a strong organization. That strong organization then delivers even better results, which attracts greater resources and commitment, which builds a stronger organization, which enables even better results.”¹¹² For ensembles this means that success makes the group stronger, and this process will continue to feed itself. Although getting started is difficult, ensembles that are dedicated and passionate about what they do will see success over time.

In this chapter I discuss what ensembles can do to become sustainable businesses. I explore not only how to make money, but how it should be managed. These topics include deciding on the type of organization an ensemble will become, booking

¹¹⁰ Ibid., 23.

¹¹¹ Many businesses do not turn a profit in their first year.

¹¹² Collins, 23-24.

concerts, fundraising, grant writing, residencies, merchandise, when to say no, and the importance of making financial goals.

Choosing a business entity

Before an ensemble starts to make money, it is important for them to explore all of their options when choosing a business structure. Entrepreneur.com describes this process:

Of all the choices you make when starting a business, one of the most important is the type of legal structure you select for your company. Not only will this decision have an impact on how much you pay in taxes, it will affect the amount of paperwork your business is required to do, the personal liability you face and your ability to raise money.¹¹³

There are numerous structures that groups can explore. These include forming a sole proprietorship, partnership, corporation, limited liability company (LLC), or not-for-profit organization. There are pros and cons to each model and the type of business structure an ensemble chooses might change throughout their career.

A sole proprietorship is: “A business structure in which an individual and his or her company are considered a single entity for tax and liability purposes.”¹¹⁴ This business type is one of the easiest to set up because the business and its owner are combined. If an ensemble is interested in a sole proprietorship, only one member can be the legal owner of the business. All financial and legal obligations will be the responsibility of this sole proprietor. This means that the business operates under one person’s social security number. For taxes, the owner must file a Schedule C along with

¹¹³ Entrepreneur.com staff writers, “Choose Your Business Structure,” *Entrepreneur.com*, under “Startups,” <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/38822> (accessed September 28, 2013).

¹¹⁴ Ramon Ricker, *Lessons From a Street-Wise Professor: What you Won’t Learn at Most Music Schools* (Fairport, NY: Soundown, Inc. 2011), 103.

form 1040, which is a simple process compared with the other business models discussed below.¹¹⁵ However, the downside to a sole proprietorship is that the owner of the business is personally liable. This means that if an ensemble is sued or goes into debt, the owner's personal assets are not safe.

In order to operate as a sole proprietorship, the ensemble must create a "Doing Business As" (DBA) if they wish to operate under a name different from that of the business's owner. A DBA is:

...a business name that is different from your personal name, the names of your partners or the officially registered name of your LLC or Corporation. It's important to note that when you form a business, the legal name of the business defaults to the name of the person or entity that owns the business, unless you choose to rename it and register it as a DBA name.¹¹⁶

Registering for a DBA is different in every state, but usually involves filling out paperwork through the county clerk or the secretary of state. This also allow groups to check to see if anyone in their state is already operating under the same name. If so, they must choose another because once a name is registered, no other business can have that name.

Another business model that groups can choose is a partnership. There are two types of partnerships: general and limited.

In a general partnership, the partners manage the company and assume responsibility for the partnership's debts and other obligations. A limited partnership has both general and limited partners. The general partners own and operate the business and assume liability for the partnership, while the limited partners serve as investors only; they have no control over the company and are not subject to the same liabilities as the general partners.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 104.

¹¹⁶ U.S. Small Business Administration Staff, "Register Your Business Name," *Sba.gov*, under "Starting a business," <http://www.sba.gov/content/register-your-fictitious-or-doing-business-dba-name>, (accessed September 28, 2013).

¹¹⁷ Entrepreneur.com staff writers, <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/38822> (accessed September 28, 2013).

In contrast to a sole proprietorship, more than one person can own a business under the partnership model. This means that taxes can be shared amongst the group owners: “At tax time, each partner files a Schedule K-1 form, which indicates his or her share of partnership income, deductions, and tax credits. In addition, each partner is required to report profits from the partnership on his or her individual tax return, Form 1065”.¹¹⁸

However, the downside to this model is that all partners are still personally liable for the business’s debt.

A corporation is another business type ensembles can consider. The main benefit to this model is that the owner’s assets are protected because the business is a separate tax entity: “A corporation’s debt is not considered that of its owners, so if you organize your business as a corporation, you’re not putting your personal assets at risk.”¹¹⁹ Other advantages are that corporations can raise money and retain profits without its owners paying tax on them. However, there are many downsides to creating a corporation. For example, they are expensive to form, and the application process often requires the help of a lawyer. Also, owners of corporations are required to pay a double tax on the business’s earnings.¹²⁰ This is not the best option for ensembles just starting out because of its cost.

S corporations, however, are less expensive and come with many of the same benefits. This type of model is: “A form of corporation, allowed by the IRS for most companies with 100 or fewer shareholders, which enables the company to enjoy the

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

benefits of incorporation but be taxed as if it were a partnership.”¹²¹ Also, all of the business owner’s assets are separate from the company. The downside to this model is that S corporations are required to: “file articles of incorporation, hold directors and shareholders meetings, keep corporate minutes, and allow shareholders to vote on major corporate decisions.”¹²² These regulations add time and stress to the business responsibilities ensembles already have.

A fairly new entity that has recently become more popular in the United States is the limited liability company. LLCs have similar benefits to S corporations in that the assets of business owners are protected, and they are taxed as a partnership. In addition, LLCs do not require the above-mentioned business formalities such as holding shareholder meetings and keeping corporate minutes. Aklap writes, “If you want less red tape and formality, the LLC can provide greater simplicity”.¹²³ However, there are some initial requirements when filing to be an LLC: “LLCs file articles of organization with the State Corporation Commission or Secretary of State and must draft an operating agreement listing members’ rights and responsibilities.”¹²⁴ Businesses must also file an application for an employer ID number (EIN) as well as a choice of tax status. Although this model creates more work for the ensemble than a sole proprietorship or partnership, an ensemble’s liability will be protected. Also, an EIN will allow groups to operate financially without using a member’s personal social security number. This puts fewer burdens on one member of the ensemble. In contrast to a sole proprietorship or

¹²¹ Ricker, 107.

¹²² Entrepreneur.com staff writers, <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/38822> (accessed September 28, 2013).

¹²³ Nellie Akalp, “LLC vs. S Corp: Which Is Right for Your Startup?,” *Mashable.com*, under “Social Media,” <http://mashable.com/2012/02/17/small-business-incorporation/> (accessed September 28, 2013).

¹²⁴ Entrepreneur.com staff writers, <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/38822> (accessed September 28, 2013).

partnership, the LLC model, in my opinion, is one of the best options for new ensembles because it is less expensive than a corporation, has fewer formalities than an S corporation, and provides liability protection.

A not-for-profit organization is another good option for ensembles, depending on their missions. Ricker describes it as: “An incorporated organization, which exists for education or charitable reasons, and from which its shareholders or trustees do not benefit financially.”¹²⁵ Despite this business model’s name, not-for-profits pay salaries to their employees. Author Libby Little writes: “The key to calling your group a nonprofit organization is quite simple—don’t make a profit. You can still receive a salary in exchange for your work and hire employees, but the overall goal of a nonprofit organization is to keep administrative and fundraising costs to a minimum.”¹²⁶ This business model benefits from 501 (c)(3) tax-exempt status, which means that these businesses are not required to pay federal income taxes. Another pro to becoming a not-for-profit is that individuals and corporations are permitted to give tax-deductible donations. These organizations must “help achieve a mission statement, which describes how the nonprofit contributes to the ‘public good.’”¹²⁷ Any ensemble that aims to serve its community through public service is eligible for this model, but the application process is complicated: “To apply, you must write a mission statement, establish a board of directors, prepare articles of incorporation, incorporate, draft bylaws describing how the organization will be run, and complete the *Internal Revenue Service’s* form 1023.”¹²⁸

¹²⁵ Ricker, 107.

¹²⁶ Libby Little, “How to Start a Non-Profit Organization,” *Howstuffworks.com*, under “Starting a Charity,” <http://money.howstuffworks.com/economics/volunteer/starting-a-charity/start-a-non-profit-organization.htm> (accessed October 29, 2013).

¹²⁷ Cutler, 230.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 230-231.

After this initial paperwork is filed, it can take up to eight months to hear back from the IRS about application status, and the filing fees can be \$400 to \$850.¹²⁹ This is quite a large expense for new ensembles. Also, the requirement of having a board of directors can take the immediate control away from ensembles, although board members can offer invaluable advice and financial resources to the group. I recommend that ensembles seriously consider becoming LLCs or not-for-profit organizations.

Tetra started our ensemble as a sole proprietorship. We operated under this platform for one year and then changed to an LLC. Our main motivation was to gain liability protection. We thought considerably about becoming a not-for-profit because of our educational mission, but decided to become an LLC because it was less expensive and easier to apply. We still wanted to be able to receive tax-deductible donations, however. To achieve this, we explored types of fiscal sponsorship. “Fiscal sponsorship is a formal arrangement in which a 501(c)(3) public charity sponsors a project that may lack exempt status. This alternative to starting your own nonprofit allows you to seek grants and solicit tax-deductible donations under your sponsor's exempt status.”¹³⁰ The fiscal sponsor serves as the umbrella for the ensemble. This allows patrons to give tax-deductible donations to businesses if they are not nonprofits. Tetra applied for fiscal sponsorship through Fractured Atlas, which is a nonprofit that offers fiscal sponsorship specifically to artists. In return, artists must pay a membership fee and 7% of donations and grants awarded. Tetra has been able to apply for grants and receive donations

¹²⁹ 501c3GO staff writers, “Federal Filing Fees,” *501c3GO.com*, under “501c3 Federal Filing Fees,” <http://501c3go.com/cost-and-fees/federal-filing-fees/> (accessed October 2, 2013).

¹³⁰ Grant Space staff writers, “Knowledge Base,” *Grantspace.org*, under “Fiscal Sponsorship,” <http://www.grantspace.org/Tools/Knowledge-Base/Funding-Research/Definitions-and-Clarification/Fiscal-sponsorship> (accessed September 28, 2013).

through their services. They also provide instrument and health insurance options. Fractured Atlas generates receipts for donors and organizes the donations that groups receive. This has saved us the time and money it would take to become a nonprofit. However, if it ever became financially beneficial for us to become a nonprofit, we would consider changing our business structure. Groups can also explore fiscal sponsorship by joining forces with any existing not-for-profit. Many potential collaborations exist such as with schools, hospitals, and arts organizations. These partnerships can open doors to groups that are not nonprofits.

The structures of these business entities vary from state to state. Ensembles should conduct thorough research on what rules and regulations exist on a state and federal level. Some businesses hire lawyers to guide them through the process. Although this costs money, it can save time and avoid frustration. For further information, consult the U.S. Small Business Administration at sba.com and the Internal Revenue Service at irs.com.

Once an ensemble has decided on their business structure, the group is ready to start making money. They can open a business bank account through one individual's social security number or an EIN. For tax purposes, groups must develop a structure for how they keep track of their income and expenses. All businesses must report 100% of their earnings to the IRS. However, businesses can offset the amount of taxes they pay by recording their expenses. Cutler explains what financial costs can qualify as deductible business expenses:

In order to be legally deductible, each expense must be “ordinary and necessary” for your line of business, at least as far as the IRS is concerned. Maintain clear records proving the costs claimed, and only write off legitimate business, as

opposed to personal, expenses. “Proof” can be in the form of clear record keeping, receipts, credit card statements, or check stubs.¹³¹

Expenses for ensembles can be anything from office supplies and music to publicity photos and travel costs. One ensemble member should be in charge of keeping track of all expenses and income. This information can be recorded in programs such as Microsoft Excel, Microsoft Word, Quicken, and QuickBooks. If these numbers are recorded throughout the year, an ensemble’s taxes will take less time. They will also avoid excessive stress because they will not be scrambling to find receipts and gathering last minute information. If groups are overwhelmed and confused about the tax process, talking to an accountant can help provide clarity. Many accounting firms provide free advice to new clients. It will cost extra to file through an accountant, but it might be worth the expense to know that the ensemble is filing correctly.

Booking concerts, events, and programs

Performing concerts is an important revenue source for chamber music ensembles. Booking these performances can be done through managers or the ensemble themselves. Beeching writes, “An experienced, successful manager is someone who has built solid relationships with presenters—the people who organize concert series, festivals, and residencies.”¹³² Managers connect presenters to successful artists for a portion of their concert fee, which is typically ten to twenty percent.¹³³ They are often looking for groups that are already leading lucrative careers: “Managers need to sign artists who can earn them a profit, who already have a track record of excellent

¹³¹ Cutler, 169.

¹³² Beeching, 153.

¹³³ Ibid., 155.

performances and reviews, or who have just won a major international competition and are attracting significant media attention.”¹³⁴ This can make it difficult for new ensembles to attract managers to use as a resource. Beeching thinks the best option for musicians who are just starting out is to manage themselves: “Professional managers are not in the business of growing anyone’s career from scratch (unless you are a world-class child prodigy). Managers simply cannot afford to invest time and energy in this process. *However, there are effective ways for emerging artists to manage themselves.*”¹³⁵ Tetra worked briefly with a friend and colleague in our first year to help us book shows. She was able to connect us with some interesting and unique opportunities. However, she was very busy with other work obligations, and we soon realized that no one was going to spend more time and energy booking our shows than ourselves.

Groups can pursue many different types of performance opportunities. The types of shows they book should always relate to their mission and can include opportunities such as formal concerts, private shows, studio recordings, and concerts for kids. Ensembles can initiate conversations with presenters through the networking skills and relationship building discussed in chapter 2. Tetra operates by the philosophy “it never hurts to ask” because we have often needed to create opportunities for ourselves. For example, we were hired to play a house concert for a fundraiser for a third grade Odyssey of the Mind team. Since the event was well received by the audience, after the concert we asked the homeowner if she was interested in hosting a fundraiser for a project we were cultivating with a local elementary school. She said yes, and we came back a few months later for another successful event. Also, Fischer of the Chiara String Quartet

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 157.

gave Tetra the advice to email press kits and follow up with a phone call. If there is something an ensemble wants, they must pursue it with passion and commitment.

The more opportunities Tetra has created for ourselves, the more we have received. We were presented with some career changing experiences we did not directly work towards. For example, because of our dedication to playing throughout the Tempe community, we were offered the opportunity to travel to Ecuador for a one-week tour. This experience was funded through a grant, and the tour was booked for us. This experience was invaluable as we performed for many new audiences and worked with numerous groups of dedicated and passionate students. Every new concert season we receive emails and phone calls to play on local concert series. Although it takes a great deal of work to create performance opportunities in the beginning of an ensemble's career, with time, it eventually becomes easier. Beeching explains:

There are many examples of ensembles that started as self-managed groups and went on to hire their own artist representatives (the Cavani and Cypress String Quartets, Synergy Brass Quintet, and the ensemble Asteria are just a few). These groups were self-managing until they reached a threshold where they needed—and were able—to hire outside help.¹³⁶

The possibilities are endless for new groups; it is important that they keep on working towards their concert goals.

When it comes down to the technicalities of booking concerts, Cutler recommends a thirteen-step process. These steps include: developing an intriguing product, determining an audience, compiling promotional materials, researching options, script sales pitch, make contact, follow through, agree on a price, sign a contract, stay in

¹³⁶ Ibid., 160-161.

touch, market, have a great show, and keep in touch.¹³⁷ This process can be used for concerts, educational presentations, or other events. An ensemble achieves the first step of “developing an intriguing product” by developing their mission and brand. The second step, “determining an audience,” helps groups create programs for specific groups of people. If ensembles think about who they want to play for, that will help direct their decisions when choosing concert series to approach. “Compiling promotional materials” is accomplished through developing an EPK, which was discussed in chapter 3. The “researching options” step is the venue and concert series brainstorming stage. Cutler suggests, “When brainstorming, include conventional and atypical options, remembering that more desirable opportunities are also more competitive. Keep thorough notes. Have they hosted similar events? Is the seating capacity appropriate? Do they have a piano, lighting, or other required elements?”¹³⁸ Through this process ensembles can create a list of presenters and venues they will contact. The “script a sales pitch” step is essential for planning ahead. This allows ensemble members to know exactly what they want to say in the moment so they will not forget essential information. For example, they must prepare a few sentences about who the ensemble is and what they do, available dates, why they want to play at that venue, and what their fees are. This will help the group exude professionalism in the phone call, in the face-to-face meeting, or in an email.¹³⁹ The “make contact” and “follow through” steps consist of the logistics of reaching out to presenters and following through with the group’s EPK or additional material. If the presenter is interested, it is important that the ensemble quickly delivers their information

¹³⁷ Cutler, 192-193.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 192.

¹³⁹ This process is very similar to the elevator pitch process discussed in chapter 2.

so that the presenter does not forget about their conversation. The step “agree on a price” can sometimes require some negotiation. Cutler writes, “...reasonably funded series offer \$1500-6000 for ensembles...Smaller community organizations pay only \$150-1200. Keep in mind that fees must cover transportation, lodging, meals, performers, taxes, and other expenses that arise. See if the presenter will sweeten the deal by covering hotel stays, meals, or other extras.”¹⁴⁰ When working with presenters, Tetra starts with our typical concert fee. If this number does not work for presenters, we offer to work with their budget or explore other possibilities. For example, if a presenter can offer gas money and room and board, that can help reduce our overall cost. In the “sign a contract” step, the series or the ensemble can assemble the contract. In my experience, most series make contracts, but in a few occasions we have created them for concert series. This protects ensembles financially if a presenter pulls out of a concert at the last minute. It is important for ensembles to connect with presenters before concerts in the “stay in touch” step. This will help ensembles confirm all of the concert details and make sure that all preparation for the concert is on track. The “market” step is a responsibility of both the ensemble and the venue. It is helpful to communicate what types of publicity are being pursued to attract a large audience. The “have a great show” step reminds ensembles to be professional the day of the concert by showing up early, being nice to everyone they meet, and delivering a passionate performance.¹⁴¹ If the audience and venue are impressed with the show, hopefully the group will be invited back. The “keep in touch” step is crucial so that ensembles foster relationships for future concerts at the

¹⁴⁰ Cutler , 193.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

venue. The ensemble can put presenters on their email list and keep them posted about their accomplishments in hopes that the venue will pursue additional bookings.

When groups are first starting out, they must develop their rates. Sometimes presenters will offer what they can up front, but other times ensembles must quote prices. Beeching suggests: “Do your homework in advance. If you know people who have performed on this series, ask them what range of fees this presenter has paid... Know your bottom line. To determine whether or not a fee is acceptable, calculate the total expenses you anticipate for this performance.”¹⁴² When Tetra first started performing, we often accepted opportunities that paid significantly below what we wanted to be making and sometimes performed concerts for free. We were passionate about building relationships throughout the community, and many of our low or unpaid concerts yielded later opportunities. This is how we invested in our future. For example, we played on the *Spirit of the Senses* concert series in the summer of 2011. In this lecture series at the Willow Art Gallery, we presented a talk called “Unlocking Haydn with the Beatles.” After the show, the gallery owner approached us and offered her space to us for free for any future performances. She ended up hosting our 2011 Christmas concert, and we were able to keep 100% of our profits. Chrystal and I also received inquiries from new private students for our teaching studios. Although Tetra rarely performs for free or below our concert fee now, these concerts helped us build relationships and connect us to future opportunities.

¹⁴² Beeching, 169-170.

Fundraising

Fundraising is another fundamental way for ensembles to make money. Through the network that ensembles create, fundraising can provide them with the resources to pursue future projects, such as concerts, travel, and educational activities. Beeching describes why people give money:

People give for a number of reasons. For some, it's because they have a personal connection to the cause, the organization, or the person making the "ask". People are also inspired to give when the project or organization connects with their own ideals, their personal values. And some people contribute in part for social reasons. They may want to be acknowledged as a valued partner in a worthy cause.¹⁴³

Before groups start fundraising campaigns, they must first develop a case for support.

This should be a one-page description of what the ensemble is fundraising towards.

Cutler writes, "Make this document easy to read at a glance, perhaps using outline form.

Describe your background, the nature of the project, and the desired outcomes and

benefits. Include the overall amount that needs to be raised and progress thus far,

including support from grants, other patrons, or even your own piggy bank."¹⁴⁴ A case

for support should also include a breakdown of financial costs so that potential donors

know specifically what their money is going towards. Cutler states:

One helpful strategy is breaking down larger goals. In fact, some contributors like the option of determining where their money will be directed (i.e. travel, reception, food, recording one piece, etc.), rather than simply adding to a generic pot. By doing this, they can be thanked not only for their gift, but also for making one specific aspect possible.¹⁴⁵

For example, Rosie's House: A Music Academy for Children in Phoenix Arizona

explains to potential donors the costs of one private lesson, one group class, an

¹⁴³ Ibid., 305.

¹⁴⁴ Cutler, 244.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

instrument, or a year of private lessons. This helps individuals who are thinking about giving know how their money can specifically help and where it is going. It might even encourage them to give more if they know how much a year of lessons costs. A case for support will help ensembles organize their campaign and provide potential donors with all relevant information.

After writing a case for support, ensembles can start exploring how they will raise money. One very popular method is crowdfunding through online fundraising platforms such as Kickstarter and Indiegogo. These websites allow musicians to offer reward levels for different contribution amounts. For example, many groups use crowdfunding sites to fund CD projects. One major incentive for people to give money is they are pre-ordering their CD; if someone donates \$10, the group can give the donor a CD. If they donate \$30, the donor can receive a CD and a poster. Groups can be very imaginative with the incentives they create. If someone donates \$1,000, the group will give a private concert at the donor's house, or if someone donates \$500, the group can make a personalized music video for the donor. The possibilities are endless. However, some crowdfunding platforms do not give the artists their money unless the project is funded. Also, most crowdfunding sites do not enable individuals to give tax-deductible donations. If an ensemble is a member of Fractured Atlas, however, individuals will be able to give tax-deductible donations, but keep in mind that the site will keep about 7% of the total amount fundraised.¹⁴⁶ Crowdfunding is a great way to use a group's network and get their fans involved in making a project happen.

¹⁴⁶ The crowdfunding platform RocketHub partners with Fractured Atlas so that artists can develop campaigns that solicit tax-deductible donations.

Another way to fundraise is through giving benefit concerts. These shows help to create awareness of a group's specific cause. These concerts can be ticketed or free with a suggested donation price. During the concert, the ensemble can explain their cause to motivate the audience to give. For example, Tetra has given a few benefit concerts to help raise money for our summer string quartet workshop.¹⁴⁷ Before the concert, we display brochures for the camp so that our audience can learn more about the program. During the concert, we talk about how the camp builds confidence, communication skills, and work ethic through our program. We have been able to provide numerous scholarships for our students because of these concerts. If audience members understand what the ensemble is striving to do and the impact it will have on the community, they are more likely to donate.

One of the most successful ways to fundraise is through asking individuals in person. However, this can be intimidating. Fundraiser Sonya Garcia writes:

For many of us, feelings of anxiety or embarrassment accompany seeking funds for our organizations, especially when we are asking our community members, friends, or family to contribute. It is known, though, that individual solicitations, that is, asking an individual for a contribution face-to-face, are the most successful way to fundraise. Statistically speaking, you have a 50/50 chance of receiving a gift when you ask someone directly for it.¹⁴⁸

Ensembles should prepare thoroughly when asking in person for money. It is hard at first, but with preparation the process becomes easier. Fundraiser Joe Garecht writes that relationship building is a key first step in asking for money face-to-face. He suggests connecting with potential donors before making the ask: "Build relationships with your prospects—ask them to come to a free event, read your case for support, sign-up for your

¹⁴⁷ For more information visit <http://tetraquartet.org/workshop>.

¹⁴⁸ Sonya García, "My Adventures in Fundraising: First Major Donor Visit," *Grassroots Fundraising Journal* (May/June 2001): 14.

newsletter, volunteer at your office. Get them involved (or at least have one introductory conversation about your charity that is not based on seeking a donation), then ask them to give.”¹⁴⁹ If an ensemble has an existing relationship with a potential donor, that person will be more likely to donate. Wealthy individuals are frequently asked for money, so it is important for ensembles to build a connection. Otherwise, the group will become one of the many unsuccessful organizations soliciting donations.

Once ensembles have decided on who to approach for money, it is time to prepare for the ask. Garecht suggests these six steps: get the pleasantries out of the way, make a transition, make the connection, make them cry, make them understand why you need what you are asking for, and then make the ask.¹⁵⁰ This process should occur in person, perhaps in a meeting or over lunch. Ensembles must practice these steps before sitting down with the potential donor so that their pitch can be smooth and effortless. Below is a sample pitch that Garecht wrote using his six steps:

- 1. Hi Ruth, how are you? How are the kids? (Pleasantries)*
- 2. Listen, I've got something important to ask you. (Make the Transition)*
- 3. As you know, I've been on the board of the free clinic for almost a year now, and it's something that is very near and dear to my heart. (Make the Connection)*
- 4. Every time I visit the clinic, I meet the nicest families, who seem just like mine, only they can't afford even basic medical care for their children. I see kids who have to be admitted because their families couldn't afford antibiotics for a simple infection. It's very sad! (Make Them Cry)*
- 5. Ruth, right now, we can only serve about 50% of the families who need our help. Our goal is to be able to serve every single family and child that needs medical care at the clinic. We need to raise another \$100,000 to make that dream a reality. (Tell Them Why)*
- 6. Would you be willing to contribute \$250 to help us reach that goal? (Make the Ask)¹⁵¹*

¹⁴⁹ Joe Garecht, “How to Ask Anyone for Anything,” *Thefundraisingauthority.com*, under “Fundraising Basics,” <http://www.thefundraisingauthority.com/fundraising-basics/how-to-ask/> (accessed September 30, 2013).

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

If the potential donor says no or not right now, this is not necessarily the end of the ensemble's financial relationship with that person. Rejection is opportunity! Beeching writes:

If the answer is no, it doesn't mean that the potential donor won't say yes to future projects. So if you're turned down, let go of feeling resentful. In the end, your deepening relationship with supporters is what matters. It's all about relationships. Fundraising and development, when it's done right, is not about a quick fix for funding one project. It's about your long-term career, about having a community of friends and supporters with you for the long haul.¹⁵²

Although making an ask is not easy or even comfortable for most groups, it is something that can be practiced and improved over time. Garcia adds: "Every time you ask, you learn, get better, and become even more hooked."¹⁵³ Fundraising might not be the easiest way for ensembles to make money, but it can turn into a great revenue source for them. Through fundraising, groups strengthen their relationships with their communities and build support for future projects.

Grants

Grants offer ensembles a great deal of support and can fund many projects, such as educational programs, recordings, travel, and commissions. Grants are sums of money that are given by organizations that do not have to be repaid. Many grants are specifically offered to not-for-profit organizations, but if a group has a nonprofit fiscal sponsor such as Fractured Atlas, they are able to apply using them as their umbrella organization. Once a group has an idea for a grant, they should start exploring the possibilities. I suggest checking out local grants first and then moving to national organizations. Local

¹⁵² Beeching, 311.

¹⁵³ Sonya Garcia, 14.

groups are committed to making their communities a better place, so depending on the mission of an ensemble, it could be a great match. Beeching writes, “Don’t overlook the possibility of funding options in your local community and your family’s hometown. Civic groups and community associations (such as Rotary, Kiwanis, and Lions clubs) often have scholarship programs and may fund special projects.”¹⁵⁴ I also suggest looking at state commissions and art councils to see what grants they have available. When looking at national grants, Beeching suggests searching online through the New York Foundation for the Arts at nyfa.org.¹⁵⁵ Chamber Music America has numerous annual grant opportunities as well, although membership with the organization is required to apply. Corporations such as Target and Walmart also offer grants to organizations. Ensembles should always be on the lookout for grant opportunities. They can check out awards given to other local arts organizations. This is a great resource because groups can see which corporations and foundations are interested in giving to arts organizations in their area.

It is very important for ensembles to take the application process seriously. Beeching writes, “Keep in mind that grants are highly competitive. Professional grant writers consider one proposal acceptance out of every five submitted to be a good success rate.”¹⁵⁶ Before applying, the ensemble must determine if the objective of the grant truly aligns with its project. Beeching suggests calling grant-giving organizations to double check eligibility: “Once you have the guidelines and the detailed program restrictions, read them carefully. If your project seems like a viable match, but you’re not absolutely

¹⁵⁴ Beeching, 299.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 298-299.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., 300.

sure, call or e-mail the funding organization.”¹⁵⁷ This will keep the ensemble from wasting everyone’s time applying for a grant for which they are not qualified. Also, groups should prepare grant materials in exceptional detail; any content, grammar, or clerical mistakes might disqualify their work. Grant submissions require numerous submissions from applicants such as a thorough project proposal, group biography, and budget. Every element must be prepared to the highest level of accuracy because review committees are looking for red flags to eliminate applications. Cutler writes, “Adjudicating panels, made up of past award winners, experts in the field, and employees of the grant giving institution, really want to identify excellent projects and provide assistance to deserving artists.”¹⁵⁸ However, Cutler goes on to write:

The first step for judges is to eliminate weak applications. Below are the most common reasons proposals are rejected: incomplete, late, extension requested, not eligible, wrong formatting, not a good fit, poorly written, sloppy presentation, and lack of graciousness. After the disqualification round, jurors rank the remaining files in order of merit. Some aspects considered are: necessity, effectiveness, impact, quality, likeliness, history, and sustainability.¹⁵⁹

I recommend that groups do not get discouraged when their grants are rejected; keep on applying. The more grants ensembles apply for, the better they will become at the process. Tetra has had more luck partnering with existing organizations when applying for grants. We have been together for over three years, making us a relatively new organization, so partnering has helped our success rate.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Cutler, 239.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 239-240.

Residencies

Residencies provide great consistent revenue for ensembles. These relationships can be created anywhere; the possibilities are endless. According to Cutler, “Residencies in schools, universities, retirement centers, libraries, towns, and other locations allow musicians to combine a number of educational activities. Possibilities include short partnerships, multiple appearances sprinkled throughout a season, and longer term relationships.”¹⁶⁰ A residency requires that the group travel to a partnering organization to present concerts or educational programs multiple times. Ensembles create specific presentations for communities based on their knowledge of what the audience wants to learn and hear. Beeching writes, “Residency work is often about going *to* the audience, meeting them on *their* turf and performing in nontraditional spaces, such as school gyms, retirement homes, or office complexes. Residency work at its best is engaging, interactive, educational, *and* artistic.”¹⁶¹ These residencies can be short or long-term arrangements. For example, the St. Lawrence String Quartet is in residence long-term at Stanford University. Palo Alto is their home, and they have teaching obligations with the university. However, they have had a series of short-term residencies at Arizona State University. Each residency has consisted of three visits of about three days each. Although long-term residencies provide more financial assurance, short-term residencies are a great way for ensembles to build relationships throughout the community and make money at the same time. Through residencies, groups are paid per visit. If ensembles have multiple residencies this results in a consistent income.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 199.

¹⁶¹ Beeching, 206.

Tetra has built the majority of our financial support around residencies in our community. These include our position as Quartet in Residence at the retirement home Vi at Silverstone, Artists in Residence at the retirement home Friendship Village, the Resident Artists at the Musical Instrument Museum, Ensemble in Residence at Marcos De Niza High School, and Outreach Artists through Arizona Musicfest. Through these positions we give reoccurring concerts and educational programs. Each relationship has a specific objective. For example, at Friendship Village we give four separate concerts a year for their Independent Living, Health Care, Memory Care, and Assisted Living residents. This is a total of sixteen concerts throughout their community in one year. We also have meet and greets after the concerts and occasionally rehearse on their campus. This residency is funded through the Friendship Village Foundation, an onsite organization. Our residency at Marcos De Niza High School consists of nine school visits focused on teaching chamber music, two afterschool workshops, two joint concerts with students, and one fundraiser concert. As mentioned in chapter 2, this program is funded through grants that the school applied for. Through these residencies, we not only gain financial security, but we are building strong and invaluable relationships in our community. Although some of these organizations approached us, Tetra created many of these residencies ourselves. I recommend that groups send email inquiries to organizations where they are interested in residing. If they respond positively, follow up with a meeting to find out what is possible.

Merchandise

Ensembles can also make money by creating merchandise to sell at shows and online. Products can include CDs, tee shirts, and stickers. For example, Tetra recorded a Holiday CD in 2011. This was a large financial investment, but we were making a profit by the end of the 2011 Christmas season. Every CD we have sold since has yielded a profit, so sales of this album give us a financial boost every December. We sold this album online through CD Baby, Bandcamp, and iTunes. The album has also served as a marketing tool as it has been played on classical music stations throughout the country, bringing us national exposure.¹⁶² In addition to making a profit on sales, items such as tee shirts and stickers help create awareness about the ensemble. It is also crucial that groups pay state and city taxes when selling merchandise. In Arizona, Tetra is required to pay a transaction privilege tax. The laws are different in every state, so ensembles must investigate thoroughly before starting to sell their products.

When to say no

Groups are presented with all kinds of opportunities, many of which are interesting and exciting. However, not all of these opportunities will pertain to the ensemble's mission. After an ensemble has decided on its mission, it is important that all the work they do pertains to their philosophy. Groups sometimes feel pressure to accept all paying work, especially at the beginning of their careers. For example, Tetra played weddings in our first year of being together. It was never part of our mission to do this work, but we needed the financial support. We found that the time we spent planning

¹⁶² For more information on how to make a CD, check out Angela Myles Beeching's *Beyond Talent: Creating a Successful Career in Music*, 85-122.

with brides was taking emotional energy away from projects related to our mission. We took a financial leap of faith to not accept weddings, but felt much better to be exclusively serving our artistic passions. Also, sometimes ensembles must say no to opportunities that pertain to their missions when their schedules are full. If groups over-commit themselves, they will sacrifice the quality of their performances and programs. For example, Tetra visited over ten schools in January and February of 2012 to teach high school students about chamber music. Simultaneously, we were preparing for a high-profile concert. We struggled to maintain excellence throughout our commitments because we had less rehearsal time due to our work in the schools. We learned that we must sometimes turn down exciting opportunities so that we perform and educate at the highest level. Ensembles must find a balance between being sustainable and doing what they love.

Creating financial goals

Once an ensemble has decided how they will make money, it is helpful to create goals for how much the ensemble desires to make in the future. This will give the group something to strive for when they plan for future concert seasons. Lewis Schiff, the executive director of the Inc. Business Owners Council, suggests that businesses make ten-year, five-year, and one-year financial goals. He writes, “Whatever net worth goal you choose, staying mindful of that specific number is guaranteed to help you make smarter choices about your partners, customers, and projects in the coming months. Bet

on it.”¹⁶³ This type of thinking helps groups reach for what they want opposed to waiting for it to come to them.

The journey to sustainability is not easy for most ensembles. Groups must seek out support through creating and researching opportunities. Through this work, ensembles that are passionate, resilient, and dedicated to bringing their missions to life will eventually start to see financial growth.

¹⁶³ Lewis Schiff, “Set Your Financial Goals for 2023 Today: Here’s How,” *Inc.com*, under “Louis Schiff Author,” <http://www.inc.com/lewis-schiff/set-financial-goals-to-achieve-success.html> (accessed October 1, 2013).

CHAPTER 5
THE BIG PICTURE

Teaching artists

Community-based ensembles are educators in addition to being performers. Teaching artistry applies to all musicians. As stated in chapter 1, a teaching artist is “the model of the twenty-first century artist and, simultaneously, a model for high-engagement learning in education”.¹⁶⁴ Groups that perform in communities will frequently interact with individuals who have never been to a classical music concert before. Teaching artist principles help ensembles create concert programs that are relevant and engaging for everyone in their audience. Booth writes:

For example, imagine three people sitting next to one another listening to a late Beethoven string quartet. One is having a life-transforming artistic experience as she enters that musical world, expanding her grasp of what the human heart and spirit can contain and the depths to which such knowing can be expressed. The man next to her is having a very entertaining evening, enjoying the beauty of the music, admiring the way the ensemble works together, drifting off to think about some problems at work, thinking how cute the violist is, but coming back to relax in the beauty of the occasion. The next guy over was dragged there by his wife, hates the event, and is getting nothing out of the music. The same musical offering becomes a work of art, a piece of entertainment, or an ordeal based on the individual’s capacity to create personally relevant connections inside the music.¹⁶⁵

Groups should be prepared to use teaching artistry to embrace all listeners, because everyone experiences music differently. Classical music performances are unusual for new audience members because concerts resemble art as opposed to entertainment.

Booth describes the difference between art and entertainment:

What distinguishes entertainment is that it happens within what we already know...Entertainment says, “Yes, the world is the way you think it is.”...Art on

¹⁶⁴ Booth, 4.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 5.

the other hand happens outside of what you already know. Inherent in the artistic experience is the capacity to expand your sense of the way the world is or might be. The art lives in an individual's capacity to engage in that fundamental act of creativity—expanding the sense of the possible—every bit as much as the art resides in what's being observed.¹⁶⁶

New individuals who come to classical music concerts are often taking a risk to be there; it takes time, costs money, and requires attention.¹⁶⁷ It is the job of teaching artists to inspire meaningful connections in the music by helping audience members feel like they belong.¹⁶⁸ Meaningful connections are achieved by bringing people inside the artistic experience, which will help ensembles cultivate long-lasting relationships with their audiences.

Ensembles can use teaching artistry to inspire active listening and reflection. Booth describes active listening as “the capacity to enter a world that someone else has made.”¹⁶⁹ Teaching artists use active listening to engage audiences in all music that is played during a concert. Booth goes on to say, “We are inviting listeners, active listeners, to become creators along with us, making connections no one else ever made before, between that person's experiences and this strange offering.”¹⁷⁰ Active listening is achieved when teaching artists interact directly with audiences. Booth recommends that musicians engage listeners before presenting them with information: “This prioritization respects learners as people, reminding us that they have to be involved participants in the work you present rather than merely acquiescent recipients of your

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., 6.

¹⁶⁸ Eric Booth, “How Eric Booth Became a Teaching Artist,” Carnegie Hall website, Adobe Flash Player, 2:40, <http://www.carnegiehall.org/ORC/Eric-Booth-on-Teaching-Artistry/> (accessed September 6, 2013).

¹⁶⁹ Eric Booth, “Making Creative Connections, Active Listening, and Reflection,” Carnegie Hall website, Adobe Flash Player, 1:50, <http://www.carnegiehall.org/ORC/Eric-Booth-on-Teaching-Artistry/> (accessed September 6, 2013).

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 3:39

information. After they are engaged, your information will have a far greater impact and relevance, will be desired, retained, and used.”¹⁷¹ Fischer of the Chiara String Quartet believes that this engagement before information principle is one of the most important aspects of building concert programs. She writes, “People are much more excited to experience art from the inside out, after being truly engaged with the art, instead of first being given facts or information that may or may not be initially interesting to them.”¹⁷² To engage audiences, Booth recommends that teaching artists consider how their listeners feel, because quite often they think that they are artistically incompetent. To help them feel competent, he suggests that teaching artists focus on what audiences “*can* do rather than emphasizing what they can’t do.”¹⁷³ This allows listeners to engage in the music rather than judge themselves for not understanding.

Speaking to audiences is one way that ensembles can create active listening. Booth writes that this can be achieved by making personal connections, breaking the ice, creating an atmosphere, providing information or context, and explaining practical matters.¹⁷⁴ Making personal connections is a great way to develop active listening. In performances, Tetra sometimes will add anecdotes about our personal lives, such as where we grew up or silly facts about our group history. We have found that this helps our audiences know us better and connect with us on a deeper level. However, Booth suggests that musicians take this a step further:

Yes, share something personal; audiences love that. But focus on something personal that takes us into greater insight about the music, too. Perhaps there is something about this particular piece that is relevant to your life, or perhaps there

¹⁷¹ Booth, 27.

¹⁷² Rebecca Fischer, interview by author, through email correspondence, September 6, 2013.

¹⁷³ Booth, 28.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 193-196.

is something personal about performing the piece that would open it up for me in the audience.¹⁷⁵

Through this technique the audience not only gets to know the ensemble better, but is able to connect that information to the music. Breaking the ice with an audience through talking can also be helpful. If the first piece on an ensemble's program is particularly difficult to understand, explanations beforehand can help bring the audience inside the performance. Booth suggests: "Ask this question of every program: Is there anything we can say or do at the top that advances the audience's ability to really receive this first piece?"¹⁷⁶ Creating an atmosphere can also be achieved through speaking. Ensembles can help depict the mood of a work through how they present the information. Booth writes, "When you speak, we read your voice, your body language, your nervousness—and you tell us volumes about who you are...If you can share yourself with us in a natural, enthusiastic way, we will follow you further inside the music."¹⁷⁷ This enthusiasm can be communicated regardless of the character of the work; musical moods such as happy, frustrated, and morbid can all be anticipated through what is said to audiences beforehand. Ensembles should be careful when providing information or context about a piece. Presenting large amounts of information might be helpful for some audience members, but probably not the majority. For example, if a group discusses the theoretical and harmonic construction of a work, many members without a musical background will be lost during the performance. Booth suggests: "Don't just tell me the stuff off the CD liner notes. Select the information that opens up my hearing and

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., 193.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid., 194.

caring.”¹⁷⁸ Sharing information can be helpful and interesting to audiences if it is presented in an engaging way for every listener. Weaving a thread of connection among pieces helps audience members draw greater meaning for the overall concert. This is sometimes achieved through overarching concert themes, such as programs that consist of only dance music or all Russian composers. Booth suggests that ensembles find deeper meaning about their themes when deciding what to say. He writes, “What you’re doing is far more than imparting information. Instead, you are sharing your own thinking about why this evening’s journey is worth taking with you, and what the reach of our evening could be.”¹⁷⁹ This type of information will help listeners develop a greater understanding about how the music they heard was connected. Booth suggests that even when groups discuss practical matters from the stage that they find ways to connect it to the music. He provides the following scenario: “Andrea Jones made this evening possible, and special thanks to her for remembering to provide us with bottles of water. The finale of the first half of the program leaves us panting and we will need them.”¹⁸⁰ Through this small anecdote, the audience is immediately referred back to the music. If ensembles use these teaching artist principles at every concert, they will help audience members make personally relevant connections to the music.

Ensembles can also develop active listening by creating interactive performances. Interactive elements at concerts can consist of anything from having the audience feel the rhythm with the ensemble to having them draw pictures inspired by the music. Booth asks: “So why not stick to traditional concert formats? I would answer that we find

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 195.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 196.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

ourselves living in a time that invites (almost demands) us to experiment and to think unconventionally, to draw young and new audiences into our beloved music in active ways, rather than just putting it out beautifully and hoping they ‘get it.’”¹⁸¹ Asking audiences to take part in concerts engages them because they are actively participating in a component of the performance. Tetra has implemented interactive elements in our concerts many times. For example, we often perform a Brazilian work by the composer Osvaldo Lacerda. Our goal when performing this piece is to help the audience understand the tresillo rhythm, which reoccurs throughout the music. We demonstrate it to our listeners through clapping and saying the phrase, “pineapple-pineapple-berry” to help them get the groove. We then provide a mini jam session where the audience can practice snapping or clapping the rhythm at a variety of tempos. When we play the piece in its entirety, we ask the audience to be our percussion section, making our performance of the work a collaborative effort. Through this exercise we not only engage our audience, but create art together while drawing them into our performance.

After an audience has actively listened to a concert, ensembles must then call on them to reflect on their experience. Booth writes, “Artistic processes are so fast and packed that we must pause and guide participants to attend to how they did things, how peers did things, and what their choices were based on, or the learning gold is lost.”¹⁸² Reflection can be achieved through asking audience members questions or asking them to draw and write about their experience. If audiences reflect on their concert experience, they will be more likely to remember how they felt at the performance and come again for another show.

¹⁸¹ Ibid., 198.

¹⁸² Ibid., 33.

In order for ensembles to be great teaching artists, they must consider Booth's "Law of the 80%". In this concept he argues that 80% of what people teach is who they are. He writes:

Of all the teaching you do around the arts, the participants' deepest learning comes from seeing how you, the emissary from the arts, think, listen, speak, dress, make meaning, respond, discover, handle trouble, play, joke, improvise, and so on... Your authenticity as an artist is one of your greatest strengths. Don't feel you must hide your artistic enthusiasm, your personality, your abilities, or your personal passion behind a "teacher" mask.¹⁸³

Audience members can sense the level of dedication and passion that musicians have through all of their actions. Ensembles should make sure that all of their energy illuminates enthusiasm for the music. Booth writes, "If performers' bodies or energies are disengaged; if they are not bursting with enthusiasm for this very performance; if they do not share themselves with the audience, much potential engagement is squandered."¹⁸⁴

Through my work with Tetra, I have noticed that our audience can tell when we are having an off day. Chrystal was in a car accident the day of a performance a few years ago, but decided to perform at our evening concert. We were all concerned about her throughout our concert, and a few audience members noticed that we did not seem as energetic or committed as usual. This incident taught us that our audiences are very perceptive, and we must always commit whole-heartedly to projecting enthusiasm and passion. Fischer explains that Booth's "Law of the 80%" helps inspire her work. She writes, "I find this statement quite empowering, as it challenges me to be more

¹⁸³ Ibid., 37.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., 190.

authentically myself as a teacher and artist.”¹⁸⁵ This concept is helpful for groups to consider before every performance or program.

Teaching artist skills are essential for every community-based ensemble. Using these tools will help groups connect more deeply with their audiences and grow excitement for their music throughout the community. Musicians must never make assumptions about what audiences know; they must do their best to bring their art alive to every listener so that they can draw personal and relevant connections from the music.

Creating a positive ecosystem

Ensemble members spend endless hours together in rehearsal, concerts, and tours. It is inevitable that conflict will arise throughout the group’s time together, but with the right skills, ensembles can learn to resolve disagreements. The most important element for the health of an ensemble is the happiness of every member. Tubist Sam Pilafian, a founding member of the Empire Brass Quintet, warned Tetra that many groups split up after being together for only a few years. He said this is because not all individual needs are being met, and members want to move onto things that they are more passionate about. He advised to us to have open conversations with one another about our needs and goals so that all of us could be equally happy in the ensemble. For him, this is the key to a group’s longevity. Group and individual happiness can be found through developing healthy communication tools, taking personal responsibility, and maintaining positivity.

Groups must learn communication tools to maintain a healthy working environment. Many musicians are passionate about their ideas, which can sometimes

¹⁸⁵ Rebecca Fischer, interview by author, through email correspondence, September 6, 2013.

create conflict in ensembles. Arnold Steinhardt, the first violinist of the Guarneri String Quartet writes:

In developing a quartet, personal qualities play as important a role as musicianship; the two can't be easily separated. Each of us has to be strong enough to exert his leadership, strong enough to endure the constant criticism of his colleagues, and strong enough to let go of cherished ideas when they don't coincide with the majority opinion.¹⁸⁶

One of the best parts about being a musician is that there are so many ways to interpret music. If an ensemble member does not agree with someone's musical concept, it is always best to try the idea before voicing an opinion. Klickstein writes, "if someone proposes a tempo or phrasing that you deem unsuitable, let your primary response be to attempt it and not criticize. Interpretive notions are like opinions—people have different ones, and musicians should know that their outlooks are welcome." Tetra has a rule that we must try everyone's ideas with committed enthusiasm, even if we do not think we will like the concept. After executing many ideas, I often find that I like another concept more than what I originally felt passionate about. This open policy helps us feel free to explore any creative avenue without being judged by one another. It is also helpful if all group members contribute to rehearsal equally. Klickstein suggests: "If you tend to cling to your views, let go more; if you rarely state your preferences, assert yourself more. Compromise that's one-sided isn't compromise."¹⁸⁷ Members of the Tokyo and Emerson Quartets recommended a similar rehearsal process: "Try out everyone's ideas—with absolute conviction—no matter how off the wall they may sound at first. Don't talk it to

¹⁸⁶ Gerald Klickstein, *The Musician's Way: A Guide to Practice, Performance, and Wellness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 117.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 118.

death beforehand. Play it and *then* have the discussion.”¹⁸⁸ The Chiara String Quartet recommended to Tetra that we take turns leading rehearsal. Through this technique, all group members must take responsibility to plan and run rehearsal. This process helps everyone’s voice be heard in an efficient way. It is also valuable for ensemble members to communicate how they are feeling without attacking one another and putting someone on the defensive. This is achieved through using I versus you statements: “And the most courteous way that you can express yourself is with an ‘I’ statement in place of a judgmental ‘you’ statement. For instance, you could say, ‘I get frustrated when we can’t begin on time. Should we rethink our schedule?’”¹⁸⁹ Taking the time to think about how to say something will help solve problems productively. It is also crucial that ensemble members learn how to receive criticism without taking things personally. Klickstein suggests: “When it comes to receiving criticism in ensemble rehearsals, you’ll hear words panning the gamut from tactful to coarse. Critiques won’t upset you, however, if you enlist a cooperative approach to listening and communicating.”¹⁹⁰ He goes on to suggest that if an ensemble member feels attacked by a statement such as “You’re rushing!” that they respond with a question such as “Where do you think the rushing began?” rather than get defensive. If the group member wants to express how the statement made them feel they can say something like, “You were right to point out when my rhythm was off, but I felt like I was being attacked rather than informed.”¹⁹¹ This will help resolve the issue without stirring up further conflict.

¹⁸⁸ Beeching, 43.

¹⁸⁹ Klickstein, 118.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 119.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 120.

Personal responsibility is another aspect that can help maintain a positive environment for ensembles. This is a key element of being a professional ensemble. Violist of the Guarneri String Quartet Michael Tree states, “As a member of a quartet, you come to realize that you’re responsible for other people’s reputations and livelihoods as well as your own.”¹⁹² Chamber music ensembles operate with few members, so it is crucial that everyone can be reliable and dependable. One major way ensemble members can be personally responsible is by staying true to their word. For example, if I say that I will respond to a presenter about a performance and forget, we might not receive the opportunity. Or if I commit to writing a grant and miss the deadline, the ensemble is no longer eligible. In these instances, my actions affect everyone in the group. Ensembles are very busy, so tasks must be delegated. If group members are not reliable, they will hold back the progress of the group. Another aspect of personal responsibility is punctuality. Klickstein writes, “Professionals don’t show up on time for rehearsals; they arrive *early*. If a practice session is slated for noon, the first downbeat happens at noon.”¹⁹³ Arriving on time not only shows that an individual is professional, but also shows respect for colleagues. This is applicable for the most relaxed rehearsal or the most high profile performance. Tetra had a period of time where tardiness to rehearsal became an epidemic. If someone was late, there were no consequences, so the culture of being tardy became a habit. In a meeting, we came to a group consensus that we were going to hold ourselves to a higher standard of punctuality. We are now ready to play about ten minutes before every rehearsal. This gives us time to tune and to discuss any pressing business matters. Another element of personal responsibility is preparation.

¹⁹² Ibid., 115.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

Ensembles must always perform at the highest level, which requires that group members come to rehearsals knowing their parts. This allows the group to rehearse efficiently. Klickstein suggests, “Embrace an equally rigorous benchmark by meticulously practicing your part between rehearsals. Never shirk your preparation and turn up for a rehearsal underprepared.”¹⁹⁴ If one person shows up to a rehearsal or performance with their part underprepared, it affects everyone and lowers the level of the ensemble. Integrity is also a crucial part of personal responsibility. Group members must hold themselves to the highest standards and never talk about others behind their backs. Steven Pologe, the cellist of the Oregon String Quartet, writes, “Let your fellow musicians know that you have a high regard for their talents, and head off any disparaging talk about a peer.”¹⁹⁵ If there is a personal conflict between two group members, it should be dealt with outside of rehearsal. This will help keep rehearsal time focused and productive. If ensemble members are personally responsible, the group will operate smoothly and know how to address conflict if it occurs.

Ensembles can create a positive ecosystem through maintaining optimistic attitudes. Klickstein states, “Personal energy is contagious, more so in the close-knit setting of an ensemble. A glum player can bring a group down, and, conversely, a soulful musician can suffuse an ensemble with heart. If you become a beacon of creative strength, you can dispel negativity and uplift your colleagues.”¹⁹⁶ It is helpful to the overall energy of the group if members do not bring their personal problems into rehearsal. If someone is having a bad day, it is not fair to the rest of the ensemble if they

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 116.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 117.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 125.

share their frustrations. Also, it is helpful if groups stay positive through disappointments. All ensembles experience failure in their careers; whether a lost competition or a denied grant application, ensembles must learn how to keep on moving forward. The Chiara String Quartet mentioned to Tetra that some of their biggest successes happened after failures. One of these instances occurred after they did not advance in an important competition. They had spent countless hours preparing for the competition and were devastated to not advance. However, they took this as an opportunity to re-think their mission and what they wanted to do with their careers. This resulted in an exciting new direction for the ensemble; they began playing in all types of venues and for diverse audiences. Positive thinking helps groups reach for what they want. It is helpful for ensembles to not limit their potential but to set the bar high for what they want to accomplish. I recommend staying away from negative thinking such as “we are not good enough to get this opportunity” or “we probably will not get a big audience because there are better groups playing that night”. Instead, groups should think “the harder we work, the closer we will get to this opportunity” or “what can we do to entice new audience members to come to our show?” Also, Klickstein recommends that groups never forget to laugh: “Comedy writer Robert Orben said, ‘If you can laugh together, you can work together.’ Although collaborative music making is an intensive activity, sprinkle in some good-natured quips. Your shared laughter will add to your musical relationship.”¹⁹⁷ Even in the most stressful situations, it never hurts to laugh!

Ensembles are like families because they must find harmony in everything that they do together. Tina Lee Hadari of Music Haven writes, “Conflict is healthy, as long as

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

it's managed in a productive way...If everyone knows that each other ultimately wants the same things, it's so much easier to come back to the trust when there are difficult decisions to be made.”¹⁹⁸ If groups unify their purpose and believe strongly in their mission and goals, conflict will be easier to resolve. In order to maintain Tetra's positive ecosystem, we have monthly mental health meetings to check in with one another to see if everyone is happy and to provide a safe environment where feelings can be voiced if someone is frustrated. Through these meetings we have changed behaviors such as not permitting phones in rehearsals. All groups will experience conflict. It is important that they deal with it immediately so it does not fester.

Evaluating experiences and looking ahead

Reflection is a crucial practice for all ensembles. After every experience a group should look back to analyze what went well and what could have been better. Earlier in this chapter I discussed the importance of reflection for audiences, but it is also an important learning step for groups. Booth states, “Etymologically, reflect comes from the Latin word meaning to bend back toward, which seems like a pretty good description of what it is. We take our complex experience and bend it back toward ourselves so we can precipitate out a few things that happened to us that we want to hold onto.”¹⁹⁹ Reflection allows groups to learn from their experiences and make plans for the future. Ensembles can ask: “Was this a good experience? Why or why not? Would we do it again? Is there anything we can do to better prepare next time?” This process can also occur at the end

¹⁹⁸ Tina Lee Hadari, interview by author, through email correspondence, September 10, 2013.

¹⁹⁹ Eric Booth, “Making Creative Connections, Active Listening, and Reflection”, Carnegie Hall video, 4:08, from a lecture series on teaching artists, accessed October 5, 2013, <http://www.carnegiehall.org/ORC/Eric-Booth-on-Teaching-Artistry/>.

of an ensemble's performance season; what were the most successful things they did and what do they want to continue doing? Tetra uses reflection to discuss everything we did the previous year. I am often surprised by the quantity of things that we have done, and it is valuable for us to realize all of our accomplishments. This helps us make our plans for the upcoming season and to focus on the performances and programs that we especially enjoyed. It also presents us with the opportunity to see if there is anything we are not doing that we want to pursue. The reflection process helps ensembles assess their activities so that they can move towards their goals with more conviction.

I discussed in previous chapters the importance of developing short-term, long-term, and Big Hairy Audacious Goals. These goals help groups plan ahead to make sure that they are moving in the right direction. Through the process of reflection, it is also helpful to stop and think about the future: what is the trajectory of the ensemble and where are we going? Is our mission still relevant? Do our performances and programs have a positive impact on our community? What can we do to develop deeper connections? Ensembles can also use this process to observe if they are happy and passionate about their work. Beeching suggests:

Pay attention to what helps recharge your imagination and what helps keep your spirit alive...Remind yourself of why you got involved in music in the first place. Your most basic reasons for being in music are crucial factors to keep you moving forward in your career. Keeping tabs on your motivation—on the essence of what music means to you—should help sustain you throughout your career.²⁰⁰

Staying connected to what energizes and inspires groups will help motivate them to continue working towards their goals.

²⁰⁰ Beeching, 13.

CHAPTER 6

CASE STUDIES

In this chapter I will present case studies of three professional ensembles: the Haven String Quartet, WindSync, and the Chiara String Quartet. Throughout this document I have discussed many crucial factors to consider when creating a community-based ensemble. By presenting these case studies, I will show how the groups have built and continue to build sustainable careers in their communities. These ensembles embody a variety of business structures and are cultivating success in diverse ways. Because these groups are achieving greatness through hard work, dedication, and a relentless passion for their missions, their stories serve as pertinent examples for new ensembles.

The Haven String Quartet

The Haven String Quartet is the quartet in residence at Music Haven in New Haven, Connecticut. Music Haven offers “tuition-free after school education programs that build long-term relationships between professional musicians, children, and families in four high-poverty Empowerment Zone neighborhoods in New Haven, CT.”²⁰¹ Tina Lee Hadari developed the concept for this organization as a member of the Vinca String Quartet in 2006. Hadari writes, “New Haven was a natural choice, because the Vinca Quartet formed at Yale, and we already had a strong base of support here. Also, one of our inspirations for Music Haven was Community MusicWorks in Providence, RI; New Haven and Providence are very similar cities in many ways.”²⁰² She started surveying the

²⁰¹ Music Haven Website, About Us: History, <http://www.musichavenct.org/history.html> (accessed October 13, 2013).

²⁰² Tina Lee Hadari, interview by author, through email correspondence, September 10, 2013.

landscape in New Haven to generate interest in a potential program. This was challenging because she was studying and working with the Vinca String Quartet in Boulder, Colorado. However, the group traveled to New Haven multiple times from 2006-2007 to play benefits and school concerts to help generate interest for the program.²⁰³ Hadari explains that much of Music Haven’s initial support came from a connection through Community MusicWorks: “Back in 2006, our current board vice-chairman had met Sebastian Ruth and Jesse Holstein from Community MusicWorks, and he had made a comment about wanting to replicate CMW in New Haven. Sebastian and Jesse connected him with me, and that was the catalyst that led to our return to New Haven.”²⁰⁴ The quartet moved back to Connecticut to launch Music Haven in 2007. They taught after school lessons to twenty-four students.

In these initial building years, Hadari focused on surveying the landscape to find out what the need for a music program was in New Haven. She writes:

I knew New Haven from my years at Yale. But what I discovered in my first year was that I had only known the small, insular part of the city that surrounds Yale. Today, I am still learning so much about what makes this city run—its history, its politics, its economy, its different communities, its diversity, and the personal and working lives of its inhabitants. Surveying the landscape can take years and years, depending on how many layers you intend to uncover.²⁰⁵

As she started learning more about the community, she began to investigate what it needed and how a music program could help.

Back in 2006, there were numerous incidents of gangs of teenagers on bicycles mugging people and vandalizing property. It sent shockwaves through the community, and there was a collective community epiphany that New Haven

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

needed more opportunities for its youth, particularly for low-income youth during after-school hours and in the summer.²⁰⁶

Hadari also learned that kids from the Empowerment zone neighborhoods are “twelve times more likely to drop out of school, fourteen times more likely to be arrested for violence, and thirty-seven times more likely to become a teen mother than the state average.”²⁰⁷ Hadari concluded through her initial research that Music Haven could help change the lives of students in New Haven. She states: “Through the sustained long-term mentorship, Music Haven teaches youth how to lead more productive lives by encouraging the development of crucial non-cognitive skills such as self-regulation, delayed gratification, ability to control temper, focus, curiosity, resilience, and persistence.”²⁰⁸ Every year Music Haven has been in existence, they have helped an increased number of kids and provided more opportunities. In their 2011-2012 season, they gave lessons to fifty-six students as well as coaching them on musicianship, improvisation, and time as an orchestra. The quartet performed twenty-four concerts in the community, organized five performance parties, and took four concert trips with students.²⁰⁹ Music Haven continues to investigate the needs of their community in order to make sure that their mission maintains relevance.

After Hadari and the Vinca String Quartet surveyed the landscape and assessed the needs of their community, they started to cultivate their mission. Hadari writes,

Our mission as the Vinca Quartet was to perform string quartets at the highest level of music-making possible. It was a worthy goal, but to me personally, it felt too self-serving and irrelevant. So I challenged the group to become more

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Music Haven Website, About Us: History, <http://www.musichavenct.org/history.html> (accessed October 13, 2013).

relevant and more service-driven over the years. So now the mission of the Haven String Quartet is completely different—to integrate music and creative endeavor into community life.²¹⁰

The mission of the quartet now is: “to use a string quartet to build a vibrant urban community through performance and music education that empowers young people, their families, and professional musicians.”²¹¹ Once the quartet was permanently embedded in the New Haven Community, they changed their name from the Vinca String Quartet to the Haven String Quartet.

The Haven String Quartet is at the heart of Music Haven’s mission. This is because a string quartet embodies many elements that the kids will be learning. Hadari explains:

Playing string quartets is intimate, intense, and democratic. I believe the challenges of playing string quartets represents a microcosm of the challenges we face as a community—balancing the acts of listening and sharing, supporting and leading, analyzing and imagining, creating and thinking critically. Playing chamber music also fosters trust and strengthens skills that are critical to building a vital community—respect, responsibility, teamwork, communication, and creative problem solving.²¹²

String Quartets also have the flexibility to perform almost anywhere in the community; they can give a concert in any location where there are four chairs. The Haven String Quartet has performed throughout Music Haven at such locations as soup kitchens, libraries, secure facilities for juveniles, barbershops, and train stations. This past year the quartet launched their “Truck Week” project where they performed thirteen concerts at thirteen locations “from sidewalks to parking lots to public parks.”²¹³ The quartet set up

²¹⁰ Tina Lee Hadari, interview by author, through email correspondence, September 10, 2013.

²¹¹ Music Haven Website, About Us: Mission and Philosophy, <http://www.musichavenct.org/aboutus.html> (accessed October 14, 2013).

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Music Haven Blog, “Every Corner of Every Neighborhood,” Music Haven Blog, entry posted June 24, 2013, <http://blog.musichavenct.org/2013/06/> (accessed October 14, 2013).

performances on the back of a flatbed truck and performed in every corner of the city. For their 2013-2014 season, the Haven String Quartet will host a string quartet petting zoo after every performance. Hadari writes, “Audiences today are looking for arts ‘experiences’ where they get to participate and be a part of the art-making. So we figured, who wouldn’t want to actually try out a violin or viola or cello after hearing us perform?”²¹⁴ This is yet another way that Music Haven is building support and enthusiasm in the community.

The Haven String Quartet, with a wide range of responsibilities, must be careful to balance their time. Hadari says that the group does “ten to twelve hours of rehearsal and approximately twelve hours of teaching a week. The quartet members also have about eight hours of administrative and program coordination work a week.”²¹⁵ In order to allow the quartet time to focus on performing and teaching, there are three staff members at Music Haven: an executive director, a development director, and a communications/general manager. They take care of much of the behind-the-scenes work for the program. Starting this year, Hadari stepped down as a member of the Haven String Quartet so that she can focus the majority of her time on running the program as executive director.

Music Haven is a non-profit organization and its budget has steadily increased since 2006. Having started with a budget of \$45,900 in 2006, they now have a budget of \$386,719 for the 2013-2014 season. Although Music Haven continues to strive for greater financial stability, the string quartet and staff are salaried and receive health insurance. Their support comes from fundraising and grants from institutions,

²¹⁴ Tina Lee Hadari, interview by author, through email correspondence, September 10, 2013.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

corporations, government, and foundations. There are also numerous individuals that give to the organization. In regards to fundraising, Hadari gives this advice:

In the beginning, be clear and concise about your mission; talk to everyone you know about what you're doing or planning on doing; thank people constantly; and keep everyone in the loop about where their money is going. Don't treat people like ATM machines—people give because they believe in what you're doing; you're just the conduit to what they would do themselves if they had the skills, time, or expertise.²¹⁶

Hadari says that it is difficult for new organizations to gain support through grants, so it is better to focus on support from individuals in the first few years. She states:

You will need a few years under your belt before you can apply for large grants. Then when you're ready, applying for grants is really the same process as cultivating individuals. Be clear and engaging about what you're doing, share how the funding was spent, and then thank funders relentlessly. Oh, and make sure to follow directions obsessively!²¹⁷

Music Haven has a very committed support network in their community. They recently won multiple prizes in The Great Give fundraising competition, including the grand prize, which was \$15,000 to the organization that received the largest number of donations.²¹⁸

Branding has always been in a state of refinement for Music Haven. Although their logo has stayed the same, their business cards, website, and other materials have gone through many changes.²¹⁹ Hadari writes, "Branding is so much about getting the message across to the public about the quality of your product, so although our logo and materials certainly matter, we work much more on internal excellence and the stories we

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Music Haven Facebook Page, Post from "October 4 2013", <https://www.facebook.com/musichavenct>, (accessed October 14, 2013).

²¹⁹ Tina Lee Hadari, interview by author, through email correspondence, September 10, 2013.

share with others through photos and quotes and other media outlets.” Music Haven shares many of these materials through their Facebook page and blog.

In chapter 5, I quoted from Hadari about how her organization deals with conflict. For the Haven String Quartet, it is important that they understand that conflict is healthy and that they each ultimately want the same thing: to realize their mission in the New Haven community. Hadari also adds:

I think as long as everyone feels like he or she has a voice, and decisions are made with clarity of purpose and transparency in the process, it minimizes the unhealthy types of conflict. It’s crucial for everyone to start off with unity of purpose, so it’s important for everyone to sit down and discuss where and how you converge on purpose and mission.²²⁰

If this unity of purpose and similarity of goals is developed early on, most conflict will be swiftly resolved.

The Haven String Quartet and Music Haven are achieving great things in their community. Through building a home for themselves in New Haven, they are affecting the lives of kids by providing them with inspiration about the endless possibilities that life has to offer them. Hadari thinks that as the organization grows, the string quartet in residence concept might need to evolve: “I think if we are to grow as an organization, we are going to also have to transition into some kind of expanded form of a chamber music roster in the future.”²²¹ This means that there will be even more opportunities for ensembles and chamber musicians. The story of Music Haven shows how ensembles can build careers for themselves by developing an organization. The quartet is not only able to have a thriving performing career, but is also changing the lives of kids in their community.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid.

WindSync

Bassoonist Tracy Jacobson created the idea for WindSync in 2009. She cultivated this woodwind quintet, based out of Houston, Texas, after graduating with her undergraduate degree from Rice University. Although she developed the initial concept to form the group, she writes that building the ensemble was a collective effort:

All ensembles must be, by nature, a collaboration; without the right creative forces, a willingness to try new things and a trust in each other, there can't be any ensemble at all. Although WindSync's original concept started from a seed hatched in my brain, it was the group's collaborative effort that made it grow and eventually succeed.²²²

WindSync's mission, developed six months into their existence, is "to inspire audiences of all ages through innovative, interactive chamber music."²²³ They achieve this through designing unique and unconventional programs, such as performing with choreography and costumes as well as playing from memory. They juxtapose traditional wind quintet repertoire with interactive performances such as *WindSync Story*, their interpretation of the musical *West Side Story*. This program includes dancing and acting in addition to the performance of the music. Their mission has not changed since it was initially developed, but their concept of how to realize their mission is always evolving. Jacobson writes, "As the audiences and communities we serve evolve, or at least our understanding of them, we continue to grow as artists and community servants."²²⁴

From 2009-2012, the group had many different ensemble members. Jacobson writes, "Each member of WindSync brings new ideas—both artistic and administrative—to the table. It is important at a certain point to continue to evolve and grow with a

²²² Tracy Jacobson, interview by author, through email correspondence, September 13, 2013.

²²³ WindSync Website, Meet WindSync, <http://www.windsync.org/meet-windsync.html> (accessed October 13, 2013).

²²⁴ Tracy Jacobson, interview by author, through email correspondence, September 13, 2013.

relatively fixed personnel, but at the beginning it's most important to find the exact right fit of artistic personalities."²²⁵ This process helped WindSync take their time in finding individuals that were equally passionate and dedicated to the ensemble's mission. On finding group members Jacobson states: "I've always been one for making my own opportunities, so essentially I went around to my friends and colleagues and asked them about joining this rebel woodwind quintet, and lucked out with some fantastic musicians."²²⁶ WindSync's core members have been the same since the fall of 2012 when they added oboist Erin Tsai and clarinetist Jack Marquardt. WindSync has accomplished many exciting things since establishing these new members. For example, they won the 2012 Concert Artists Guild Victor Elmaleh International Competition and are now managed by the Concert Artists Guild. WindSync flutist Garret Hudson adds, "[Tsai and Marquardt] have contributed to a significantly heightened level of artistry, and we now feel like a five-person power team that is truly unstoppable."²²⁷

WindSync plays for a wide range of audiences, including adults and children. Some programs are for all ages and others only for children, such as their work in schools. Jacobson explains, "WindSync's target audience has always been a broad demographic. It is our goal for concerts to be accessible to children and adults. The actual demographic make-up of our audiences varies greatly based on the performance venue."²²⁸ Due to the wide range of their community members, WindSync offers

²²⁵ Ibid.

²²⁶ Misha Penton, "WindSync: Savvy, Smarts, & Sass," *Artsandculturetx.com*, May 3, 2012, <http://artsandculturetx.com/windsync-savvy-smarts-sass/> (accessed October 13, 2013).

²²⁷ Nancy Wozny, "In Advance of Carnegie Hall Debut, WindSync Works to Shape a New Future for Classical Music," *Houston.culturemap.com*, March 16, 2013, <http://houston.culturemap.com/news/entertainment/03-16-13-in-advance-of-carnegie-hall-debut-windsync-works-to-shape-a-new-future-for-classical-music/> (accessed October 13, 2013).

²²⁸ Tracy Jacobson, interview by author, through email correspondence, September 13, 2013.

numerous programs. They perform programs specifically geared towards elementary students such as “Peter and the Wolf” and “Oh, the Places You’ll Go!” Each of these programs has a specific educational objective such as developing out-of-the-box thinking and listening skills.²²⁹ They also design specific programs for middle and high school students through mini-residencies. These programs are called “Imagination in Music: a mini school residency that provides creativity.” These residencies meet the Texas Educational Agency’s Fine Arts Standards, and the educational focus of each program is discussed in conjunction with schools.²³⁰ In addition to these programs, they also design workshops for college-age students, giving presentations at Stanford University and California State University Long Beach. Examples of these programs are “Writing Music for Today’s Woodwind Quintet: a discussion of contemporary performance practice” and “Developing Entrepreneurial Skills through Music Outreach: a session on self promotion and audience creation.”²³¹ Their performances for all ages include creative programming as well. Hudson says, “Selecting new repertoire and creating new programs is always a challenge for the group, but it's also one of our favorite aspects in terms of what we get to do as a creative team...Coming up with our wildest ideas and forming those into appropriate concert productions is a process that we don’t take for granted.”²³² They often create programs with themes like “Music in Nature” and “Where

²²⁹ WindSync Website, Education: For K-5, <http://www.windsync.org/assembly-programs.html> (accessed October 13, 2013).

²³⁰ WindSync Website, Education: For Middle and High School, <http://www.windsync.org/school-residency1.html> (accessed October 13, 2013).

²³¹ WindSync Website, Education: For College and University, <http://www.windsync.org/developing-entrepreneurial-skills-through-music-outreach-a-session-on-self-promotion-and-audience-creation.html> (accessed October 13, 2013).

²³² Nancy Wozny, <http://houston.culturemap.com/news/entertainment/03-16-13-in-advance-of-carnegie-hall-debut-windsync-works-to-shape-a-new-future-for-classical-music/> (accessed October 13, 2013).

in Time is WindSync?”), a concert inspired by time travel. Through their innovative programming, they focus on making their concerts relevant for all of their audiences.

WindSync has made huge strides in their journey towards financial stability. In their first year they barely broke even. Today, all WindSync musicians are salaried with benefits. The budget for their 2013-2014 season is \$200,000.²³³ Jacobson writes, “Each member of WindSync worked hard, often for no pay, over the last four years to make our organization successful...”²³⁴ When the ensemble first started out, they pursued every opportunity, even if it did not offer much money. They did this to gain experience and make connections in their community. This process started to change in 2011, however. Jacobson explains:

Eventually, as the ensemble gained experience, the fees increased beyond just stipends to a real concert fee. In 2011 it became our goal for WindSync to financially support its musicians; as our commitment to the group increased, so did our concert fees. Later in 2011 WindSync became a non-profit and started diversifying income with grants and private donations. In 2012 WindSync was added to the roster of the Concert Artists Guild and with management, fees increased again in a more substantial way.²³⁵

WindSync made the decision to become a non-profit in 2011 so that they could expand their fundraising capabilities. They were operating as a limited liability corporation, but it was in their best financial interest to become a non-profit. This change in business structure enabled their supporters to give tax-deductable donations. Jacobson writes, “The majority of WindSync’s fundraising is through private donors who love WindSync’s creative and community-enriching concerts.”²³⁶ They have also been able to easily apply for grants without needing to apply through an umbrella organization.

²³³ Tracy Jacobson, interview by author, through email correspondence, September 13, 2013.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ Ibid.

Another benefit to being a non-profit has been developing their Board of Directors. These members volunteer their time and help oversee ensemble matters. Also, WindSync's management has helped them book concerts internationally and has significantly increased their financial success. Jacobson explains that even though the group has worked tirelessly for their opportunities, "we still acknowledge the incredible luck we've had in finding our personnel, management, and a supportive board and community."²³⁷ When planning future seasons, WindSync continues to strive for financial and artistic growth.

WindSync deals with conflict and disagreement within the group with patience and respect. Jacobson writes, "At this point WindSync exists very much like a family, there are disputes and disagreements that all stem from a point of mutual love and respect. Feelings don't stay hurt long and everyone is willing to compromise and make concessions."²³⁸ WindSync decided to live together for one year so that they could nurture their creativity and foster relationships within the group. Hudson explains, "Living under one roof allowed us a year to brainstorm 24/7, and was invaluable in terms of the group's history. In that time together we came up with our most diabolical plans because our creative, out-of-the-box thinking was constantly encouraged."²³⁹ However, Jacobson adds, that this living situation was only meant to be for one year: "That type of intensity is only sustainable for a limited time, but it was very helpful in incubating a group sound and unifying ideas."²⁴⁰ When it comes to making decisions, the majority

²³⁷ Ibid.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Nancy Wozny, <http://houston.culturemap.com/news/entertainment/03-16-13-in-advance-of-carnegie-hall-debut-windsync-works-to-shape-a-new-future-for-classical-music/> (accessed October 13, 2013).

²⁴⁰ Tracy Jacobson, interview by author, through email correspondence, September 13, 2013.

rules. WindSync's French horn player Annie Hochhalter explains, "It's not always easy, lots of pushing and pulling, but in the end majority rules, and final decisions are always made in the best interest of the group... We're very honest with each other, and have a really healthy balance of those who love debate and those who are more drawn toward resolution."²⁴¹ This honesty helps them make decisions that are best for everyone.

WindSync's successes have continued to grow throughout their time together. Jacobson writes, "WindSync has learned that most of our dreams are possible if we just believe in them. We are constantly brainstorming and dreaming up new projects and finding ways to make them come into fruition."²⁴² In November 2013 they will perform at Carnegie Hall in addition to touring throughout the United States. Their story shows that even young musicians who are recently out of school can build sustainable careers for themselves.

The Chiara String Quartet

The Chiara String Quartet are artists in residence at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and perform concerts internationally. Violinist Rebecca Fischer and cellist Gregory Beaver met in 1993 as high school students at a summer festival. Fischer writes, "We knew immediately that we had a spark together, rehearsing Schubert's 'Death and the Maiden' quartet for hours in the laundry room... Playing in the quartet was a dream for us, and we met just about every summer after that point (two years later Jonah Sirota

²⁴¹ Nancy Wozny, <http://houston.culturemap.com/news/entertainment/03-16-13-in-advance-of-carnegie-hall-debut-windsync-works-to-shape-a-new-future-for-classical-music/> (accessed October 13, 2013).

²⁴² Tracy Jacobson, interview by author, through email correspondence, September 13, 2013.

joined the group).”²⁴³ Fischer, Beaver, and Sirota ended up at the Julliard School of Music for graduate school and were performing as the Chiara String Quartet with a violinist they knew from school. However, the group says that they officially formed as a quartet in 2000 when they joined forces with violinist Hyeyung Yoon. Fisher writes, “When Hyeyung joined the Chiara Quartet it felt like the group was finally complete.”²⁴⁴ In the fall of 2000 the group moved to Grand Forks, North Dakota through the Chamber Music America’s Rural Residency program. This was a grant that matched chamber music groups with rural communities for one to three years. Fischer states, “Even though there was an adjustment period of playing with a new member, there was the even larger issue of actually learning how to rehearse and function as a professional quartet; what had previously been a dream was becoming a daylong reality, so all four of us equally participated in that adjustment.”²⁴⁵

The quartet’s time in North Dakota helped shape the direction of their career. The Chiara String Quartet performed numerous programs for elementary and high school students in addition to serving as assistant principals of the Greater Grand Forks Symphony Orchestra. They also started a summer program for kids called the Red River Chamber Music Festival. Fischer explains, “It was exhausting but exciting work, and we learned a lot about engaging students of all ages as well as how to gauge our energy level as an ensemble.”²⁴⁶ Through this work they learned how to build and sustain relationships in the community. After their residency they were appointed as the Julliard School of Music graduate resident string quartet. Their studies in school were followed

²⁴³ Rebecca Fischer, interview by author, through email correspondence, September 6, 2013.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

by their appointment as the University of Nebraska-Lincoln quartet in residence in 2005. This position was created for them after a performance of theirs made a positive impression at the university. They currently reside in Lincoln, Nebraska and teach students at the School of Music.

When the Chiara String Quartet moved to Nebraska, they focused on connecting with their community. Fischer explains:

Our needs as a quartet and the needs of our community are inextricably linked, and we have always wanted to bring those needs closer together. This can be in specific ways such as starting a concert series at a soup kitchen (as Hyeyung did at Matt Talbot Kitchen and Outreach) and also just by becoming an integral part of expecting excellence in the artist community (i.e. playing concerts, teaching excited students, etc.).²⁴⁷

The quartet visits high school orchestra programs in the area to “give students a window into a life they could have in a professional chamber music ensemble.”²⁴⁸ In addition, they have toured around Nebraska, bringing classical music to small towns throughout the state. The Chiara String Quartet also has an international touring career, but they never stop nurturing their relationships at home: “We try to keep everything going at once, as intense as that may sound. For example, when we have periods of time without community engagement we feel that loss...When we’re at home for long periods we put a lot of our energy into our University of Nebraska-Lincoln teaching and performing and working in the community.”²⁴⁹ The quartet teaches many students at the university including The Skyros String Quartet, a doctoral group that is working towards a degree in chamber music. The Chiara String Quartet created this chamber music degree at University of Nebraska-Lincoln for the ensemble. Also, Fischer teaches a class called,

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

“Teaching Artist Class in Chamber Music” which focuses “on giving students the tools to bring their art into schools and community venues.”²⁵⁰ Regardless of the work they are doing, the quartet focuses on being dedicated and honest with their community. Fischer offers this advice: “The most important aspect of serving your community is continually being yourself and sharing that with others—if you are true to yourself, you will have authentic relationships with members of the community and also stay open to opportunity.”²⁵¹

The Chiara String Quartet has spent much time discussing their mission over the years. Fischer writes about the progress the group went through when writing their mission:

We initially decided to write one when we were struggling with the post-competition phase; we had decided to stop doing competitions, and we were grappling with our identity as a string quartet. We spent about two weeks without our instruments, making lists of strengths, weaknesses, things we were, things we weren't, pieces we loved, dreams we have, audiences we want to reach, etc. Our mission statement evolved from those free form sessions.²⁵²

After this intense period, the group came to the conclusion that they all liked playing for younger audiences in untraditional venues such as clubs and bars. Although they still enjoyed playing for classical music lovers, they were especially excited about playing for individuals who were less familiar with the musical style. They developed programs that featured one movement of a work at a time, as opposed to performing a piece in its entirety. They did this to help new listeners experience the music. They titled this project “Chamber Music in Any Chamber,” which became the core of their mission.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid.

However, in recent years, the Chiara String Quartet have altered their focus. Fischer writes:

While audience-building is still of utmost importance to us, we have stopped focusing on “Chamber Music in Any Chamber” with the intensity we once had. Right now we are working on performing all of our concerts by heart, another project that we feel gets to the core of the musical experience and helps us share our music more freely with our audiences.²⁵³

The quartet is now relentlessly dedicated to performing all of their repertoire from memory. Beaver states, “The act of performing from memory has been challenging for us. Each member must find a way to know the music inside and out. But the payback for each of us is equally rewarding, bringing us that much closer together in our music-making.”²⁵⁴ This mission allows the quartet to focus on how they make music and perform at the highest level for their audiences. As they pursue this new mission, they are appearing less in bars and clubs and more at colleges and universities. The group has been Blodgett Artists-in-Residence at Harvard University since 2008. They perform at Harvard four weeks a year. Since this residency will end in 2014, the Chiaras are pursuing other collegiate opportunities. This year they are performing mini-residencies at such schools as Hastings College, Southern Oregon University, and the University of Iowa.²⁵⁵

The quartet’s journey to sustainability was helped immensely when they were appointed as faculty at University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Each member is able to financially support themselves on their university salary, so that the quartet can invest their remaining earnings back into their business. “However,” Fischer writes, “we have

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Chiara String Quartet Website, Homepage, <http://www.chiaraquartet.net/> (accessed October 15, 2013).

²⁵⁵ Chiara String Quartet Website, Performances, <http://www.chiaraquartet.net/tour.php> (accessed October 15, 2013).

not always had this steady teaching income, so at the beginning of our career we had to cut corners in order to pay both our individual bills and our quartet bills.”²⁵⁶ Due to their salaried positions at University of Nebraska-Lincoln, they are able to take more risks when pursuing projects that they are passionate about. For example, the group recently recorded Brahms’s complete string quartets and his string quintet no.2 in G Major. They also traveled to Asia twice to give concerts in Korea and China. In order to pursue these projects, the quartet has thought deeply about becoming a non-profit organization.

Fischer writes, “A few years ago we went through all of the steps to become a 501(c)3...After doing more research into raising money, however, we realized that we could use the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, our home university, as an umbrella organization for grants and individual donors.”²⁵⁷ Although the group has come close to becoming a non-profit, they have decided to maintain their business structure as a S-corporation.

Although the quartet earns a salary, they still apply for grants and do fundraising. The Chiara String Quartet has received many grants for special projects including one called “Creator/Curator”. This project included “commissioning new works for string quartet by composers Nico Muhly, Huang Ruo, Daniel Ott and Gabriela Lena Frank. Each composer curated the concert on which his/her piece was premiered, choosing music that complemented and gave context.”²⁵⁸ The group was able to raise over \$44,000 in grants through the Aaron Copland Foundation, the Amphion Foundation,

²⁵⁶ Rebecca Fischer, interview by author, through email correspondence, September 6, 2013.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Chiara String Quartet Website, Group bio, <http://www.chiaraquartet.net/info.php> (accessed October 15, 2013).

Chamber Music America, Meet the Composer, and the University of Nebraska

Foundation. Fischer offers this advice when applying for grants:

The most important thing you need to write a successful grant is a fantastic project about which you are wildly enthusiastic! Spend more time than you think you need to work on it. A good month before the grant is due, show the application to as many people as you can for advice. Mentors really want to help you out in this regard, so don't be shy about asking for readers of your application; you will always benefit from having that full month for revision.²⁵⁹

She also suggests that ensembles look for grant offices associated with colleges. They may offer free feedback to faculty, students, and employees. Fischer says that the process of fundraising is similar to grant writing:

Similar to the advice about grants, you have to start from a project/performance that is of great interest to you...holding an event to raise money for your project/new instrument/money to travel to a competition, etc. is good in that regard; people will experience your energy and want to support you. Online fundraising has been wildly successful for artists, and the more you can access interested people all over the world online, the better.²⁶⁰

The Chiara String Quartet has explored numerous types of fundraising, including a successful Kickstarter campaign to raise additional funds for their Brahms recording project. The group raised over \$10,000 in only twenty-nine days.²⁶¹ Although the fundraising process is difficult, Fischer explains that the more ensembles achieve, the easier it will be to raise money: "People respond to momentum; they like to see track records in fundraising and grant awards. So once you do get your first grant you will be more likely to get more grants in the future. Keep working hard on the dreaming and the applications, and it will happen!"²⁶²

²⁵⁹ Rebecca Fischer, interview by author, through email correspondence, September 6, 2013.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ Kickstarter, "Chiara Quartet Records Complete String Quartets of Brahms," <http://www.kickstarter.com/projects/chiaraquartet/chiara-quartet-records-complete-string-quartets-of> (accessed October 15, 2013).

²⁶² Rebecca Fischer, interview by author, through email correspondence, September 6, 2013.

The Chiara String Quartet has been together for over thirteen years, so they have learned a great deal about how to cope with conflict as an ensemble. Fischer writes, “The most important element in a long-term ensemble relationship is respect. Nothing can last for long without this essential ingredient. Obviously respect is something that is present at the beginning and nourished throughout a relationship, as in any marriage or other long-term relationship.”²⁶³ The quartet’s time in North Dakota helped them learn many lessons on how to maneuver through conflict. Fischer explains, “One of the hardest adjustments for all of us was reconciling each other’s rehearsal styles... We spent those first two years arguing and trying and trying again (and arguing) for hours on end.”²⁶⁴ The group has now found a more fluid way of rehearsing, however. Their sessions are influenced by each member’s individual needs. Another thing that helped them cope with rehearsal stress was to spend time with one another away from their instruments, especially when they were living in North Dakota. Fischer explains, “For all four of us it was our first experience out of school, so we had frequent dinner parties, movie nights, etc. For our group the social time away from rehearsal was significant and necessary for adjusting well to one another.”²⁶⁵ Another aspect that has helped the Chiaras achieve a healthy relationship is through making group assignments:

Since we are all strong-willed people, we discovered early on that we all enjoy taking charge of things. This can be large items like aspects of our business (i.e. finances, contact with manager and PR person, music librarian, education work, etc.), medium-sized items like specific performance projects, or daily items like the order of rehearsal, crafting daily goals, etc. When we each have ownership of something quartet-related *outside* of rehearsal we are more balanced and open in rehearsal.²⁶⁶

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Ibid.

The quartet has learned to work through numerous issues during their many years together. When the group copes with unexpected stress, the ensemble uses humor and gratitude to keep the ensemble thriving.

The Chiara String Quartet is leading a balanced career; they have built significant relationships in their community in addition to touring. They provide a great model for ensembles that want to foster relationships in their hometown while concertizing nationally and internationally. Their persistent dedication to their passions has brought them numerous opportunities. They continue to challenge themselves and are always looking forward to the next step in their development.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Building a career as a chamber music ensemble takes an enormous amount of time and dedication. It can take years to foster relationships and to create support networks in communities. Groups must believe in themselves relentlessly, even when they are feeling discouraged. Collins explains: “You must retain faith that you can prevail to greatness in the end, while retaining the discipline to confront the brutal facts of your current reality. What can you do *today* to create a pocket of greatness, despite the brutal facts of your environment?”²⁶⁷ The possibilities are endless for community-based ensembles. However, groups must be invested in creating these opportunities for themselves. It is not enough to be talented musicians; ensembles must be entrepreneurs.

Through establishing a foundation for an ensemble, groups create a unified vision for themselves in addition to learning about their communities. Branding and marketing provide groups with the tools to build a public image as well as teach them how to advertise and promote their concerts and programs. The journey to stability is a long and challenging process, but through developing a solid business structure and cultivating revenue sources, groups will generate income. Big picture concepts like teaching artistry, creating a positive ecosystem, reflecting on experiences, and looking ahead help to strengthen relationships with audiences and with each other. The case studies of the Haven String Quartet, WindSync, and the Chiara String Quartet show that sustainable careers in chamber music are possible. Through these concepts, I argue that any

²⁶⁷ Jim Collins, 30.

musician can create a career in chamber music if he or she develops entrepreneurial skills in addition to artistry.

Many American music schools are starting to address the need for these skills. Degrees and classes in entrepreneurship are invaluable assets to musicians. Traditional jobs such as symphony and music faculty positions are fiercely competitive. Although some musicians are still pursuing these jobs, many are starting to create their own career possibilities. If musicians do not learn entrepreneurial skills in school, they must take the initiative to investigate these business concepts. In order for the next generation of classical musicians to be successful, they must learn how to build careers and create opportunities. Also, musicians must think about how to speak to audiences and what they can do to foster interest and enthusiasm for their music.

My experience with Tetra has been exhilarating. Although our journey towards financial stability has not been easy, we are continuously evolving and striving for the next level of excellence. Being in a chamber music ensemble is very rewarding. Not only do ensemble members pursue their musical passions, but they also explore creative solutions to local needs. I am excited to see what positive changes these groups will bring to their communities and how they will cultivate new generations of listeners.

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APPENDIX A
WORKSHEETS

Developing Goals Exercise

Ensembles can use this worksheet to develop BHAGs, ten-year, five-year, and one-year goals using the concept of backwards planning described in chapter 2.

Big Hairy Audacious Goals-Dream big on this step—anything is possible!:

Ten-Year Goals-Where do you see your ensemble in ten years? How much do you want to be making? Who is your audience and how often are you performing/rehearsing?:

Five-Year Goals-Where do you see your ensemble in five years? What types of support will you have generated in your community? How often and where will your ensemble be rehearsing? What types of revenue sources will support your group?:

One-Year Goals-What specific goals does your ensemble wish to accomplish in one year? What types of performances and programs are you planning? How will you generate income? What kinds of connections will you foster in your community?:

Support Network Brainstorming Exercise

Step one

According to Jackie Battenfield's philosophy on cultivating support networks, brainstorm individuals your ensemble knows for each category.

Unexposed-individuals that have never heard of your ensemble:

Exposed-people that have been briefly introduced to your group:

Connected-anyone that is interested in your ensemble's mission:

Core Supporters-individuals interested in helping your group succeed:

Step two

Make a list of individuals that have potential to move from the unexposed, exposed, and connected groups to the core support category.

Step three

Make a list of potential community partners, supporters, and community leaders. Think about how the interests of your ensemble can be aligned with the needs of other community organizations.

Day of Concert Checklist

This checklist can be used to help ensembles gather promotional materials the day of a concert.

Concert: _____ **Date:** _____

Questions:

1. Will a table be provided by the venue? _____
2. Who will set up table? _____
3. Who will operate the table? _____
4. Who is in charge of electronic transactions? _____

Potential items to bring:

- CDs

- Tee Shirts

- Stickers

- Mailing list sign-up (notebook or electronic device)

- Brochures

- Cash Box

- Credit Card processing device

- Cash in cash box

- Other promotional materials

- _____

- _____

- _____

- _____

- _____

- _____

Publicity Checklist

Below is an example of the Tetra String Quartet's pre-concert publicity checklist. Ensembles can use this as a model to create their own checklists.

- Press Releases:
 - Silverplatter
 - NewTimes
 - AZ Central
 - KBAQ
 - KJZZ
 - TV Stations
 - Local Papers: East Valley Tribune, local blogs
 - Change homepage banner
 - Raising Arizona Kids

- Facebook
 - Create Event
 - All Tetras invite guests
 - Pay for advertisement

- Constant Contact
 - Make sure quarterly constant contact include big shows

- Written advertisements
 - Posters
 - Commercials
 - Hand written invites

- Approach journalists to review event

- Ask: What work is the presenter doing?

- Brainstorm: Busing from retirement homes, schools, local violin shops, etc.

APPENDIX B

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD EXEMPT STATUS

To: Katherine Mclin
MUSIC BUIL

From: Mark Roosa, Chair
Soc Beh IRB

Date: 07/22/2013

Committee Action: **Exemption Granted**

IRB Action Date: 07/22/2013

IRB Protocol #: 1307009387

Study Title: Community-based chamber ensembles: How to build a career that infuses
performance with public service

The above-referenced protocol is considered exempt after review by the Institutional Review Board pursuant to Federal regulations, 45 CFR Part 46.101(b)(2) .

This part of the federal regulations requires that the information be recorded by investigators in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects. It is necessary that the information obtained not be such that if disclosed outside the research, it could reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability, or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, or reputation.

You should retain a copy of this letter for your records.