Michigan State University
College of Music
Community Concert Series Handbook

Thank you for choosing to be a part of this season’s Community Concert Series. In this handbook, you will find ideas to help you successfully plan and deliver your program, interact with the audience and market your event. Please download your CCS Information form from www.msu.edu/outreach and email along with your program notes, head shot, and bio, to Liz Spector Callahan (liz.spec@gmail.com) 30 days before your performance. If you do not have a head shot and bio, please see instructions below. Programs should be one hour in length, including the speaking portions.

Who is your audience? Interacting with the audience:

- **Make sure to project your voice.** Some venues will have microphones and some will not. If there is a microphone available, please use it.
- Many of our audience members are elderly and may have difficulty hearing - speak more slowly, loudly, and clearly than you think you need to.
- Speak conversationally, not formally- think of it like you are having an informal conversation with the audience. The content and tone will be different than how you would speak in a lecture recital or dissertation defense.
- You may want to consider the following:

I. **Speaking before the performance:**

- Introduce yourself to the audience before you begin playing and thank them for attending
- Tell the audience where you are from, when you started studying music, why you picked your particular instrument/voice, what year you are in school, what your future plans are, who your influences are, etc.
- Explain the theme of your performance.

II. **Speaking between pieces:**

- Speak briefly about each piece. If you are performing only one or two long works, speak briefly between movements.
- Since many of our audience members are non-experts, keep observations relatively simple
  Come up with a few things audiences can listen for in each piece. Non-expert audience members will appreciate having specific things to listen for.
- Share personal anecdotes- why did you choose this particular piece? What do you like about it? What did it help you learn? What was going on in the composer’s life when he or she wrote it? How long have you been working on it?

III. **Question + Answer:**

- **Before** your last piece, invite the audience to ask you questions about yourself, your instrument, studying music, careers in music, etc. If an audience member asks you a question, **please repeat the question** before you answer it. Other audience members may not have heard the question.
• Keep an eye on the time to make sure this portion does not run too long. If you run out of time, invite audience members to come up and talk to you after the concert and ask you the rest of their questions personally.
• If the audience members are shy and do not immediately come up with questions, ask them questions (i.e. Why did you enjoy the concert? What was your favorite piece? Raise your hand if you played an instrument growing up?)

IV. Speaking after the performance:
• At the end of the performance, thank the audience again for attending and invite them to meet you after the performance.
• In many cases, there will be a reception following the performance where you will be able to meet and greet the audience and answer more of their questions. If there is a reception, we ask that you attend so that the audience can meet you.

V. Get feedback about your audience interaction
• Attached you will find a Presentation Feedback form. Ask friends and teachers to come to your performance and fill one out so that you can use their suggestions for future performances.

Required headshot
➢ Please submit headshot via email to Liz Spector Callahan at liz.spec@gmail.com.
➢ There will be an opportunity to have your headshots taken through a photography class on campus during Spring semester.

Required short biography
➢ Biographies should be approximately 200 words and should contain the following information:
  o Current and previous musical work experience (orchestral jobs, teaching positions)
  o Current and previous education
  o Primary teachers
➢ If you do not have a bio, you may want to visit http://writing.msu.edu/locations/ to find locations and hours of operation for the Writing Centers. Consultation appointments are available.
➢ For examples, please see attached Sample Bio page.
➢ * Please note: if there are multiple performers, each performer must submit their own personal bio. If the performers are members of an existing group (i.e. brass quintet, string quartet, woodwind quintet), and the group has a prepared biography, please submit that, as well.

Required program notes
➢ Program notes for each piece should be under 250 words and should contain the following information:
  o Biographical information about the composer - When was the composer born? When did he die? Where did he spend most of his career? What other pieces is he or she known for? Who were his contemporaries
  o Historical/political context - When was the piece written? What was happening in history at that time? How did the composer fit into the historical climate? Does this piece express the composer’s political stance at the time?
Basic theoretical outline - What is the form of the piece? What key areas does it visit? Point out a few interesting moments. Does the piece lead you to believe she’ll end up in a certain key, but she chooses a different direction? Does this choice relate to thematic material in the music?

* Please note: if your CCS performance is serving as a studio recitals, students may split up the writing of program notes (i.e. each student is responsible for the program notes for his or her own piece)

Recommended marketing plan

- This is a great opportunity for you to develop networking skills. Your goal is to recruit 5-10 additional audience members. Here are ideas for advertising your performance:
  - Make a Facebook invitation two weeks before your event and send to friends, family, and colleagues.
  - Update your Facebook status to include your performance venue, date, and time of your performance for several days before your event.
  - Use Twitter to tell your friends about your concert.
  - Use photo shop and your headshot to create a poster and post it around campus.
  - Ask friends and teachers to come and give you feedback about the non-musical aspects of your performance- did they feel your communication was clear? (see feedback form, attached to this application) How was your stage presence? Did you speak loudly enough? Print off and hand out the attached survey to friends and teachers you trust. Then, collect and read the comments so that you can incorporate suggestions into future performances.

Themes

- Come up with a theme for the repertoire in your performance.
  - Examples:
    - By country (all French music, all German music, all Czech music)
    - Composer (all female composers, all Latin American composers)
    - Genre (all classical music influenced by Jazz, all pastoral music)
    - Instrument-related (a program that features the wide variety of styles available on the violin- classical, fiddling, jazz)

- If your performance falls on or near a holiday, try and choose one piece that would fit.
  - Example: Christmas carols, Hanukkah songs, something spooky around Halloween, etc.
  - If you do not have repertoire that relates directly, try and come up with a way to tie in the holiday when you introduce the piece.
    - Example: A piece that has Klezmer influence for Hanukkah, a piece your family always listens to around Thanksgiving, a piece by your girlfriend or boyfriend’s favorite composer for Valentine’s day

- Be sensitive to your audience. If most of the audience members are elderly, find a transcription of a piece that was popular during the 1930’s.
Sample Biographies

Below you will find two sample biographies. For additional samples, please visit http://music.msu.edu/faculty/ and take a look at our MSU College of Music Faculty biographies.

Sample Individual Biography

Katha Zinn is a 23 year old violinist attending the Mannes School in New York City, where she studies with Laurie Smukler and Nina Beilina. She completed her Bachelor’s Degree at the Juilliard School. Before attending Juilliard, Ms. Zinn studied at both the New England Conservatory Preparatory School and the Eastman School of Music Community Education Division with Boris Zapesochny and Ilya Kaler. While at the New England Conservatory Preparatory School, she had the opportunity to work with Donald Weilerstein and Magdalena Richter.

Ms. Zinn has won first prize in the prestigious Empire State Competition, as well as second prize in the Alexander & Buono International String Competition. She was selected for the Rochester Philharmonic League’s Albright Award, and has been awarded private scholarships to attend the Juilliard School.

Ms. Zinn has been invited as a guest artist at the Monmouth Conservatory, the Otterbein College, and the Bexley Library Concert Series. In addition, she was also invited to perform in the Eastman at Washington Square Concert Series, as well as the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra’s Orkidstra! Series. In 2006, Ms. Zinn performed a solo recital in Boston’s Boswell Hall. In March of 2009, she gave a joint recital with Mr. Filshtinskiy in the Chi-Mei Fine Arts Society of Tainan, Taiwan. She has performed in several venues around New York City, including Juilliard’s Paul Hall, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church.

Sample Group Biography

Founded in 1977, the Missouri Woodwind Quintet is an ensemble-in-residence of the University of Missouri School of Music. The ensemble performs a wide variety of literature, ranging from Baroque transcriptions to cutting-edge contemporary repertoire. The Quintet has performed in Boston, New York, Chicago, and Dallas, and at musical institutions including the New England Conservatory, Northwestern University, University of Illinois, Baylor University, and University of North Texas. Highlight performances include a Carnegie Hall debut in 1989 (reviewed favorably in the New York Times), a broadcast on National Public Radio’s Performance Today, and the International Festival of Chamber Music, in Belem, Brazil. The Quintet has recorded two CDs for the Cambria label: Quintets Nos. 1 & 2 by American composer David Maslanka, and Romantic Winds, a collection of transcribed works by Grieg, Dvorak, and Rimsky-Korsakov. In 1999, the Quintet commissioned Quintet No. 3 from Maslanka, which, along with other chamber works by the composer, appear on the Albany Records label.
Community Concert Series - Presentation Feedback

Date ____________

Name of Performer _______________________________________

Name of Person Providing Feedback ____________________________

Communication

Clarity of speech

Volume of speech

Content of speaking portions

Stage presence

Confidence

Approachability

Ease of interaction with audience

September 6, 2012