

Managing Musicians: Creating a Podcast for the New Music Business

by

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Abstract

This creative project explores the process of creating a podcast about artist management and the future of the music industry. The creative component of this project is a 32-minute episode of the podcast created for this project, *Managing Musicians*, that has been released to several listening platforms. The written component of this project details the process of planning, producing, distributing, and promoting *Managing Musicians*.

I. WHY PODCASTS?

Oxford Languages defines podcasts as “digital audio files made available on the internet for downloading to a computer or mobile device, typically available as a series, new installments of which can be received by subscribers automatically.” I have been listening to podcasts since the beginning of college, with many hours spent driving between my home in Kentucky and Murfreesboro learning about different topics I found interesting. From Peabody Award winning *S Town* to popular YouTuber David Dobrik’s podcast *VIEWS*, podcasts are fun to listen to and educational in unexpected ways.

There is nothing quite like a podcast. They are accessible, understandable, and usually bite-sized information packaged in a way where one can multitask while learning. Podcasts are perfect for the 21st century, when people - and especially my fellow music industry professionals - are often asked to do many things at once and tend to have shorter and shorter attention spans.

When I started this project, I wanted to do something I was passionate about as well as learn something new. I obviously wanted to choose something in line with my course of study, so I thought a lot about my career goals and interests. I have wanted to work in artist management for most of my college career, so it was a clear choice – I would create a podcast where I would interview artist managers with the hope of learning things from them that I could apply to my career, while studying podcasts with the goal of learning about this podcast industry with which I was unfamiliar.

Podcasts are a distinctive way of communicating information. Conversations with artist managers about the future of the music business are well-suited to being put out as a

podcast versus any other medium because they can be listened to in the car, at the gym, or while cleaning the house. It is beneficial to music business professionals to hear the voices of their colleagues that often go unheard when working behind-the-scenes of such a forward-facing industry.

Podcast Popularity. Podcasts are a popular way to consume information of all kinds in this day and age. There is something for everyone in the podcast landscape, with shows covering everything from true crime to gardening to the music industry. Podcasts are convenient to listen to and have grown over the last several years. According to an early 2020 article from Nielsen, the audience of podcast users could potentially double by 2023. Not only that, but according to Brandtastic, about 55% of Americans have heard a podcast and 24% of Americans listen to a podcast weekly.

Podcasts are Lucrative. The podcast industry has been flourishing over the last several years, with the highest earning podcast, The Joe Rogan Experience, earning \$30 million in 2019 (Celebrity Net Worth). Podcast distribution websites have become widespread, podcast producers are in high demand, and big music companies like Spotify are investing heavily (Carman).

In 2019, Spotify announced that they were going to invest up to \$500 million into their podcast division. They have spent the last two years turning the podcast landscape upside down: developing podcasts that can only be found on their platform, acquiring companies like podcast distribution service Anchor, and making it easier to discover podcasts on their platform (Carman).

Spotify's early moves included getting the most profitable podcast on the market, The Joe Rogan Experience, to become an exclusive to the platform. This was a good move on their part, as they have roughly 2.2 million podcasts on their platform as of 2021, but only a few dozen of them see real engagement from Spotify listeners. They are now taking a big step to monetize their podcasts by starting the Spotify Ad Network, which will allow advertisers on Spotify's ad-supported streaming service to seamlessly buy ads on their podcasts. Monetizing their podcasts has become more urgent for Spotify since investing nearly \$1 billion in the sector over the last two years (Levy). It is clear that podcasting is a growing industry with avenues for expansion at every turn, which is one of several reasons I set out to create a podcast for my thesis project.

II. APPROACH

The way I structured my project is in four phases: Production, The Interview, Distribution, and Promotion. My podcast, *Managing Musicians*, is truly a creative project from start to finish.

In Production, I talk about how I used my resources and included Hannah Humphress as the producer and editor of the podcast. I also talk about how we came to choose each piece of equipment we used, and about the advantages and disadvantages of each. I detail what we learned from spending time with an expert, and go on to talk about the technical as well as the creative process of editing the first episode of *Managing Musicians*.

The Interviews section includes the process of how I learned more about interviewing people, largely through practicing by talking to experts and absorbing their words of wisdom. This phase is also where I talk the most about the content of the podcast, and how I created the description and questions for *Managing Musicians*. I also included the process of narrowing down which questions I wanted to ask, choosing my first guest, and how the interview went.

The Distribution phase is where I figure out which podcast hosting site to choose and go through the process of setting up the *Managing Musicians* webpage. I also talk about why the platform I chose is the best one, and how they distribute the podcast to all of the different listening platforms. Since podcasting has become such a lucrative industry, I also include a summary of how to monetize a podcast on this particular podcast hosting site and what that would look like.

In the Promotion phase, I detail my process of developing my marketing plan. First, I talk about the lengthy process that was coming up with the name *Managing Musicians*. I go on to develop my target audience and explain how to target them with social media marketing in this phase. I include images of the logo and posts that I made for social media and to be included on listening platforms, as well as document my progress in gaining likes and follows on my social media accounts.

Before I can get into any of that, I will describe the extensive research I did by listening to many different kinds of podcasts. The podcasts I listened to and what I learned from them are in the Competitive Analysis and Planning section of this paper.

III. COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS AND PLANNING

In addition to speaking with experts and researching through databases, statistics, and articles, I have also done an extensive amount of competitive analysis. I started with what I knew - identifying what I liked and did not like about podcasts and interview shows I regularly listen to, as well as discovering new ones related to the topic of my podcast.

Hot Ones. The first show I analyzed in depth is *Hot Ones*, a YouTube series in which celebrities answer questions about themselves while eating increasingly spicy wings. *Hot Ones* has grown from a YouTube interview show into a brand with high-profile advertisers, multiple hot sauces of their own, and a TV show on Hulu. They interview some of the biggest names in TV, movies, and music, and typically have at least 1 million views per YouTube video.

The negative about this show is that it can come across as gimmicky. It is easy not to take it seriously as an in-depth interview show, despite its best quality: the incredibly well-researched host, Sean Evans. There is hardly an episode that goes by without the subject commenting on the high quality of Sean's questions. When starting my own podcast, I knew I wanted to at least attempt to be as well-researched as Sean. I also wanted to include something similar to *Hot Ones*' other big strength – the disarming nature of the spicy food. The subjects interviewed on *Hot Ones* always tend to open up more when they reach the harder questions and the hotter wings. Upon noticing this about the show, I wanted to ask the experts I had the opportunity to talk to about how they practiced this in a way that is less extreme than having subjects eat spicy food.

Shady Ladies of Music City. Susan Nadler and Evelyn Shriver, the hosts of *Shady Ladies*, are music industry veterans that have a podcast in which they tell stories from their careers. I have been listening to this podcast for a while and I find that the hosts are very interesting. While this podcast is somewhat lesser known, it is important to include in part because of the fact that it is produced by Monument Records, a division of Sony Music Entertainment. It is demonstrative of how all kinds of organizations are investing in podcasts. *Shady Ladies* is a great example of a podcast in which personalities shine, and their stories about everyone they have worked with, from Tammy Wynette to George Jones, are very entertaining. This podcast also gave me an idea of what a great description of a podcast looks like, as well as their tagline, “Light one up and lighten up”. They do a great job of stating exactly what you are going to hear in the show, which is something I considered important for my podcast.

Folk Alliance Panel. After thinking about the podcasts I already listen to, I decided to look beyond my realm of knowledge. I had the opportunity to attend Folk Unlocked, the online version of the Folk Alliance International Conference that takes place every year. One of the panels put on by Folk Alliance was called “The Best Interview,” in which several musicians and a music journalist talked about their favorite and least favorite interviews, what makes an interview good, and techniques for interviewers and subjects to use when talking about sensitive topics. I learned a lot from this panel, but one of my biggest takeaways was how it is beneficial to view the interviewer and the subject as two halves of a team working towards the common goal of getting the subject’s message across and the interviewer’s questions answered.

The Joe Budden Podcast. I listened to this podcast because, at the time of listening, it was listed as the number one podcast in the Music category on Apple Podcasts. Upon listening to this often three hours long podcast, I discovered that the majority of the topics covered had little or nothing to do with music, leading me to wonder what it was doing in the Music category. Joe Budden, the host and namesake for the podcast, is a rapper and media personality which may explain the podcast's presence in the Music category. The podcast episode I listened to did cover some hot music industry topics like the invention of social media app, Clubhouse. However, most of the topics ranged from cheating on your significant other to sports.

The main wisdom I took from this podcast was that I did not want mine to be longer than an hour. Most episodes of *The Joe Budden Podcast* last from two to three hours, which is just too long. It also contained somewhat random songs in between segments that did more to discombobulate the podcast than to link the segments together. It also showed me how important it was to focus my podcast with a few topics in the same realm rather than talking off the top of my head and jumping from topic to seemingly unrelated topic.

Here's the Thing with Alec Baldwin. When I first saw that Alec Baldwin's podcast was number 2 in the Music category on Apple Podcasts, it felt shocking. Upon looking into who he was interviewing, it appeared that there were only a few musicians among many different kinds of celebrities from former murder suspect Amanda Knox to actress and business owner Kristen Bell.

The episode I listened to was the one he did with Kristen Bell. While I enjoyed listening to the stories she told, it did not make sense for it to be in the Music category.

Listening to this podcast taught me that the creator of the podcast defines what category it should be in on the platform rather than Apple Podcasts categorizing it for you.

The Bob Lefsetz Podcast. Bob Lefsetz is a music critic who writes an email newsletter and blog called *The Lefsetz Letter*. He is known for inspiring Taylor Swift's song "Mean," and also hosts a podcast where he speaks to performers and music industry professionals. I found his interview style to be interesting, with him usually asking short direct questions to his guests and them talking quite a bit. He does have an issue with interrupting his guests, which is something I definitely wanted to avoid in my own podcast.

Promoter 101. This podcast was one that I had never heard of before, but came up time and again when searching for the most popular music industry podcasts. It is hosted by Dan Steinberg and features several different segments that can feel a bit chaotic. The content of the segments was valuable though, and *Promoter 101* is one of the few relatively popular podcasts I found whose target audience is music industry professionals. It feels a little bit like the promoter version of my podcast, but the segments at the beginning make it feel more disjointed.

Music Industry Blueprint with Rick Barker. Rick Barker is often credited as the manager who launched Taylor Swift's career, and he has gone on to teach independent musicians around the world how to best represent themselves. One of the ways he has done this is through his podcast. Something I liked about *Music Industry Blueprint* is that he puts out bite-sized episodes about very specific topics. They are perfect for a short commute or if one is looking for information about something in particular. I found this podcast when looking for music industry podcasts, which highlighted the fact that there is very little

differentiation between music industry podcasts for musicians and music industry podcasts for musicians.

IV. PRODUCTION

Producing the podcast was admittedly where I lacked the most prior knowledge. I decided early on that I wanted to have a podcast producer, someone to help improve the sound quality of the podcast and to handle editing so it would sound as professional as possible. I enlisted the help of my friend and a professional podcast producer, Hannah Humphress. Hannah has a background in radio, working at her local radio station in high school to having her own radio show on MTSU's station, WMTS. She has been a podcast producer for the cofounders of Crowd Surf, a digital marketing company that works largely with boy bands, since December 2020, with episodes of one of their podcasts being featured by Spotify.

Some of Hannah's duties in the production of the podcast included:

1. Advising me regarding what microphone to buy for the podcast;
2. Interacting with guests about best practices for producing the best sound quality over Zoom;
3. Creating the list of equipment we would need for recording the podcast;
4. Making a pop filter and mounting it in front of my microphone;
5. Helping me set up before recording the podcast;
6. Sitting in on the podcast recording, making notes of what would need to be edited; and
7. Editing the podcast.

Equipment. We used several pieces of equipment to record and edit the podcast. While Hannah and I had a lot of the equipment necessary to record, I needed to purchase the

most important thing: my microphone. Most computer microphones are not up to the quality desired by professional podcasters, so I consulted Hannah to help me pick one to buy. Hannah recommended the Blue Yeti Nano microphone. The Blue Yeti Nano is a great microphone for broadcasting and podcasting, and came with its own stand. It cost \$114, which is considered an affordable price for a microphone of this quality. Another advantage of the Blue Yeti Nano is that it is a USB mic, meaning it can connect to any laptop as long as it has a USB port.

The Blue Yeti Nano is good for recording both one person and groups of people, as it has both a cardioid polar pattern and an omnidirectional polar pattern (“Yeti Nano”). A cardioid polar pattern is good for recording a single person, as the way it records is very directional, meaning one has to speak directly into it. An omnidirectional polar pattern is good for recording an entire room of people, as the way it records is not very focused to one speaker, allowing one to use one microphone when one would otherwise need multiple. The downside of an omnidirectional pattern is that it can pick up background noise from within the room and outside of it, like cars on the street or dogs barking outside.

My guest, on the other hand, did not have an external microphone of any kind. She had to use her computer microphone, which is not as high quality as the Blue Yeti Nano. While there are advantages to its portability and ease of use, it is always preferred to have an external microphone when recording audio for a podcast. If the pandemic had not prevented us from recording the podcast in person, we would have used one of Hannah’s microphones to record our podcast guest.

Another result of the pandemic was our use of Zoom to record the podcast. Hannah has been using Zoom to record the other podcast for which she is a producer, and it is being used pretty universally by anyone recording a podcast during the pandemic. Using Zoom has actually worked out well in that it has allowed us to meet with people living in different parts of the country for research purposes as well as recording the podcast itself. Zoom is also advantageous as it is free, fairly easy to use, and allows users to record each participant's audio individually, making it easier to edit after the interview is over. The only downside to Zoom is that regardless of what microphones are used, the participants' audio quality is going to differ as they are not in the same room, forcing us to rely on editing things in post.

In addition to advising on what equipment to use, Hannah created a piece of equipment for the podcast. A pop filter is, "a mesh screen that shields a microphone from bursts of air from a person's mouth," ("Pop Filter"). Pop filters are great for reducing plosives, which are any "p" and "t" sounds that could make the microphone pop. The only downside to using a pop filter is that it decreases the volume of the sound going into the microphone. Hannah made our pop filter from an embroidery hoop and a pair of pantyhose, mounting it to my cube using packing tape as pictured below in Fig. 1.



Fig. 1. Levine, Anna. "Podcast Microphone Setup." 2021. JPEG file.

As far as improving audio quality for a podcast, there is one more tool that is essential: headphones. All participants need to use headphones when recording a podcast, as it helps to reduce background noises, echoes, and keeps participants focused. The only real downsides to using headphones when recording a podcast are that it requires a little extra setup when getting on Zoom and that they can affect the look of a video if the podcast chooses to post the video captured by Zoom.

When it comes to the editing process, a Digital Audio Workstation (DAW) is required to make cuts and put effects on the sound. The DAW we used to edit the podcast, ProTools, is the last key piece of equipment necessary for podcast production.

ProTools is the industry standard for recording everything from podcasts to rock albums, and it is also the DAW that is taught in almost every Audio Production course offered at MTSU.

Sarah Wardrop Interview. In addition to enlisting Hannah's help, my faculty director helped us reach out to a professional in the industry, Production Director and Music Host, Sarah Wardrop, at NPR affiliate WFUV in New York City. After working at WFUV for 15 years, Sarah is an expert in the field and gave Hannah and me some great advice about editing audio. She talked about what the transition from working at the station to working from home has been like, recording through Zoom, and guidelines she would give someone recording audio from home. Sarah advised us about wearing headphones and making sure the headphone audio is not so loud that it gets picked up by the microphone. Hannah told her about the pop filter she made, which Sarah thought was a great idea. We went on to ask her about some things to do during the podcast recording to make editing easier. Some of her recommendations included recording some blank room sound, asking guests to start their answers with the questions, and making sure to stop and rephrase rather than keep going with a question or answer you do not like. Sarah went on to talk about different effects she uses in different situations when editing audio. She was incredibly helpful advising us about editing audio in this setting, and our interview with her was very valuable.

Post Production. After recording the first podcast, we realized a few things that we might have done differently. When reflecting on how it went, Hannah and I came to the conclusion that we may have benefited from not being in the apartment. Despite our best efforts to avoid any bleed into either of our microphones, there are still moments in which

one can hear Hannah in my microphone, which had to be edited out. Another thing we would have done differently is the angle at which we had the microphone while recording. The Blue Yeti Nano is best used upright, but we had it at an angle to accommodate the pop filter. As for the pop filter, if we had had more time we would have mounted it more sturdily. While taping the pop filter to my block did not hurt audio quality, it would have looked more professional if we had mounted it differently.

Editing. About a week after recording the podcast, Hannah and I sat down to edit the first episode and she walked me through her process as we went. The first thing that Hannah does when editing podcasts is to convert the audio files so that she can work with them in ProTools. She opens ProTools and opens the files, first grouping the individual vocal tracks so that when she makes cuts it will apply to both voices. Hannah goes on to create a third track from the grouping that has both vocal tracks within it. This way she can begin to add effects to the voices together. She uses a compressor effect called NPR Voice that is made by Neutron 3, and then goes into each voice individually to EQ them.

EQing is a filter that allows the editor to boost or cut certain frequencies to make each vocal track sound better. For my vocal track, Hannah was able to use EQing to cut some extreme high and low frequencies to avoid hearing any cars that drove past my apartment while we were recording. She used EQ to cut some of the sibilance in my voice like the way I pronounce “s” sounds due to my mild lisp. Hannah was also able to emphasize some of the lower frequencies to bring more warmth into my voice. As for Danielle’s vocal track, Hannah only had to cut extreme high and low frequencies because her warmth was pretty good.

Next, Hannah goes through the entire hour-long audio, marking where each question starts, making notes of where cuts need to be made, cutting out “ums” and other distracting pauses, and marking where we might want to rearrange the order of the questions. She says she tends to leave some of the “likes” and “ums” in, only removing the ones that take away from the flow of the conversation. Thanks to Hannah coaching my guest and I ahead of time, the cuts were easier to make as we both took the time to stop and rephrase things so that they made more sense.

V. THE INTERVIEWS

Interviewing people is not something I have ever had to do before. I love talking to people about anything and everything, but I wanted to approach this project with as much expertise and research as possible. I spent a lot of time watching interviews with different people in all facets of the music industry, and wanted to talk to interviewers that are considered experts in that field. Professor Conceison, my faculty director, was able to introduce me to two incredible women that are expert interviewers: Ann Powers and Cindy Howes.

Ann Powers. Ann Powers is NPR's Music correspondent and critic, an author of several books, and has an extensive resume as a writer and interviewer at some of the nation's most respected publications, like *The New York Times*, *San Francisco Weekly*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and *The Village Voice* ("Ann Powers"). My conversation with Ann was incredibly impactful and also served as great practice for the podcast interview. After pitching Ann the podcast, she said, "I think there's a lot of room in the podcast market for this kind of more practical and niche-oriented podcast...so good choice." It built my confidence up a lot to hear that from someone with so much expertise in this area, and made me excited to ask her the questions I had come up with about interviewing people.

One of the first things we covered was how to make an interview into a story. She talked about having three acts within the interview, addressing topics either chronologically or by topic. This part of our conversation reminded me of the creative aspect of creating a podcast, crafting my questions in a way that tells a story rather than to have a conversation without a real purpose. She talked about using framing devices

like starting a question by referencing a specific event or point in time in the subject's career to allow for an impactful jumping off point in the story.

Another recommendation that Ann gave me was to avoid asking about anything that you can Google. She said to focus on the harder to find content, and to do your research well enough that you do not have to ask boilerplate questions. She also said to keep questions as short and direct as possible, but to allow them to contain the information necessary to have an impact. Her recommendation for length was to avoid taking longer than 10 seconds to ask a question. Ann also advised me to memorize the questions as much as possible so it does not sound like I am reading them, as this can make an interviewer seem unprepared or robotic. Another piece of advice Ann gave that stuck with me throughout this process was the importance of leaving silence – not only while the subject is answering the question but also after they've finished - to allow for space between questions for cuts to be made if necessary.

Cindy Howes. Cindy Howes is an on-air host and producer at NPR-affiliate 91.3 WYEP as well as the host and creator of her podcast, *Basic Folk* among several other roles. Cindy is an expert in interviewing subjects and had some great insight about how to prepare for the launch of a podcast. When I first read her my description of the podcast, which will be mentioned below, she recommended coming up with a tagline to use at the beginning of the podcast rather than reading a somewhat lengthy paragraph every episode. This advice ended up being incredibly helpful when I began to market the podcast on social media, as my long description exceeded the character limit of both “About” sections on my Instagram profile and Facebook page.

Cindy said something similar to Ann when talking about crafting a story within the interview. Cindy recommended writing out what I wanted the podcast to be and specifically outlining an episode in order to see the arc that the conversation could take before it happened. She also had some great advice about how to approach researching a subject, although her process ended up being a bit more extensive than mine. Cindy detailed how she spends 4-6 hours searching online about her subject, opening every relevant article about them in a new tab and then going back and copying and pasting important sentences about them into a document for her to then sort through. After compiling a large document of research, she categorizes each piece of information about her subject either chronologically or by topic and start to base her questions off of what she found. I ended up doing something somewhat similar when researching my first guest, Danielle Broome, but it was a bit more difficult to find such an extensive amount of information on an artist manager than it would be to find information about artists, who strive for media coverage.

Another topic Cindy and I covered was how to overcome anxiety when interviewing a subject. We talked about our shared experience of focusing so hard on the next question that we forgot to listen to them answering the one we just asked, and how to avoid doing that by preparing as much as possible and using humor when possible. One way to avoid anxiety by preparing extensively is to have more questions than one anticipates needing. Cindy talked about having 10-12 questions prepared for her podcast in which she usually only asks 3-5. She talked about how, as the interviewer, you are the conductor of the train and have to keep it moving regardless of what happens, but also

taking a step back when necessary to allow the subject to answer your question as naturally as possible.

The Interview. I chose Danielle Broome, Cassadee Pope's day-to-day manager, to be my first guest on the podcast because I was familiar with her work and had taken MTSU's Artist Management course with her boss, Daniel Miller, and had the pleasure of meeting her during that time. I also chose Danielle because she has had an interesting start to her career in the music industry and works with a unique artist in Cassadee Pope.

When I first started to come up with questions to ask on the podcast, I wrote down anything and everything that came to mind. Next, I eliminated questions that did not really go with the goals of the podcast, and narrowed down which were the most important to me. At the time, these were all questions that could be asked of any artist manager, questions like, "What was your biggest takeaway from your first music business job?" and, "How do you set professional boundaries with your artists?"

After booking the interview with Danielle, I really honed in on what I wanted the podcast to be, writing this description of the podcast, to be posted with the podcast on all listening platforms as well as in the "About" section on the Facebook page:

The music industry has been undergoing a flood of changes since the beginning of the pandemic. As we come out of this year of finding creative solutions to brand new problems, we have to ask: What is the music industry going to look like now? *Managing Musicians* asks the most central position, artist managers, what they think it should look like, how we can change it for the better, and what they've learned throughout their careers to help us figure it out.

Writing the description of the podcast brought up some other decisions I had to make: How much of myself would I insert into the podcast? How would I identify myself? What gave me credibility? I decided to keep who I was mostly out of the content of the podcast, focusing on my guests and their credibility as reputable professionals in the industry. I do think that my perspective as a student is important to identify in the podcast, as it allows me to ask just about anything. Having the perspective of a student interviewer allows managers to open up more, to explain things in a way that the layperson can understand, and to feel more excited about the topics covered.

Figuring out what I wanted to tell people about the content and goals of the podcast helped me start my research into Danielle's career. While there wasn't quite enough to do the extensive level of research Cindy mentioned, I did find a few facts I didn't already know to help me focus the questions I wanted to ask Danielle as well as come up with a biography to read about her at the beginning of the episode. I sent the bio I wrote to her for revisions, and she sent it back with a couple of additions. The final version of the bio is as follows:

From her start working in corporate America to road managing for The Band Perry to now being the day-to-day manager for pop-punk turned Grammy-nominated, singer-songwriter country star Cassadee Pope, Danielle Broome is a manager through and through. Danielle has been a part of many projects with Cassadee throughout the pandemic, including the release of Cassadee's first acoustic album 'Rise and Shine' in August, producing 8 music videos in 2 days, virtual meet and greets, and more.

Now that I had the description of the podcast as well as a good bio for Danielle, I was able to finalize the questions I wanted to ask her. Since I was hoping for about a 40–45-minute podcast after editing, I planned to ask some version of these 6 questions:

1. How did your plans change when the pandemic hit? What do you think we will keep from those alternative strategies going forward?
2. How would you describe your relationship with Cassadee and how did it change over the pandemic?
3. What's the audience development path for Cassadee? How do you help her stand out from the crowd?
4. What techniques did you use to unwind pre-pandemic and how did the pandemic affect those? Do you feel like you've set any new boundaries during the pandemic that you'd like to maintain?
5. If you could manage any artist, alive or dead, who would you manage?
6. Who or what do you miss? What are you looking forward to?

I spent a lot of time coming up with these questions and tried to heed the advice from Ann and Cindy when crafting them and deciding in what order to ask them. When I actually recorded the podcast, I was pretty nervous, and while I asked some version of each of those questions, I wish I had been able to craft a clearer narrative in the interview.

Overall, the interview went very well. I am happy with the final product of the episode, but there are several ways I plan to improve how I conduct interviews going forward. I hope to more intentionally craft a story in the way I ask my questions. I also would like to take the time to nail down the exact wording of my questions before I ask them on the podcast. Additionally, I hope to be able to speak more slowly when

recording the podcast as my anxiety tends to speed up how I talk. Lastly, I want to avoid saying the same reactionary word over and over in response to everything my guest says. In this case, I responded with “totally” to almost every answer Danielle gave. While Hannah was able to cut the more repetitive ones out, I hope to maintain more calm within myself when recording future podcasts so I can respond more slowly and more articulately than “totally.”

VI. DISTRIBUTION

When releasing a podcast, one can choose to either upload it to each listening platform individually or one can upload it to a podcast hosting site that will then distribute the podcast to each of the listening platforms for you. I chose Anchor to host my podcast because it is free, extremely easy to use, and creates one's podcast's website automatically. As seen below in Fig. 2., one can even choose to record your podcast on Anchor's platform, as well as see how easy it is to upload the audio file of one's first podcast episode.

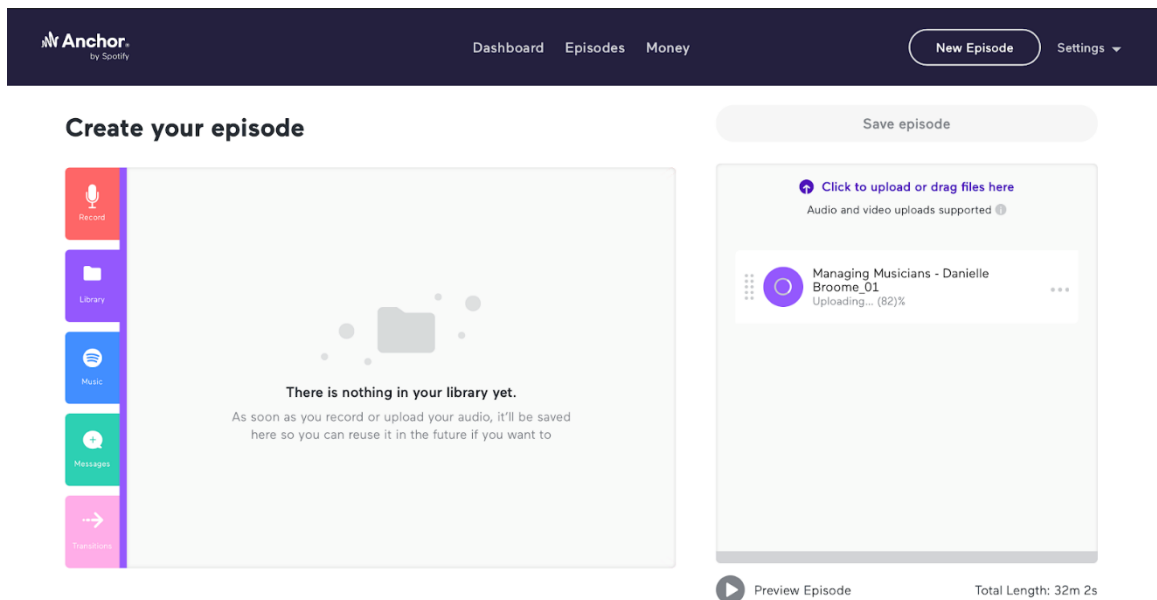
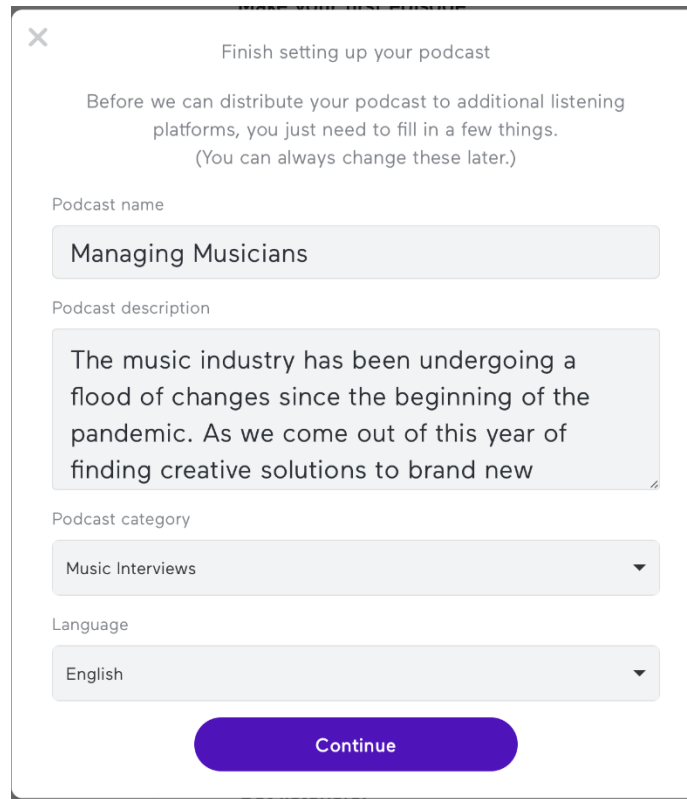


Fig. 2. Levine, Anna. "Anchor Podcast Upload Screen." 2021. JPEG file.

After uploading the audio file of the first podcast episode, one has to fill in the information that will help people find your podcast. This includes the podcast description, the podcast title, the episode description, the episode title, the language it is in, and the

category of the podcast. Fig. 3 shows what it looks like when one puts this information into Anchor's website.



The screenshot shows a modal window titled "Finish setting up your podcast" with a close button (X) in the top left corner. The text inside reads: "Before we can distribute your podcast to additional listening platforms, you just need to fill in a few things. (You can always change these later.)". Below this are four input fields: "Podcast name" with the text "Managing Musicians"; "Podcast description" with the text "The music industry has been undergoing a flood of changes since the beginning of the pandemic. As we come out of this year of finding creative solutions to brand new"; "Podcast category" with a dropdown menu showing "Music Interviews"; and "Language" with a dropdown menu showing "English". At the bottom center is a large purple "Continue" button.

Fig. 3. Levine, Anna. "Uploading Podcast Information." 2021. JPEG file.

Upon inputting this information, one can then choose to publish and distribute the podcast. If one chooses to publish it, then Anchor will immediately create a website for the podcast and the podcast will be available to be listened to on that website. Once one chooses to have it distributed, it takes an average of 2-6 days for the podcast to be uploaded to all of the listening platforms. At the time of writing, my podcast is up on Spotify and Google Podcasts, as well as several of the smaller listening platforms. It only took about 24 hours for the first episode to show up on Spotify and about 2 days for Google Podcasts. It also makes sense that it would take the shortest amount of time to be

put on Spotify because they bought Anchor in 2019 (Carman). The third big listening platform is Apple Podcasts, but Apple is practically infamous for taking the longest to upload podcasts and music alike. I am hopeful that the podcast will be uploaded to Apple Podcasts before my official launch date of Wednesday, March 31st, since I published the first episode for distribution one week in advance.

Anchor is also a great platform if one chooses to monetize their podcast. Since I am starting *Managing Musicians* with the purpose of this project, I have not yet monetized it but have the opportunity to do so later if I choose to. I explored the option a bit just to see what it would be like, and found that one can almost immediately record an ad to be added to the podcast. The first advertisement it suggests adding to one's podcast is for Anchor itself. After that, one can be offered ads based upon the engagement the podcast gets as well as the content of one's podcast. Anchor's payment is based on how many interactions the podcast receives. In this case, an interaction is considered listening to the advertisement. For example, if one were to add the Anchor advertisement to their podcast, one will be paid \$15 per 1000 interactions with it ("Understanding CPM"). Anchor takes a 30% cut of any ad revenue made through their platform, which is how they keep the service free for all users. This seems like a pretty large cut to me, but it does not really affect my decision in choosing them since I do not plan to monetize my podcast at this time.

VII. PROMOTION

The marketing of this podcast has been my favorite phase of this project as well as the one about which I am most knowledgeable. There were many portions to developing a marketing plan for the podcast that many people wouldn't even think about. The first and arguably most difficult was coming up with a name. I wrote down every name I could come up with on several different occasions, going through probably 75-100 different names. I was trying too hard to be clever, using different song names and buzzwords to try to come up with something involving a good joke or pun. I even came up with one that I really liked, *Advancing the Show*, only to find out that it was already in use by another music industry podcast. After weeks of thinking about what to call the podcast, consulting friends and trying different brainstorming techniques, a very simple and literal name came to mind: *Managing Musicians*.

Now that I had the name and the description of the podcast that I detailed in a previous section, I set to work crafting the brand for *Managing Musicians*. I started this process by defining my target audience. My target audience for the podcast is mainly other music industry professionals. There are secondary and tertiary target audiences to be found in those who are just interested in how the music business works behind the scenes as well as fans of the artists that are managed by the people I am interviewing.

To reach these kinds of people, I decided to create an Instagram profile as well as a Facebook page for the podcast. Instagram is a major resource for music industry professionals, and I have a pretty wide network that I was able to reach out to from my personal Instagram account. Facebook is also essential for any podcast, especially one

related to the music industry. There are hundreds of Facebook groups for music industry professionals, so it was essential to have a page for the podcast to share with them.

After creating the accounts on each social media platform, I had to populate them with content. Content creation is a skill becoming integral to practically every job in the music industry, so this was a great opportunity for me to practice using my resources. The podcast description I had already written for the listening platforms was too long to fit in my *Managing Musicians* Instagram bio or the main “About” section on my Facebook page, so I had to come up with something new. I decided to include a tagline, a practice recommended by Cindy Howes, and came up with, “A podcast for the new music business!” I also included the credits for the podcast, and the social media handles for the musician who wrote and recorded the song used in the podcast, Zach Zettel, as well as my producer and editor, Hannah Humphress and myself. This is efficient in that when I request for people I know to follow or like the pages, they can easily see that it is my podcast. I was able to include the longer description I wrote in the “Additional Information” section of my Facebook page, and plan to eventually make a branded post containing the description on my Instagram page.

With the written content finished, I was able to move on to the type of content I would actually be posting: pictures. I started by using the graphic design platform, Canva, to make a logo to be used as profile pictures for my social media accounts. Fig. 4 below is the logo that I designed. I am a big fan of using blues in logos and spent quite a bit of time nailing down the perfect color and fonts for my podcast logo. I am really happy with how it turned out, as it sets the tone of the podcast’s brand as clean, simple, calming, and professional.



Fig. 4. Levine, Anna. “Managing Musicians Logo.” 2021. PNG file.

I also created three images in the same style as the logo to be posted on Instagram to tease the release of the first podcast. I was also able to use one of them as the cover photo for my Facebook page. Below is a screenshot from the day that I started the Instagram profile. As one can see in Fig. 5, I posted the images I created in a way that it reads “EPISODE 1 IS COMING SOON...”. This made the Instagram grid of my profile look full without being overwhelming on the first day it was up.

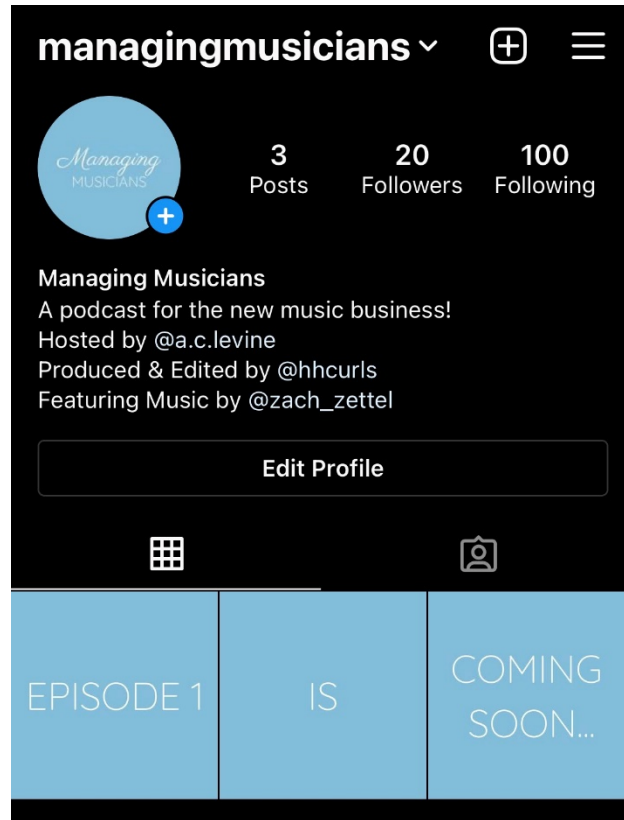


Fig. 5. Levine, Anna. “*Managing Musicians* Instagram Day One.” 2021. JPEG file.

Fig. 5 shows that I was able to get 20 followers within the first few hours of the page being up simply by following my friends and family, as well as posting to my personal Instagram story asking my followers to follow @managingmusicians. Fig. 5 also illustrates how important it is to have a cohesive brand image when launching a social media campaign.

The next leg of my social media campaign was to introduce the members of my team, Zach Zettle and Hannah Humphress. I did this on the Friday and Saturday before the podcast was released, giving them shoutouts and thanking them for their roles in the creation of the podcast. On the Sunday before the first episode’s release, I introduced my first guest, Danielle Broome.

This way, the second row of posts is complete and cohesive, maintaining the first announcement row. It also gives possible listeners a chance to feel connected to the podcast, whether they know a member of the team personally or feel like they do because of the posts. One can see the Instagram grid as of Sunday in Fig. 6 below. One can also see that the account is now above 50 followers as of Sunday, March 28th.

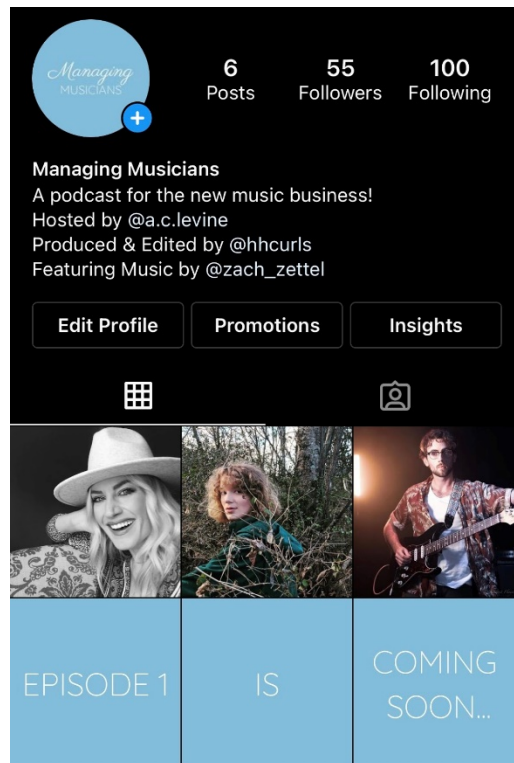


Fig. 6. Levine, Anna. “*Managing Musicians* Introductions Grid.” 2021. JPEG file.

The last task I plan to do before the first episode is released officially on Wednesday is to post another row of images. The first will be a Spotify logo with a link to listen to the podcast on Spotify, the second will be the official *Managing Musicians* logo with a caption about the first episode being released, and the third will be the Apple Podcasts logo with a link to listen to the podcast on Apple Podcasts. On launch day I will

also make an Instagram story to reach potential listeners in a different way, and I will include the link to the Anchor website in my bio.

As for Facebook, it is important to have some level of consistency across platforms, so I will be sharing the same posts from Instagram to the Facebook page. It is very easy and clean-looking to do this, as Facebook owns Instagram and makes the transition very easy. When the podcast is officially released, I plan to post the links to the different listening platforms in several of the music industry Facebook groups that I am a part of with the hopes of reaching my target audience in a meaningful way.

If I had more time and money, I definitely would have bought an ad on Facebook and Instagram stories to promote the podcast. If the pandemic was not ongoing, I likely would have had some sort of launch party with my family and friends to celebrate the release of the first episode.

VIII. REFLECTION

This project has challenged me in ways that I did not even know were possible. I set out to do this project in a completely different world, my thesis proposal taking place the week before the pandemic shutdowns started. It has been a challenging year to say the least, and while a lot of things could not have gone any further from the original plan, I am still very proud of how this project went. Despite all of the challenges I faced personally and globally, this podcast still turned out how I wanted it.

Planning, producing, and launching this podcast taught me how to adapt and persevere. I had to pivot from planning to interview artist managers in person to figuring out how to use Zoom. I had to reach out to artist managers during difficult times in the world and the music industry, when they might not have been inclined to talk about how things were going for their artists. The project's timeline got pushed back on multiple occasions, due to the sensitivity of approaching managers during the worst parts of the pandemic as well as difficulty communicating with my first faculty director and struggling with my mental health.

I also learned how to truly rely on someone as a partner in a project. Hannah was instrumental in pushing me forward throughout this process, from phone calls bouncing ideas off of each other to sitting in my kitchen while I recorded the podcast from my bedroom. I have always struggled with not being the one in control of a project, so it was really nice to give Hannah my insights and then trust her enough to edit the podcast on her own.

I was able to expand my network with some incredible people throughout the process of this podcast, as well as learn an entirely new skill - how to interview. I do not claim to be amazing at it just yet, but speaking with people like Sarah Wardrop, Ann Powers and Cindy Howes helped me an incredible amount. Their expert opinions improved my self-confidence in hosting my own podcast. I also got to form a great working relationship with my guest, Danielle Broome, who I plan to keep in touch with going forward.

On the topic of self-confidence, I also learned how to reach out to people I do not know via email. I improved my professionalism through sending countless emails to potential guests, field experts, my faculty director, and others. I gained confidence in saying what I think in a direct and professional way. I improved my ability to advocate for myself, and really gave my full self to this project.

Going forward, I hope to continue the podcast with my newfound confidence. Zoom, while at first an annoyance, has widened the net for podcasts to include people from around the world in the conversations we need to be having. The music industry needs to keep talking about what worked and what did not before and during the pandemic so we can learn from our failures in infrastructure going forward. I hope to help foster those conversations and to have many more guests open up about the struggles they faced and the successes they had during this time.

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