NCCO Webinars

Part 2

Series 1, Webinar 6 - 10 Mar 2020: Writing and Publishing

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Amanda, what advice do you have for writers who have an article that has been on the back burner because they've just been too busy? How can you help them get started?

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Amanda: Go back to thesis, introduction, conclusion: what do you want to write about? I see people trying to take their dissertations and pare them down into an article, and they're unfocused -- trying to write about everything and end up with nothing. What are you wanting to say? Some articles arrive at the end and have a "so what?" situation. Why did I read this? Why is this important? Consider what you want the reader to get out of it. What insight or new thinking are you offering? Let the outline flow from that. If you have an idea but aren't sure what direction to take it, email me. The CJ Editorial Board is willing to help point you in a direction and narrow your topic.

Follow-up: Can you walk us through what takes place in your office once an article is submitted?

All articles come to me; 3--5 reviewers are chosen based on expertise and interest; they send back comments; these comments are shared with the author for revisions.

Sean, what advice do you offer to a newly minted DMA who is working toward employment or tenure and needs to use this time wisely to get something published?

Sean: Publication is an outcome of meaningful inquiry, not a goal unto itself. Find a topic that you are passionate about, and then find an appropriate venue. Your first publication probably shouldn't be your magnum opus -- start with something concise. If you can find opportunities to review recordings, books, concerts, or repertoire, that's very useful, and a good discipline. It's very important that we don't produce something for the sake of a line on your CV. That's the worst part of academic bureaucracy. Mine your doctoral research, including papers you wrote for classes; an historical edition produced for a recital.

Follow-up: As you look back at your publication record, what practice or commitment helped you most in achieving such consistent acceptance with academic journals? How would you help someone else achieve similar success?

Sean: Keep in touch with your mentors. Inner drive and competition can help fuel success, but what matters is this: when you have something to say, are you willing to share it? Go forth and do it -- don't hold back.

Dale, you've just completed two short pieces specifically for Zoom choir, and yesterday you mentioned that you plan to write more. Tell us a little about what you've discovered in the process.

This platform was not designed for music, and any piece written for Zoom is inherently aleatoric, and there is going to be lag. As a composer, I need to expect that everyone is going to be singing at their own pace. It brings up all sorts of questions: what is the role of an audience? Is there an audience, or are we singing just to make music among ourselves? As a composer that's an interesting question. Thinking of this as a new,

albeit flawed and imperfect, instrument that has nothing written for it, that's a challenge and I love that. These two pieces, I don't know that they're successful, but my goal was to give choral singers something to do that brings us together as a community to make music. In that regard, I think they are a success.

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