

Episode 6 (MANAGEMENT) Start

{Intro Music}

This is the Institute for Music Leadership

Stephen: Hello and welcome to another minisode of *Create. Inspire. Lead.* Dr. Blaire Koerner is back, and this is a quick one - a little career amuse-bouche if you will. Today we're going to talk about artist management. Do you need it? When is the right time to get it? How does it work? Is it even necessary?

Blaire: Yes, good question. So in today's DIY, do it yourself mode mentality, chances are you're going to start without a manager and for a while, managers and getting on a roster basically happen one of two ways. You either win a competition that's a part of the rewards where, you know, you get signed on or you do some sort of recital and they support in markets you and then you might actually become part of Opus 3 or whatever managing group that might exist. That's one way.

And another way is basically to pester them enough with information until they finally, you know, get a hold of you. That's a little bit harder to do because they get so many kinds of emails with press releases and press kits and so forth, that it's hard for them to filter through. So you really need kind of an *in*. And the best way I could describe that is finding people that you know or connections through teachers, whatever, who are being managed and get to know that individual and then down the road, see if they can make an introduction or some sort of connections for you, because, again, the cold calling kind of just messaging doesn't necessarily guarantee you anything.

Stephen: So what do managers do? Well, they do a lot of the administrative work for the artists they represent.

Blaire: They're the ones that are going to help you with figuring out how you can get... they follow up with all of that so you don't have to worry about chasing people down. They're going to help you with marketing materials. And that might mean getting you a really good photographer and, you know, handling all the edits and just give you the final results. They might be helping you with... you know, literally, if you were doing a tour, figuring out all the scheduling and you just show up and they have... "Here's your tickets, here's this," and they organize all of that.

Stephen: But that doesn't mean that you're not involved. You still have to do some work.

Blaire: One of the things that most people don't realize about managing companies is that you can't just sit back and then, poof, they create your tour for you. You actually need to put in work as well. So you need to let them know. "OK, here's a timeframe I would like to tour, specifically Texas and... handing out these particular areas because I might have a connection here or there at the college and stop by and so forth."

Stephen: It's also important to realize that with a manager, or management company, you may not be their top priority.

Blaire: ...they manage a lot of people and they're not going to prioritize just you, right, until you become like a multimillion dollar person who brings in lots of people for every single New York performance you ever do, that you are not necessarily going to be a priority, whether it's individual or a chamber group. So you're going to have to, you know, pull your weight a little bit with that as well.

Stephen: Speaking of tours.

Blaire: And then the other thing, too, is that people don't always realize when they do tours... and this is without a manager as well as with a manager, is that sometimes when you go to these places, you might have a great set of materials all at the ready and they say no. They actually might help pick out your repertoire for you, so there is not always when it comes to these things, you know, especially if you're gonna do a solo career, you know, unless you're known for a particular thing. And then even if you become known for a particular thing, you might get requested for it all the time.

So I was actually interviewing WindSync, which is the wind quintet group and they managed themselves, but they said they've done lots of things where they've gone to either performance spaces or colleges or whatever, and they've sent out the repertoire lists and they got pushback and they said take these two pieces off and do something else instead. And so even then, they don't even necessarily always have a choice.

Stephen: If you have a manager, they may be able to negotiate rep on your behalf in those situations, but even so, you may have to be flexible. Or, like Blaire said, if you're known for a certain piece, you better like playing it over and over and over. So, when is the right time to seek management if that's what you want?

Blaire: Um... It's a hard decision to make because they do cost money. Right? So you need to be making money... enough money to be able to hire an extra person. And that, again, might just

be fortune. After running a competition, you get ten thousand dollars and a manager for a year or two and then you just start moving from there. Awesome. But if it's something you're kind of creating in your own, using a connection and so forth, you need to be making enough money on your music or with other things as well to really warrant their interest and to warrant the funds to get them on board because you're paying them whether or not you get a gig.

Stephen: You're paying your manager for their time, and while they may get a percentage on certain gigs or recordings, you usually pay them a base fee regardless.

Blaire: So whether you go out and get lots of paid gigs or not, you're still paying them. So you have to like that's why the whole working towards things and, you know, balancing it out and giving them some guidelines as to what you want is important. You can do it yourself for a while. A lot of people do. A lot of chamber groups, especially up and coming. And I would say in the last 15 years or have organized for the past 15 years run their own group. Now, some of the older groups, the quartet and so forth, they're most likely going to be managed because that was the style of it then.

Stephen: But that's not really the style now. There's so much flexibility and access to things that artists didn't used to have on their own. There's social media, websites where you can hire someone to create a logo, you can create your own logo with different apps, make your own website, you can even make your own recordings and get them on Spotify or other platforms pretty easily.

Blaire: So like there's lots of things that you can do, but then you do have to acknowledge that that's going to take a lot of time and administrative skills. If you're by yourself, that means you're going to be definitely splitting up your time. If you have other members you're working with in a chamber group, you can kind of assign different roles. But obviously it just boils down to: at the end of the day, what's money versus time? And those are the two resources that really kind of take up the most priority is: do you have the funds to do it and do you have the time to do it? And if it's no and one of those buckets, then you have to figure out how to make it happen in the other.

{outro music}

Stephen: Thanks again to Blaire Koerner. Remember, if you have specific questions for Blaire, you can set up an appointment with her through Handshake. The link for that is in the show notes.

Questions were compiled by Frances Inzenhofer and Emma Gierszal. Intro music and incidental music was by me, and the outro music was composed by Alexa Silverman. Please be sure to follow us on SoundCloud or on the IML's Facebook page for podcast updates, and of course you can always email us with comments, questions, or ideas for future episodes.

Now, go out. Make art. Do good work. From the IML, I'm Stephen Biegner. Until next time.

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