

Music Student Performance (Community Day) Evaluation

This project started as a tutor suggestion for what we, as media students, could do for the “College In The Community Day” as all lessons were cleared. Most people went home or headed out throughout the day, leaving me with one other person from my class and 3 others from a different class. The proposed work we could do was to record and edit a video of several performances from numerous of the college’s own bands. We spent most of the day, with our dwindling class numbers, searching for the relevant people involved and trying to gather information on the performance that was scheduled to be coming up soon.

We eventually came across one of the music class tutors and were updated on the planned timings for the performances and where they’d be taking place. The performance itself would be taking place later in that evening, set to conclude around 9pm with us heading over at 7pm, and until then we were given time to book out our equipment and do some test recording of their rehearsals. During this time, I got my first experience in requesting and being declined the option to film a person and thus got a chance to put my personal research on the law to use and respect their choice to not appear on camera.

While recording the rehearsals, we used this time as a chance to think on what camera angles we should attempt to utilize at the final performance and organizing the specific roles that each person will be required to take on in order to ensure a successful filming day. I took on a director-like role and planned out an idea for positioning and what recording responsibilities each person should take on. This would prove to be invaluable as the layout for the actual performance would be extremely cramped, allowing our pre-organized focuses to save time and more easily adapt to this drastically different room layout.

We next went to meet with the music students and their tutors to head down to where the performance would be taking place. We gathered at the cafeteria, as this was where we were told we’d gather before leaving, early in order to ensure that all our equipment was booked and working with the right settings and spare batteries.

After arriving at the location, it was then revealed to us that we would be recording a performance at a youth centre. This immediately caught my attention as I had taught myself not long before this about the laws regarding amateur filming, and this was one of the scenarios that came up. My fears were immediately justified as our equipment set-up was interrupted in order to provide us with a briefing on the rules that were to be put in place. We learnt that this was a youth centre specialising in protected, young members of the LGBTQ+. We were briefed on how this meant that we weren’t allowed to capture any part of the crowd that involved these people, including the backs of their heads. This would make things rather difficult due to the layout of the building.

The building was set out in the shape of the letter “T”, with the long “I” section of the T being used for crowd seating and 2 remaining square rooms in the top right and left corners being used for the performance and filming. This meant that we’d have to record over a section of the crowd which, when considered alongside the limitations of not being able to film the crowd, meant that recording this event could be much more difficult. I set out immediately to discuss this matter with the person who owned the building and was organizing the event for the college. I managed to successfully implement my personal client-handling practice that I’ve been working on over the last few years working with my dad to resolve this issue before filming commenced. I managed to organize the

layout of the seating plan so that the music students who were not currently performing would be sat directly in front of the performers, which would allow us to record the bands without worrying about removing large sections of our footage in editing due to capturing the audience.

This was my first time working with a camera spider rig to stabilise our shots over longer periods of filming. We also booked out and got to use cameras with a high-zoom lenses so that we could accurately capture the intricate details of the instruments being played in good quality. During the filming of the event, we were exposed to long stretches of handheld recording which led to some aches and pains for myself and the others. I ensured that between bands, everyone was reminded to set the camera down and stretch their arms and legs out to avoid cramping. Sadly, we ran into complications whilst filming as the long duration of each recording ended up draining camera batteries faster than expected. Due to my time working on the drama students' rendition of the dinner scene from August: Osage County, I had learned that it's necessary to ensure that SD cards have plenty of available storage and to make sure that there are backup cameras that are set up on a tripod – to ensure that we have a supply of consistent shots during the editing process. Whilst focusing on these countermeasures, however, I ended up forgetting to organize the order of the batteries that we'd be working through for the cameras. This meant having one camera use a battery that was roughly less than half-full, with a full battery sat to one side. Inevitably, this led to the camera running out of battery partway through one set of performances, which led to a mad dash to resolve the issue before the next song started. We luckily managed to record all angles of the previous band's song and then began to quickly resolve the battery issue. This ended up eating into their next song and thus removing some of our camera angle options in the editing process. Luckily, my learned idea to include a backup tripod angle ended up coming in handy whilst editing due to its consistency.

As this project took place over the period of time with which we were actively working on our Final Major Project for the first year of the course, this meant that there were serious delays regarding the creation of this evaluation and the editing of the performances. Upon finishing up my FMP, I spent the next 2 weeks working on an edit. I ran into major setbacks though, upon finding that OneDrive was saving my edit files to the PC's hard drive. This meant that I couldn't access my edit on any separate computer, at home or otherwise – as well as putting my work at risk of deletion when the computers undergo their regular data wiping. This ended up delaying the finish for this project by over half a week, which has taught me a harsh lesson on double checking where the files are being saved to and if they have done so successfully. After 2 weeks of multitasking this edit alongside the rest of my work, I had the end video completed before the half-term break (as requested) and uploaded to the necessary people.

This was my first time working with limitations regarding who or what I can film as well as dealing with protected individuals. I have learned a great deal of practical knowledge now on the rules of recording specific kinds of individuals, being now able to put most of my personal legal research to the test by the end of this academic year. I plan to spend more time researching these hypothetical legal issues as I was surprised by how often they ended up occurring and wish to not only be prepared, but to gain more knowledge and experience through future, relevant ventures.

This project was also a good opportunity to put a lot of untested skills to use, especially in utilizing my client-handling skills and foresight that I've been working on over the last while. There's still plenty to learn, but I've managed to successfully practice and learn a lot over the course of this project. Overall, there are elements I'm not too happy with regarding the final product, but with all the knowledge gained I believe I can do better in the future – making this an invaluable experience.