

Case study

An insider's view on crowdfunding from Nonclassical



Photo: Multi Story Orchestra at Nonclassical by Dimitri Djuric

Nwando Ebezie interviewed by Wendy Smithers



Published 2015

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 2.0 UK: England & Wales License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/2.0/uk/)

Managed by



Supported by



Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND



In partnership with



Nonclassical (NC) brings contemporary classical music to new audiences in non-traditional ways and settings through events and festivals (both in the UK and internationally) and developing and mentoring artists through the NC record label.

Tell us about the *We Break Strings* campaign and what it achieved.

We wanted to create a book that documented the alternative contemporary classical music scene that has built up in London over the last 10 years, and also coincided with the 10th anniversary of Nonclassical. We felt it was important to work with credible partners so joined forces with photographer **Dimitri Djuric** and music blogger **Thom Andrewes**, who had both been following the scene for years, to create something that showcased a community of talented musicians at a pivotal moment in music.

Crowdfunding felt relevant for this project because it was bigger than Nonclassical. It was something for the whole scene that was about supporting and showcasing that scene. It gave an outlet to both artists and fans. We were also able to involve many artists as over 30 were interviewed for the book, which really helped with sharing the crowdfunding ask as we could use their networks too. In September 2014 we set a target of raising £5k through our crowdfunding campaign on Kickstarter and successfully raised £5,574 by 5 October 2014.



Photo: Dimitri Djuric

Thom Andrewes (music blogger and interviewer) and Dimitri Djuric (photographer)

What do people need to consider before starting their crowdfunding campaign?

First consider which crowdfunding site is right for you and your project. Some have the jeopardy element to consider (ie you will not get any money if you do not hit the target) whereas others will give you whatever is raised. Most will take a cut of what you raise. Some have more of an international appeal and reach whereas others are more UK focused or have a sector specific focus ie are known for music or film so relevant fans are more likely to engage with those sites.

You have to pick the right project, one that will connect with people. One that fits a niche, is exciting, interesting and different. One that people will want and will feel is important to fund. It may be they want to feel part of something, part of a community. It needs to be time sensitive to compel giving within a certain timeframe.

You need to have access to big enough networks to access enough donors and the time and resource to manage the campaign. You have to continually work at it once it is live rather than just set it up.

Ideally it needs to be about the strength of the idea/offer rather than the people involved and their networks otherwise it won't move beyond their immediate circle of family and friends.

What are the key ingredients of a successful crowdfunding campaign?

We were really lucky that Kickstarter approached us as a potential organisation they could support before setting up their UK office so they gave us a lot of advice. Whichever platform you use, make sure you use the support and advice they offer on the site and ask for help if you need it.

A really good film of what your idea is all about is VITAL.

It needs to connect beyond the personal and where relevant draw from different interest areas so, for example, we were lucky that our project appealed to both those interested in contemporary classical music and those interested in photography.

Where did your supporters come from (geographically)?

We had a significant international response from the US which was unexpected. We also had people giving higher donations internationally so they accounted for greater spend per head than our UK supporters.

What was the influence of social media on your campaign?

Huge! Sharing content and starting a dialogue about the campaign online was a major factor in its success. We were featured on the front page of the Kickstarter UK website which was a massive boost for us. We were also promoted through the social media channels of our artists, collaborators, funders and partners such as The PRS for Music Foundation, which hugely increased our reach and engagement. We felt it was important to run the campaign as if it were an event rather than let the campaign do its own thing and this paid off.

How did you work out the levels/perks and how easy was fulfilment?

We made them interesting and priced them accordingly based on who would buy what. We're close to our fans and audiences so had a good sense of what would appeal and what they would be prepared to pay. We treated it like an advance sale for each item sold, which was the safest approach ie know you have the goods so you can fulfil the order and restrict the necessary monies for fulfilment costs. It took a lot more time to fulfil than we anticipated because we did not expect so many international buyers. Pricing is key as you need to raise the money you need for the project as well as allowing enough for fulfilment as well as making it a reasonable price for your buyer!



Photo: Dimitri Djuric

Gabriel Prokofiev and Sarah Dacey - One of the prints available as a reward

What would you do differently next time?

We would be more organised about getting the rewards out quicker and allowing more time and capacity for fulfilment.

We're thinking about another Kickstarter campaign but think it will have a different target this time; it's important to consider who the target audience is and what would compel them to buy/donate.

Given the strong interest internationally we would do more work on international publicity and pushing the campaign with the help of our international partners. We already have relationships internationally so we need to build on them.

And we'd allow more money for postage!

More information

- [Nonclassical](#) website
- Check out their Kickstarter campaign here: [We Break Strings](#)
- And buy the book here: [We Break Strings The Book](#)

About CultureHive

This case study was produced as part of CultureHive, a free knowledge hub where you can discover and share best practice in cultural marketing and fundraising. Visit culturehive.co.uk for more great resources.