10
website optimizations
CLASSICAL
MUSICIANS
should do right now

Hi!
my name is Josep Molina

I have created this guide specifically for classical musicians.

As the Creative Director for the creative agency, *Molina Visuals*, I have many years of experience, leading all kinds of projects from huge websites to complicated photo sessions.
When it comes to visual communication, I know what does and doesn't work.

What people say about me ?

TABLE OF CONTENTS

MUSIC BRANDING

INTRODUCTION

Do You Want to Increase Your Web Traffic? Read on!

Attention all artists, entrepreneurs, and website owners! Today, constructing or owning a website does not require you to be an IT expert. There are millions of websites on the World Wide Web today, and *you* can be a part of that.

The critical issue: How can you get people to visit your site and not get lost trying to find your one lone website among the millions of others?

I am going to show you how.

Increasing your web traffic in order to promote your brand or increase your sales is easy – if you know how to do it.

Follow the suggestions in this guide and watch your visitor counts and brand awareness start to grow exponentially!

SIMPLIFY YOUR NAVIGATION

1

You want your site to be user-friendly.

Too many options and tabs will often make people move on to the next site as they can get easily confused.

To ensure simplicity, do not use more than six navigation links. Make sure that the menu items are written in clear, simple language that everyone can quickly recognize and understand. Refrain from using two words when one will do.

 For example, "Concerts" is better than "My Tour." "Contact" is better than "Say Hello."

Try not to be overly clever. People visiting to your website for the first time do not want to be challenged. They want an easy and seamless experience – otherwise they will move on and likely never return. To keep your website visitors coming back for more try these tips:

- The quicker or fewer clicks it takes for a visitor to access a page on your website from your homepage, the better.

- Use your analytics regularly. If one of your pages gets little to no traffic, delete it and try something else.

- Consolidate similar pages using one navigation item (i.e. drop-down menu). Try   putting Photos, Video, and Audio Clips together under Media.

- Decide which pages are the most important to you and your visitors then include them on your home page.

REDUCE CLUTTER AND NOISE

2

Picture someone's first-ever trip to an amusement park. You are excited and don't know what to expect but you know it will be fun. You scan the landscape looking for something that will grab your attention and scream, "Start here!" While it may seem like there's lots of fun stuff to take part in, you easily become overwhelmed with *how* much there is to do.

As a website owner you can help direct the overwhelmed and glassy-eyed visitors by reducing distractions. 'Distractions' constitute anything that does not contribute to your primary website goal(s). To keep page visitors engaged with the site:

- Give your visitors the power of the play button. Using auto-play for audio/visual elements can be frightening for a first-time guest. Nothing converts a first-time visitor to a never-again visitor quite like audio that starts blaring from your PC's speakers as soon as you land on the website.

- Beware the dreaded splash page! The splash page is the introduction page that loads before the site itself- an unnecessary cover page, if you will. Why add one more step to get to your site?

- No graphics or animations – many of which are not supported on mobile devices and tablets. Animations can be fun, but they are often slow to load, distracting, and can give your visitors a reason to hit the 'back' button.

YOUR
CALL TO ACTION

3

One of the most important components of your website is your call to action. This is where you ask your visitors to do something like sign up for your newsletter, buy your music, or comment on your blog.

Let people know what they should do when they click on your website page, but avoid providing too many options. A simple and direct call to action on your homepage works best.

You can have more than one call to action. However, the primary one on your home page has a greater likelihood to compel a visitor to act and do what you want them to do.

How to Create a Call to Action

- List what visitors will be searching for on your web page.
- List the actions you want your visitors to take (i.e. buy something, read something, participate in an event).
- Compare the lists and draft appropriate calls to action.
- Use a website analytics too (**SumoMe** is a great one) to analyze and determine the most popular pages on your website and the most popular actions people take when visiting the site.
- Experiment a bit. Try different wordings, graphics or locations for your calls to action. Sometimes a small change makes a big difference to potential clients.
- Once you have determined what your primary call to action will be, ensure that you include a specific benefit the visitor will get if they follow your advice (i.e. free album, discounts, special offers, or something else).

MAKE YOUR TEXT WEB-FRIENDLY

4

As a result of our caffeine-infused, technology-addled brains, people rarely read a full page of text.

Skimming is the new close-reading and your website's text needs to reflect that. To make it easier for readers to quickly discern your key topics, make liberal use of the following techniques:

- Lists! Bullet-pointed lists are even easier to read.
- Double spacing between paragraphs gives your text room to breathe.
- Use aptly-titled headers that describe the following text.
- Avoid fancy or over-the-top fonts.
- Break up your paragraphs with pictures. Photos can succinctly communicate what might otherwise take dozens of lines.
- Use pull-quotes to emphasize the main idea. A pull-quote is a line of the paragraph that has been reprinted in a larger font and away from the rest of the article. If readers only read one thing on your site, it will be the pull-quote, so make it interesting and relevant.

THINK LIKE A DESIGNER

A degree in design is not necessary to create a classy-looking website. There are many free, customizable web templates available and little excuse for publishing a poorly-designed site. The web is such a visual medium that if you want to stand out, your site needs to be professional and stylish all in one.

Changing a few minor things on your website can improve your site design ten-fold. Oftentimes, the best design does not call attention to itself. Follow these simple tips to elevate your website to the next level of professionalism:

- Consistency is key to brand recognition: Use a site like www.colourlovers.com or www.kuler.com to pick out a stellar palette of just a few colors. They give you the color code to copy and paste into your editor.

- If your photos have a dominant color, go with it. Changing the photos can initiate color changes, but for branding purposes, it is best to stick with one color palette.

- Add photos whenever possible. Though professional photos are ideal, a beautiful smartphone snap can do the trick in a pinch. Use panoramic background images and large banner photos. If you can't use your own breathtaking images, check out sites www.josepmolina-stockphotos.net, www.istockphoto.com, or www.shutterstock.com to purchase professional stock photos.

- Choose a font and font size and stick to it! Random changes within text make it hard to read and create an inconsistent web experience. Googling "best font combinations" can provide you with plenty of inspiration to get started.

OPTIMIZE YOUR IMAGES

6

A website's rank in traditional search engine results is important, but there are many additional ways to be discovered online.

Google Image Search (and other such search engines) can be a valuable source of traffic and is not as competitive as traditional search results- thereby giving you a better chance of ranking highly.

Luckily, optimizing your images for search is a simple task.

BEFORE you upload, make sure to name your image using dashes between each word and choose descriptive keywords. e.g. your-name-best-guitar-player.jpg

BE RESPONSIVE

Currently 60% of web traffic originates from smartphone and tablet devices.

If your website is not mobile-compatible, you are neglecting 6 out of every 10 potential visitors to your site.

The best solution for creating a mobile and tablet-friendly website is to use responsive design. As Google's recommended format, responsive design will automatically resize to any screen size— eliminating the need to pinch-and-zoom just to read text.

Many of today's online platforms, like **Squarespace** or **Wix**, already have this functionality. If you're unsure if your site is mobile-friendly try these tips:

- Search your site using an array of the most popular smartphones and tablets.

- Do a run-through of your site: Can you read the text on your site without zooming? Can you easily navigate through the site by touch?

KEEP IT UPDATED

A website that is unwilling to change blends into the millions of other websites out there.

The digital world is dynamic and your site should stand as a testament to that notion of fluidity. Avoid a stagnant site by maintaining a current Calendar page ALWAYS updated and updating blog posts or news once a month at the least.

Provide your audience with a reason to return. Even a true fan of the site will get bored and wander elsewhere if you have nothing new to show. It takes very little time to keep a website fresh and inviting. For ideas: change out some of the background photos or banners, post a new video, write a brief update on your current project, and update your calendar with upcoming events and ways a site-visitor can get involved.

SOCIALIZE YOUR WEB

This may seem intuitive, but it must be said.

Social media is colossal on the World Wide Web- it is the means of staying connected, informed, and interested in the world around us. If you, your organization, or website isn't social, you are losing out on tons of traffic. At the very least, have "follow" buttons so that people can find you on social networks like Facebook and Twitter and "share" buttons so they can share your content.

Adding Follow Buttons

Social media icons make engaging with your brand fun and easy for site visitors. The downside is that people have grown used to seeing those generic Facebook and Twitter icons. Spice up the icon design, make them POP! Instead of saying "Follow me on Twitter" or "Follow me on Facebook," try:

"Follow me on Twitter and get updates and crazy discount deals" or "Follow me on Facebook to get all my new videos before everyone else!"

Adding Share Buttons

Squarespace websites have built-in share buttons that just need to be activated. Alternatively, **SumoMe,** as previously mentioned is a free service that makes adding share buttons and call to actions to your website extremely quick and easy.

ADD A
PRESS KIT

Provide bloggers and journalists the essentials for writing about you and talking about your brand.

With a downloadable press kit you will have control over which photos you want used in the media.

Create a zip folder that includes:

- One-sheet bio. Tell them about you, your work history, and your purpose.

- 2 or 3 high-res photos (at least 300 dpi) of yourself/your group.

- Your logo, if available.

- You may want to include any articles or reviews that might be useful to a journalist or blogger. Only the best 2-3 articles or links!

Upload the folder and link it to your "Press" or "About" page.

Within your kit, there are a couple ways to be sure you present yourself in the best light possible:

- Be fresh and interesting with your photos and avoid cliché backgrounds

- Compose a thrilling bio that expresses the essence of you; tell wild tales of how you got to where you are, and your philosophy on life. The press always love a great story!

READY TO MAKE A STEP FORWARD?

Learn to create and maintain attractive websites specially designed for classical musicians in **1 day.** *Promised!*

It doesn't matter what your skill level is! With this **step by step course** you just need to follow what I do and in one day you can have your own professional website up and running.

KNOW MORE

music-brandiing.teachable.com/courses/create-your-website-in-just-one-day

YOUR WEBSITE IN 1 DAY!
course for musicians who want to dedicate their time to what they love doing most - playing music.

MUSIC BRANDING