

*Cristina recorded an EP, which is a pop music term for an album with just a few pieces on it. A normal pop album will last around an hour; an EP might last 15 to 20 minutes. The EP was called Mechanical Angels. She then decided to release a full album, so she incorporated the music on the EP into the album, which was called Ex Voto. Here's her original plan for promoting the EP. You can see that it's very ambitious, and that doing these things would take a lot of work. Which she was willing to do.*

*Since her album took the place of the EP, she used these steps to promote the album. After them, I've added her later comments on how it all worked out. You'll see that most of her ideas worked and a few didn't, and that one of them succeeded in an unexpected way. The main lesson I learn from this is that if you work, work, work to get your music or your performance known, in every way you can think of — and if people like what you do — good things can happen.*

*By showing you this, I don't mean that I'm expecting all of you to do something similar. Not at all. A promotion plan like this is only for highly entrepreneurial people, which isn't everybody. My idea was only to show you what can be involved.*

*Here's Cristina's original plan:*

My goal for the EP is this: I want regular people who don't necessarily have a music education to listen to my music. I always thought that I wanted other people in the music world to appreciate my music, but right now I feel the opposite. Finding an audience is the most important thing for me. I've broken that process down into a few steps.

1. I'm turning to social media to find an audience. There is a lot of enthusiasm for classical music on Instagram, some of the musicians have over 100,000 followers and their videos get viewed thousands of times. I reached out to pianists on Instagram with large followings, asking them if they'd record and share a video of themselves playing one of the pieces from *Mechanical Angels*. There are tags that I've asked them to use that help drive traffic to my profile. So far I've received confirmation from five of them.

2. I'm trying to foster a collaborative environment that encourages other amateur pianists to learn my pieces and upload videos on their own pages. I'm making the sheet music available on my website. The music for *Mechanical Angels* isn't that hard, people who play [Olafur Arnalds](#) or [Ludovico Einaudi](#) can easily learn my music. [Arnalds and Einaudi are popular composers whose peaceful music is partly classical, partly pop, and partly ambient or new age.] Already three pianists who I've reached out to are programming *MA* on their upcoming recitals. I'm hoping that momentum will pick up around the social media posts and translate into more real-life concerts. I've taken inspiration from old-fashioned parlor music in that I'm trying to curate excitement over new piano works. Instead of people coming together in someone's living room to hear new music, I'm hoping that they'll gather together online to share their own interpretations of *MA*.

3. The social media aspect is its own sort of marketing. I also plan on purchasing Facebook and Instagram ads to drive traffic to my website, Spotify, Apple Music, etc. As for the other marketing, I've reached out to 40 blogs (and counting) that aren't classically based, but have done reviews on film composers and others like Ludovico. I've also contacted a few podcasts.

4. I reached out to piano magazines and offered to do a giveaway for their readers. Whoever follows both myself and the magazine on social media is entered to win the sheet music for *MA*. So far I've heard back from one online magazine willing to participate.

5. I have a few performances of *MA* and some of my other works planned in Louisville, Nashville, and Stamford. This fall is a busy one for me with a premiere at the Nashville Ballet, and the principal clarinetist of the LA Phil playing my concerto here in Nashville. So I'll be getting local press for those performances which might also help my EP.

6. I'm using the recording of *MA* and my debut album to contact music supervisors [people who are in charge of music for a film or TV show]. There are quite a few of them in Nashville.

7. It isn't top on my list, but I would like a little recognition from the new music world. I've written to blogs like [I Care If You Listen](#) and [New Music Box](#) to see if anyone will review my EP or feature my video. And I know it's a long shot, but I've contacted National Public Radio and the Wall Street Journal as well. I'm also going to ask music journalists to tweet my video or EP once it's out. I think more people would discover it that way than if it were to be in a review.

*Here's Cristina's followup:*

### **1. I'm turning to social media to find an audience.**

I ran some Facebook ads this summer (that's a whole separate topic!). I went from 440 followers on my artist page to over 12,000 in about 10 weeks. I've gained some loyal fans from the campaign but it hasn't translated into sales. I've sold a few albums through posts on my FB page, but that's it. I see it more as a tool for awareness. The videos that I've posted there get more views than I was getting before. I don't know if any of that really matters, but it's there for people to discover! I was also able to connect with new choreographers and performers through this campaign so I see it as an investment in building long-term relationships with future collaborators.

### **2. I'm trying to foster a collaborative environment.**

This one was a little unexpected. I thought that I might be able to get pianists interested in playing the music of *Ex Voto*, but it turns out that other instrumentalists wanted to remix it. A bansuri flutist in Japan created a few videos of his interpretations of *Ex Voto*. He reached out and asked for permission first and I was just blown away at what he created. Pianists have included some of the pieces from *Ex Voto* on their recitals which is wonderful.

### **3. Social media and blogs.**

Ha! This entry about blogs makes me laugh. Apparently being based in Nashville classifies me as a pop musician - which these very important and serious music blogs don't cover. So I didn't get an entry, or even a retweet! about the release of my album from the New Music world. Aside from that, I was featured in indie blogs. *Strings Magazine* presented the video premiere of "Il Nodo," a track from *Ex Voto*, which was really cool!!

*Ex Voto* also won "Best Classical Album of 2020" in our local paper the *Nashville Scene* so it was nice to get some local press about it. All of this relates to #4 and #7 of my original release plan.

### **5. Performances**

Well, I was happy to get an album release performance in before everything closed down. I previewed *Ex Voto* last year in Louisville as part of the local classical radio station's concert

series. And I also got to play excerpts on 91Classical's show "Live From Studio C." Over the summer some dancers from the Nashville Ballet used *Ex Voto* for their New Choreographic Works series, presented online. The Italian platform *Piano Sharing* invited me to perform *Ex Voto* as part of their live-streaming concerts. Of course I couldn't tour *Ex Voto* after its release, but I'm glad that there have been some alternative opportunities.

## **6. Music Supervisors**

I met with two music supervisors, one in NY and one in Nashville. So far no luck with that avenue, but I'll keep trying!!

I did end up sending *Ex Voto* out to 50 classical radio stations and I've gotten great feedback from that effort. People reached out through my website after hearing *Ex Voto* on their local radio. I really didn't expect that!