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Jamalar Agency: Building Awareness for New Music through Radio Promotions

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Jamalar Agency: Building Awareness for New Music through Radio Promotions

An Internship Academic Report

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
In
Arts Administration

By

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BCJ Loyola University New Orleans, 2002

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Abstract

This report documents the internship of LaWanda J. Smith with Jamalar Agency. Jamalar is a booking agency which specializes in selling the music and culture of New Orleans to the world. LaWanda's main task was radio promotion for the 2015 spring release of *We've Got a River to Cross*, a CD by the gospel group Joyful. LaWanda was also exposed to record label management by working with Jamalar's sister company, Rampart Street Music. This report provides an overview of Jamalar Agency, analysis of the company's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, an examination of best practices in music promotions performed by a similar record company and recommendations for the company based on LaWanda's observations.

Introduction

Jamalar Agency, located in New Orleans, Louisiana, is a booking agency which secures international and state-side live performance opportunities for jazz, soul, gospel, and blues musicians. For more than 30 years, the agency's artists have worked with some of the best in the music industry, from Tony Bennett to Al Green. For Jamalar Agency, New Orleans roots music is its focus. The agency's motto is, "Taking New Orleans to the rest of the world."

I chose to intern with Jamalar Agency not just because of its history but because an internship at a booking agency and a related record label seemed to be a unique opportunity. As follows in this report, I completed tasks related to day to day operations, promotions, and artist management.

Chapter 1: Overview of the Organization

Background

The history of Jamalar Agency is rooted in the gospel group, Joyful Commanders. The original members of Joyful Commanders were Jessie Veal, Alfred Caston, Meredith Mickel, Albert Mickel, Loretta Caston, Alvin Johnson and Reginald Veal. Joyful Commanders' first album, *In Command*, was pressed in 1981 on the Checkmate label. The album was moderately successful in the southeast region of the United States. Unfortunately, the group realized their album was credited to another group with a similar name. In 1981, the fledgling group determined it needed to set up an office for booking services, marketing, and artist development. The business was named Jamalar Agency and was located at 3618 18th Street, in Metairie, Louisiana, in an area known as Fat City.¹ Office operations were financed by Joyful Commanders' album sales and concert earnings, as well as the personal contributions from individual members.

In the early 1990's, the group decided to drop *Commanders* from their name. Joyful then created a parent corporation called Joyful Music Group, Incorporated. Joyful Music Group purchased a dilapidated two story structure in the Desire neighborhood of the upper 9th Ward in New Orleans. Several members of Joyful renovated the

¹ Jamalar is an acronym for the first letter of each member's first name.

property. In 1995, Joyful Music Group purchased recording equipment for Rampart Street Music.²

Prior to Rampart Street Music, Joyful had recorded albums with several other labels including Mardi Gras Records of New Orleans, Louisiana. Starting the Rampart Street Music label afforded Joyful Music Group ownership of Joyful's master recordings and more input in the production process. The label entered the Top 40 in 1996 with Lyle Henderson's CD entitled "I Cannot Go Back." Paulette Wright-Davis, Ray Iglehart, Linda Wright, The Friendly Travelers, and Children of God are just a few of the artists with successful recordings on the label.

Both Jamalar Agency and Rampart Street Music were thriving when Hurricane Katrina made landfall in 2005. The 9th Ward office and studio sustained moderate damage. Once again, members of Joyful, with the help of family and friends, made repairs to the building. A last minute decision to transfer Jamalar's main phone number to a mobile phone enabled the artists on Jamalar's roster to keep working despite suffering inconceivable losses and being displaced many miles away from New Orleans.

Organizational Structure

Jamalar Agency is a for profit entity. The parent corporation is Joyful Music, Incorporated, and is registered in the state of Louisiana. Jamalar Agency has three

² Appendix A

positions: President, Vice President and Management. The names of each staff member, biography, and job description are as follows:

Alfred S. Caston – President: Caston is responsible for booking the artists on Jamalar’s roster and making creative decisions about the business structure, finances, artistic direction, and personnel. Caston has more than 35 years experience as a producer, guitarist, and singer.

Albert C. Mickel – Vice President: Mickel handles all fiscal matters and coordinates with the offsite accountant. Mickel has been singing professionally for over 50 years. He is a retired member of the armed forces and is currently an ordained minister and pastor.

Jan Randolph – Management: Randolph coordinates tour and individual performance parameters for the artist(s). These parameters include but are not limited to securing tour insurance, wardrobe, hotels, and rehearsals. Randolph has been singing for over 40 years. She joined Jamalar in 2002 and soon after became a member of Joyful.

Intern(s): Jamalar chooses one to two interns to work on special projects. The interns are usually chosen from the Loyola University New Orleans’ student body through Loyola’s Internship and Part Time Job Fair. The internships are unpaid positions.

Programs

Rampart Street Music: Rampart Street Music provides a 32- track state of the art recording studio. Ray Iglehart, The Friendly Travelers, and Children of God are just a few of the artists with successful recordings on the label. Since Hurricane Katrina, the label has recorded and distributed eleven albums. Its latest release is entitled *We've Got a River to Cross* by Joyful Gospel, which is a conglomeration of Joyful and members of the Spirit of New Orleans Choir.

Jamalar Agency: Jamalar Agency is responsible for booking live performances. The agency currently has the following groups/choirs on its roster: Friendly Travelers, Spirit of New Orleans Choir, Eddie "Lil Fats" Domino, JC & Company, Sjuwana Byers and Children of God, Charmaine Neville, Linda Wright, Kinfolk Brass Band, Reverend and the Lady (of Italy) and Joyful.³ Between tours, Jamalar's artists provide entertainment for private events and the convention and tourism industry in Louisiana.

Joyful Foundation: Joyful Foundation is Joyful Music Group's initiative to invest in the next generation of musicians. The foundation, solely funded by Joyful, sets aside funds from each performance to fulfill its mission to provide financial assistance to help financially challenged music students buy instruments. The foundation purchases instruments for students at a chosen school in Jefferson or Orleans Parish. Past recipients include The Milne Boys Home, Landry Walker High School, John Curtis High

³ Jamalar Agency acts as a sub agent for Reverend and the Lady.

School, and West Jefferson High School. Alfred Caston and Albert Mickel manage the foundation.

Financials

Joyful Music Group, Incorporated, is a privately owned company and therefore does not offer its financial statements for outside review. Jamalar Agency and Rampart Street Music each have separate budgets. Joyful Music Group has a number of assets including all recording equipment and the property it owns in New Orleans. Also, I observed monthly planning sessions between Caston (President) and Mickel (Vice President) regarding future projects / tours, investing in additional property, and cash flow. Based on my observations, Joyful Music Group, Incorporated appears to be in a solid position to ensure operations in perpetuity.

Chapter 2: Internship Description

Job Description: The ideal student(s) will help locate and identify relevant commercial and non-commercial radio stations in our music genre. The goal is to get our music placed into normal day-to-day play rotation. This task is normally performed via phone, internet, and normal mail. The ideal candidate will also call on festival and event promoters in order to promote a given current music project.

Qualifications: We trust that an ideal candidate for this work would already be invested (2 years course study or work experience) in music production, promotion, or recording in some way.

Prior to my internship, I had very little experience in the music industry. I am a volunteer with several local music festival organizations and a student member of the Recording Academy. The opportunity to intern with both an independent record label and booking agency located in the same building and managed by the same people has been golden.

I began my internship with the main task of promotions. Rampart Street Music was ready to release its recent gospel recording entitled, *We've Got a River to Cross*. Within a couple of weeks, my responsibilities grew. I became more involved with artist management, booking, and the creative process. This chapter outlines my professional development with Jamalar Agency and Rampart Street Music.

Promotions

We've Got a River to Cross is a 12-song recording distributed digitally and on compact disc. The album was produced by Alfred Caston and keyboardist Carolyn D. Shield, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, composed 10 songs. The CD includes two cover songs – *Wade in the Water*⁴ and *Jesus is Love*.⁵ It features the gospel group Joyful and the Spirit of New Orleans Choir. The goal for promoting this album was to send the music to as many radio stations in the United States, as possible, and create a database documenting my communications with each station. To accomplish this, I used websites like <http://radio-locator.com/> to contact radio stations.

Initially, I struggled to break down the barriers at the radio stations. Anyone answering the station's main number can make or break any effort to get the music on the air. I learned early in the process that some of the websites did not offer the correct names for the music or program director for each station. Fortunately, a conversation led me to what proved to be an essential tool for promoting gospel music - the *2015 Gospel Music Industry Roundup*. This directory is printed annually and is considered "the bible of the gospel music industry."⁶ *Gospel Roundup*, as it is called, is a listing of every gospel radio station, record label, media outlet, and booking agent in the United States. For a nominal fee, the directory provided a plethora of resources to successfully promote this album.

⁴ Song is in the public domain.

⁵ *Jesus is Love* is attributed to Lionel Ritchie.

⁶ This directory was referred to me by a president emeritus of the Gospel Announcer's Guild.

Once the music was sent to each station by email (as an MP3) or mail (physical copy), I had to proactively follow up with each station to track the music. “Tracking the music” means determining if the music was accepted or rejected by the station and why. If the station accepted the music, I then inquired about the level of rotation. Music heard on the radio usually falls into two categories of rotation: “heavy” refers to the songs that get the most airplay and “light” refers to songs that get less airplay. During my internship, several songs from the album were in rotation at 10 radio stations across the country.

When promoting an album, radio stations request interviews with the artists. I had an opportunity to visit KKAY Radio in Donaldsonville, Louisiana. Albert Mickel and I participated in a live 20 minute interview, in which five songs from the album were played. Days later, Mickel used Rampart Street Music’s recording studio to record three radio spots, better known as commercials, for KKAY. Radio spots align the artist(s) with that particular station, which increases rotation, sales of the album, and the station’s audience. During the last month of my internship, Jan Randolph, Mickel and I recorded radio spots for WGUP of Laplace, Louisiana and WAZA of Liberty, Mississippi.

I was also responsible for contacting newspapers, magazines, and online media outlets for music reviews. I sat in on a recording of local television showcase of New Orleans talent in an effort to network with the producer and talent coordinator. I submitted a profile to the show for Joyful for future performance opportunities. I

successfully solicited three music reviews from *The Journal of Gospel Music*,⁷ *Sun Herald*,⁸ and *OffBeat*.⁹ On December 16, 2015, *OffBeat* nominated Joyful in the *Best Gospel* category for the Best of the Beat Awards.

Talent Coordinator and Booking Agent

Early in the internship, a health information systems (HIS) company booked a 30-voice choir for its convention in New Orleans. I volunteered to contact each potential choir member and maintain communication from that point forward. For this performance, I distributed the music to each choir member via email and hard copy, ordered choir robes, and ensured each person was present for rehearsals and the performance. This position also required me to maintain a master calendar and to address non-compliance of the “food provisions” section of the rider with the event coordinator.

From then on, Caston assigned me the task of coordinating talent for live performances. The final live performance during my internship was for a site visit. “Site visits” are conducted by meeting planners who wish to convince a company to have its convention in the city of New Orleans. Delegates from the prospective company are given a tour of an iconic location in the city, while being entertained by local artists and/or musicians. For this particular site visit, the meeting planner requested a quartet. Caston allowed me the opportunity to manage this performance on my own. I

⁷Online review. <http://journalofgospelmusic.com/gospel/joyful-weve-got-a-river-to-cross/>. 13 Oct 2015.

⁸Online review. <http://www.sunherald.com/entertainment/article43298148.html>. 5 Nov 2015.

⁹Online review. <http://www.offbeat.com/music/joyful-weve-got-river-cross-rampart-street-music/>. 25 Nov 2015.

communicated directly with the meeting planner, which included negotiating the option and drafting the invoice/contract. I also assembled the quartet, managed them during the performance, and distributed payroll post performance.

In the final weeks of my internship, I assisted in the preparation of JC and Company's and Joyful's winter tours in Europe. I secured copies of the valid passports for all band members which were then forwarded to the booking agent in Italy. I also purchased plane tickets and travel insurance for each member of Joyful. Per a long standing arrangement with the agent, Joyful recouped the money for air travel. The final step included creating electronic files for interoffice use and paper files for traveling.

Physical CD Sales

Downriver Fest was held at the Old US Mint and the French Market on Saturday, September 12, 2015. The festival celebrates the impact the Mississippi River has on southeast Louisiana. Jamalar Agency partnered with Downriver Fest to provide two artists: Eddie "Lil Fats" Domino and The Reverend and the Lady. The Reverend and the Lady are the blues/roots music duo of Mauro Ferrarese and Alessandra Cecala. Domino, nephew of the legendary Antoine "Fats" Domino, covers classic songs like *"Ain't That a Shame," "Walking to New Orleans,"* and *"Blueberry Hill."*

In the weeks leading up to the festival, I had understood that I would accompany Caston. I noticed several boxes of unsold music in the Jamalar office. The CDs were

recorded by artists who unfortunately parted ways with Rampart Street in the early stages of promoting the projects. I suggested to Caston that he should sell some of the CDs at Downriver. He communicated with the festival's leadership and determined there was no plan for sales at all. We got the approval to set up a merchandise table. Upon arriving at the festival, I set up the table. I sold CDs for Rampart Street artists and three of the six bands on the lineup: The Reverend and the Lady, Eddie Domino and Panorama Jazz Band.

Just before Joyful was due to embark on its annual European tour, I presented another opportunity to Albert Mickel and Alfred Caston to sell CDs of the two artists no longer signed with Rampart Street. CD A is a 10 – song tribute album to Mahalia Jackson. CD B is a rhythm and blues project. I suggested that since the music was aging and the artists are virtually unknown, the CDs should be sold as a package. Rampart Street successfully sold 25 sets in Europe, generating over \$500.

Jamalar Presents: N'Awlins Soul Revue

A number of New Orleans musicians gained notoriety for the soul music produced and recorded from 1950 to 1980. Alfred Caston decided to pitch a soul revue to the Louisiana Museum Foundation, to which they agreed to a one month run. The target market is tourists and each performance will be held at the Old United States Mint, located in high-pedestrian tourist area.

Years ago, Jamalar Agency assembled a doo-wop group called JIVE. Since demand for doo-wop was nonexistent, the group disbanded. For this short-run performance, I solicited five new singers (two male and three female vocalists) to become JIVE. I researched iconic songs with ties to New Orleans and developed a list of 50 songs. To promote the show, Jamalar will print post cards to be placed on the front desk of the venue and will be distributed to hotels and restaurants in the area. The Louisiana Museum Foundation promotes performances via newsletter and on its website. Also eight songs will be recorded for a compact disc to be sold during the show. Rampart Street Music owns the Primera *Bravo*® disk publisher, which allows for the publishing of compact discs in smaller orders. A complimentary copy of the recording will be given to the venue to play daily.

N’Awlins Soul Revue’s goal is to transport the audience to days gone by. JIVE will perform ten songs, just as the songs were originally recorded, in an effort to conjure a nostalgic feel. The group will be outfitted with classic sequined jackets and black tuxedo pants. The venue, the Old United States Mint, is a fitting locale for this revue.¹⁰

¹⁰ Managed by the Louisiana Museum Foundation (LMF), the Old US Mint is a museum and offers music programming called Music at the Mint. The art on display at the US Mint was acquired by LMF from the defunct New Orleans Jazz Museum.

Chapter 3: SWOT Analysis

<u>Strengths</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Longevity• Annual winter tours• Relationship with key players in the tourism Industry• Recording studio• Unrestricted access to recording studio and equipment• ASCAP membership /royalties	<u>Weaknesses</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Small staff• Lack of public awareness• No long term plans for local retail sales and promotions• Lack of consistent performance opportunities• No connections to facilitate sync licensing in Hollywood South• No Social media presence• Aging roster• Morale
<u>Opportunities</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• European tours• <i>N'Awlins Soul Revue</i> series• Social media• Unreleased book	<u>Threats</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Competition for artists• Younger Artists

Strengths

1. Longevity

Jamalar Agency has been booking live performances for over 30 years. Jamalar is held in high regard amongst gospel artists in the community. Internationally, Jamalar has strong, long-lasting relationships with promoters in Europe.

2. Annual Winter Tours

Jamalar Agency has had the same European booking agent for over 20 years. Because of that relationship, at least two of Jamalar's groups have toured Europe in December and January. The 2016 winter tour has already been negotiated. The previous tours consisted of 8-12 tour dates. The shows are intimate and each venue has high rate of attendance. Every gig sells hundreds of dollars in merchandise and CDs.

3. Relationship with Key Players in the Tourism Industry

Jamalar Agency has established relationships with the Convention and Visitors Bureau and several meeting planners throughout the city. As a result, Jamalar's artists perform live at conventions and private events produced specifically for visitors to give an authentic cultural experience. Some of these appearances have lead to bookings for private functions locally and out of state.

4. Unrestricted Access to Recording Studio and Equipment

Jamalar Agency is unique because the agency has a recording studio at its disposal. Recordings can be made with very little notice. The studio does not have high

overhead because it is located in the building that is owned by Joyful Music group and only has one employee.

Joyful Music Group has invested in the purchase of state of the art recording equipment. As mentioned earlier, Rampart Street Music owns the *Bravo*® CD/DVD publisher which allows the label to print (and reprint) small batches of CDs. The ability to publish in small batches eliminates the costs associates with record distribution on a larger scale.

5. ASCAP Membership / Royalties

Jamalar Agency is a member of the American Society of Composer, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP). It is a performance rights organization. ASCAP protects the rights of its members by licensing and distributing royalties for the members' copyrighted work. During my internship, the agency considered joining SIAE, a performing rights organization which collects and distributes royalties in Italy. Jamalar is registered as a publishing company and therefore receives royalties. Jamalar did not make any other details about royalties available for my review.

Weaknesses

1. Small Staff

Jamalar Agency does not have any paid, full time staff. Jan Randolph works in the office on an as needed basis. Neither Jamalar Agency nor Rampart Street Music has a receptionist or executive assistant to field calls and emails. All inquiries go directly to Alfred Caston.

For album promotions and administrative tasks, Jamalar Agency relies on unpaid student interns. With each round of interns, Caston has to orient the interns in the business protocols of the agency. Interns can be lost to paid and larger scale internships and employment opportunities. Interns can never replace the dedication and work ethic of a paid employee.

2. Lack of Public Awareness

Jamalar Agency has a unique problem. It offers Louisiana roots music but does not have a presence in New Orleans. The agency's artists tend to perform for private gigs or while on tour in Europe. The exceptions are Linda Wright, who performs every Sunday at the House of Blues in New Orleans for the gospel brunch; Eddie "Lil Fats" Domino, who performs in Illinois; and Sjuwana Byers and Children of God, who performs throughout the country.¹¹

The musical landscape in New Orleans consists of a handful of large venues (1000+ person capacity) and scores of smaller venues. The artists on Jamalar's roster have not built audiences to fill larger venues to capacity. Several groups, on the roster, have members who live over 100 miles away from New Orleans. They are musicians with multiple academic degrees in music and awards in the industry. Considering those factors, it is not fiscally sound for Jamalar to accept gigs at smaller venues because those venues pay less and therefore do not justify having a musician drive hundreds of miles to take a loss. Joyful Music Group has not had much success in resolving this issue.

¹¹ Domino and Byers currently live in other states.

3. No Long Term Plans for Local Sales and Promotion

Rampart Street Music only promoted "*We've Got a River to Cross*" to ensure national radio play. The CD is available for purchase (physical copies and downloads) on the label's website and on www.cdbaby.com. However, there was no plan for live performances, even on a small scale, to get local exposure and sell music. Recordings on the label are only sold at Louisiana Music Factory, located on Frenchmen Street in the French Quarter. Joyful Music Group has not partnered with locally produced festivals or locally owned businesses, like coffee shops or bookstores, to sell the CD. Basin Street Records has had success with this strategy and benefits by making its presence known in the community and opportunities to grow its audience.

4. Lack of Consistent Performance Opportunities

The artists on Jamalar's roster do not work regularly. Linda Wright is the only artist performing weekly. In New Orleans, many venues are open every day and operate for eight or more hours daily. This issue can be directly related to a lack of public awareness of the roster of musicians and lack of dedicated staff available to seek out new opportunities for every genre Jamalar represents.

5. No Connections to Facilitate Sync Licensing in Hollywood South

Synchronization licensing is the purchase of music to be used in sync with visual images on film or videotape. New Orleans has become the center point for the filming industry in the south since 2005. Due to the generous tax credits mandated in Louisiana legislation, the state has seen tremendous growth in television and film production.

Shows like *Treme*, *American Horror Story: Freak Show*, and *Night Watch* were all filming and editing multiple episodes and seasons in the city. Local artists like Kermit Ruffins, 3D Na'Tee, and John Boutte have had their music placed or made guest appearances. Hollywood South, Louisiana's new moniker, had *NCIS: New Orleans* and *Scream Queens* in production during my internship. Rampart Street Music has not been successful in securing sync licensing for commercials, television shows, or movies. A sync license for a movie would potentially inject a few thousand dollars into the label's coffers.

6. No Social Media Presence

It appears some of the groups depend on Jamalar to secure gigs for them in the absence of self promotion. Today, it is very important for a group to promote itself. Serious interest can be generated by a group's website coupled with up-to-date social media accounts. It is the central place for talent buyers, corporate businesses, and fans to get information. The roster, including group bios and photographs, is on Jamalar's website. Unfortunately, none of the Jamalar's artists have individual websites. This puts the onus on the public to be familiar with Jamalar Agency to find out which artists it represents.

Only two groups have and maintain social media accounts. Sjuwana Byers and Children of God have a Facebook page but it not current. To promote the latest CD, Joyful created Facebook (94 likes and 39 posts) and Twitter accounts (40 followers and 20 tweets). Both of Joyful's accounts were updated by me during the internship. When my internship ended, Alfred Caston took on the role of updating social media. The lack

of social media presence is contributing to the lack of consistent performance opportunities, music sales, and being unknown in a city filled with music.

7. Aging Roster

Jamalar's roster is made up of groups that have been in the business 15 years or more. At some point, these groups will lose members to attrition or death, which may cause them to disband. Jamalar is not currently seeking new musicians and singers.

8. Morale

As with any agency representing a large roster, some artists will be dissatisfied with how they are being treated. At Jamalar Agency, Joyful generates more earnings than any other group. In turn, Joyful gets more work than the other groups.

Opportunities

1. European Tour Dates for 2016

Joyful is scheduled to tour Europe five times in 2016. The cities are: Aosta, Murcia, Barcelona, Spain, and Paris, France. Tours offer opportunities to earn revenue from ticket and CD sales and to grow the audience. The tour will generate more income for the agency, as well as merchandise sales for the label.

2. *N'Awlins Soul Revue Series*

The music series will be pivotal for Jamalar. Partnering with the Louisiana Museum Foundation (LMF) will expose more locals to Jamalar and improve Jamalar's presence in the area. LMF will promote the event on its website and in e-blasts to its

subscribers. Jamalar will employ five singers and three musicians for the four concert series.

3. Building a Social Media Presence

Joyful is now active in the social media realm. The agency will be venturing into marketing using Facebook. If Jamalar sees success with Facebook ads for Joyful's new CD, then the concert series will be marketed on Facebook, as well.

4. Unreleased Book

Alfred Caston is working with an editor to publish a book about his life and the history of Joyful. The 80 page book, in its current version, is untitled but gives the reader a collection of funny and tragic tales about what happens when a young man aspires to have a career in music. If published, proceeds from book's sales will go to the Foundation and to Jamalar Agency. The book is expected to be published in English, Spanish, and Italian.

Threats

1. Competition for Artists

New Orleans has a number of booking agencies, of varying sizes and genres. Understandably, any one (or more) of the groups could leave Jamalar because of dissatisfaction with the lack of performance opportunities. Some musicians who have had interest, in the past, in being represented by Jamalar have opted to go elsewhere because of the appearance that Joyful gets more attention.

2. New Artists / Artist and Repertoire

More of the newer artists are opting to handle booking themselves and do not understand the need for an agent. During my internship, Jamalar Agency and Rampart Street Music was did not actively scouting for new artists. Jamalar needs to bring in fresh faces to generate more income and the resulting visibility will make the agency more relevant in the city.

Chapter 4: Best Practices

Jamalar Agency and Rampart Street Music are home-grown businesses that specialize in spreading the culture of New Orleans to the world. The market in New Orleans is quite competitive, having a number of booking agencies and record labels which cater to the public's taste in music. Jamalar and Rampart Street, however, face issues that are very familiar to independent record labels. This section will pinpoint the best practices relating to building awareness for new music, social media marketing, and getting maximum exposure for new music.

Building Public Awareness

When a CD is released, the label is hoping that every person capable of buying a CD will do so. The only way that can happen is to vigorously promote the music. Music promotion is the process of raising awareness for an artist's music. Promotions consist of marketing strategies developed from the input of the artist, his management, and the label. "Marketing in the recording industry consists of promotion, publicity, advertising, and merchandising, all of which are intended to result in record sales."¹² Publicity and advertising are two critical elements to building public awareness.

Independent labels are very familiar with the difficulty in promoting and marketing new music. A publicist can be a conduit through this maze by helping to spread the artist's message in a way that will positively affect the bottom line. A publicist does not handle marketing or booking but will write or deliver press

¹² Steinberg, Irwin and Harmon Greenblatt. *Understanding the Music Business: A Comprehensive View*. 5th ed. UNO Press. 2009. Print.

announcements on behalf of an artist. Publicists are paid a flat fee or a monthly retainer for an agreed upon number of hours.

Cyber PR founder, Ariel Hyatt has produced a guide for artists on hiring a publicist. Hyatt says, "A publicist is hired as a member of your team to represent you to the media. A publicist's job is to liaise with the press."¹³ The publicist should be hired before the album is completed. This allows her time to build a public relations strategy specific to the type of campaign the artist wants. An online campaign needs less lead time in comparison to a national campaign. Hyatt warns that publicity will not sell records but will raise awareness to build the musician's story and recognition. Although a sizable investment is required, the right publicist should open doors, with her public relations skills and an impressive network of contacts, to get the artist noticed by the media.

The cheapest way to promote music is with publicity. Publicity for a CD is free media and is generated with a press release containing the date of the new release, notable collaborations, and any other relevant information about the artist and the album. The press release should be sent to trade magazines and consumer publications. During the campaign, the press release facilitates music reviews and features with local and regional newspapers. These media outlets have thousands of readers and a good review will create the buzz the artist needs.

¹³ Hyatt, Ariel. "A Musician's Guide to Choosing the Perfect Publicist."
<http://www.sonicsoupmusic.com/Publicist.pdf> 10 April 2016.

Advertising is paid for by the label and is aimed at consumers and trade magazines. Advertisements create public awareness and inform the market of new music. The marketing department of the label creates ads with a consistent theme. This ensures that consumers can easily recognize the artist and upcoming album in online, print, television, and radio ads.

In major record labels, the marketing department is responsible creating a campaign for every album. The promotion and sales campaigns can cost tens of thousands of dollars. However, independent labels may forgo pricy advertisements for publicity, unique social networking activity, and creating viral content to build their audience.

Unique Social Media Marketing for Indie Artists and Record Labels

Avery Sunshine is a good model for best practices for building a social network. She is a pianist and R & B singer with two albums: *Avery Sunshine* (2010) and *The Sun Room* (2014). Sunshine actively engages her audience on multiple social media avenues like Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Tumblr. She promotes her social networking accounts by taking a few minutes during each of her concerts to encourage the audience to go to any of the aforementioned social media sites to post pictures and videos from the concert. She is usually singing or saying her name several times so the audience gets her name right in their posts and to leave a strong impression. According to a 2011 article in Billboard's website,

“Soon after implementing this new strategy, Avery’s personal Facebook page hit the maximum of 5,000 allowable friends, leading Facebook to shut down her account and forcing her to create a fan page – which, as of this publication, has accrued 11,633 likes. Similarly, her Twitter followers have ballooned to 7,263 as she spreads her message to an increasingly large ‘internet family.’”¹⁴

Today, Avery has over 33,000 followers on Twitter and has 138,248 likes on Facebook.

In the article, she acknowledged that her team developed a marketing strategy that involves selling herself. However, Avery only allows for 10%-20% of her social media activity to self promotion. The New Artist Model suggests that “about 80% of your posts should be funny, conversational and interesting, leaving about 20% for self promotion.”¹⁵ Audiences want to know her story. The connection will make the music more meaningful to fans that will, in turn, retweet and repost videos and pictures to spread the word about the singer’s personality and music. Her marketing approach satisfies the casual fan with status updates and tweets, as well as the “super fan” with live Facebook video feeds from concerts, airports, recording studios, and restaurants.

Promotions Practices for Independent Artists and Record Labels

Many of the weaknesses listed in the SWOT analysis are challenges that indie music businesses face in promoting their products. In major labels, the promotions department only focuses on getting airplay. However, an independent label like Rampart Street does not have employees solely dedicated to one task. Despite this,

¹⁴ Rys, Dan. “Avery Sunshine Builds her Social Network Base Onstage and Off.”

¹⁵ Dave Kusek’s New Artist Model. <http://newartistmodel.com/promote-your-music/>. 2 Feb 2016.

indie labels have been successful in promoting new music by carefully crafting a promotions timeline. Timing is essential to the life cycle of a new song or album. CD Baby and Indie Guide compiled a 12 month time line to ensure maximum exposure for new music.¹⁶ The document focuses on three types of media: traditional, social, and new.

Traditional media includes newspapers, magazines, television, and radio. To get exposure, the label should seek out music reviews, televised live performances, and heavy rotation on the radio. CD Baby suggests starting the traditional media campaign 2-3 months before the release date. Traditional media has the longest turnaround compared to the other forms of media. Print journalism has its own timelines and television and radio require a great deal of back and forth communication before the music is aired.

Social media generates conversation and word-of-mouth marketing. Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat allow users to get and give information instantaneously. Social media campaigns should start well before the music is recorded. Videos of rehearsals, pictures of guest musicians, or a post describing the inspiration for a song can drive a successful social media campaign by creating a buzz. Buzz leads to getting gigs and an increase in music sales and public awareness.

¹⁶ Chertow, Randy and Jason Feehan. *Countdown to Maximum Exposure: A Promotion timeline brought to You by IndieGuide.com and CD Baby*. <http://members.cdbaby.com/campaigns/MaxExposureGuide.pdf>. 18 Feb 2016.

According to CD Baby and Indie Guide, podcasts, blogs and websites are new media. The new media campaign should start within one month of release. Musicians use podcasts and blogs to acquire new fans. Therefore, the promotions team should diligently research which podcasts and blogs are a good fit. Websites should be ever-changing and give fans a reason to visit regularly. Websites should be easy to navigate and visually appealing for fans. Blog posts and buzz-worthy news should always be on the home page. Fans should be able to have their music, information, and merchandise needs met on the website.

A local example of marketing and promotions for an independent label is Basin Street Records. Basin Street Records was founded by Mark Samuels and Tom Thompson in 1997, before the prominence of social media. Basin Street's first project was a live recording. Samuels and Thompson started the promotion campaign two months before the performance. The concert was successful and created the necessary buzz for the album which was released three months later. In that same year, Basin Street released two other projects. The label earned top sales at the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival.¹⁷

Today, several Basin Street Records artists can be heard in New Orleans on any night of the week. Rebirth Brass Band is regularly booked at the Howlin' Wolf and the Maple Leaf Bar. Irvin Mayfield captivates audiences at the New Orleans Jazz Market

¹⁷ Felina, Melanie. Examiner. *The Soul of New Orleans – An Interview with Mark Samuels of Basin Street Records*. 9 May 2012. <http://www.examiner.com/article/the-soul-of-new-orleans-an-interview-with-mark-samuels-of-basin-street-records>. 19 Jan 2016.

and at the Irvin Mayfield's Jazz Playhouse located in the Royal Sonesta Hotel. Kermit Ruffins can be seen at several local bars as well as the Blue Nile and Little Gem Saloon. Music (CDs and vinyl albums) and merchandise are sold at each gig.

Samuels, now the sole owner, employs social media, traditional media, and printed marketing collateral. The label's website is a one-stop shop for fans and promoters with artist bios and tour dates, a music and merchandise store, and Samuels' blog. Basin Street's Facebook page has 5,320 likes and the Twitter account has 13,100 followers. Double-sided book marks were printed for the 2015 New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. The bookmark included a list of new releases and all the Basin Street performances during the 11 days of festival. Again in 2015, Basin Street Records was acknowledged in Offbeat Magazine for having the #1 selling CD at Jazz Fest - Kermit Ruffin's album, *#imsoneworleans*.¹⁸

¹⁸ Offbeat. *Top 10 Biggest Selling Album of Jazz Fest 2015*. 27 May 2015. <http://www.offbeat.com/articles/top-10-biggest-selling-albums-jazz-fest-2015/>. 7 Feb 2016.

Chapter 5: Recommendations

Jamalar Agency has changed the lives of many musicians with the opportunities it has provided over the years. Nevertheless, there are issues that Jamalar Agency will need to address to become a stronger and more profitable company. My recommendations will address the weaknesses and threats as listed in the SWOT analysis.

Quarterly Newsletters

Rampart Street Music receives quarterly sales reports from CD Baby, which includes statistical information about each music purchase. The purchaser's name and email address are very valuable for the label. E-mail marketing is a perfect way to engage your audience. E-blasts are the vehicle for email marketing. An e-blast is one electronic message (newsletter) sent to many people at the same time. E-blasts build customer loyalty through frequent communication. Mail Chimp allows do-it-yourself users to create and execute email campaigns for free. However, once a user has 2,000 or more subscribers, Mail Chimp charges a premium. Black Gospel Promo offers e-marketing services specifically for communicating with the audience via e-blasts. Black Gospel Promo allows the artist to purchase a single pre-designed e-blast for \$214 or special packages for e-blast purchases in multiples of five.¹⁹ The most successful e-blasts include an attention-grabbing subject line, fresh images, upcoming tour dates, and personal stories.

¹⁹ www.blackgospelpromo.com/products-and-services

Live Stream In-Studio Performances

Jamalar Agency has a YouTube channel and a G-mail account but does not utilize all of Google's tools. Google Hangouts has a live stream feature. Hangouts On Air allows users to host and broadcast live performances to the world through the user's YouTube channel. On Air segments can be edited. Jamalar would only need to create a Google+ profile and link it to the YouTube channel. More detailed instructions are provided on Google's support page. This service is free.

Joyful has a fan page on Facebook. To stay connected to Facebook fans, Joyful can live stream. Live stream for Facebook is an application on mobile devices. The application must be selected in the account settings.

Live video streams are another tool to help a musician monetize his craft. Streaming can attract new fans, demonstrates a live performance experience, and facilitates booking opportunities. Popular groups generate immediate money with pay per view (PPV) live streams. Services like [Concert Window](#) and [Stage It](#) let the artist connect with fans, increases exposure, and increase ticket sales. This option works best when the right venue is chosen and for bands with a substantial following and an email subscription list.

Increase Royalties and Exposure through Music Streaming Services

Rampart Street Music should have interns contact music streaming services and internet radio stations like Spotify and Pandora to have its music included. Millions of

users log into these services to hear music. Although royalty rates for streaming services are controversial because of unfair payouts per stream, the label could needs the exposure. Submitting music to Jango, Last.fm, iHeartRadio and SiriusXM should also be considered.

Seek Retail Opportunities

Rampart Street Music should research and align with other small businesses to sell its music. Those businesses include independently owned Christian bookstores, church bookstores, coffee shops, art galleries, dance studios, and take-out restaurants. When negotiating with a potential retailer, Rampart would sell the CD at wholesale and offer free CDs in every reorder. Once Rampart Street signs a contract to sell the music, it will be the label's responsibility to manage the CD at the store. This requires going into or calling the manager regularly to track sales. Locally, the label can contact the following stores:

- Lifeway Christian Book Store (New Orleans, LA)
- Gospel Book Store (Gretna, LA)
- Celebration Church Bookstore and Gift Shop (Metairie, LA)
- Community Book Center (New Orleans, LA)

The demand for New Orleans art and music has increased in popularity since Hurricane Katrina scattered citizens across the United States. A new online marketplace was created to promote art and other items that are made in New Orleans.

Dat.Market sources “only the best local artisans and craftsmen to offer a premier selection you cannot find anywhere in one place.”²⁰ On the website, goods are divided into six categories: jewelry, bath and body, home and hosting, apparel, books and music, and artwork. Currently, Basin Street Records is the only label contracted with *Dat.Market* in the music category. Rampart Street Music would be at an advantage because Basin Street Records does not have any gospel recordings on sale. Based on the terms on the website, *Dat.Market* handles shipping and returns and exchanges. The marketplace will also hold contests and survey shoppers to secure data on their demographics and shopping experiences. This opportunity will give Rampart Street access to a new group of people, with the possibility to make new fans.

Seek Alternative Marketing Opportunities

Marketing music online is cost effective for independents. Online music marketing agencies provide great opportunities for independents. These agencies focus on providing the tools necessary for building an audience while staying within the artist’s budget. For example, View Maniac provides social media marketing packages, social media verification, music publicist services, lyric video production, video design and access to music blogs for as little as \$399 per month.²¹ View Maniac’s clientele includes Def Jam Records, 50 Cent, Rihanna, and Chris Brown.

²⁰ <http://dat.market/about>. 28 Feb 2016.

²¹ www.viewmaniac.com/about. 1 Mar 2016.

If Jamalar and Rampart Street chose not to outsource for marketing services, social media advertising is cost effective and allows for precise customer targeting. Through a brief survey, the company can stipulate the age, location, religion, and gender of the target market. Social media, unlike traditional advertising, provides immediate statistics on each advertisement. “For instance, \$500 in traditional advertising could buy a small print add or perhaps a few radio ads with limited ways to track your return. The same \$500 in social media could be effective for up to 14 weeks and will result in an engaged audience where the return on investment can be tracked in real time.”²²

Apply For Financial Assistance

The United States Small Business Administration (SBA) provides aid and other resources to small businesses.²³ Jamalar Agency may qualify for an SBA loan for the expansion of the business. The 7(a) loan is the most common loan but Jamalar would have to meet the requirements and agree to the terms of the loan. I offer the following suggestions should a loan be secured:

- Hire an employee - The loan amount requested should include at least 2 years salary and benefits. With the additional help in the office, more attention can go to A&R, administrative duties, and booking. This employee can promote music on a more consistent basis.

²² Garrett, Chris. *What \$500 Will Buy You in Social Media Advertising*. 24 Jan 2014.

http://www.brw.com.au/p/marketing/what_will_buy_you_in_social_media_L1YivfeHPHqAtVjbq88fTl 1 Mar 2016.

²³ The requirements and guidelines for SBA loans are listed at www.sba.gov.

- Incentives for interns – Interns are eager for experience; however, working for free may not be an option. To get and keep qualified interns, Jamalar should consider incentives like weekly stipends, travel reimbursement, bus passes, concert tickets, gift cards, and trips to industry conferences.
- Marketing – Jamalar Agency and Rampart Street Music should create a marketing plan to include social media and print marketing. The marketing plan should include budgets for advertisements space in music industry magazines and newspapers and partnerships with more roots music and folk art festivals to build community awareness. The ads should generate more studio-related income for the Rampart Street. Paper fans, buttons, bookmarks, and tech tattoos are popular marketing collateral which can be sold or given away.²⁴
- Increase exposure – Create a Soundcloud Pro account. The Pro account requires a monthly charge \$55 per year for four hours worth of uploads. The Unlimited account costs \$135 year for unlimited uploads. Monthly subscriptions are also available. Soundcloud does not pay royalties. Links to CD Baby or iTunes can be added to page for music purchases.
- Give free performances in intimate venues to increase public awareness.

²⁴ Tech tattoos are removable stickers designed for laptops, tablets, smart phones, and other mobile technological devices.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Jamalar Agency is ripe with talent and music industry knowledge. Due to irregular cash flow, the agency relies on unpaid interns to complete tasks that should be handled by paid employees or consultants. As with most small businesses, decision makers can be apprehensive about taking great risks, or taking out a loan, to increase revenue. Jamalar has a unique roster to make its mark in New Orleans but it needs dedicated staff to scout and secure performance opportunities.

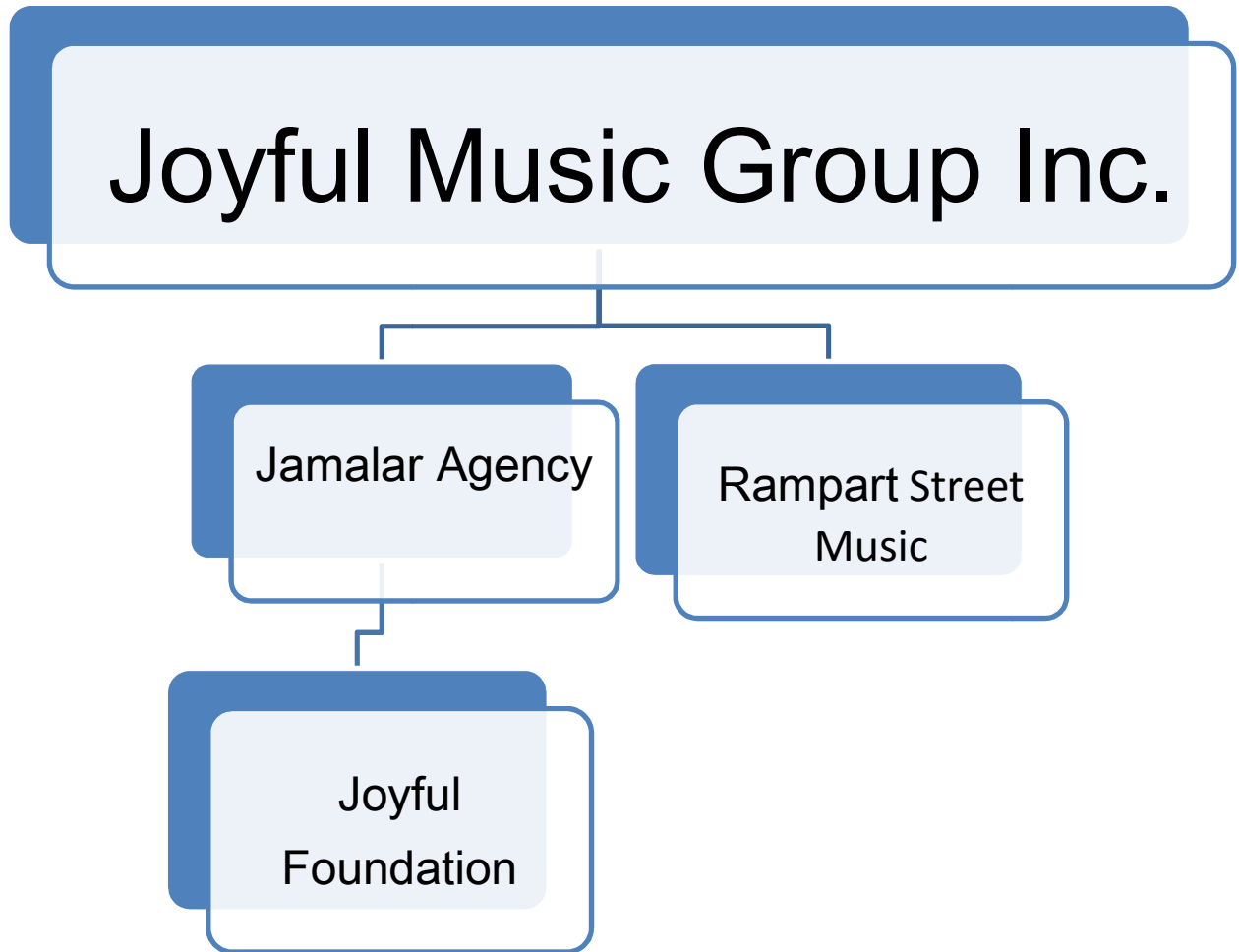
From the start of my internship, Alfred Caston and Albert Mickel were very candid about past failures and their current limitations. Their attitudes were refreshing and ignited within me a desire to help them in any way I could. My contributions were short-term but will hopefully have long-lasting impact on the agency. I took great pride in soliciting radio play and music reviews. The nomination for “Best Gospel” group for Joyful’s CD, *We’ve Got a River to Cross* should help Joyful build a local awareness and fans. Providing Caston and Mickel with ideas on selling physical CDs while on the road, proved profitable for the label.

At the end of my internship, the Jamalar Family expressed their gratitude to me for assisting with booking and communicating with them about upcoming gigs. Overall, my experience gave me a deeper understanding of the music industry from the vantage points of the artist, booking agent, and the record label. Through hands-on experience, I gained insight into the pros and cons of two related businesses being run by a group of musicians with dual interests.

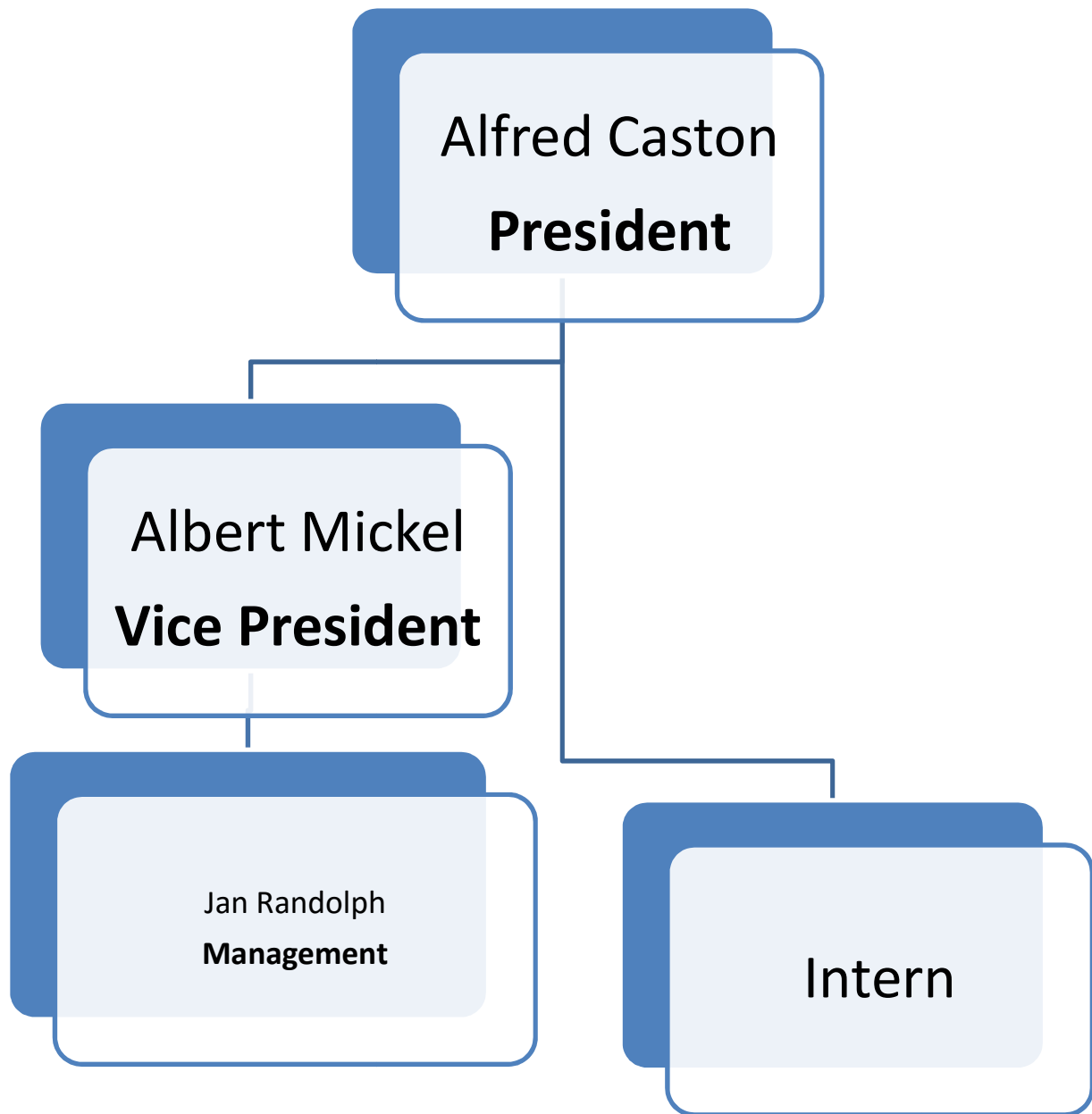
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APPENDIX A: CORPORATE STRUCTURE



APPENDIX B: ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



APPENDIX C: EUROPEAN TOUR PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact:

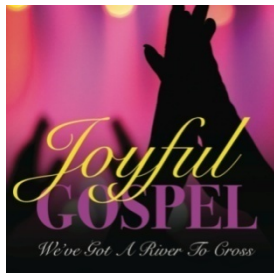
Jamalar Agency

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RAMPART STREET MUSIC RELEASES NEW CD AND ANNOUNCES EUROPEAN WINTER TOUR

NEW ORLEANS, LA (NOVEMBER 2, 2015) – For over 30 years, New Orleans’ own Joyful! Has been delivering their own brand of gospel and soul to enthusiastic audiences all over the world. Joyful! And members of the Spirit of New Orleans Choir, known as Joyful Gospel, united to release an energetic 12-track CD entitled ***We’ve Got a River to Cross*** on the Rampart Street Music label.



Ten of the twelve songs on ***We’ve Got a River to Cross*** were written by the accomplished keyboardist, composer, and choral director, Carolyn D. Shield of Baton Rouge. Shield’s passion and commitment to excellence shines through on each song. All of the featured singers and musicians work with Jamalar

Agency.

In a review of ***We’ve Got a River to Cross***, Bob Marovich of *The Journal of Gospel Music* noted, “This combined choral group sings with studied elegance, precise articulation, smooth delivery, youthful enthusiasm, and friendly harmonies.”

Since 1991, Joyful has toured internationally. This winter Joyful! Will tour Italy and Germany from December 19, 2015 through January 10, 2016. Joyful! Will appear in Piacenza, Iseo, Treviso, Brescia, Cesuna, Jesolo, Prato, Aglientu, Palau and Milan. Each concert includes songs from ***We’ve Got a River to Cross***, as well as gospel standards and songs from seven of the group’s previous albums.

Joyful! Was formed in 1980 by duo Alfred and Loretta Caston, along with father and son team, Jessie and Reginald Veal (former bassist for Wynton Marsalis’ group). Today, Joyful! Consists of Alfred Caston, Albert Mickel, Jan Randolph, Angela Dunn, Chandra Grayson, and Carolyn D. Shield.

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APPENDIX D: SONGS USED FOR US MINT CONCERT SERIES

ICONIC NEW ORLEANS SONGS

Song Title	Artist
I Know (You Don't Love Me No More)	Barbara George
Iko Iko	Dixie Cups
Chapel of Love	Dixie Cups
Walking to New Orleans	Fats Domino
They All Asked For You	The Meters
Little Liza Jane	Nina Simone
Let the Good Times Roll	Shirley and Lee
Rockin' Pneumonia and the Boogie - Woogie Flu	Huey 'Piano' Smith
Who Shot the La La	Oliver Morgan
St. James Infirmary	Snooks Eaglin
When Its Sleepy Time Down South	Al Hirt
Time is on My Side	Irma Thomas
Holy Cow	Lee Dorsey
What a Wonderful World	Louis Armstrong
Workin' in a Coal Mine	Lee Dorsey
You are My Sunshine	Jimmie Davis
Sea Cruise	Frankie Ford
Carnival Time	Al Johnson
Tell It Like It Is	Aaron Neville
It's Raining	Irma Thomas
I Got Loaded	Little Bob
Hoodo Party	Tabby Thomas
Ain't Got A Home	Clarence Henry
I Like it Like That	Chris Kenner
Don't You Just Know It	Huey 'Piano' Smith
Mother-in-Law	Ernie K. Doe

ICONIC NEW ORLEANS SONGS

In The Same Old Way	Tommy Ridgley
Stagger Lee	Lloyd Price
Time Is On My Side	Irma Thomas
Ruler of My Heart	Irma Thomas
There's Something On Your Mind	Bobby Marchan
Personality	Lloyd Price
How I Feel	Tommy Ridgley
The Bigger the Figure	Louis Prima
Right Place Wrong Time	Dr. John
Such a Night	Dr. John
Let the Good Times Roll	Dr. John
I'm Gonna Be a Wheel Someday	Fats Domino
Blueberry Hill	Fats Domino
I'm Walkin	Fats Domino
Walking to New Orleans	Fats Domino
Basin Street Blues	Louis Armstrong
Groove City	Chocolate Milk
I Hear Ya Knockin	Smiley Lewis
Certain Girl	Ernie K-Doe
She's Got Me Hook Line and Sinker	Smiley Lewis
Ya Ya	Lee Dorsey
Ohh Poo Pah Doo	Jessie Hill

APPENDIX E: JAMALAR PRESENTS: N'AWLINS SOUL REVUE

Description	A musical tribute to some of the greatest songs recorded in New Orleans during the '50s, '60s, and '70s.
Staff to Hire	2 male singers 3 female singers 1 pianist 1 drummer 1 guitarist 1 merchandise salesperson
Venue	Old US Mint (Third Floor) 400 Esplanade Avenue New Orleans, LA 70116
Date(s)	May 6-May 27, 2016 (Fridays only)
Time	2:00 PM – 3:00 PM
Capacity	120-150 (seats and standing room in the rear)
Tickets	Unable to disclose price. Ticketing will be sold at the door and on the Louisiana Museum Foundation's website.

APPENDIX F: JIVE BIO

Jive!

New Orleans is a gumbo of musical genres. We think most locals and tourist agree that on virtually every corner, there is a musical offering. We all recognize jazz, gospel, soul and certainly the blues, but.... Doo Wop?

Some say that Doo Wop originated in a certain northern stretch of the USA. That theory, of late, has been challenged. Some happy go-lucky southern crooners beg to differ. The vintage falsetto tenor and bebop bass lines that define Doo Wop were more likely started in the cotton fields and sugar plantations right here in the South. This ain't no ***Jive!***

We will, however, concede that that many of our ingenious, transplanted neighbors from the North (mainly Philadelphia, New York, and Detroit) were the first to widely commercialize it.

Hence we find ourselves forever in love with classics like, ***Cupid, Oh What a Night, Tears on My Pillow, Get a Job, Love Potion #9*** and countless others. This ain't no ***Jive!***

Jive! (New Orleans latest vocal tribute group) has dedicated countless hours to paying homage to many of the signature groups and songs of the popular Doo Wop era, while stirring in iconic rhythm and blues hits from New Orleans during the 1960s and 1970s into each performance.

Floyd Turner, Caprice Sanders, Wanda Joseph, Alfred Penns and Pearlie Tyler make up “Jive!” This group represents more than 100 years of gospel, soul, and rhythm and blues experience. So naturally, their presentation of many of the greatest hits of all time is flawless. The excitement they exude is certainly a focal point of this New Orleans vocal group. Ladies and gents... This is ***Jive!***

VITA

LaWanda J. Smith was born in New Orleans, LA. She obtained a Bachelor's degree in criminal justice at Loyola University New Orleans in 2002. Soon after, she began volunteering with local arts organizations during festivals and special events. In 2013, her volunteer work led her to pursue an MA in Arts Administration at the University of New Orleans. She is currently a student member of the Recording Academy.