

INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE FOR MUSICIANS OF THE GRAND HOUSTON OPERA

Client Name: Christina Medawar

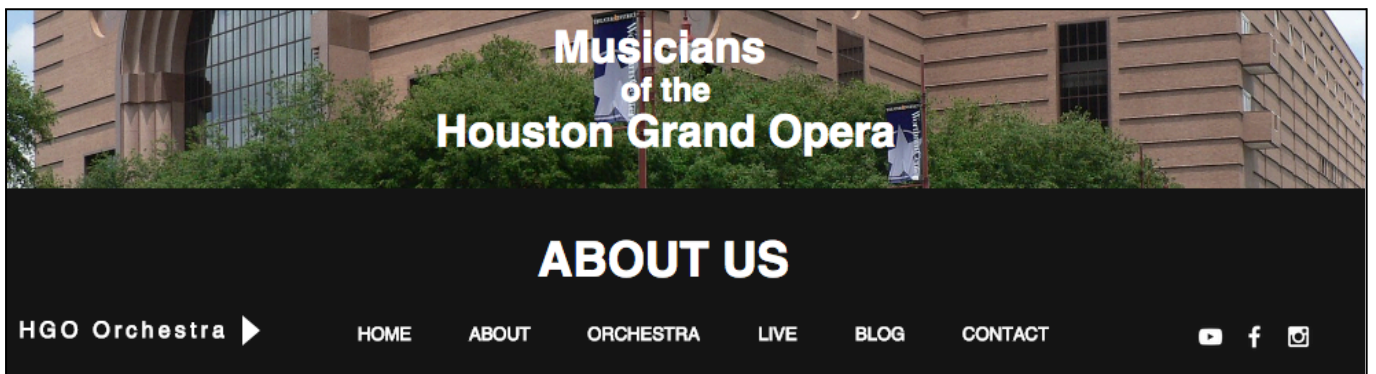
Web Team: Starr Harris, Sam Mchaney, Dini Nadzaruddin, Mitchell Thomson

Top-Down Approach:

Top-down approach is a technique of breaking down and analyzing a website's architecture that is already in place, with the goal of finding elements that work and distinguishing what doesn't work well in websites that already exist. For this exercise we looked at our client's current website for the Musicians of the Houston Grand Opera (MHGO) as well as two competitors' websites, the Met Orchestra Musicians and Musicians of the Utah Symphony.

Musicians of the Houston Grand Opera

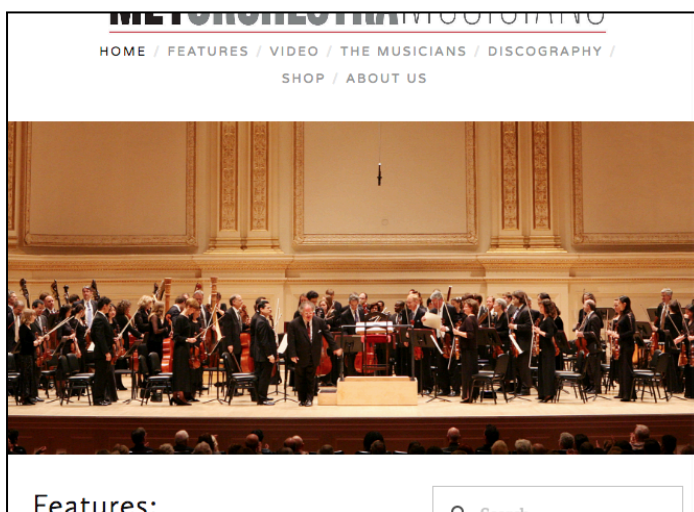
<http://info348306.wix.com/hgoorchestra>



Top Level Navigation: As seen above. There is no sub level navigation on their current website.

Met Orchestra Musicians

<http://www.metorchestramusicians.org/>



Top Level Navigation:

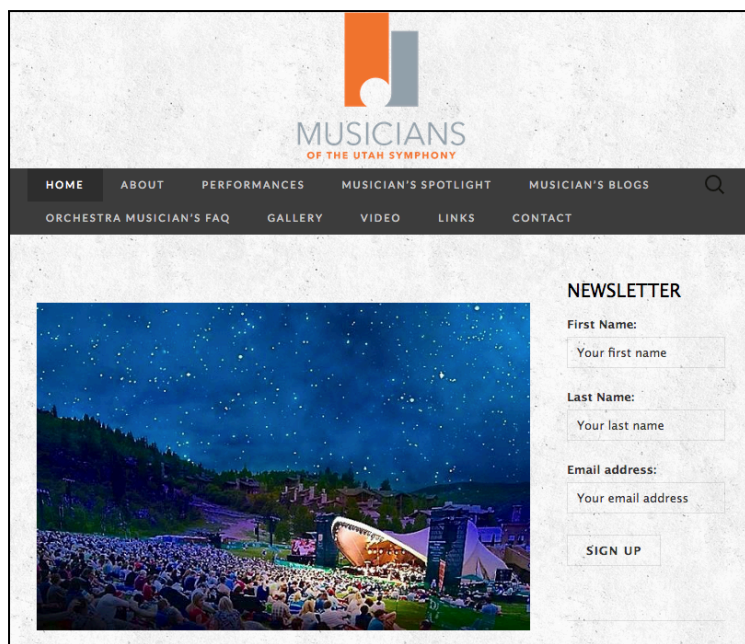
- Home
- Features
- Video
- The Musicians
- Discography
- Shop
- About Us

Sub Level Navigation:

- Discography > Full Orchestra > Solo Work > MET Opera Brass
- About Us > Newsletter > Contact > Portal

Musicians of the Utah Symphony

<http://musiciansutahsymphony.com/>



The screenshot shows the website's header with the logo "MUSICIANS OF THE UTAH SYMPHONY" and a navigation menu. Below the menu is a newsletter sign-up form with fields for "First Name", "Last Name", and "Email address", and a "SIGN UP" button. The background features a large image of a concert audience at night.

Top Level Navigation:

- Home
- About
- Performances
- Musician's Spotlight
- Musician's Blog
- Orchestra Musician's FAQ
- Gallery
- Video
- Links
- Contact

Sub Level Navigation:

• About > The Musicians > Utah Symphony > Interesting Facts > Teachers & Ensembles > Out Reach > Rear Window > Music & Musicians in the News

• Performances > Utah Symphony Performances > USUO Events Calendar > Intermezzo Chamber Series > Summer Venue Maps

• Musician's Spotlight > John Eckstein > Bonnie Mangold > Erin Svoboda > ALS Ice Bucket Challenge > Viola Day 2.0 > Artist Anecdotes >> Lynn Rosen > Previous Spotlights >> Elina Lev >> Don Main >> Lynnette Stewart

• Musician's Blog > Brant Bayless > Jason Hardink > David Porter > Robert Stephenson > The Orchestra > Percussion Highlight >> The Three Year Old "Historic" Timpani >> How to be a professional triangle player > Rely on the Professionals > Cool Technology Use > How a musician learned to deal with a career-ending ear injury

• Gallery > In Rehearsal > Vintage > European Tour > Youthful > Lounge

• Video > ALS Ice Bucket Challenge > Ralph Gochnour > Turandot > Ski with the Symphony Musician's Day 2014 > Utah Symphony on Tour > An interview with Francis Darger > American Federation of Musicians Local 104 > For the Love of Music

• Links > International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians > American Federation of Musicians > Abravanel Hall > Industry News > Polyphonic Orchestra Musician Forum > Utah Youth Orchestras & Ensembles > Legacy Music Alliance

Bottom Up Design Approach:

Bottom-up approach is a method of piecing together information and trying to categorize it in a way that should make sense to end users. For this exercise, the web team gathered questions about the website, acting as our potential target audience. After coming up with a list of questions, the team created main categories (top-level navigation) and sorted the questions under what seemed the appropriate main category. This process helped in creating the sitemap/information architecture of the new MHGO website.

1: Questions from target users

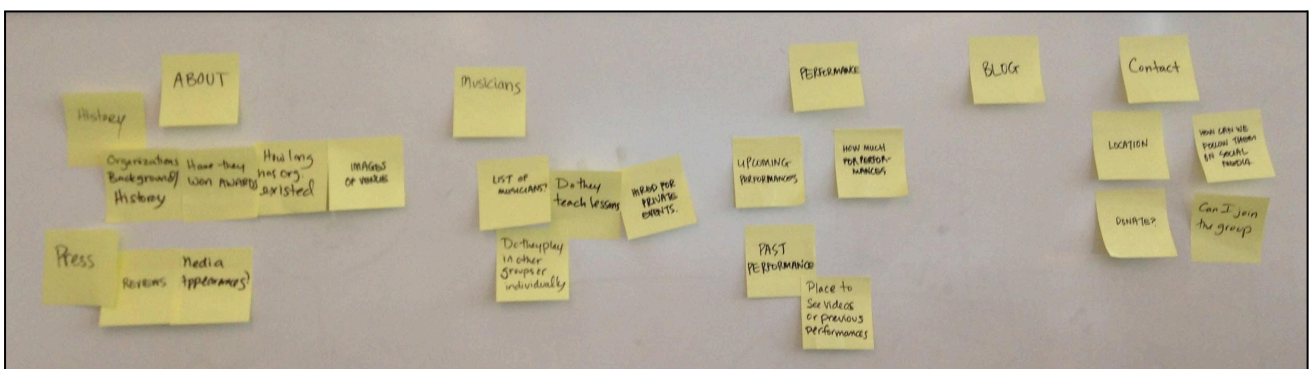
The first approach to Bottom-Up design was to gather questions that target audiences would normally ask when visiting the website. The group brainstormed and came up with the following list of questions:

See list the musicians in the group?
How can I donate?
Are they any good?
Images of the venue
Can I join the group?
Contact?
Do they teach lessons?
How long they have been around?
Can I purchase your music?
Do media appearances?

List of upcoming events?
Where are the performances.. Location
Press Reviews?
How much are the performances?
Can the musicians be hired for private events?
Have they won any awards?
Do they play in other groups or individually?
The organization's background and history?
Place to see videos and see previous performances?

2: Affinity Diagram

After the team compiled the list of questions, we then analyzed the list and discussed the groupings and how these groups should be defined for the MHGO website. This helped create the main navigational components and content that would be found under each navigation. This stage was helpful in terms of visualising how the sitemap would look like and how we form the basic structure of the website.



The groupings:

1. About

1.1 History

- Organization background?
- How long have they been around?
- Have they won awards?
- Images of the Orchestra

1.2 Press

- Reviews and articles?
- Media appearances

2. Musicians

- List of musicians
- Do they teach music lessons?
- Can they be hired for events?
- Can they play in smaller groups or individually?

3. Performances

3.1 Upcoming performances

- Calendar
- How much do they charge for performances

3.1 Past performances

- Are there images and videos from past performances?

4. Blog

5. Contact

5.1 How to contact them

- Location
- Email
- Phone ?

5.2 Do they have social media?

5.3 Donate?

5.4 How to join their orchestra group?

Through this process the team came up with some questions for the client:

1. For the contact page does the client want a form, that will directly email to her, or are we going to use the email contacts that are on the current site.

2. Do the musicians teach or have other projects that they would want linked to their personal bio pages?

Conclusion

The process of looking at this project from both the top-down and bottom-up approaches proved to be very helpful to the team. In the top-down approach, we learned that the current MGHO site is lacking in structure and to meet our clients goals, we need to build a more detailed site. Goals include adding a blog, individual musicians pages, possible video pages and press pages (something more along the line of the Met Orchestra Musicians website). However, we do not want it to be as large or overwhelming as the Musicians of the Utah Symphony, which has so much content and sub level navigation that is really not needed to meet our client's goals.

The web team found the bottom-up method to be a very useful process. Being able to visualize the web structure in a simple format (post-its on a white board), and having the freedom to openly discuss and easily move information around, really helped form the information architecture for the MGHO site, we are proposing below.

