

Chamber Music America

www.chamber-music.org

CMA Survey Summary

The Impact of COVID-19 on the Small
Ensemble Music Field as of April 1, 2020

This report has been published in partnership with the Wallace Foundation's ["Building Audiences for the Arts"](#) initiative.

Introduction

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus (COVID-19) a pandemic. Even before that, live ensemble music performances had begun to be cancelled because of accelerating illnesses and deaths in concentrated parts of the country and the world.

As the virus spread, so did the cancellations, and it became clear that the disease would affect the small ensemble music field in profound and unprecedented ways.

In an attempt to understand and document the impact of the pandemic on the field, Chamber Music America distributed a survey to its mailing list of 8,593; 453 completed the survey, a response rate of 5.3 percent.

Following is a summary of the survey results. It is essential to remember that these results represent activity, perceptions, and estimates from respondents up to April 1, 2020, the deadline to complete the survey.

We recognize that much has changed since then, and intend to distribute a second survey whose results will contribute to a more complete picture of how the pandemic has affected artists, educators, presenters, and music businesses.

The findings will help CMA continue to advocate for the small ensemble music community, and to serve the field in the best way we can.



Margaret M. Lioi
Chief Executive Officer

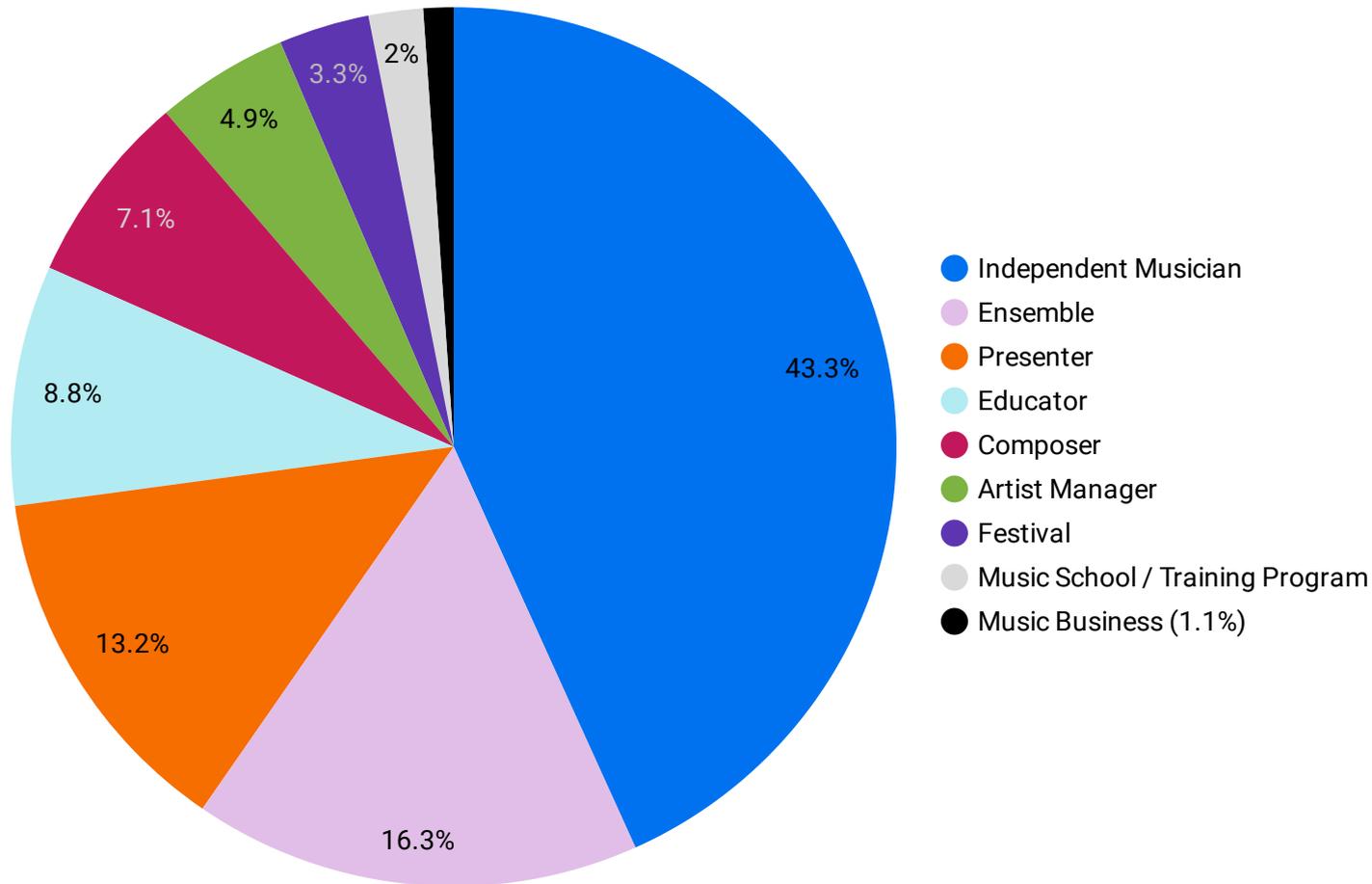
Survey Respondents

453 responses were received from:

41 states, Washington DC, and Puerto Rico

High response rates from New York (29.1%) and California (17.7%)

3 additional countries (Canada, Denmark, and Germany)



Have you or your organization adopted remote technology due to COVID-19?

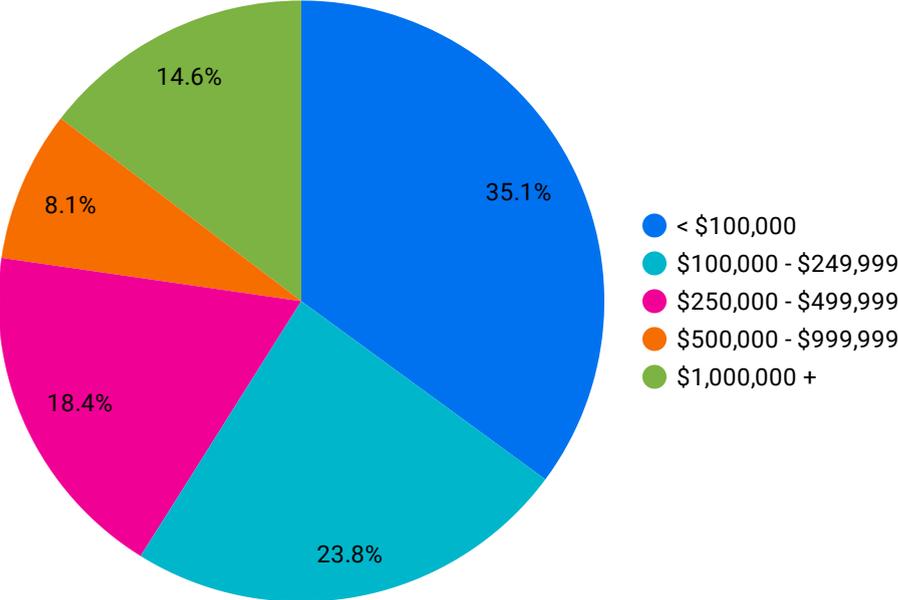
Yes - Has adopted or plans to adopt remote technology	291	64.24%
No - Do Not Have the Infrastructure for Remote Activity	84	18.54%
No - Do Not Plan to Adopt Remote Technology	78	17.22%

Responses from Organizations

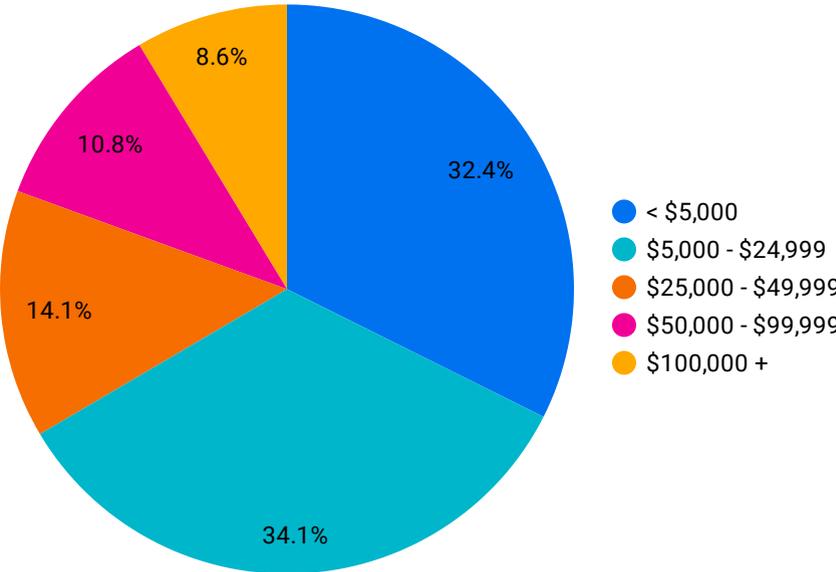
Artist Managers, Ensembles, Festivals, Music Businesses, Music Schools/Training Programs, & Presenters

12.4% have had their health affected by COVID-19
60.5% expect COVID-19 to impact their organization severely
19.5% extremely likely to lay off staff
77.3% have budgets under \$500,000

Operating Budget of Respondent Organizations



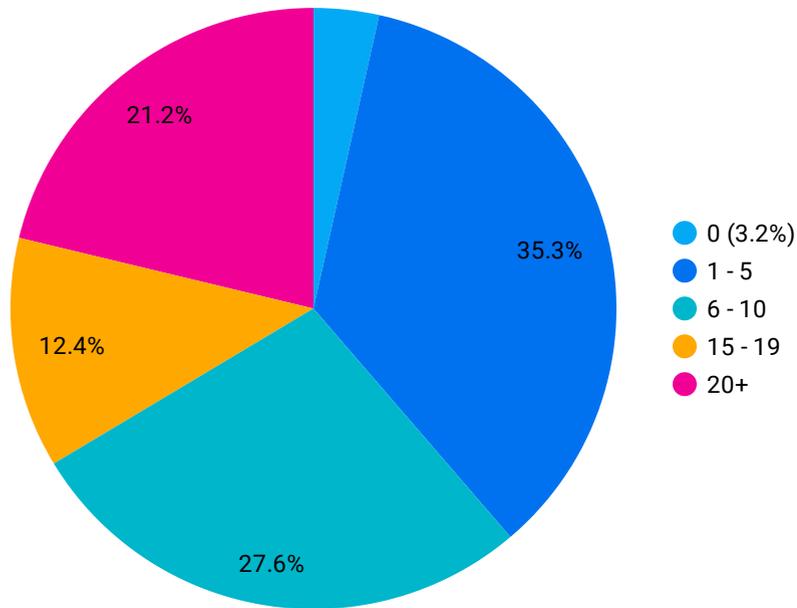
Estimated Amount of Lost Income



Responses From Organizations (cont.)

Artist Managers, Ensembles, Festivals, Music Businesses, Music Schools/Training Programs, & Presenters

Number of Events Cancelled or Postponed



Plan to present/produce events remotely

Yes - we plan to present/produce some events remotely	82	44.32%
No - we do not have the infrastructure to present/produce any events remotely	54	29.19%
No - we do not plan to present/produce any events remotely	49	26.49%

Organizations Experienced Increased Expenses Due to:

- Technology upgrades
- Cleaning
- Setting up remote working capabilities
- Rescheduling and marketing events/performances

Responses from Individuals

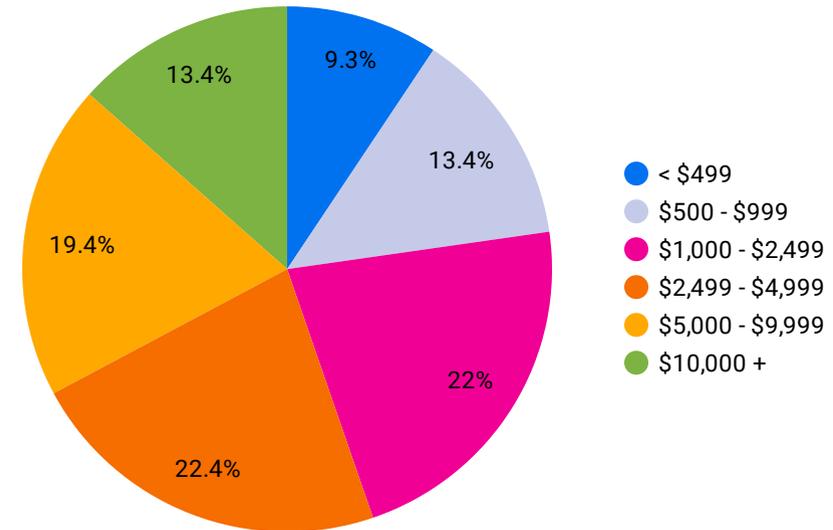
Composers, Educators, & Independent Musicians

8.2% have had their health impacted by COVID-19
 63.8% expect careers will experience significant financial impact from COVID-19
 32.8% saw increases in unanticipated expenses

Types of expenses:

- electronic devices to enhance remote teaching
- office supplies
- additional software and subscriptions
- unanticipated travel
- unreimbursed medicine and medical care

Estimated Amount of Lost Income



Have you adopted remote technology due to COVID-19?

Yes - I have adopted remote technology	209	77.99%
No - I do not have the infrastructure for remote musical activity	30	11.19%
No - I do not plan to adopt remote technology for musical activity	29	10.82%

Remote technology primarily used for teaching, performances, and recording

What Organizations Shared

Artist Managers, Ensembles, Festivals, Music Businesses, Music Schools/Training Programs, & Presenters

"We are working very hard to avoid laying off any staff...If we can start the fall season again as planned, we believe we can weather the crisis - although we will have significantly reduced funds for continuing programming as usual. If shutdowns extend beyond September, we will be in serious trouble as an organization."

"We anticipate long-term reduction in ticket sales of 20-30% and a 20% decline in giving for the next several years - not just this season. The affects of this on audience behavior and giving will be long-term."

"Our most immediate concern is the potential loss of our physical space, should income fall extensively for an extended period. It would be an extinction-level event for our organization, as without a physical space to store instruments and rehearse, we simply cannot exist."

"The interest free loans being offered by some emergency funding does not work for small and vulnerable organizations. We're also concerned about the long-term impact to other partnering organizations. If there's no one to do business with after this is over then all small to midsize organizations will fold. Our agency has weathered many downturns in the last 4 decades. This is by far the scariest and most unnerving of them all because of the unknown length of impact."

"The dramatic market turn-down and overall disintegrating economy will affect endowment returns, as well as donor capacity to give."

"It has been devastating financially and artistically, but we're focused on figuring out how we can continue accomplishing our mission as much as is possible during this uncertain time."

What Individuals Shared

Composers, Educators, & Independent Musicians

"The uncertainty of the timeline and the financial pressure are creating an unbelievable level of anxiety and stress in my community. At the same time, I am seeing people come together online in a wonderful spirit of connection that I haven't really witnessed online before. I feel that this crisis is a huge opportunity for the arts community to step up and show that we are NOT superfluous but rather very necessary to the health of our society."

"I fear that the impact on the artist community will be felt for years. Right now, it is easy to quantify the lost income through cancelled performances, etc. Harder to measure will be the loss in donated income for small non-profit ensembles, loss of performance opportunities going into the next 2-3 seasons due to rescheduled performances from right now, loss of teaching positions as universities and music schools contract in size due to budget cuts in the face of lost revenue from COVID-19."

"It appears entrepreneurs, in particular working musicians are being left out of many of the currently projected possible financial bailouts/solutions."

"For now, a surprising and heart-warming number of presenters who have canceled engagements have paid the musicians some portion of what they would have received, citing awareness of how hard it is for free-lance musicians when all their work disappears and that we're all part of this community together. But it seems clear there are limits to how long that can go on, and I worry about the medium term."

"Recovery for culture-bearers in New Orleans will take a long time. Over-dependence on visitorship/tourism, will create longer term problems. Venues will likely not survive and the local economy will be decimated for a full one or two years because of the planning process and timeline for business travel. Leisure tourism will be slowed because of global economic downturn. Many musicians, possibly a majority, are not in a position to re-tool and re-brand. They lack the resources, technical infrastructure and habits."

Chamber Music America

For Emergency Relief Efforts, CMA Actions, and Other Resources
Please Visit:

<https://www.chamber-music.org/resources/covid-19>