DMA Proposal Workshop   Interviewing for research
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Oct. 3, 2016

Have clear goals for the interview
You must know why the interview is necessary to your project and be able to convince the GPDC of this fact.

Advice from Booth, Colomb, and Williams, *The Craft of Research*, 3rd ed.

> …**the more you plan by determining *exactly* what you want to know, the more efficiently you will get what you need**. You don't need to script an interview around a set list of questions—in fact, that can be a bad idea if it freezes the interviewee. **But prepare so that you don't question your source aimlessly. You can always reread a book for what you missed, but you can't keep going back to people because you didn't prepare well enough to get what you needed the first time.** (82)

IRB Approval is required. This will require a set of interview questions.

https://research.unt.edu/faculty-resources/integrity-compliance/irb

Do your own work

Use an interview if there is information you need for your project that you can only get from an interview. Don't use it as a substitute for doing your own research with print sources or your own musical analysis.

Prepare for the interview
Prepare so that you can avoid wasting the interviewee's time by asking about information that is available in published sources. Read other interviews with that person if possible.

Avoid obvious or naïve questions
Don't ask "where do you get your ideas?", "what did you have in mind when you composed this piece?", "how should this piece be analyzed?", "what is the most important thing about your music that my research should focus on?", or any question that begins with "what is your favorite _____".

Read published interviews
A few examples:

Gagné, Nicole V., Tracy Caras, and Gene Bagnato. 1982. *Soundpieces: interviews with American composers*. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press.

http://iii.library.unt.edu/record=b1224213~S12

Gagné, Nicole V. 1993. *Soundpieces 2: interviews with American composers*. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press.

http://iii.library.unt.edu/record=b1766025~S12

Kelly, Jennifer. 2013. *In Her Own Words: Conversations With Composers In The United States. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.*

http://iii.library.unt.edu/record=b5010053~S12

Read guides to interviewing and choose what suits your project and your style
A few I found with a quick search:

http://managementhelp.org/businessresearch/interviews.htm

https://www2.open.ac.uk/students/skillsforstudy/conducting-an-interview.php

http://www.monash.edu.au/lls/hdr/develop/4.2.1.html

Give thought to the process of transcribing from speech to text
If you do it too literally, it's difficult to read. If you edit too much to make it readable, you risk misrepresenting what the interviewee said. I have a longer handout that goes into the transcription question in more detail. It's available on request.

Practice with technology
If you are recording in person, make sure the recorder has enough battery power or plug it in, check for sufficient storage space for the recording. Check the gain to be sure the volume is high enough to have good quality, but not so high that it distorts. If you are recording a phone call or skype call, make sure you can record both ends of the conversation with good quality. Make backup copies of your interview recordings on more than one computer and online storage. As you transcribe it, work from copies, not the only original file.