

WHISPERINGS

S o l o P i a n o R a d i o

History

Whisperings: Solo Piano Radio is an Internet Radio broadcast founded by David Nevue, a pianist and composer who also operates The Music Biz Academy, an educational web site for independent musicians; and is the author of the book, *How to Promote Your Music Successfully on the Internet*. An internationally known recording artist and live performer, Nevue has released 10 professional CD recordings and offers sheet music of many of his recordings for purchase.

Nevue launched Whisperings: Solo Piano Radio in August 2003 for the purpose of promoting his solo piano music and the music of his fellow artists. The formation of Whisperings also created a community of piano artists who enjoy the many benefits of working together as opposed to individually; music cross-promotion, networking, receiving career and technical advice as well as participating in Whisperings branded concert performances around the country. Five years in, Whisperings: Solo Piano Radio is home to more than 150 talented piano artists and can be heard on iTunes and Windows Media Tuner among other platforms, where it is streamed 1.4 million times each month by piano music fans.

Whisperings: Solo Piano Radio now offers two distinct streams: The free service, offering FM-quality audio with commercials accessible; and Whisperings "PureStream", a new

subscription-based, commercial-free service offering CD-quality audio and an expanded playlist. Both streams are accessible at www.SoloPianoRadio.com.

Situation

When first launched in 2003, Whisperings had an initial capacity of 25 simultaneous listeners or audio streams, incurring bandwidth costs of roughly \$25 per month. An immediate hit, the service quickly expanded to more than 1,000 simultaneous listeners, with bandwidth costs rising exponentially. In the early days, Nevue and other Whisperings pianists shouldered all of the operating costs.

"For the first year, the artists were financially propping up the broadcast and the service, allowing us to support up to 1,000 simultaneous listeners," said Nevue. "But we reached a point where we couldn't financially support the growing demand for our broadcast. We were constantly pegged at 1,000 listeners because people were continuously trying to access the stream, and we didn't have the bandwidth to service everyone who wanted to tune in. If they couldn't get in, they would receive a message from our server saying the broadcast was full. I had to find a way to make Whisperings listener-supported because I was already asking the artists to contribute financially in addition to my own contributions. That's when StreamGuys entered the picture."



David Nevue, pianist and internet music entrepreneur

Solution

StreamGuys first built a robust server infrastructure with plenty of bandwidth capacity to support larger audiences for the free service. StreamGuys also enabled Nevue to launch the PureStream subscription service using the

StreamGuys RevenueStream subscription platform. The RevenueStream service has enabled Whisperings to become entirely listener supported, and has allowed Nevue and his team to increase revenue and defray operating costs.

Whisperings "PureStream" is the second Internet Radio outlet launched by Nevue, accessible at SoloPianoRadio.com. It is the subscription-based, commercial-free version of his first Internet Radio broadcast, "Whisperings: Solo Piano Radio", which remains a free service. PureStream offers an expanded playlist in CD-quality format with no commercial interruptions. Both services, managed and delivered by StreamGuys, present performances by more than 150 accomplished solo piano artists.

Since utilizing RevenueStream, subscriber revenue from the Whisperings PureStream service has defrayed bandwidth costs and allowed Whisperings to grow its aggregate audience by 500 percent to more than 5,000 simultaneous listeners, which equates to about 50,000 streams launched each day. The robust server architecture built by StreamGuys allowed Whisperings to support its growing audience and promote its artists' music to listeners who otherwise would have never heard the music.

"Whisperings was completely listener-supported within five months of launching PureStream as a subscription-based Internet Radio broadcast using RevenueStream," said Nevue. "And because of that revenue, my fellow artists and I no longer had to financially support the broadcast. The fans of the broadcast are now supporting the broadcast. Overall, we're seeing more than one million streams launched each month, and our global audience continues to grow."

Benefits

The StreamGuys RevenueStream service provides password-protected subscription controls and conditional access for both new and existing streams using PayPal, the popular third-party online payment service; and its own efficient, scalable server infrastructure.

StreamGuys currently supports Windows Media audio/video, Icecast mp3 audio and QuickTime for both streams, with Wowza-enabled Flash audio and video in the works. Content providers can encode media by remotely accessing software in the StreamGuys server architecture.

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"StreamGuys has been extremely helpful since the beginning, offering exceptional support and easy-to-use, Web-based tools for encoding and managing our program content," said Nevue. "StreamGuys enhanced the technical side and helped us create a commercial free stream for our broadcast. The subscription system allows listeners to contribute to the broadcast and enjoy our premium content, while also maintaining the free service for everyone."

In addition to audience expansion and enabling listener support, Nevue says he's also seen an increase in revenue resulting from the online sale of his own CDs, digital downloads and sheet music for his original piano compositions, most of which are featured on the Whisperings broadcast.



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