

# ARTISTIC PROPOSAL COMMUNICATION DECALOGUE

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*A step-by-step guide to presenting  
your project effectively*

**Women Conductors**



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# How to Communicate Your Artistic Proposal Effectively

Before we dive into the 10 keys of this guide, it's important to recognise one essential truth: having a strong artistic idea is only the first step. The way you communicate that idea — especially in professional or institutional contexts — can determine whether it is heard, considered, and supported.

This *Decalogue* is designed to help you structure and present your proposal in a way that is clear, engaging, and aligned with the needs of the person or organisation you're addressing. It's not about "selling" — it's about building meaningful, respectful, and strategic artistic dialogue.

Let's begin.

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## 1. Help Them Identify with Your Proposal

### **Need Addressed:**

Often, a proposal fails to generate interest simply because it doesn't align with the other person's values or interests. It's not just about what you want to share, but about allowing the other person to see themselves reflected in what you're proposing.

### **Objective:**

Ensure the other person sees your proposal as relevant, feasible, and valuable for them — not just for you.

### **IN FACE-TO-FACE CONTEXT**

#### **How to apply it in a live conversation:**

In the first few minutes of dialogue, the most important thing is to establish a genuine connection. Observe, listen, and adapt your speech. If you know something about the person's background or interests, refer to it to show

affinity.

✦ **Key Tip:** Don't begin by "selling" your idea. Start by recognising a shared value or common concern.

**Example:**

You're talking to a director who has expressed interest in educational impact projects.

You could say:

"I know you've been working with young people in marginalised neighbourhoods, and your approach really caught my attention. I'm developing something similar with a youth orchestra, and I think we could exchange ideas — or even collaborate."

 **IN DIGITAL CONTEXT (email or platform messaging)**

Before writing, research the person's profile: past projects, interests, place of work. That way, you can show from the very first paragraph that your message is tailored — not generic.

✦ **Key Tip:** Avoid mass messages. Always personalise.

**Example:**

If you saw they published a call for innovative proposals, you could write:

"Hi [Name], I noticed your call for proposals focused on connecting with younger audiences. I've developed an idea specifically for that goal — it preserves the classical essence but delivers it with a fresh, contemporary aesthetic. I'd love to tell you more if you're open to new approaches."

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## 2. Spark Intrigue, Curiosity or Surprise

**Need Addressed:**

In a landscape full of proposals, messages, and ideas, what captures attention isn't always the most polished concept, but the one that sparks immediate curiosity. If you don't grab interest within the first seconds, your proposal may go unnoticed.

### 🎯 **Objective:**

Generate interest from the very beginning, so the other person wants to keep listening, read until the end, or ask you for more details.

### 🗣️ **IN FACE-TO-FACE CONTEXT**

#### **How to apply it in a live conversation:**

Open your presentation with a mental image, a question, or an unusual statement connected to your project. This invites the other person to get curious, to ask, or to imagine the idea with you.

★ **Key Tip:** Evoke an experience, not just a technical concept.

#### **Example:**

“Imagine the audience moving freely through the space, while musicians perform from different sound stations. It’s a proposal that turns the concert into a journey.”

This type of sentence invites natural follow-up questions: *How would that work? What kind of music fits that format?*

### 💻 **IN DIGITAL CONTEXT (email or platform messaging)**

Your opening message needs a “hook” that encourages the recipient to keep reading. The subject line and first line should be engaging but clear.

★ **Key Tip:** Use imaginative language that remains professional — avoid exaggeration.

#### **Example – email subject:**

“A moving sound experience: proposal for your upcoming season”

#### **First line of message:**

“I’m working on a concert format where the audience doesn’t stay seated — they walk, listen, and explore music in motion. I believe it could be a unique way to bring classical music closer to new audiences.”

### 3. Explain What They Will Gain from Your Proposal

#### **Need Addressed:**

Even a creative idea may not be appealing if it doesn't clearly show how it benefits the recipient. Many proposals fail because they don't explain what the other person actually gains from getting involved.

#### **Objective:**

To present clear, specific benefits aligned with the other person's goals or needs — whether in terms of visibility, innovation, social impact, artistic prestige, or audience reach.

#### **IN FACE-TO-FACE CONTEXT**

##### **How to apply it in conversation:**

Once you've captured their interest, be direct: explain why your idea is useful or valuable to them. Avoid long or abstract speeches — focus on a single, realistic and relevant benefit.

✦ **Key Tip:** Ask yourself what your idea adds to their institution, project, or goals. Does it expand their audience? Improve visibility? Solve a problem?

##### **Example:**

"This format could help you open the season with a proposal that surprises, without clashing with the style your audience already enjoys. It's innovation without disruption."

#### **IN DIGITAL CONTEXT (email or platform messaging)**

Your message should clearly highlight what the other person will gain if they support or respond to your proposal. Don't leave it implied — if needed, list the benefits briefly.

✦ **Key Tip:** Avoid vague phrases like "I think this might interest you." Instead, use concrete, tailored advantages.

##### **Example:**

"This project could help you diversify your audience by engaging new publics, without compromising the artistic quality that defines your work."

## 4. Make Clear What They'll Receive (and What You Offer)

### Need Addressed:

People often reject proposals not because they aren't interested, but because they're unclear about what's involved. Ambiguity creates mistrust, especially in new relationships or among collaborators who haven't worked together before.

### 🎯 Objective:

To build trust and clarity from the start by explaining what you will provide, and what they can expect from you (and, if relevant, your team or community).

### 🗣️ **IN FACE-TO-FACE CONTEXT**

#### How to apply it in conversation:

Once you've presented your idea and its value, clearly state what you're offering to do. Don't leave anything to assumption — clarity helps the conversation move forward.

✦ **Key Tip:** Be specific, but avoid overwhelming with technical detail.

### Example:

"The proposal includes a team of visual artists I've worked with before. I'd coordinate all artistic production, and all we'd need from your side is help connecting with your press team."

### 💻 **IN DIGITAL CONTEXT (email or platform messaging)**

Written messages require even more clarity. The recipient can't ask follow-up questions instantly, so you need to explain what they'd receive if they join the proposal. Avoid phrases like "I'll take care of everything" — say what that includes.

✦ **Key Tip:** Use a short paragraph or list to outline your contribution — and, if applicable, what you'd need from them.

**Example:**

"In this proposal, I would handle the artistic direction, programme script, musician coordination, and general rehearsal supervision. From your side, I would just need access to the auditorium and a sound technician from your local team."

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## 5. Speak to Their Mind

**Need Addressed:**

When you present an idea, the recipient immediately starts asking themselves questions:

Is this feasible? How complex is it? Will I need to be heavily involved? Will it work in our context?

If you don't anticipate these thoughts, they can cause hesitation or doubt.

**🎯 Objective:**

Show that your proposal is well thought-out. Anticipate concerns, offer solutions, and build confidence through preparation.

**🧠 IN FACE-TO-FACE CONTEXT****How to apply it in conversation:**

Pay attention to non-verbal cues: a hesitant look, a pause, a gesture.

Sometimes, people don't voice their doubts, but you can spot them. Use phrases that naturally address unspoken concerns.

★ **Key Tip:** Try opening with "You might be wondering..." or "I know this may sound complex, but..." to reduce tension and clarify.

**Example:**

"I know it might sound ambitious to stage a performance in a non-traditional space, but I've done something similar before in a comparable venue — with very good results, even on a tight budget."

### **IN DIGITAL CONTEXT (email or platform messaging)**

In emails, the recipient reads alone and can't ask you immediate questions. So, it's crucial to address likely doubts within the message itself.

✦ **Key Tip:** Choose one or two foreseeable questions (funding, logistics, workload, artistic fit) and answer them briefly and proactively.

#### **Example:**

"I understand there may be concerns about technical requirements, but the format is flexible — it can be performed with either a full orchestra or a reduced ensemble, depending on what's available."

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## **6. Anticipate and Address Their Objections**

### **Need Addressed:**

When someone receives a proposal, it's natural for them to consider potential challenges or risks — such as budget, logistics, timelines, staffing, artistic alignment, etc.

If you don't acknowledge these points, the other person might assume you haven't considered them or aren't prepared to manage them.

### **Objective:**

To show that your proposal is not only creative, but also realistic and well thought-out. By anticipating likely objections, you build trust and reduce barriers to moving forward.

### **IN FACE-TO-FACE CONTEXT**

#### **How to apply it in conversation:**

Listen carefully not only to what the person says, but to what they suggest between the lines. Do they look doubtful? Cross their arms? Ask vague questions? These may be signs of concern.

✦ **Key Tip:** You can proactively raise a potential objection and respond calmly. This doesn't weaken your pitch — on the contrary, it shows strategic thinking.

### Example:

“I imagine one of the challenges might be how to fit this into an already planned season. That’s why I designed it as a standalone capsule that can be integrated without disrupting your overall programming.”

### **IN DIGITAL CONTEXT (email or platform messaging)**

As with previous points, in a digital message you can’t see real-time reactions, so it’s even more important to anticipate resistance. Choose one or two likely concerns and respond to them clearly, briefly and confidently.

★ **Key Tip:** Don’t over-explain or sound defensive. Instead of saying “I know this may seem difficult,” try a confident approach like “this proposal already accounts for...”

### Example:

“I understand that cost may be a concern. That’s why the project is structured in three flexible formats, adaptable to the available budget. I also have the support of a local foundation that can partially fund the production.”

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## 7. Reduce Risk; Provide Confidence and Comfort

### Need Addressed:

When a proposal is new, different, or requires a certain investment (of time, money, or reputation), it’s normal for some hesitation to arise. Even if the idea is strong, fear of the unknown can lead the other person to hesitate or choose not to engage.

### **Objective:**

To reduce the perception of risk by showing that you have experience, organisation, and a clear strategy. Trust isn’t built through enthusiasm alone, but through concrete, reassuring arguments.

## 🗣️ **IN FACE-TO-FACE CONTEXT**

### **How to apply it in conversation:**

Speak with confidence, but without arrogance. Share examples of similar situations you've successfully managed. Demonstrating your ability to handle logistics and work professionally helps put the other person at ease.

★ **Key Tip:** Combine a realistic statement with a specific reassurance — such as a timeline, work method, or support team.

### **Example:**

“I know it may sound like a challenge, but we implemented a very similar project last year, with over 30 musicians on stage and a tight schedule. It worked thanks to a highly organised team and a well-structured timeline that covered every detail.”

## 💻 **IN DIGITAL CONTEXT (email or platform messaging)**

In written messages, your tone should convey preparedness and control. Use words like “planned”, “supported”, “verified”, or “backed” to create a sense of structure. It also helps to mention previous experience — without sounding defensive.

★ **Key Tip:** Don't overpromise or ignore potential challenges. Instead, show that you've already identified them and planned ahead.

### **Example:**

“To provide reassurance, I've included a detailed project guide, references from previous experiences, and a step-by-step timeline. Everything is designed to ensure the process is safe, realistic, and smooth.”

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## **8. Speak Their Language**

### **Need Addressed:**

Often, a proposal is not rejected because of its content, but because it isn't communicated in a language the recipient relates to. Using terms that don't resonate with their background or expertise can create distance or confusion.

### 🎯 **Objective:**

To tailor your language and tone to the person you're speaking to, so your proposal is understood, appreciated, and perceived as relevant.

This doesn't mean oversimplifying — it means being strategic about your approach depending on your audience.

### 🗣️ **IN FACE-TO-FACE CONTEXT**

#### **How to apply it in conversation:**

Observe how the other person expresses themselves and adapt your language accordingly. If you're speaking with an experienced music director, feel free to use technical terms. If you're speaking to a cultural manager, focus more on impact, budgeting, audiences, or scheduling.

★ **Key Tip:** Adjusting your language is not about losing authenticity — it's about making your proposal accessible and clear.

#### **Example 1 – conversation with an artistic director:**

“I'm working with a structure based on an open ternary form, and the modulation between sections is designed to build narrative tension while maintaining tonal coherence.”

#### **Example 2 – conversation with a cultural manager or programmer:**

“The proposal is designed to attract new audiences without requiring heavy technical investment. It also offers strong potential for local media coverage due to its community focus.”

### 💻 **IN DIGITAL CONTEXT (email or platform messaging)**

Before writing, analyse the person's background. Are they from the music world, production, education, or cultural management?

Adapt your language accordingly. Don't use jargon if you're not sure they'll understand it. And don't be overly formal if it's a peer or someone you already know — strike a balance between professionalism and warmth.

★ **Key Tip:** Showing that you understand the recipient's field is a form of respect — and a way to build rapport.

### **Example – message to a programming coordinator:**

“This proposal could enrich your programming by connecting classical music with a contemporary narrative. It also requires minimal technical setup and has strong outreach potential due to its interdisciplinary nature.”

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## **9. Rely on Third-Party Endorsements**

### **Need Addressed:**

When someone doesn't know you or hasn't worked with you before, it's natural for them to hesitate:

Will they be reliable? Will they deliver? Will this proposal really work?

In such cases, references, testimonials, or external support can be key to building trust.

### **🎯 Objective:**

To back up your proposal with endorsements from people or institutions with experience or authority — showing that you've successfully worked in similar contexts before.

### **🗣️ IN FACE-TO-FACE CONTEXT**

#### **How to apply it in conversation:**

There's no need to brag — just naturally share previous experiences and who has trusted your work. If you can link your current proposal to something you've already done with a recognised or respected person or organisation, even better.

🔑 **Key Tip:** Mention names or institutions that the other person is likely to recognise or that are relevant to their field.

### **Example 1:**

“We developed this very project a few months ago with the Rosario Women's Ensemble. The artistic director was really pleased with the process — she even wrote a short recommendation. I'd be happy to share it with you if you'd like.”

### **IN DIGITAL CONTEXT (email or platform messaging)**

Including a short reference or mention of support in your message immediately boosts credibility — especially when the recipient doesn't know you yet.

You don't need to attach formal letters: a single sentence noting that your work has been well received by other professionals can go a long way.

✦ **Key Tip:** If the endorsement comes from someone reputable or with ties to the person you're contacting, even better.

#### **Example – digital message:**

“I developed this same format with the X Chamber Orchestra, under the direction of [Name], who can provide a reference if needed. It was a very positive experience for both the team and the audience.”

✓ **Bonus Tip:** If you don't yet have formal references, ask a trusted colleague to write a short testimonial about what it was like to work with you. Even 2 or 3 well-chosen sentences can make a strong impact.

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## **10. End with a Clear Call to Action**

### **Need Addressed:**

Many conversations or emails end with vague phrases like “let's stay in touch” or “I look forward to hearing from you,” which leave everything up in the air.

A lack of a clear call to action can weaken your proposal or cause it to fade over time.

### **Objective:**

To close your proposal with a concrete invitation to take the next step — whether that's setting up a meeting, scheduling a call, replying to a message, providing feedback, or sharing materials.

This helps the recipient make a decision and shows professional initiative.

## 🗣️ **IN FACE-TO-FACE CONTEXT**

### **How to apply it in conversation:**

Don't end the conversation without clarifying what comes next. This isn't pressure — it's guidance.

You can do it naturally by suggesting a specific (but flexible) next step.

★ **Key Tip:** Choose an action that is clear, feasible, and measurable.

### **Example 1:**

“Would it work if I send you a short summary of our conversation this week, along with a possible date to meet?”

## 💻 **IN DIGITAL CONTEXT (email or platform messaging)**

Your message should end with a clear direction. The recipient should know exactly what to do if they want to move forward.

★ **Key Tip:** Avoid phrases like “looking forward to hearing from you” without offering a concrete proposal. Instead, suggest one or more clear next steps.

### **Example – digital message:**

“If you're interested in moving forward with this proposal, would next week work for a brief virtual meeting? I'm available Tuesday or Thursday mornings.”

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## **11. Sample Email Applying the 10 Keys of the Decalogue**

This model is adaptable to a situation in which a member of the platform contacts a cultural institution or another female conductor to propose a collaboration.

**Subject:** A Scenic Proposal to Engage New Audiences through Classical Music

**Message Body:**

Hi [Name],

I've been following your work at [Name of the space/project], and I found your approach to engaging new audiences with classical music especially interesting. Along those lines, I'd like to share a proposal that I believe aligns very well with the goals of your current programming.

The format is unconventional: the audience doesn't remain seated, but moves freely through the space while the music unfolds in different "sound stations." It's an immersive experience that transforms the concert into an emotional and sensory journey, while always maintaining the artistic quality and rigour of classical repertoire.

This project could bring you:

- Innovative programming without breaking with your artistic direction
- An opportunity to reach a younger and more diverse audience
- A concept with high communication potential for media and social platforms

I would take care of the artistic direction, repertoire selection, coordination with the musicians, and scenic design. I also regularly collaborate with a technical and visual team with whom I've successfully carried out similar projects.

From your side, we would only need access to the rehearsal and performance space, and contact with the person responsible for the local technical team to coordinate logistical details.

I understand that proposals like this may raise certain questions, especially regarding technical resources or rehearsal time. For this reason, I've outlined three flexible formats (ranging from a reduced version to a full production), all adaptable to the space and its availability.

Additionally, the project includes a detailed timeline, support materials, and a follow-up system that ensures a smooth and professional process from the very beginning.

This same format has already been presented at [Name of institution or venue] with excellent results, both in terms of audience reception and internal feedback. If you find it helpful, I'd be happy to connect you with [Name of person or institution] so they can share their experience directly.

Would you be open to a brief meeting to discuss the idea in more detail? I'm available Wednesday or Friday morning, but I'm happy to adapt to your schedule.

Thank you for your time — I'd be delighted to hear your thoughts.

Warm regards,  
[Your full name]  
Conductor / Stage Creator  
Member of the Women Conductors Platform  
[City, Country]  
[Link to your profile on the platform, if applicable]