Piano Trio Recording

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Joel and I worked as a team to record a piano trio consisting of a piano, a violin, and a cello. We recording using a M/S and spaced pair recording technique. The M/S setup was in the center of the stage in front of the ensemble, while the spaced pair were off to both sides of the stage.

Stage

Piano

Cello

Violin

Spaced Pair

Spaced Pair

M/S

Originally, we planned on using Joel’s laptop to record with audacity, but since we forgot the adaptor for USB to USB-C we could not use it. We ended up using the Zoom recorder instead. We learned the Zoom only had 2 channels with phantom power, so at first we only recorded with our M/S setup. We used AKG Perception 420s for both the M/S setup and the spaced pair because of their switchable polar patterns. The M/S setup was about 5 feet up and the spaced pair were both around 5 feet up as well. The height definitely helped pick up a cleaner sound as well as add more fullness for the complex instruments. We were initially concerned the piano would be too overpowering compared to the other instruments, but the M/S setup actually captured a nice balance between the three instruments. Later we borrowed an interface and a laptop so we could record with the spaced pair as well. I liked learning how to use the Zoom recorder, I think it is a great recording device. My only issue with the Zoom was unless you wanted to make multiple projects, you had to record everything in one take. I personally like doing multiple takes because it saves you time when you edit, but saving and creating a recording on the Zoom was fairly intuitive.

Out of the two recordings I prefer the M/S setup. The recording has a great balance between the instruments as well as good directionality. It captured the room without too many first reflections and it also did not have much background noise.