Case Study for Dr. Kenn Gartner, Concert Pianist User/Design Research, Information Architecture, User Experience Design

IA Design & Usability

Topic: User/Design Research, Information Architecture, User Experience Design, User-Centered Design

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My Role and Client Deliverables

- User research
- Information architecture
- Project management
- User experience design
- Navigation systems design
- Interaction design
- Heuristic evaluation
- Usability testing
- Competitive analysis
- Reviewing online classical piano performance videos
- Website redesign and revamp
- Writing case study and user scenarios
- User Scenario
- Persona
- Producing wire frame mockups
- Producing flow chart
- Rapid prototyping
- Website design and production
- HTML coding (HTML5, CSS3; suggestions for improvements)
- SEO (Search Engine Optimization)
- Coordinating events and client presentations
- Brainstorming with group
- Developing templates and forms
- IA is not responsible (or legally responsible) for maintaining or outcome of Mr. Kenn Gartner's Website

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INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE:

Case Study for Kenn Gartner, Concert Pianist

My Role and Client Deliverables

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INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE:

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Information Architecture/User Experience Design Research: Heuristic Evaluation and Findings (April 20, 2013-May 1, 2013)

This introduction and brief explanation provides you with recommendations and solutions for improvements (based on research), regarding your Website and online promotional materials. While Information Architects charge a high rate for their services, it is proven statistically that working with usability experts can only increase the production of a more usable—a much better designed online product—in the long run. Because it is a highly specialized type of work, most Information Architects generally have completed specialized degrees and credentials.

My experience extends into User Experience Design and quality control, including piano performance. This means that I am providing you with a product that includes more expertise and deliverables.

After an informal review of your Website and a few online items, I discovered that your Website is a very poor representation of your piano performance skills and abilities. The Website is very inconsistent, layout is chaotic, labeling and text require extensive editing and revamping. Performing informal heuristic evaluations on your Website, I found it was difficult to use.

Overall, the Website does not promote a positive online image. It does not really provide end users with a professional snapshot about your piano performance skills or teaching abilities. Some end users might find the layout problematic; it might deter and scare them away from thinking about hiring you as a teacher (especially if they are sending children to you). The text on your Website (in my opinion) is written in a voice that might to some end users sound overinflated or too egotistical.

The text needs to be better written and used more appropriately as professional Web content. As you may or may not realize, Web content is written much differently than say a book or brochure. The research from usability testing points out that end users do not read text online. The one reason they might read it is if they print out the Web page. User-centered design and usability have to be taken into account prior to production, if the end users desire to print and read it.

Most end users really only read superficially online. Heat maps (from usability testing) show end users normally read in the F-pattern. Eye tracking tests (from usability

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testing) also show how the normal end user may scan a Web page for 2 to 8 to 10 seconds—if that—most end users will scan for 2 to 4 seconds online, while reading a Web page. Without going into a lot of fancy usability jargon, a properly designed Website (referring to the Information Architecture and Design) has to comply with certain usability standards.

That means they only read the header and a little bit of the text; they might scan down to see if the next block of text better suits their need. The online content for your Website has to be converted into Web content with appropriate headers, including better development of chunking. All the items I have presented to you are concerning user-centered design principles and relate to professional Web-page layout, including a professionally designed Website.

There are unusual looking photographs on your Website, not congruent on your Website or other online Websites. The current Website (though a great start) falls far below an acceptable standard. It does not provide end users with a professional representation about your piano performance skills and Juilliard training.

In my opinion, to attract piano performance employment opportunities and new students, your Website needs to be redone to provide a more professional online representation of your piano performance skills and Juilliard education. I would opine, as it is currently presented online, that some end users might feel turned off. In turn, this problem would create a lack of wanting to hire you for performances or teaching.

It also presents a conflict between what services you offer that would include voice lessons or piano lessons or both. In order to better professionally position yourself in the market (a very competitive market for concert pianists), your Website needs to clearly objectify a professional image and message to your clients.

I recommend cleaning up samples online (taking down any inappropriate materials), including only high-quality samples of your piano performance playing online. This is good because it ultimately provides end users with a more positive representation and insight into what you may provide them with—the way the Website is set up online—does not provide a positive image, including a lack of usability. Proven usability testing show that if end user cannot use a Website or feel turned off for any number of reasons, they may elect to use another online resource or opt to receive services from another provider.

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INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE:

Case Study for Kenn Gartner, Concert Pianist

The point of a Website and online presence is to professionally showcase your skills and abilities. More than a few samples I viewed online did not provide a positive image to end users. Samples of piano performance (for whatever reason or reasons) did not sound clear to me (phrasing and other piano performance items discussed give you some ideas about what I am talking about).

Services include design research, piano performance critique (suggestions and recommendations for presentation improvement and performance improvement), editing, information architecture and design for a new Website, documents required to produce a professional Website. In short, providing you with a subjective and fresh evaluation serves you more in the long run.

Because improving both your piano performance skills and your online presence, I would imagine it might only have a positive impact on moving your piano performance career forward. I recommend you consider something like this Website (refer to next screen shot, after first screen shot); http://www.frankwiens.com/.

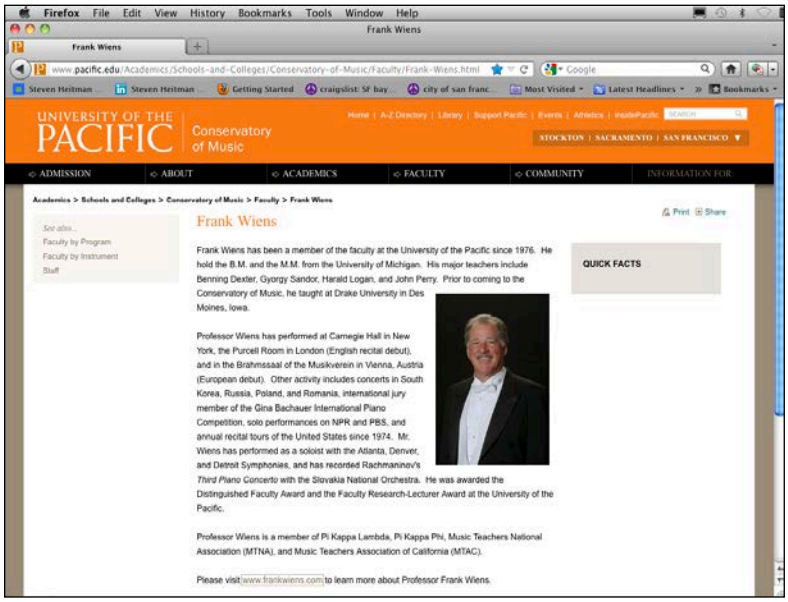

Figure 1: http://www.frankwiens.com/

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INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE:

Case Study for Kenn Gartner, Concert Pianist

Home (Frank Wiens)

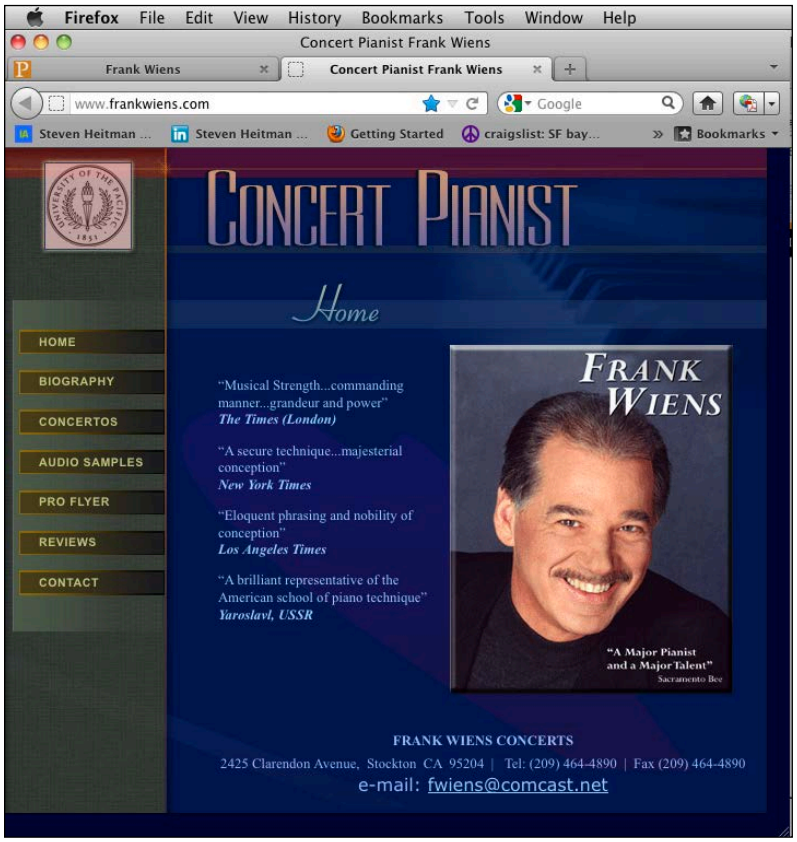

Figure 2: http://www.frankwiens.com/

Though a very academic approach, this Website is consistent and follows best practices—easy to use—good writing. There are some usability issues; overall, it is well done. His photographs are very clear and professional. They are not unusual looking photographs to end users. The main navigational system is easy and clear to end users; the labeling is fine and easy to comprehend.

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INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE:

Case Study for Kenn Gartner, Concert Pianist

Biography

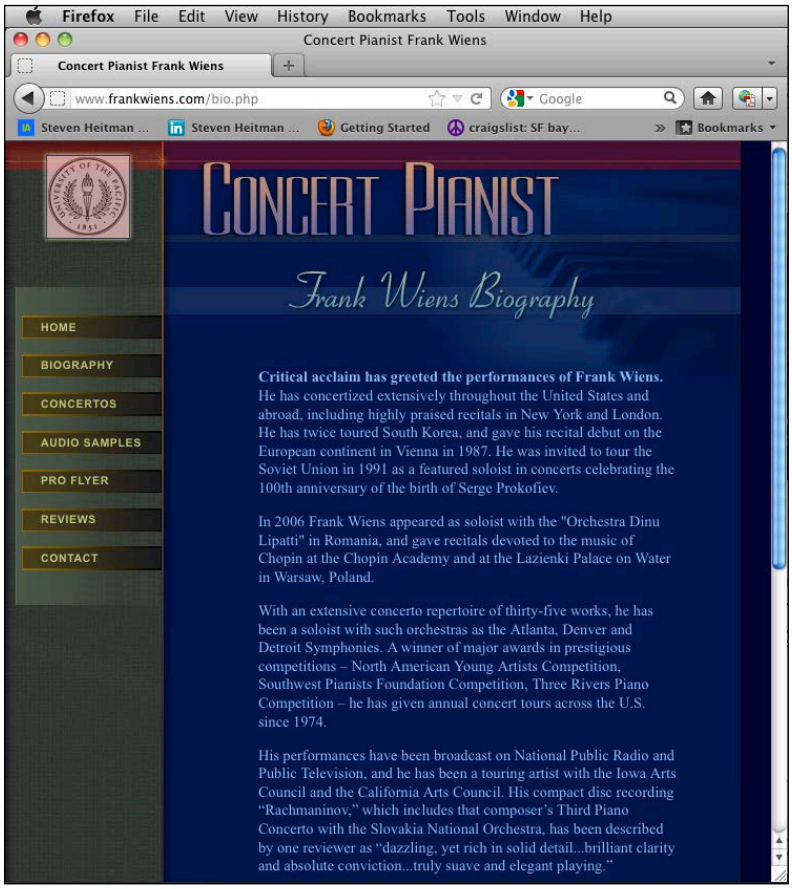

Figure 3: http://www.frankwiens.com/bio.php

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Concertos

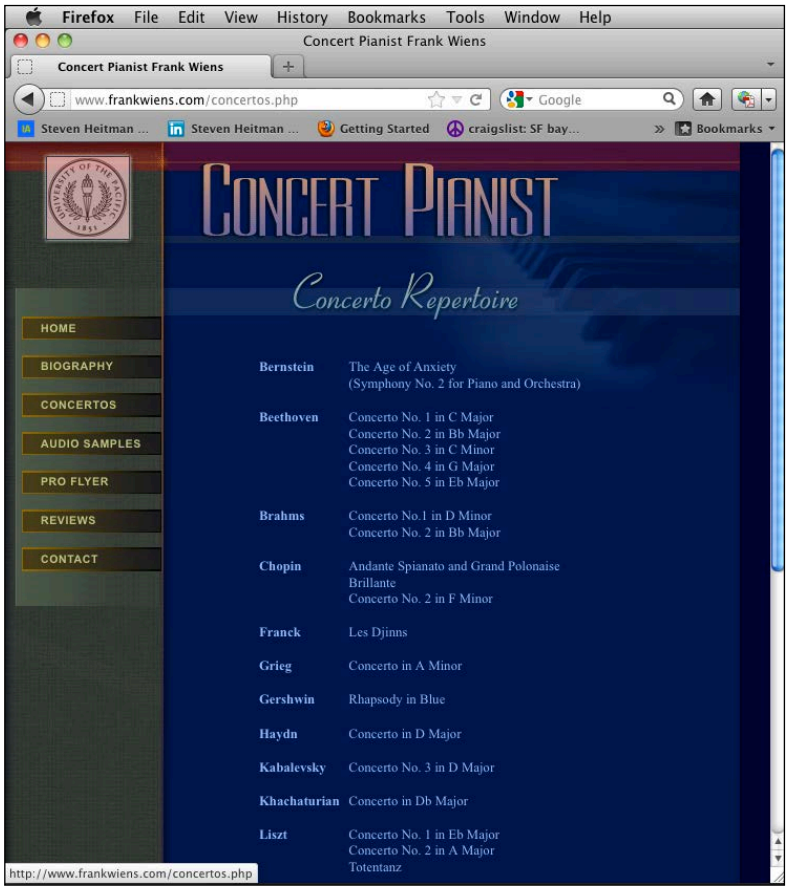

Figure 4: http://www.frankwiens.com/concertos.php

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INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE:

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Audio Samples

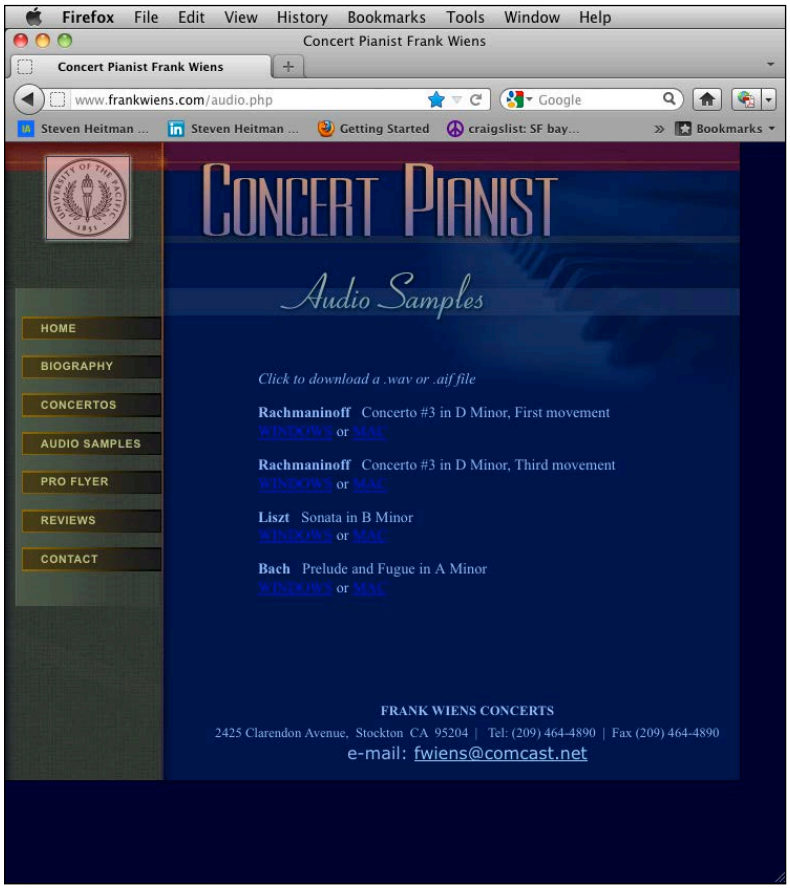

Figure 5: http://www.frankwiens.com/audio.php

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INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE:

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Pro Flyer

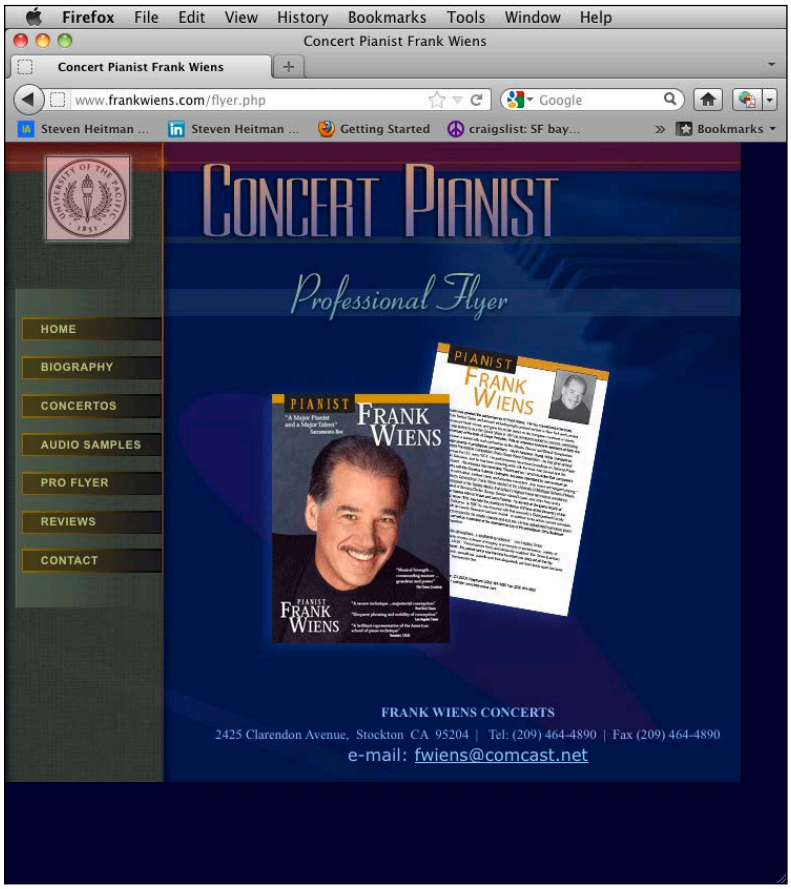

Figure 6: http://www.frankwiens.com/flyer.php

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Reviews

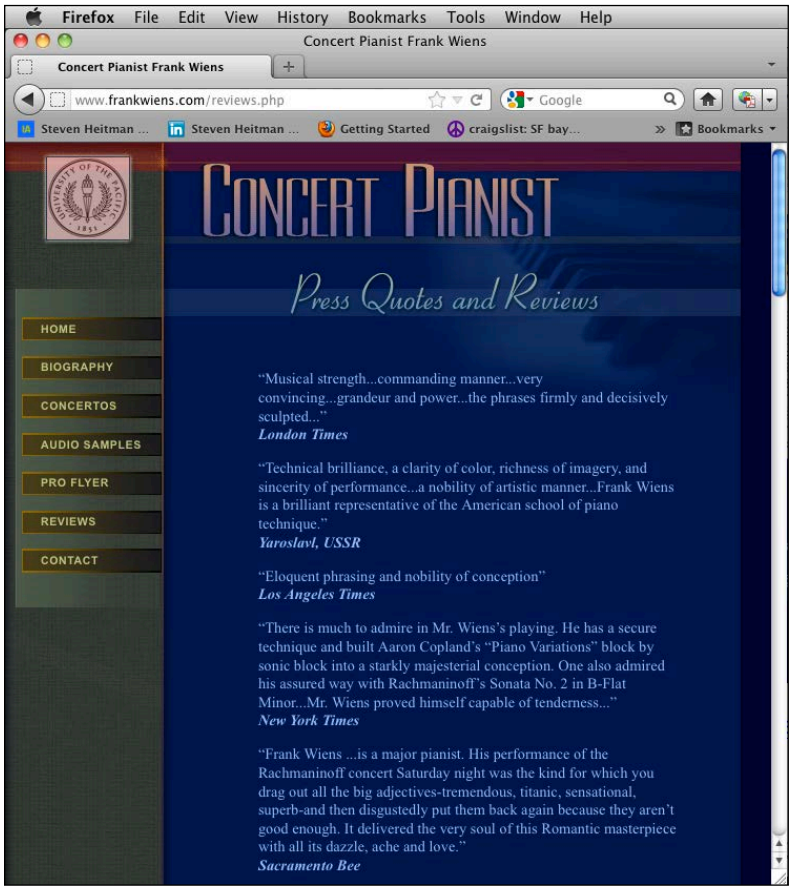

Figure 7: http://www.frankwiens.com/reviews.php

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Contact

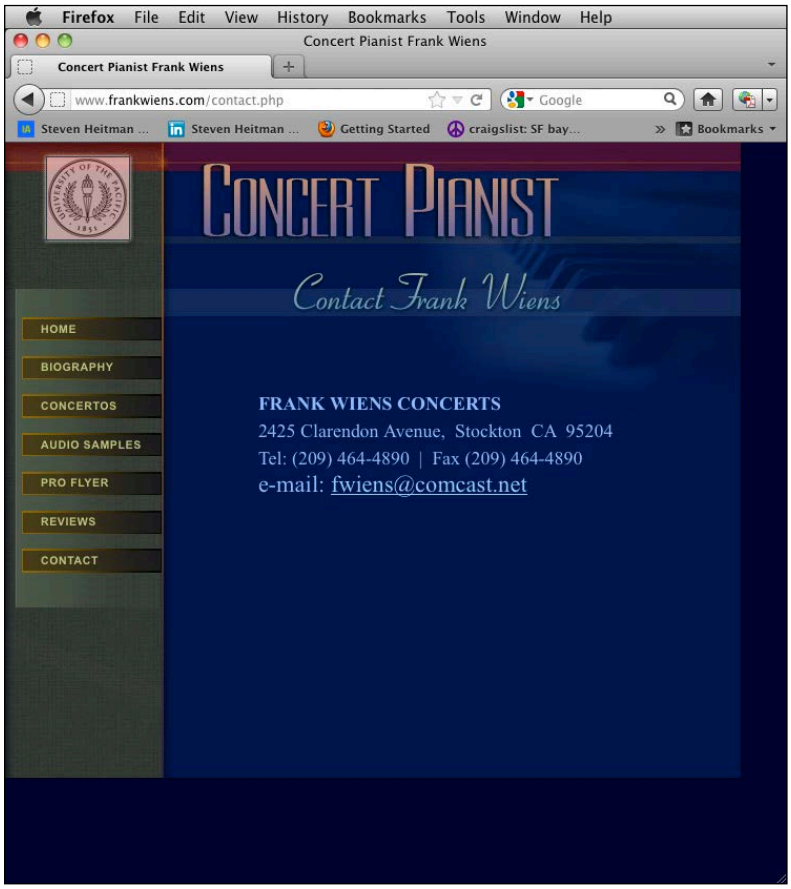

Figure 8: http://www.frankwiens.com/contact.php

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INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE:

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Index (Jonathan Oshry)

Figure 9: http://www.joshry.com/index.html

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Usability Issues

This Website seemed difficult to navigate around in. The most annoying thing was that it had music playing automatically. As an end user, I found this most distracting. Certainly, it has a lot of nice things programmed into the Website. The functionality, in terms of usability, lacks drastically. The black and white theme was used; the Web pages seemed a bit too busy to me. When the end user decreases Web page size, the user interface icon, playing the music automatically shrinks down and gets cut off of the Web page. The font sizes were too small. The main navigational system did not work right; labeling seemed kind of problematic because it was difficult to understand.

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INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE:

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Biography

Figure 10: http://www.joshry.com/Biography.html

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INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE:

Case Study for Kenn Gartner, Concert Pianist

Reviews

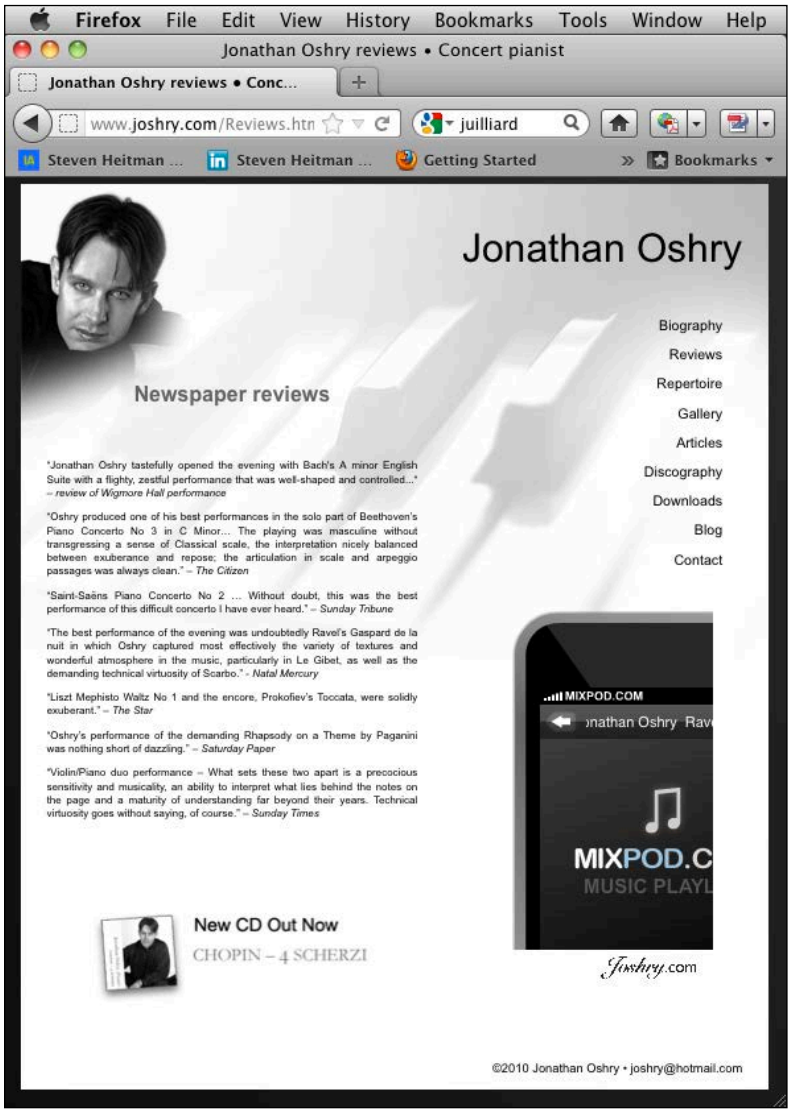

Figure 11: http://www.joshry.com/Reviews.html

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INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE:

Case Study for Kenn Gartner, Concert Pianist

Repertoire

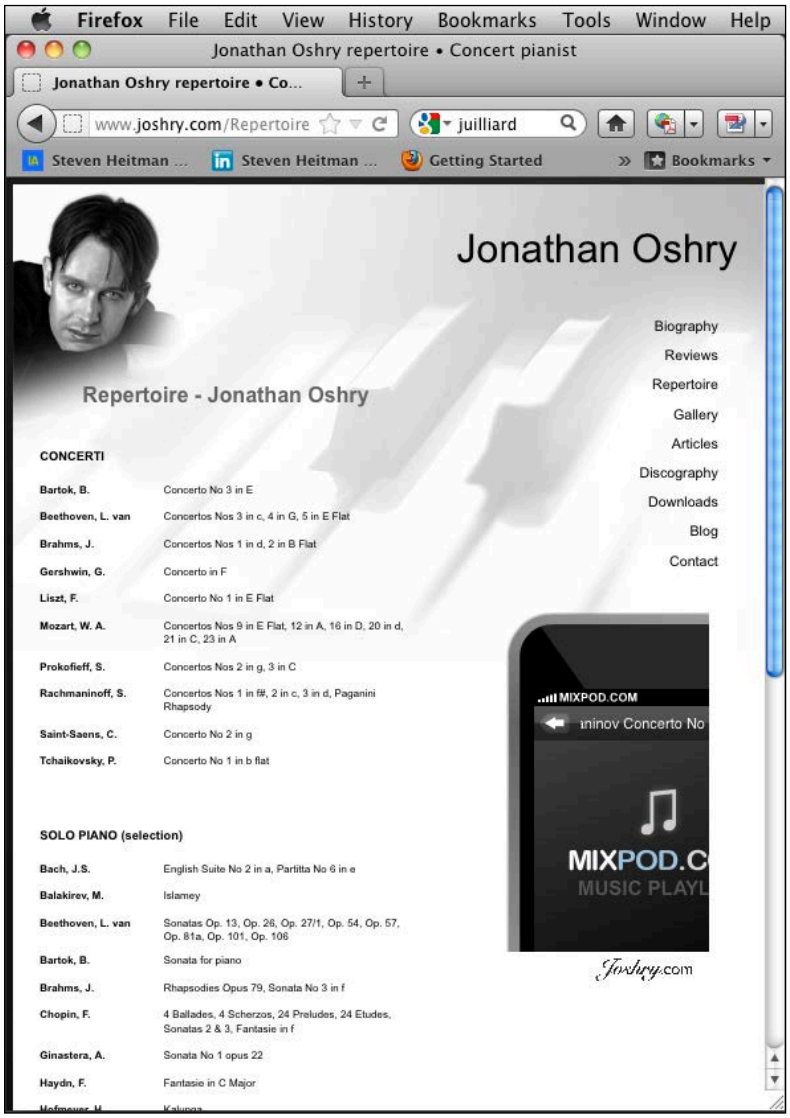

Figure 12: http://www.joshry.com/Repertoire.html

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INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE:

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Gallery

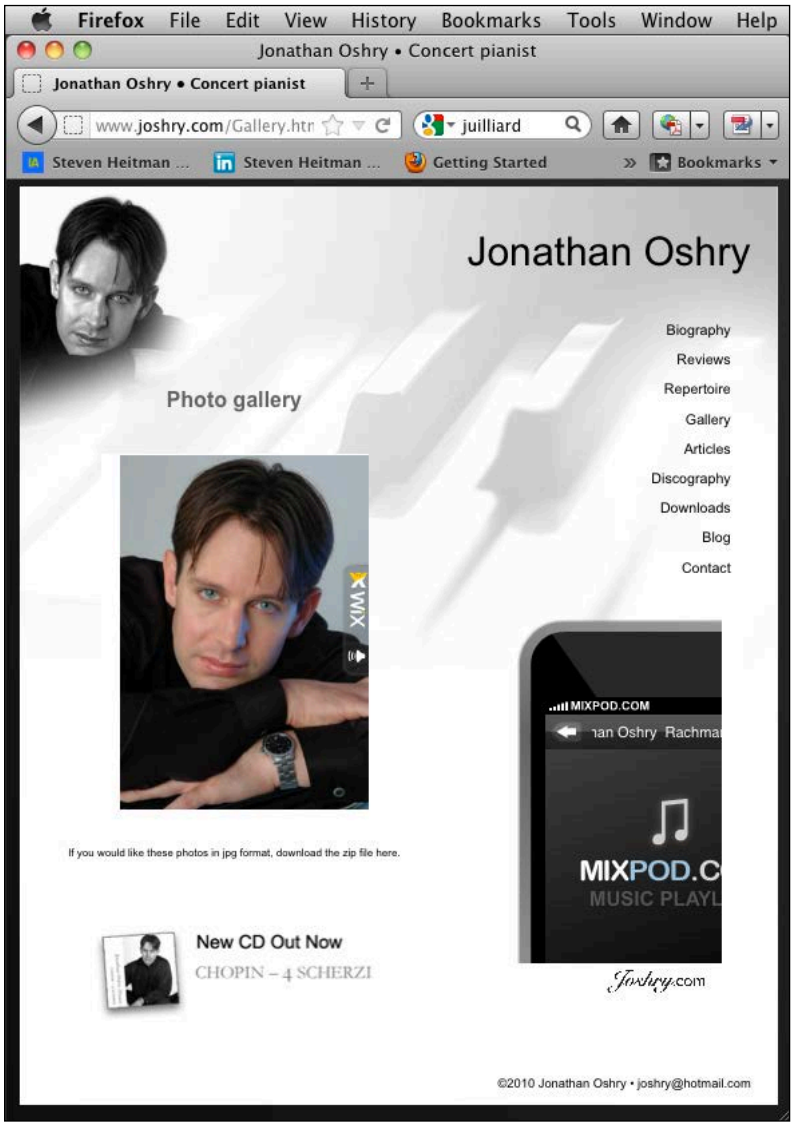

Figure 13: http://www.joshry.com/Gallery.html