

Wisconsin Singers How to Sponsor Handbook



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Introduction

Dear Wisconsin Singers Sponsor,

Congratulations on choosing one of the nation's premier collegiate performing troupes to entertain your community. These outstanding University of Wisconsin-Madison students have performed for audiences across the country throughout their 44-year history as the University's official "Ambassadors of Goodwill", and now are ready to go to work for you!

The Singers are prepared to put on a great show for you this year. *Starstruck!* is a professionally arranged and choreographed, high energy musical review, that promises a great night of entertainment for your entire community.

The Singers are also focused on assisting your group in hosting a successful and profitable event. With the help of this marketing strategy, and the dedicated efforts of passionate individuals on your team, we know that you will be able to raise significant funds for your organization.

The handbook is designed to explain the volunteer roles, establish a timeline, and provide tips and advice on successful execution. The process is complex, but NOT AT ALL DIFFICULT. If you use this guide to stay organized, show sponsorship can be a fun and rewarding process.

We hope that this guide will prove to be helpful in facilitating all of the details of producing an outstanding event with a capacity house. In addition, I am available at any time to answer questions or provide insight into how to improve your marketing efforts and ticket sales.

We are here to do whatever we can to help ensure your success, and look forward to working closely with you on this exciting project.

On Wisconsin!

Chris Novotny
Director of Business Operations
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Job Descriptions

Concert Chairperson

The Wisconsin Singers have performed some of their most well attended concerts in places where they have been relatively unknown as a result of the intelligent organization and enthusiasm of a sponsoring organization. It is the chairperson's responsibility to get the talent of your membership behind the promotional and patron effort.

The Chairperson's most important responsibilities include:

- Recruit all committee chairs and high school contacts
- Schedule all general meetings for parents, choir directors and committee chairs.
- Work closely with committee chairs to coordinate all aspects of the promotion and logistics of the concert. Consider this concert a community affair, and work to include as many different organizations as possible.
- Coordinate arrival time and facilities for the Wisconsin Singers, or delegate these responsibilities to an appropriate concert site chairperson.
- You should expect calls from the following Wisconsin Singers staff:
 - 2-3 months prior: a PR Intern will call to discuss publicity needs and send you all requested materials. If you want to set this in motion earlier, please call our office, and we will happily accommodate you.
 - 1 month prior: our Company Manager will call to discuss final details of arrival, button sales, meals, housing (if overnight stay), directions to the site. CM will confirm all details following this call via fax.
 - 2 weeks prior: our Tech Director will call to discuss final details of stage, lighting, dressing and warm up rooms, load in area, bus parking, electrical hookups, etc.
 - **Please return our staff's phone calls** - as full time students, our staff keeps limited office hours. If you miss them, leave them a time and both your work and home phone numbers.
- Provide a Concert Chairperson Report after the show:
 - We would appreciate any newspaper articles and advertisements, flyers, posters, tickets, and reviews of the show.
 - We would also appreciate copies of letters to the editor and any other correspondence you receive regarding our appearance. We invite you to send us a letter complete with comments regarding our appearance in your community as well. If you were pleased with our appearance, your letter will be beneficial when securing future show sponsors AND grants to help keep the Singers program financially strong. If you were not pleased, we would like to know why so we can make necessary changes.

Promotions Committee

A good, comprehensive promotional plan will guarantee a well-attended concert. About three months prior to your show, our PR Intern will contact you to answer any questions you may have. The following outline will give you insight to develop a solid media plan.

Media Plan and Advertising Strategies

Effective advertising is a necessity when putting on a Wisconsin Singers Show. Certain forms of advertising are more successful than others. The Wisconsin Singers can provide you with several promotion materials.

What Works Well:

- Full, half or quarter page ads with photos and art work
- Display ads of at least three columns
- Color photos and art work
- Coupons for ordering tickets
- Radio and TV promotion in addition to display ads

What Does Not Work:

- Classified ads
- Radio Public Service Announcements alone
- Arts and entertainment calendars alone

Where to Direct Your Publicity:

- Schools: music directors of choirs, show and vocal jazz choirs, jazz bands, superintendents and principals
- Local and surrounding community music organizations, mailing lists from your community cultural organizations
- Music stores
- Chamber of Commerce: their publications and calendar
- Service clubs
- Community at large
- Local Wisconsin Alumni (You can access the area Wisconsin alumni information online at www.uwalumni.com. Click on “Clubs and Affiliates” and contact the area alumni president listed in your area.

Promotional Materials Available

The following promotional materials can be found under the Sponsor Info tab on our website, www.WisconsinSingers.com.

- A sample press release that you may fill in with your own pertinent local information
- Photographs for newspaper articles, which you may also request hard copies of
- Digital audio file for Radio Public Service Announcements
- Downloadable files of our Wisconsin Singers logo and *Starstruck!* logo

- Wisconsin Singers Quick Facts sheet
- Interviewing Tips
- Media 101 Guide
- Troupe Biographies
- 8 ½ X 11 poster templates that may be included in direct mailings or mailboxes

The following promotional materials can be mailed to you upon request:

- Brochures
- Sample Print Advertisements
- Ideas for feature news stories
- Templates for posters, table tents, and newspaper ads

We also mail 25 – 11 X 17 inch posters with the bottom third blank to fill in with your own local information. You will need to print the **concert date, time, place, ticket price, and where tickets are available for purchase**. As you distribute posters, be sure to cover such places as area business windows, including music stores; hotel, post office, restaurant and transportation lobbies; and bulletin boards of schools, churches and ticket agencies.

Working With the Media

A successful publicity campaign will require some budgeted monies, but local media is often willing to donate advertisements or match your expenditures dollar for dollar. This is one place you do not want to cut corners! Several areas must be given special attention:

- Newspapers
 - Your area newspapers are exceedingly important to your committee. Get to know each paper's publisher, editor, entertainment editor, and music critic. The publicity chairperson should personally contact key newspaper personnel to get the campaign underway. Give them a press kit, along with a request for any help they can offer.
 - We suggest that you plan on submitting at least two articles for the paper. One could highlight the sponsoring organization and function of the fund-raising activity, emphasizing how the money raised will benefit the entire community. The other can spotlight the Wisconsin Singers themselves, emphasizing that *Starstruck!* is perfect entertainment that will delight the entire family.
 - Don't forget to ask for pictures of your hometown or area Wisconsin Singers student for a special article. If you are not sure if there is an area student in the group, ask our Public Relations Intern when you order your materials, or check online at www.wisconsinsingers.com in the troupe listing.
 - We recommend that one full-page ad be used to begin your newspaper campaign. A number of newspaper sponsors have provided this service in the past. At other times, concert sponsors have been successful in getting local merchants to sponsor these ads.
 - In addition to your dailies, you should consider targeting releases to business organizations, monthly newspapers in your community, high school and college

papers, weekly papers, and free advertising papers throughout your publicity campaign. You will want to coordinate this with your "special group" committee.

- Request that the newspaper(s) compose advertisements for the concert and run them daily on the entertainment page for a week prior to the performance.
 - A picture story in Sunday or weekly supplements just before the concert would provide an excellent opportunity for many to learn of the show.
 - You should revise the press releases sent by the Singers with local concert information. Deliver these releases personally or FAX them to the paper and make a follow up call. You may want to suggest a personal interview with the sponsoring organization, a Wisconsin Singer, or the Director of the Singers. Have the editor call the Wisconsin Singers office directly at 608-263-9499 to arrange for a telephone interview.
 - You may wish to invite all music critics in the area and provide them with complimentary tickets. Your patron and ticket committee should decide on the distribution of these tickets.
 - Paid Advertising: Paid ads in the local press will probably result in extra tickets being sold, plus more cooperation in printing advance notices free. Investment in this nearly always pays off!
 - It's a good idea to provide newspapers with our web address in order for them to access a newspaper ad template, information, and photos for the show (www.wisconsinsingers.com). Our PR Interns can contact the newspaper by request; simply send the newspaper's contact information in an email to alex@wisconsinsingers.com anderc@wisconsinsingers.com.
- Radio and Television
 - Approach the station owner, manager, and/or program director for assistance. Ask for their help in promoting this community event, emphasizing its family-friendly, live entertainment value.
 - Let them know you can provide them with free audio for a public service announcement and offer several complimentary tickets that can be given away on the air to callers.
 - The Singers can provide you with an audiotape appropriate for a voice over Public Service Announcement (PSA). Contact the program director at your local station to try and get airtime.
 - Investigate the possibility of arranging for interviews on local radio talk shows.
 - Direct Mail
 - Direct mail can be an important media tool because it can help you target a specific audience. Mailings can be sent to schools, city music organizations, service clubs, and any other arts and entertainment lists you can obtain.
 - Keep the copy of such a letter neat and simple so that attention is not lost. You may want to include a poster/handbill with your mailing or a copy of the Wisconsin Singers marketing material (available upon request).
 - We suggest that you start a database of these community members at this time for future Singers events.

- Direct Phone Contact
 - Phone calls by parents, students, etc. to friends, families, and business contacts are the best way to generate interest in the concert event. Ask that all students involved in the concert and all parents involved in the project call several friends to sell them tickets. You can easily create an effective phone network this way.
- Business and Industry
 - Check to see if the large business and industrial firms in your area publish in-house newspapers or retain other information outlets for their employees.
 - If they do, ask them to print several articles on the concert in your city, and seek permission to place posters throughout their plants and office buildings.

BE SURE TO BILL THE WISCONSIN SINGERS AS TREMENDOUS FAMILY ENTERTAINMENT WITH A LITTLE SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE TO ENJOY
(the press releases we send will emphasize this as well).

Soliciting Reviews

Please invite a local reviewer to attend the Singers show and write a review on the performance! A brief note, similar to the one below, tends to work well if you are unable to meet the reviewer in person:

Dear (reviewer):

The Wisconsin Singers will be performing in (your town) on (date). (Your organization) invites you to attend our concert and review it for your readers. We would also appreciate receiving a copy of the review.

Enclosed is a copy of the program for this performance and two tickets for the show.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

(your name)

Tips for Writing Press Releases

- Make sure the information is newsworthy.
- Tell the audience that the information is intended for them and why they should continue to read it.
- Start with a brief description of the event, and then distinguish who sponsors it.
- Ask yourself, "How are people going to relate to this, and will they be able to connect?"
- Make sure the first 10 words of your release are effective, as they are the most important.
- Avoid excessive use of adjectives and fancy language.
- Provide as much Contact information as possible: Individual to Contact, address, phone, fax, email, web site address.

Ticket Committee

The Ticket Committee is responsible for:

- Setting ticket prices
 - Prices vary from community to community. General rule of thumb...charge at least as much as it would cost to attend a movie.
- Printing tickets
 - It is important to print and distribute **one-third more** tickets than the seating capacity of the auditorium. The excess ticket amount is based on a 25 percent no-show rate that you can expect at the show. This number may seem high, but after years of experience it has proven to be accurate.
- Distributing tickets
 - Count on direct sales by organization members, students, parents, etc. being your best and most efficient way of selling out the show. An organized method of keeping track of how many tickets are distributed this way is absolutely necessary. Be sure to set a firm deadline date for turning in unsold tickets so that you know how many are yet to be sold.
 - Identify several convenient places of business in your community and surrounding communities where people can buy tickets. Banks, schools, local stores and music stores are all possibilities.
 - Coordinate the publicity of where tickets are available with your publicity committee.
- Coordinating a complimentary ticket policy with the promotion and patron committees. You should include patrons, music critics/news editors, radio station giveaways, school principals and music directors.
- Collecting money from the ticket sales when a ticket office is not available
- Identifying and coordinating ticket sellers for the concert. Don't forget to arrange for a moneybox and have enough change to make sales convenient as well as a place to secure the funds taken in before the concert.

Other tips:

- Set definite goals and deadlines. Goals may include how many tickets you want each high school or student to sell apiece, how many complimentary tickets you will make available to patrons, news media, etc. and how many advance sales you wish to achieve before the actual event. **TICKET INCENTIVES** are a great motivator – offer a cash reward for the highest number of tickets sold!
- Start a ticket sales campaign at least one month before the concert.
- Give schools and senior citizens special rates.
 - Seniors will love the Singers show! There is always a section of "Sentimental Journey" tunes for our older audiences and our seniors that attend Singers show always talk about what a delight it is to see young people with so much energy and talent!

- Count on direct sales by organization members, students, parents, etc. being your best and most efficient way of selling out the show. An organized method of keeping track of how many tickets are distributed this way is absolutely necessary. Be sure to set a firm deadline date for turning in unsold tickets so that you know how many are yet to be sold.
 - Identify several convenient places of business in your community where people can buy tickets. Banks, schools, local stores are all possibilities.
 - Coordinate the logistics of where tickets are available with your publicity committee.
- Many communities are not used to buying tickets ahead of time and prefer to buy them at the door. The only way to combat this is to emphasize how popular you expect the concert to be and buying their ticket early will ensure them good seats. Be sure your publicity committee is working up until the afternoon of the concert to promote ticket sales with you. You may also consider charging more for tickets at the door.
- ***Several of our sponsors have developed quite a mailing list for repeat performances of the Singers by having audience members fill out a card or detachable coupon at the bottom of their program insert, including name and address, that designates the desire to be notified of the next local performance by the Wisconsin Singers in their area. These cards can be inserted in the program prior to the show and can then be collected at the end of the performance. This is an "instant" mailing list for your next year's event.***
- Our show duration is 90 minutes plus a 15-minute intermission.

Patron Committee

Many of our sponsoring organizations over the years have found that a patron drive is an extremely effective way of raising funds above and beyond ticket sales.

- Develop a list of small businesses/individuals and potential major contributors who have supported your organization, the arts, and youth in general. Draw upon all resources for this information, organization members, parents, cultural arts memberships, etc.
- Send out a letter to this list telling them about your organization and what your goals are for the Wisconsin Singers event (i.e. to raise scholarship funds for area music students to go to summer music clinics). Offer them ____ number of complimentary tickets for a \$25 donation (you determine the amount that is appropriate to your community.). If you have a local or area student in the Wisconsin Singers or have had one in the recent past, be sure to mention this in your letter as well. *See Sample Patron Letters.*
- Send out a separate letter with the same information to major contributors asking them for \$100-250 donations in exchange for ____ complimentary tickets (usually the same amount of complimentary tickets as you offer your small businesses). *See Sample Patron Letters.*
- These letters should include a postage paid or self-addressed stamped envelope and/or tear off portion at the bottom to make response as easy as possible.
- You will want to offer complimentary tickets and preferred seating in the first few rows of the concert site.
- Note in your letter that all patrons will be acknowledged in the program that evening for their valued support of your organization.
- Two weeks before the Wisconsin Singers show, you may want to follow up the letters with personal contact and hand deliver tickets for the show. This allows you the opportunity to thank them for their support and solicit more support.
- Compile all names of individuals and businesses and print these in your own special program insert to put inside the Wisconsin Singers' program. Coordinate with the ticket or host committee who will be inserting the programs before the show. A sample program will be sent to you with your publicity materials so you may design this insert accordingly.
- Develop a comprehensive list that is kept for this purpose from year to year.
- Direct sponsors to look at the Wisconsin Singers video online at www.wisconsinsingers.com under "booking." We can also provide a copy of this promotional video to show potential patrons. Contact our PR interns at alex@wisconsinsingers.com or eric@wisconsinsingers.com.

Volunteer Committee

Ushers:

- Ushers will be needed to hand out programs provided by the Wisconsin Singers. Ushers may also help insert your patron recognition for your organization.

Meals:

- The Wisconsin Singers contract calls for a meal while on site. There are 36 people with the troupe. Any arrangements for dinner should be discussed with the Company Manager at least two weeks prior to the concert. If we are going to host homes or a restaurant instead of eating at the site, we will need to build travel time into our normal schedule.
- The Singers always welcome the opportunity to eat with our sponsors or students that may be performing with us. The Company Manager will notify you of any specific food needs (vegetarian, kosher, etc.). Please note that our Singers expend a lot of energy prior in rehearsing on site – a hot meal is much appreciated. Potlucks are a special treat.

Housing:

If you are hosting the Wisconsin Singers overnight, please observe these guidelines:

- The Company Manager will notify you how many homes we need and specify how many of them need to be pet free due to student allergies. We ask that you provide us with a list of host families that live within 10-15 minutes driving time from the concert site, how many people and of what sex they can host, as well as any pets they have.
- The host home should be able to provide the Singers with a bed, shower facilities, and breakfast the following morning. It is also required that our musicians stay in homes with **smoke-free environments**.
- The host home should provide transportation from the concert site and return transportation at the designated time the following morning. While the Singers certainly do not need to be entertained, it is always nice if someone is at the host home to greet the Singers. This has not always been the case in the past and our Singers are uncomfortable staying in an empty home.
- The hosts will be introduced to their Singers after they have changed costumes, struck the set, and loaded the bus. **This normally takes at least 50 minutes after the performance** so be sure to notify your host families of the timing before that evening of the concert. The Company Manager will introduce the Singers and designate the return time for the following morning. The Company Manager will notify you of the projected return time and place before the concert so that you may tell your host families ahead of time if you wish.
- The Singers have traditionally gathered with their host families as a group the next morning to thank them for their hospitality. We invite all the families to stay for about 10 minutes after returning their Singers in the morning to join in this "Wisconsin Singers Circle." You may even hear some musical appreciation!

Sample Timeline

Initial:

Sponsoring organization decisions

- Confirm theater site
- Agree on show times
- Sign contracts
- Check on insurance coverage
- Designate General Chairperson and method of organization (i.e. what committees needed)
- Set up first general meeting date for organizational support

3-4 months ahead:

- Meeting with sponsoring organization full membership
 - Note that we are happy to have our Director of Business Operations attend this initial meeting by phone or in person to help organize tasks and provide advice on how to maximize your efforts (and ticket sales) if you so desire.
- Decisions to be made
 - Ticket prices
 - Date of sale
 - Patron levels
 - General show timetable
- Choose chair people for committees and hand out committee assignments
- Newsletter to all families of participating choir students describing event, purpose (i.e. raise money for summer music scholarships), and need for volunteers, patron contributions, how many tickets each student is expected to sell, etc. Note when next meeting is for volunteers.
- Print tickets
- Organize publicity campaign using media plan tips in this handbook

2 months ahead:

- Letter to all families of participating students
 - Update on ticket sales, meeting date, etc.
 - Request for volunteers. Notice that each parent will be called by person/committee
- Meeting of all chair people and other interested parents
 - Details of publicity, meal for Singers
 - Updates on ticket sales and patrons
- Make sure you have all publicity materials you need from the Wisconsin Singers office
- Publicity campaign starts
- Each family contacted for food, etc. by committee chair
- Schedules finalized for show day
- Ticket updates to choir director/students/parents
- Patron drive begins

1 month ahead:

- Final meeting to organize show date details
- Confirm arrival, clinic, and meal details with Wisconsin Singers company manager
- Confirm details with concert site
- Publicity campaign in full swing
- Patron drive follow-up calls
- Send notice to all participating students of clinic times, meal, show time

1 week ahead:

- Print program inserts recognizing patrons
- Final publicity push

Day of show:

- Meet Singers upon arrival and get programs from them so you can put your own inserts into them
- Clinic (optional)
- Serve meal
- Make sure you have the ticket booth manned and ready
- Enjoy the show!

Following month:

- Follow up meeting
- Update on show profits
- Review organization and make recommendations
- Mail thank you's to all volunteers
- Pay final bills
- **Determine when you will book the Singers for next year!**

Sample Patron Letters

Dear Community Organization Contact Person,

The () Public School's Show Choir is excited to be able to present an outstanding show on () at ()p.m. at the ()auditorium. We will be sponsoring the Wisconsin Singers, the UW-Madison show choir, a highly energetic and outstanding song and dance troupe.

Proceeds from this event, which will also include a performance by our ____ show choir, will be used to benefit our area choral program.

This joint venture is a first for our show choir/organization and we are already reaping the benefits of camaraderie and communication. We are anxious to share information about the show with your organization.

We rely heavily on ticket sales as well as support from community organizations, business, industry and individuals that care about quality educational programs for our youth. Therefore we also have a companion patron program that coincides with this show.

In recognition and appreciation of your tax deductible patron donation of \$50/\$100/\$250 or more, you will receive two complimentary tickets for reserved seats at the Wisconsin Singers performance on (). You may also be recognized as a "Friend of the Show Choir" for a donation of \$25 - this does not include any tickets. Checks should be made out to ().

Your contribution will be acknowledged in a special program insert at the show as well as acknowledgment in future concert programs.

Regardless of your organization's decision to become a Patron or Friend, we do hope you and your members will attend this fantastic show. Speaking personally, it is with great pride that I watch these young adults perform with such talent and make this effort to raise funds for equipment purchases and program expenses for their schools. If you have any questions or would like any other material, please call me at () or write to me at ().

Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

SAMPLE PATRON LETTER - COURTESY OF REEDSBURG MUSIC BOOSTERS

*These letters have been paraphrased. They are included here to give you an idea of how to write a letter to your own community regarding your specific fund raising efforts

Dear _____ Area Business and Industry,

The _____ school district has an outstanding music program. Much of the support for this program comes from the efforts of (name of your sponsoring organization) and the generous contributions from our area businesses and industries.

One of the musical highlights under our sponsorship this year will be the **WISCONSIN SINGERS** show, scheduled for (date). The **WISCONSIN SINGERS** include (community's own name) as a singer/dancer, a (your high school's name) graduate. This outstanding song and dance troupe has played to standing ovations for 44 years as the University's "Official Ambassadors of Goodwill." Former Wisconsin Singers are currently performing on Broadway, at theme parks such as Disney, and even at the Metropolitan Opera.

Profits realized from this event will provide over \$(fill in your financial goal) in scholarships for our district students to attend summer music camps and will also help provide other needs of the band, choral, and orchestra programs not covered by the school's budget.

We gratefully thank those of your who have supported the Music Boosters in the past with your contributions. We hope that all of you will lend your support this year to further the excellence of our music program.

We would be happy to receive your response by mail. Otherwise, a canvasser will contact you sometime during the week of (_____). With a donation of \$20 or more, you will receive _____ complimentary tickets for the **WISCONSIN SINGERS** show and you will be listed as a contributor in the program. Payments should be made to (name of your organization) and should be mailed in the enclosed envelope by _____.

We look forward to seeing you at the performance

PLEASE DETACH AND MAIL IN ENCLOSED ENVELOPE

Business or individual name: _____

Address: _____

We wish to make a donation to the (name of your sponsoring organization) in support of the area youth.

_____ \$250 _____ \$100 _____ other

Please make checks payable to _____.

(your sponsoring organization's name) is a non-profit, tax exempt organization: # _____

Do you have a place you can put up a poster? Call me or pick one up at the Jan. 2 meeting.

Thank you for your help!

Tips to Ensure a Successful Wisconsin Singers Show

(Courtesy of Fox Valley Alumni Club and The United States Coast Guard Band)

- **Start Early:**
4-5 months is not too early to begin work on a successful Wisconsin Singers event. Don't forget to book your show date as soon as possible!
- **Use Your Resources:**
The Wisconsin Singers success is vested in the success of our sponsors. If you have questions or need advice, do not hesitate to call our office. We are happy to help out however we can.
- **Delegate the Work:**
Use strong leadership to form committees that can organize the entire event from beginning to end.
- **Get Corporate and Sponsor Donations:**
Ticket sales are great but they don't always raise enough money!
- **Incorporate Local Choirs, Bands, etc.**
Local swing choirs, jazz bands are encouraged to perform before the Singers and bring quite a following with them. You may then want to ask the students in each choir /band to sell tickets to the show.
- **For the Host:**
Your importance as the host cannot be overemphasized. Among your several responsibilities, promoting the show is number one. Getting the word out to people in your community will be a challenging task, and that is where the committees will be helpful.
- **For Publicity Committee:**
When forming this committee it is important to consider people such as: newspaper editors, publishers and owners; executives of radio and television stations; and civic, social and educational leaders. These people will be valuable to you, as they control the media you will want to use and they know how to use it to your best advantage.

Frequently Asked Questions

What do sponsors normally charge for a ticket?

This is a hard question to answer. We recently surveyed our sponsors and found that ticket prices range from \$8-\$15 for students/seniors and \$10- \$25 for adults. A rule of thumb is to charge at least as much as a local movie costs.

Is the amount of stage designated in my contract really all that important?

Absolutely!! We have choreographed the show with some terrific dance that requires the Singers to have the full 36 feet by 30 feet. Without this, our Singers are in real danger of hurting themselves not to mention the fact that your audience will miss the effect of professionally choreographed movement. We can only make minor exceptions when notified far enough in advance to change specific parts of the show. Wing space is important to us as well since we have many props and costume changes. Be sure that you have checked the requirements specified in our contract carefully and call us immediately with any concerns you may have.

Is videotaping allowed during the Wisconsin Singers show?

Copyright laws dictate that no videotaping is allowed during our performances. The only exception we make to this rule is for Wisconsin Singers' parents who are videotaping for their own personal use. Flash cameras are allowed if your performance facility does not have any rules to the contrary.

Will the Singers bring their own programs?

The Singers will bring enough programs to accommodate a full house. These will be available to you upon our arrival so you may insert your own material if necessary.

Do we need to have someone announce the show?

This is basically your own preference. Our show can stand by itself without an introduction but our sponsors often like to welcome the audience and recognize their own patrons. You will need to discuss specific arrangements with the Director before the show so that we may work out which sides of the stage you will enter and exit from, and which microphone you will use.

Will the Singers take an intermission?

Whenever doing a full show, we take about a 15-minute intermission. The Director will give a short speech prior to intermission and can announce if you are selling refreshments. Singers' representatives will be in the lobby area as well, selling buttons and CD's. You may certainly have a representative from your own organization speak at intermission as well. Plan on coordinating this with the Singers' Director prior to the show.

When should we send you a check for the show?

The Friends of the Wisconsin Singers will bill you directly approximately a week after the performance. That bill will reflect the concert fee and transportation as charged us by the Badger Bus Company. Bills are due within 30 days upon receipt.

2011-12 Wisconsin Singers' Professional Staff

Director.....Robin Whitty-Novotny
Director of Business Operations.....Chris Novotny
Arranger.....Jenna Mood
Choreographer.....Chad Schiro
Associate Choreographer.....Angie Canuel

2011-12 Wisconsin Singers' Student Staff

Company Manager/Production Manager/.....Nick Ulrich (New London, WI)
Lighting Design.....Max Schweiner (Green Bay, WI)
Stage Manager.....Kimberly Washnesky (Hartford, WI)
Associate Director.....Ryan Moldenhauer (Watertown, WI)
Dance Captain.....Bryce Mahlstedt (Bloomington, MN)
Dance Captain.....Shannon Keeling (Baraboo, WI)
Program Public Relations Manager.....Eric Stupinstky (Northbrook, IL)
Business Public Relations Manager.....Alex Degener (Manitowoc, WI)
Program Graphic Arts Coordinator.....Rongjie Lu(Madison, WI)
Business Graphic Arts Coordinator.....Katie Gaab (Middleton, WI)
Project Manager.....Andrew Straus(Wayland, MA)
Project Manager.....Marty Clarke (Port Washington, WI)
Web Developer.....Brent Clark (Oregon, WI)
Business Administrative Assistant.....Jenna Severson (St. Anthony, MN)
Program Administrative Assistant .. Melanie Bonetti (Neenah, WI)

A special thanks to Judy and Tom Novotny for sharing their organizational expertise as detailed in this handbook. Also to Terry and Tina Carroll, our LaCrosse parent group, and the United States Coast Guard Band.

Theater Specifications

This person is normally a theater manager or the local music director of the schools involved. Responsibilities of this person include coordinating details of the Singers performance with the concert site including arrival time, house sound setup, electrical hookups, special lighting details, dressing rooms, warm up rooms, etc.

Arrival Time:

- Wisconsin Singers normally arrive at concert site about 4 1/2 hours ahead of show time. Their typical schedule will run like this:
 - 2 ½ hours of unload, setup, sound check, and rehearsal
 - 45 minutes for meal
 - 1 1/2 hours for costume, makeup, and warm-ups
 - 90 minute show
 - 20 minutes to sell buttons and mingle with crowd
 - 30 minutes of change costumes, strike set, and load bus

***If the Singers are working in a clinic with area schools, expect that the Singers will arrive 75 minutes earlier for each school involved in a clinic.

Stage Facilities:

- The Wisconsin Singers show needs a stage or floor space area of 36 feet width by 33 feet depth with about 3 feet of wing space on either side. This show has been choreographed with these space needs in mind and for the safety of our performers as well as the optimum enjoyment of your audience. We ask that you notify us immediately if there is any problem in this area. Please remind the technical director when he contacts you of any variations from these contracted requirements. **The stage and wings should be completely clear of all props and equipment before our arrival.**

Dressing Rooms

- The Wisconsin Singers require 2 dressing rooms that can accommodate up to 15 people each. These should be made available to the group upon arrival at the site. At least one dressing room should have ample electrical outlets for curling irons, etc. and hopefully, several mirrors. These should not be public restrooms and should be able to be secured during performance time with access available to change costumes at intermission.

Warm-Up Rooms

- The Singers need two rooms, one for instrumentalists, one for singer/dancers for warm-ups 45 minutes prior to show time. The rooms need only have clear space for stretching and dance warm-ups (no piano required).

House Set-up

- We travel with a full sound amplification system. We will need guidance as to where to set up our soundboard so that we interfere with as few audience seats as possible. **BE SURE THAT IF YOU ARE SELLING RESERVED SEATING, YOU DISCUSS WHICH SEATS YOU MUST NOT SELL TO ACCOMMODATE OUR SOUNDBOARD.**

Lighting

- It is the responsibility of the sponsor to provide a trained person to run the light board and spots, as the Singers bring basic cue sheets for the show.

First Year Show Tips

The following tips come from our LaCrosse parent group that hosted their first show in 2008. This show was a sellout and an overwhelming financial success. The following tips and suggestions will help make your Wisconsin Singers show just as successful!

Organization Tips:

- Formed a core group and met every one to two weeks for 2 months.
- Communicated in between meetings via email.
- Assigned duties per comfort levels.
- Selected several days for show that didn't conflict with football games and area events. Gave these dates to hosting Show Choir directors for final selection with Robin.
- Used school auditorium for show because there was NO FEE for use.
- Followed guidelines that are available through WI Singers website.
- Asked sponsoring Show Choir director to attend one of our meetings.
- Informed Show Choir Parent Organizations for their support.
- Approached following groups for financial sponsorship:
 - Own employer (received \$1,000)
 - Area Rotary (refused)
 - Area UW alumni (sent out email announcement to area alumni)
 - Area large corporation (refused)
 - Area Wal-Mart (too late)
- Asked Show Choir parent organization to provide food for potluck to feed Singers. (increased ownership)
- Asked Show Choir parent organization to provide desserts for intermission. (increased ownership)
- Arranged for emcee for event.
- Had fun/Stayed positive and optimistic!!!!

Ticket Tips:

- Decided on \$12 for Adult and \$10 for Senior/Student ticket price.
- Printed tickets.
- Carried tickets with us at all times to be available for sale.
- Sold tickets at Show Choir parents organizational meetings and at a Show Choir event.
- Sold tickets from two very popular grocery chains.
- Collected unsold tickets from area grocery stores not until day of event.

Promotion Tips:

- Printed additional posters through local printer who donated services.
- Spoke with local hospital newspaper/publication about an article/picture.
- Talked with local newspaper to run article featuring the three local alumni in the troupe and a special article was run. This was the best publicity we had!!!
- Ran article in County Retired persons newsletter.
- Purchased newspaper ad that ran twice the week of the event. Used the WI Singers photo and logo from website.
- Gave local radio and TV stations public service announcements.
- WI Singers from community personally talked with both school's Show Choirs to answer questions and increase interest.
- Distributed posters to Show Choir parents and were delivered to area businesses, library, schools, churches, visitors bureau, etc.
- Developed cover letter and smaller poster and sent to friends and 26 different area school music departments.
- Stapled picture of the three area alumni to all posters to make it more personal.
- Typed up list of local Show Choir members and sponsors for program.
- Talked up show at work and social events.
- Announced upcoming event on both High School marquees.

Budget Summary Example

Budget for La Crosse Wisconsin Singers Show January 2008

Expenses:

Copies of pictures of local WI Singers	
Postage	
Copies of WI Singers posters	\$ 108.00
Ad run in newspaper	\$ 292.00
Gift certificate for emcee	\$ 20.00
WI Singers fee	\$3,500.00
Bus fee	\$ 930.00

TOTAL EXPENSES: \$4,850.00

Income:

Donation from local corporation	\$1,000.00
Ticket sales	\$8,154.00
Intermission food	\$ 168.60

TOTAL INCOME: \$9,322.60

PROFIT: \$4,472.60

Media 101

Making the Most of Your Media Efforts

- **Personalize your media packets**
 - Address your media packet to a specific and appropriate person. Do not use “To Whom This May Concern” or any other general title.
 - Reword the press release to illustrate your specific community and show details in order to make it unique and seem less pre-packaged.
 - Take advantage of the hometown press releases the Wisconsin Singers provide to highlight the students in your specific area, creating a personal and local aspect of the story.

- **Get your press release to the appropriate editor**
 - Make sure the entertainment, art, or local editor gets your media packet.
 - This gets your information to the correct person immediately, makes it more likely to be covered, makes it less work for a general editor and decreases the chances of being lost or ignored.

- **Ask about event calendars**
 - Some media outlets have community/event calendars, call to ask if you can get the Wisconsin Singers show listed on it.
 - This is an effective and often free way to promote the show.

- **Ask about community feature stories**
 - A media outlet that serves a large area likes to cover stories about smaller surrounding communities to better serve their audience – Use this to your advantage and pitch your story about the show accordingly.
 - Some media outlets do on-camera interview features about fun, upcoming events in the community. Explore this opportunity.

- **Make yourself available**
 - Provide several phone numbers where you may be easily reached for further questions and information.
 - The easier it is to contact you, the more likely a reporter will follow up.

- **See the interview tips for suggestions**

11-12 Wisconsin Singers Quick Facts

2011-2012 Show Facts

- In this year's show titled *Starstruck!*, the audience will experience the best of American popular music from the last 40 years.
- 90 minute Broadway-style revue featuring 16 singer/dancers and a live 7 piece band
- Complete with explosive song and dance, laugh-out-loud humor, and big band sound
- Choreographed by professional Broadway dancers/choreographers from New York City

General Program Facts

- Features 26 of UW-Madison's most talented performers
- "Official Ambassadors of Goodwill" entertain more than 50,000 people annually throughout the United States
- 44-year-old UW-Madison tradition of excellence trains future leaders in student staff that manages their own "entertainment business"
- Conducts workshops for more than 1,000 aspiring high school and junior high musicians each year
- Helps to raise millions of dollars for community organizations and UW Alumni clubs throughout the state and nation
- Since 1967, has raised more than one million dollars in scholarship dollars for students to attend UW-Madison