

Concert Organiser Pack



Introduction

This pack has been put together to assist organisers in running a successful and profitable concert. Many of you will have run similar ventures before and may need no help at all, but others may be less fortunate, so what follows is for you! If any of the fortunate few read this and think of other things we can add please feel free to email wycombeorpheus@aol.com.

Over the years the Orpheus has been engaged to perform in hundreds of concerts organised by many different organisations. Some concerts are extremely successful with large audiences and high revenues for the charity involved. Others less so and occasionally concerts even fail to get off the ground leading to disappointment for all concerned. Our aim is to help you to run a successful, well attended, stress free concert to raise the money you want.

Committee

Trying to run a concert on your own is not to be recommended! We would suggest you have an active, committed committee around you and everyone takes some responsibility for ticket sales as well as other organisational issues.

One person should be in overall control of the tickets. This is best suited to a “driver”, someone who is going to take up the challenge and sell those tickets, who will continually update the committee on progress, who will get the committee to sell tickets issued to them, who is positive and gets on with it. **Tickets do not sell themselves** and we cannot stress enough how important it is that you get the right person for this job.



It is important that everyone on the committee knows who is doing what and that they all do their bit. You want things to run smoothly and the analogy of a bicycle comes to mind. Whilst the wheels are perfect it moves along very well in the direction you want it to go, with a buckle (someone not doing their part) in it, the ride gets bumpy and can even stop. Provided the Chairman pedals and steers well you get to where you want to go with the minimum of effort!

Tip – When planning your event try to avoid dates that clash with other musical events locally

Budget



How much money do you want to make? This determines the size of the venue and the ticket price as well as how many tickets you need to sell to achieve your target. Why not set up a budget? A budget does not need to be complicated and you don't need an accountant to do one. A simple example is shown below.

Income

Ticket Sales (300@£10)	£3000.00
Raffle (150 tickets @ £1)	£150.00
Advertising revenue	£500.00
Sponsorship	£500.00
Total	£4150.00

Expenditure

Choir	£400.00
Venue	£150.00
Refreshments	£150.00
Printing progs, posters, tickets	£100.00
Flowers	£50.00
Total	£850.00

Profit **£3300.00**

Ticket prices

This is usually an emotive issue on a committee. You will usually get a range of responses with members worrying about how much pensioners can afford and not wanting to overcharge but at the same time wanting to make money. Let's put all that aside and remember why we're doing this. You want to make a sum of money, correct? Therefore the amount you want to make determines the ticket price. Over the last few years we've seen ticket prices for our concerts ranging from £5 through to £16.50 with the majority in the £8 - £10 range. Funnily enough the worst attended concerts were the lowest price! Human nature is a funny thing, if something doesn't cost much we often consider it can't be very good! As an illustration consider the following...

200 tickets @ £5	£1000
200 tickets @ £10	£2000

It is common practice to offer the Choir tickets at a concessionary price (usually £2 less than the full price). A good proportion of wives and partners as well as our own band of supporters follow the Choir throughout the country and it is not unusual for us to sell between 30 and 50 tickets.

Tip - Charging half the price doubles the work!

Tickets please!

It is a good idea to have tickets available as early as possible. One very important rule – DON'T TRUST ANYBODY, always make sure you get the money up front. It is amazing how many people drop out through illness, family commitments, or deny they'd ever said they'd come!

Tickets should include at least:

- The organisation running the event including registered charity number if applicable
- The venue
- Start time
- Price of the ticket
- Ticket number
- What the event is

We recommend ticket numbers as it helps in accounting both financially and for Health and Safety compliance. Having a number on the ticket allows you to issue batches to other committee members to sell and also for seeing how you are doing sales wise.

Keep a list of who has what ticket along with their phone number and email address (think ahead it will make it easier next time!)

Example:

You've decided to sell 300 tickets for a concert on 31st January.

1st October – 300 numbered tickets are produced and 30 tickets are issued to each of 6 committee members with the ticket Chair retaining the rest. Members told the tickets are to be sold by end of October.

1st November - 4 members have sold 20 tickets each and the other two haven't sold any. 40 other tickets have been sold through phone calls, emails etc. Suggested action: Ask the two committee members who haven't sold their tickets if they are going to. If not, take them back (nicely!). You've now sold 120 tickets plus let's say at least 30 by the Choir. You're half way there. Send out a positive email to everyone you can think of announcing that half the tickets are sold and reiterate what a good evening it is going to be.

1st December – 30 more tickets have been sold, costs are covered, it's now time to move into top gear. Get on the phone, send emails, put up positive posters, speak to as many people as possible.

Tip – Start selling tickets as early as possible!

Advertising

Please make sure you only use photographs and copy that has been agreed by the Choir. Before printing programmes or posters please email to: stuart.aitken@matchings.co.uk who will proof read and agree for publication on behalf of the Choir. Authorised photographs of the Choir are available from Stuart or from the Events section of our website www.wycombeorpheus.org.uk

Don't be fooled, putting up a few posters does not sell many tickets. Many people make this mistake. You would be amazed at how many people never notice a well displayed poster let alone those that see it and don't act on it. This does not mean you shouldn't put up posters, they do let people know that something is happening and raise general awareness.

The best methods of selling tickets are:

- Active selling by speaking to people face to face
- Telephone calls
- Targeted emails
- Involving other groups
- Local press and community publications
- Local radio / TV
- Website
- Leaflet drop

Posters and advertising media should be very positive, make people think they are missing something. Let's look at each of these in turn:

Active Selling – when approached properly, face to face, it is very difficult to say no unless you have a genuine reason. Use positive language such as "are you doing anything on the 31st" and "have you got your tickets for the concert yet?" followed by "how many do you want" rather than "do you want tickets for the concert?" (Too easy to say no!) For the true professionals amongst you ask if they know anyone else who doesn't want to miss out on such a fun packed evening!! Be positive in the approach have the tickets with you and take the money!

Telephone calls – You can get to people further afield or that you don't normally see by this method. Once again be very positive in your language, it's easier for them to tell a white lie on the phone!

Targeted emails – the internet has opened up a new very cost effective way of advertising. Make sure you send a very positive email but don't make it too long as people will only read what they immediately see. If you want to be really clever ask for their help and get them to send to say ten people who may be interested. Please, please make sure when using email advertising that you don't disclose recipient email addresses. Common practice is to email yourself and then bcc all recipients.

Tip – All literature should include your charity name & the registered No.

Involving other groups - this can be very successful, think who maybe interested in your charity and try to get their support. For a recent event held in High Wycombe we emailed churches, Resident Associations etc. and asked them to send out on their mailing lists. The response was great and significantly helped ticket sales for the charity concerned.



It is suggested you sit down and brainstorm a list of all the groups in your area who maybe able to assist you. This may include schools, clubs, Women's Institute, Resident and Community associations, churches, other charities, business groups, the Lions, Round Table, Masons, political groups, music groups to name but a few.

Above all don't be frightened to ask, most people love to be helpful.

Local Press – community newspapers especially those run by resident groups are well read and you know you can get to your target market very easily. Watch cut off dates carefully and make sure you get on well with the editor!

The What's on section of local papers such as the Bucks Free Press are also useful but again make sure you give plenty of notice and keep badgering. Be very wary of paying for advertising in local papers – the cost can quickly eat into your budget.

Local Radio – BBC 3 counties Radio (3CR) and others have been known to be extremely helpful in advertising events. They even allow you to go on the radio and talk about your charity. Provided you have a good front person this can be an excellent way to get noticed.



Website – if you have a website why not put an announcement on the front page. If you're really flying you might even persuade other organisations to do the same!

And now a shameless plug! Have you visited the Wycombe Orpheus website, www.wycombeorpheus.org.uk? You will find lots of useful information here especially in the "Events" section.

Leaflet Drop – We recommend that you print off some A5 leaflets and drop them through the doors of local resident's, this is particularly good if you have access to cheap printing facilities!

Tip – You don't have to spend much to sell tickets!

Venue

You need a venue that can accommodate up to 70 choir members as well as enough seats for the audience size you wish to attract. Other things you need to consider:

- We need a decent, tuned piano (otherwise we will need to use our own keyboard)
- Staging or enough room for the Choir's staging
- Seating for the Choir in between groups
- Refreshments
- Toilets
- Parking
- Disabled access
- Lighting – internal and external
- Car Parking - marshals
- PA system for compère
- Risk Assessment



Tip – Check the venue has a PRS licence (see info below).

FAQs

How long before the concert should I start selling tickets?

We would recommend at least three months. Remember people have busy diaries and there are many conflicting things they can do with their evening!

Tickets are not selling quickly, what can I do?

There is usually an initial surge which then slows down or even stops before picking up again in the last two weeks. You need to keep positive and get very active. Send out more emails, talk to people, make them realise they're going to miss out. Above all don't panic!

I'm not sure how to promote the Choir what do I write/ say?

Firstly, come to a concert and see what you enjoy, it is then much easier to enthuse. Remember people want to be entertained. When producing posters / emails make them really think they're going to miss out by not being there. Use press articles written about the Choir.

And Finally please keep in regular contact with the Choir, we like to know how ticket sales are progressing and we are always happy to help with any problems.

Useful Information

Concert Secretary: Ray Walton
Tel: 01296 624329
Email: rdw123@tiscali.co.uk

Media Material Stuart Aitken
Email: stuart.aitken@matchings.co.uk

Publicity: Alan Walsh
Tel: 01494 565585
Email: alan@wpml.co.uk

Secretary: Craig Lewis
Tel: 01628 528550
Email: wycombeorpheus@aol.com

Performing Rights Society (PRS) 0845 3093090
Web: <http://www.prsformusic.com>

Follow the link below to get to the information for charities:

<http://www.prsformusic.com/users/businessesandliveevents/musicforbusinesses/charityandcommunity/Pages/default.aspx>

Tip – Only use material authorised by the Choir