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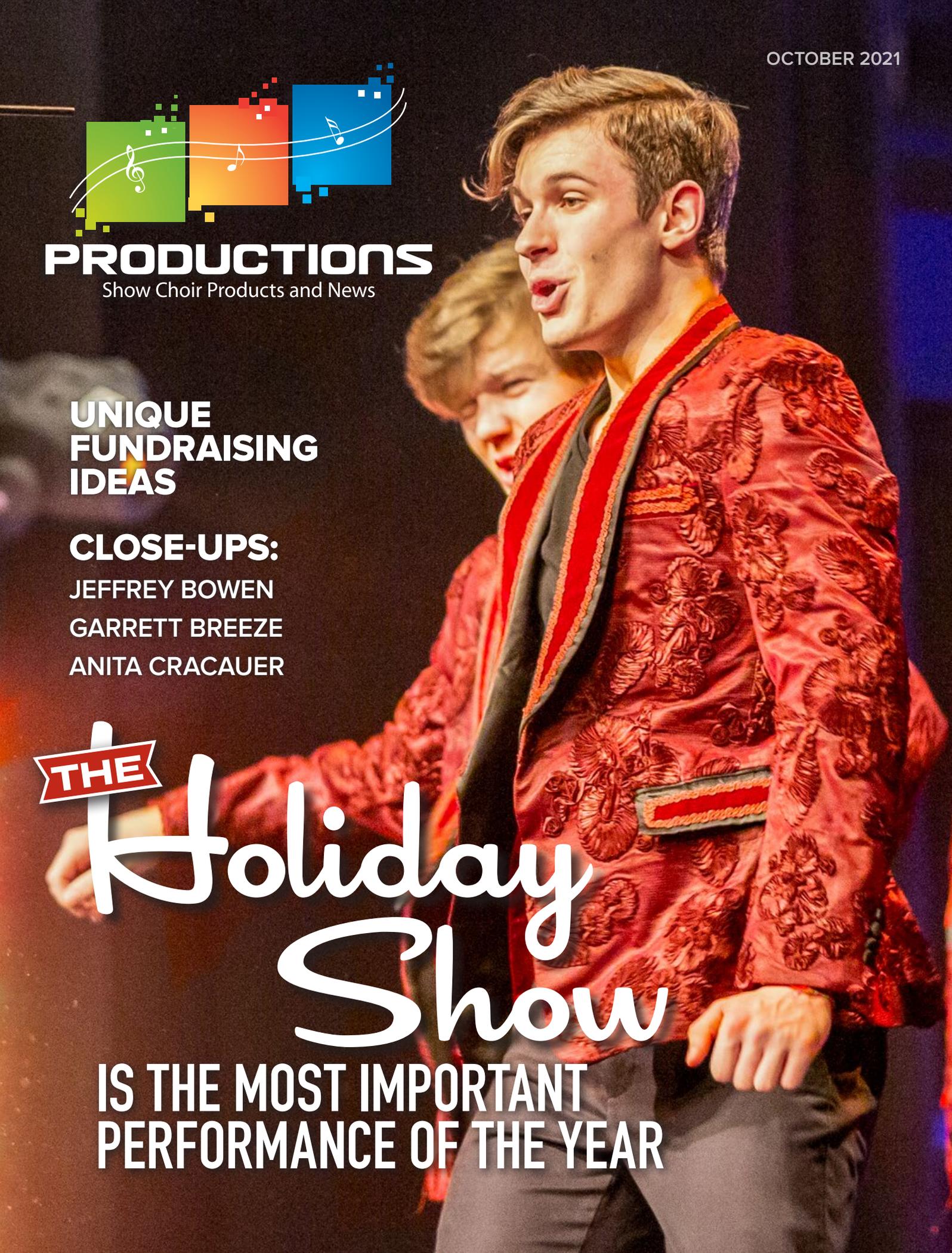
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THE HOLIDAY SHOW IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PERFORMANCE OF THE YEAR

The December/holiday/winter concert is the greatest opportunity of the year to make a positive impact in the community. This article provides some ideas on how to plan a concert program that will make the holiday season a highlight of the year and a fitting finale to the fall semester.



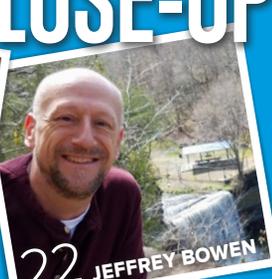
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MIKING A SHOW CHOIR

Show choirs come in many sizes and styles. They all have one thing in common, however: an audience who wants to hear them. With that expectation comes the challenge of overcoming a live band or mixed tracks, as well as some not-so-acoustic-friendly rooms.



IT'S TIME FOR YOUR CLOSE-UP



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UNIQUE FUNDRAISING IDEAS FOR SHOW CHOIRS

No matter how a choir is funded—by collecting dues or through an external source—fundraising is generally part of the equation. We share ideas for tackling this perennial challenge.

editor's letter



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The fall season is one of my favorite times of the year. Fall concerts and upcoming holiday celebrations are the highlight of all the preparations that so many have been making. The return of in-person holiday concerts will make this season so much sweeter. Many directors, booster officers, and armies of volunteers will soon be building sets, putting final touches to costumes, and doing the millions of little things behind the scenes that never get seen but are the essence of a successful show choir production. I must confess that I am literally giddy about seeing holiday performances, in addition to feeling great anticipation for a competition season that I am sure is going to be legendary!

When I was first introduced to show choir, I went expecting—at best—a lackluster performance. To be completely transparent, I expected an experience not unlike enduring a root canal. Talk about being wrong; man, was I mistaken. As I sat there, my mouth hung open from the first performance until the very last note echoed through the auditorium. I have people like you all to thank for giving me that gift, and I hope we give you information and tools that make it easier for you to continue giving others this present.

With all we are going through in today's world, your light means more than ever, and you definitely deliver! My desire is that you realize how special each one of you is and how much beauty you spread to a world that needs it so much. The long hours that the performers practice, the limitless hours volunteers work behind the scenes, the countless hours that tireless directors and their teams meet way into the night, the endless text chains between choreographers, arrangers, directors, and costumers are all for the benefit of this wonderful world of show choir. "Thank you" does not seem enough, but it is all I have until I am in the auditorium basking in your talented performances and I get to clap, shout, and yell with all the others to show appreciation for all your hard work and the outpouring of talent that you present to us.

Thank you for allowing us to be a part of this wonderful and beautiful world. We look forward to what comes next and to being amazed, thrilled, and moved with your performances.

Talk again soon,

Ed Bauer
Publisher/Editor
Productions Magazine



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THE Holiday Show

IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PERFORMANCE OF THE YEAR

by Garrett Breeze

The December/holiday/winter concert is the greatest opportunity of the year to make a positive impact in the community. This article provides some ideas on how to plan a concert program that will make the holiday season a highlight of the year and a fitting finale to the fall semester.



PHOTO BY STEPHEN STAIR / STEPHENSTAIRPHOTOGRAPHY

Since holiday performances are often crammed between a fall concert and final exams, some directors may be tempted to just go through the motions and not put as much effort into these late-season performances. This decreased attention can happen for a variety of reasons: finding rehearsal time in the back half of the semester can be difficult, some directors are just not excited by the holiday repertoire, or maybe their focus is on the following semester when the “real music” happens. But there is a simple reason why holiday concerts should be the focus of fall semester programming: That is the one concert that “non-choir” people are likely to attend.

Advocating in the Community

At least in the United States, holiday music is inescapable—and choral singing is an important part of the December experience. The holiday season is the only time many people will attend a choir concert all year. As a result, holiday concerts have the potential of being the biggest audiences the choir will sing for all year. This opportunity is a perfect time to advocate for the choral arts in the community by blowing them away with the performance. The holiday concert is a chance to convert the “choral curious” as well as to impress civic leaders and administration. The same time frame is also a natural moment (in a non-COVID world) for choirs to get out in the community by singing in public spaces, nursing homes, community events, and so on.

Fundraising

While the music should come first, holiday concerts can also provide a fundraising opportunity that should not be ignored. After all, for many professional arts organizations, holiday concerts are the thing that keeps them solvent. Some schools have turned their concerts into spectacular productions, selling out multiple nights and generating huge ticket sales. Others have earned money by performing at corporate events or private parties. Holiday-themed events like bake sales, silent auctions, toy drives, food drives, flash mobs, and singing telegrams have also been successful for many organizations.

Student Achievement

A pedagogical argument can also be made for emphasizing holiday performances. A successful December concert can help build momentum and enthusiasm going into the second semester. A choir that can sing challenging music in December is more likely to be successful in April and May, when many states have their festivals and contests. Students who perceive that the director is putting more effort into the holiday shows will do the same, and that effort will help stretch them during a time when they may be tempted to go on autopilot.

Planning a Concert Program

The process of choosing music for a holiday show is basically the same as any other

concert. The main difference is that students and audiences come to a holiday show with more expectations and pre-conceived notions than they do at other times of the year. When considering music, the following four concepts may be of help.

The Needs of the Students

Directors should start with the needs of the students in mind, thinking both about what they need to sing to be better musicians and what they need to sing to have an emotionally fulfilling concert. Directors should be sure to include any traditions or songs that are important to the group--or start some new ones! An ideal holiday program would make both religious and non-religious students feel seen and included.

The Needs of the Audience

Next, directors should think about the audience and what they’re going to expect, considering whether there are certain songs or styles that have been popular in the past. Directors should also think about striking a good balance between choral and popular music, targeted at the audience’s level of music literacy. A great concert will both meet and surprise audience expectations.

The Needs of the Concert

Like any other concert, the holiday show should feature a variety of tempos, styles, and emotions that is well paced. Choosing a mix of

religious, secular, choral, and pop music is an easy way to make sure concerts are engaging and interesting. Ultimately, the length of the concert will determine how much variety that can be included.

Quality above All Else

Maintaining high standards in song selection is always worth the effort. Directors should resist the desire to “check a box” in show planning, thereby choosing a subpar arrangement. When directors choose music that is memorable and meaningful, then the concert is also guaranteed to be memorable and meaningful.

By playing to the audience’s desire for a meaningful and entertaining holiday concert, directors can leverage the opportunity to increase community support, raise extra funds, and spur students to greater and more fulfilling achievements.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: With more than 1,000 show choir arrangements in circulation, Garrett Breeze is a sought-after clinician and adjudicator whose credits include film and television, Broadway stars, and Grammy-winning classical artists. His show choir music is available at breezetunes.com and he recently launched a new catalog of music for concert and church choirs at holiday-choirmusic.com.

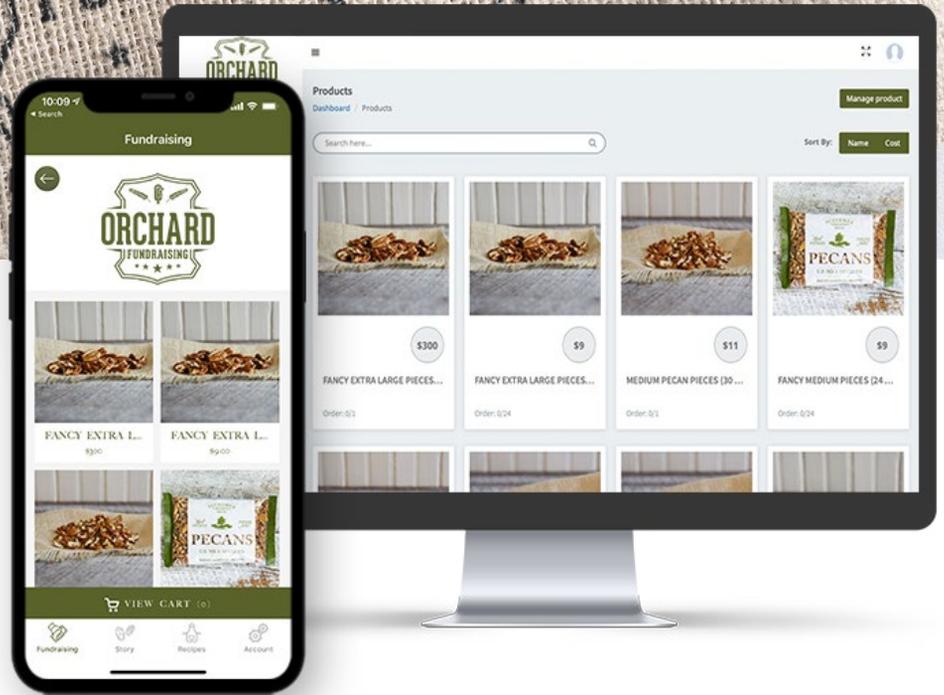


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Schermer Pecans shares some exciting news with the readers of *Productions Magazine*, about how their app can help you and your team with your show choir fundraising.

Why Develop A New App?

Aron Wimberly from Schermer Pecans explains, "We wanted to develop an innovative platform for fundraisers. Orchard fundraising allows customers to sell Schermer Pecan products through this online platform. This platform creates a shareable link that makes sharing your fundraising information quick and easy. No need for brochures anymore, just share the link on your social media. Friends and family can use your link to purchase products and the funds go straight to the desired bank account."

Wimberly continues, "We've shared the idea with many different organizational groups who are looking for new way to fundraise. Many organizational leaders are eager to learn about what is to come from this platform. We offer the ability to add their own products, which is even more exciting."

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Aron Wimberly can be reached at aron@schmerpecans.com or by calling 1.800.841.3403. Contact Orchard at info@orchardfundraising.com, call 833.850.8324, or visit www.orchardfundraising.com



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UNIQUE FUNDRAISING IDEAS

FOR SHOW CHOIRS

by Kari Metzger





Between the costs of risers, music, costumes, make-up, travel costs, and the other elements each particular group needs in order to survive and thrive, finding ways to obtain those green-backs is likely a continual concern. Before starting up the next bake sale, supporters might consider some more fun ways to successfully fundraise. The fun part is coming up with new ideas to interact with community members and fans. This article offers a few ideas and tips for thinking outside of the box.

Benefit Concerts

Teaming up with a nonprofit to raise awareness for a cause—while also asking for support—is a great way to make a difference in the community. Partnering with a worthy association and performing for a great cause will gather followers and allow them to see another side of the group. Not only will performers, supporters, and audience members feel good after such a performance, but the choir will also have a much better understanding of how important community events are.

Gala Dinners

Supporters who are in the event-planning mood might try their luck at a gala dinner. Many different types of functions that can be planned. For instance, the Houston Chronicle reported that even though the word “gala” is inherently “fancy,” these events can be as formal or informal as planners would like. One possibility: a cabaret-style dinner and a show, where the show choir provides the entertainment.

Social Media Campaigns

The world is social, no doubt about it. Supporters can promote raffles, contests, and events online through as many social media networks as members of the group participate in. Facebook events are great for inviting specific supporters to the group, and Twitter can help generate buzz in preparation for an event. Events can be promoted on the choir’s blog and website as well, and tickets can be available on the spot for eager fans to purchase.

Merchandise Sales

Of course the first thing a choir thinks about when they think merchandise is often a CD. What merchandise might be sold if a choir hasn’t recorded a CD or video yet? Planners can think outside the box. Many fans are also fans of singing or choir generally, so supporters might order some funny choir memorabilia for fans to purchase. Water bottles, coffee mugs, t-shirts, and other swag with funny sayings on them can be a great fundraiser. Online shops like cafepress.com allow users to create merchandise on an as-needed basis, so show-choir support groups only pay for what is printed while gaining a portion of the proceeds of each sale.

Singing Telegrams

Show choirs know how to sell the song, so they might consider actually selling the song on Valentine’s Day or someone’s birthday. Many choirs these days break into smaller groups around Valentine’s Day and offer a singing telegram experience for loved ones. This fundraiser is also a great way to gain new audience members and potentially even new choir members.

Mystery Games

Wicker Park Choral Singers, a group in Chicago, created a mystery fundraiser based on the popular television show “Where in the World is Carmen Sandiego?” They wrote up clues that would help guests put a stop to Thomas Markasino’s evil plot to ruin the art of choral music. The event was ticket-based, and the group also provided beverages to make the experience more fun and party-like. Those who solved the mystery had the chance to win prizes, as well. Other groups can come up with their own take on the mystery dinner theater, creating an immersive event that guests will be sure to remember.

Raffle and a Dinner

Another idea is to host a dinner or high tea and sell tickets for tables. Naturally, the show choir can provide the entertainment while guests are dining. Visitors can enter a raffle to win various prizes; these events work best when they are connected with local businesses that donate prizes. Restaurant gift certificates, spa getaways, and other gifts work well for raffle prizes. Once again, the show choir’s talents can be part of the offerings, with a personal concert as part of the raffle. Drawing on a previous idea, certain raffle winners may be able to unleash show choir members on their unsuspecting friends in the form of a singing telegram.



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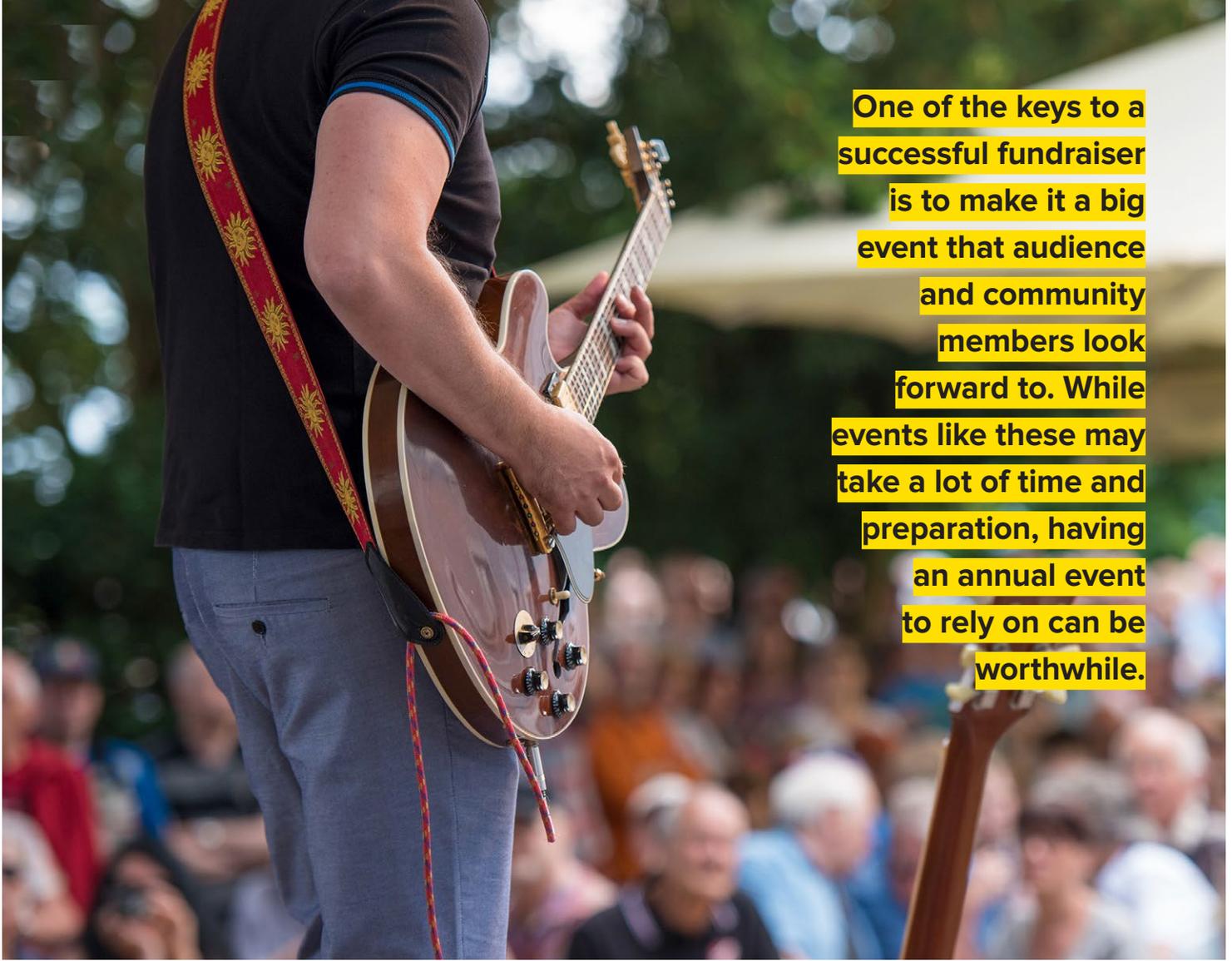
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One of the keys to a successful fundraiser is to make it a big event that audience and community members look forward to. While events like these may take a lot of time and preparation, having an annual event to rely on can be worthwhile.

The great thing about fundraising is that it can also double as a marketing opportunity. When a show choir performs at a gala or a 5K race for donors and community members, the audience experiences the choir's personality and love for music. Attendees get excited and involved listening to the hits. These events are excellent avenues to simultaneously get more people interested in the music while also raising funds for the group to do bigger and better things. Such opportunities are wins for both the choir and the audience members, who now have great new music to enjoy.

Once a group finds an idea that works especially well for its unique personality, it can continue the same fundraiser year after year. One of the keys to a successful fundraiser is to make it a big event that audience and community members look forward to. While events like these may take a lot of time and preparation, having an annual event to rely on can be worthwhile.

Hosting the Event

A perfect fundraiser doesn't just happen magically. These events take a lot of planning, preparation, and strategic execution,

meaning that the choir has to be on top of its game. To help kick off the process, here are six important tips for show choir fundraising:

1. Think about the Overall Goal

Yes, the main goal is to raise money, but are there other purposes to the event? As mentioned above, these events can be used as publicity opportunities or to gain attention from a new audience. Either way, supporters should start planning with the big purposes in mind, making decisions based on what else they want to gain from the event.

2. Set Incremental Goals

Show choir supporters should never go into a fundraising event blindly. Instead, they need to set a goal for how much money the choir wants to make, the target audience size and demographic, and any other important metrics the group may want to track. Setting these goals ahead of time will help planners keep tabs on how it is progressing as well as give a better idea of how to plan the event.

3. Define the Budget

This aspect is an important part of the process because show choir supporters will

want to make the smartest decisions possible regarding the budget. People will often have to invest some funds to raise more money, but how much? Planners need to think about the profit that will be made, i.e. the funds left over after the event is paid for. Supporters must plan so that fundraising efforts aren't made in vain and the event allows the choir to use the money to pursue the hoped-for opportunity.

4. Who Should Attend?

The attendee list is very important. Inviting donors depends on what the event is trying to accomplish. For instance, if the goal is to have a community gathering, planners should ask local businesses and neighbors to get involved, put flyers up in coffee shops, and get the word out locally. However, if the aim is a more formal gala, organizers should stick to influential people such as business owners and other musicians or important personalities in the music community.

5. Market the Event

Show choir marketing efforts need to be smart, strategic, and creative. Planners should use the show choir website, social

media accounts, blog, and a variety of offline methods to get participants. Organizers should design flyers to post around town or go with more formal invitation letters. It's also worthwhile to simply ask people face to face if they want to attend the event, and encourage choir members and their families to do the same.

All fundraisers need careful preparation and smart decision-making. Once the event is over, organizers need to always thank attendees and donors for their help and support for the choir. These ideas should help show choir supporters to get out there and start raising some money!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Kari Metzger has an extensive background in musical and administrative choir leadership and runs the business development team for Groupanizer, a company dedicated to helping choirs and choruses organize and manage their administrative, musical/repertoire, and marketing needs through its proprietary members-only and public-facing websites. Learn more at www.groupanizer.com.

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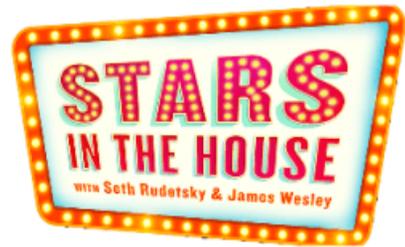
Industry leader celebrates the performing arts by supporting online fundraising series

Broadway is back! And Staging Concepts, a leading national provider of staging solutions and equipment, is celebrating by sponsoring "Stars in the House," an online series launched during the pandemic to help support the Broadway and performing arts community. The company's support will cover production costs for the show, allowing 100% of the monies raised through the series' ongoing fundraising efforts to go directly to The Actors Fund. Created and hosted by SiriusXM's Broadway Channel personality Seth Rudetsky and his husband, producer James Wesley, "Stars in the House" first aired in March 2020 after Broadway shut down due to the pandemic. The series features stars of stage and screen singing or performing live (from home!) to promote support for charitable services for those most vulnerable to the effects of Coronavirus (COVID-19).

"Our mission as a company is to elevate the abilities of all people to safely access and enjoy amazing life experiences, and that is exactly what Seth and James are doing through their 'Stars in the House' program," said Cindy Albrecht, director of sales and marketing for Staging Concepts, a Trex Company. "We are pleased to support their efforts as a way of giving back to the amazing and resilient performing arts community that we serve."

Over the past 18 months, the show has raised more than \$1,076,000 to benefit The Actors Fund, a national human services organization that provides a safety net for performing arts and entertainment professionals. Through special episodes and events, another \$264,000 has been raised and donated to other charities including the NAACP LDF, Trevor Project, Humane Society of New York, and more. In recognition for their tireless efforts to keep the theater community connected, informed and uplifted during the pandemic, Rudetsky and Wesley received a special Drama Desk Award and a Gotham Icon Award from the Museum of the City of New York.

Staging Concepts' sponsorship will officially kick-off on Oct. 19th with a special Game Night episode of "Stars in the House," featuring the casts of the iconic TV series "Glee" and "Fame." Original "Glee" cast members, including Vanessa Lengies (Sugar Motta), Kevin McHale (Artie Abrams), Becca Tobin (Kitty Wilde) and Jenna Ushkowitz (Tina Cohen-Chang), and original cast members of "Fame," including Loretta Chandler (Dusty Tyler), Lee Curreri (Bruno Martelli), Carol Mayo Jenkins (English Teacher Elizabeth Sherwood) and Valerie Landsburg (Doris), will come together for a battle of the drama departments in an evening of nostalgic fun and games to raise money for The Actors Fund.



In keeping with the theme of the episode, representatives from Staging Concepts will chat with Seth, James and their celebrity guests between games about the impact of COVID-19 on high school performing arts and how they are working with facilities across the country to bring back the arts safely through spatial planning and modular solutions.

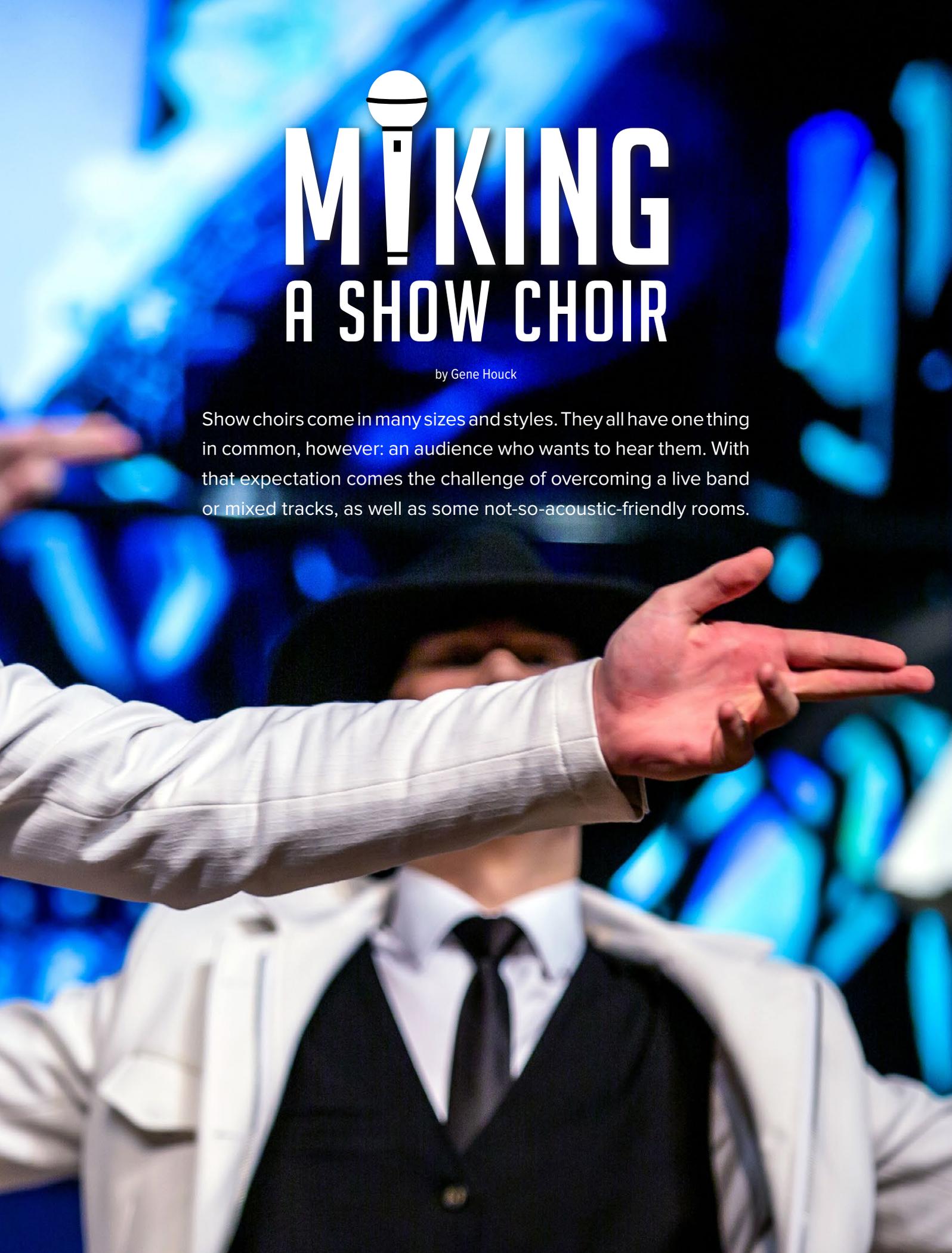
"We have a variety of portable, demountable, and permanent solutions for theaters that are specifically designed to create the ultimate performance setting for those on stage and in the audience," noted Albrecht. "During this live segment, we look forward to highlighting our elite staging solutions and showing our support for the stars of the stage and screen."

Visit starsinthehouse.com to learn about upcoming shows, watch previous episodes, or donate to The Actors Fund. For more information about Staging Concepts, visit stagingconcepts.com.

Staging Concepts, a Trex Company, is a national leader in engineering and producing the most advanced modular, custom portable staging solutions for all types of venues, including performing arts spaces and production companies, sports facilities, worship venues, convention centers, hospitality settings and special events. Since 1990, the company has been committed to elevating the abilities of all people to safely access and enjoy amazing life experiences.

Based in Minneapolis, Minn., Staging Concepts is a division of Trex Commercial Products, Inc., a subsidiary of Trex Company, Inc.





MIKING A SHOW CHOIR

by Gene Houck

Show choirs come in many sizes and styles. They all have one thing in common, however: an audience who wants to hear them. With that expectation comes the challenge of overcoming a live band or mixed tracks, as well as some not-so-acoustic-friendly rooms.



PHOTO BY STEPHEN STAIR - STEPHENSMIRPHOTOGRAPHY

It is a shame for a choir to do months of rehearsal and for an audience not to be able to hear their performance. So the question these days is not so much, “Do we need to mic the choir?” but instead, “How do we mic the choir?” The answer to this question can and does vary, so let’s look at some of the common methods as to what works and what doesn’t.

Show choirs are, of course, particularly challenging because of the combination of singing and choreography. Unlike most choral groups or church choirs that are stationary and limited to one area of a stage or platform, show choirs typically can make use of the entire stage. Add a live band, and the proper use of microphones can be a mystery. In fact, at most regional and national competitions, there is a live instrumental accompaniment, which is typically louder than recorded tracks. The Show Choir National Championship Series (SCNCS), according to www.showchoirs.org, actually levies a penalty for using recorded accompaniment. In miking this type of performance, one of the first decisions is whether to use wireless or wired microphones or—more than likely—a combination of both.

Wireless, Wired, or Both?

Many show choirs are taking a page from Broadway and investing in wireless microphones for all or part of the choir. These can

be body-worn or handheld microphones. Body-worn microphones can be headset or miniature lavalier-style microphones clipped to clothing, taped to a cheek, or pinned in a performer’s hair. If the choir is small enough, a case can be made that a wireless microphone gives the performer the flexibility to move freely while giving the sound person the ability to control the sound. It is impractical, however, to consider wireless microphones for each singer for choirs ranging in size larger than 16 to 20 members. Besides the enormous expense of multiple wireless microphones, having a plethora of live microphones brings with it serious sound mixing challenges.

One of the biggest challenges is trusting the “blend” of the choir to the mixing ability of a sound person. Choirs are made up of basses, baritones, tenors, 1st and 2nd altos, and sopranos, and they each have their unique part to sing. One of the duties of a good show choir director is to teach the performers how to blend their voices, how to listen to each other, how to express dynamics, and how to harmonize. All choirs have some singers who sing soft, some loud and some who may not be in perfect pitch. So, rather than relying on massive moves by a sound engineer to balance the mix of voices, microphones should ideally be utilized to “capture” the choir’s natural blend. This dynamic challenge is why using

wired microphones to mike multiple voices at a distance, along with a couple of wireless microphones on stands for soloists, is highly recommended; it is also more affordable.

Choosing a Wired Mic

There are two types of wired microphones commonly utilized today: dynamic and condenser. The choice between a dynamic or condenser mic is typically dictated by the distance to the sound source. Dynamic microphones, like the Audix OM2 or Shure SM58, are commonly used for wired, handheld vocals. They are also effective on a stand for miking soloists. They are rugged and generally less expensive than condenser microphones.

A condenser microphone, however, is better suited for distance miking or capturing a larger area, such as a show choir, because of their higher sensitivity and output. Condenser microphones require phantom power—provided from the mixing board. They are also more delicate and need to be stored properly and kept away from moisture.

To determine if a microphone is a dynamic or condenser, turn off the phantom power at the mixer (there will be a button labeled “phantom” or “48volt”). Make sure that all volume faders are down before doing this. If the mic only works with the phantom power on, it is a condenser. Engaging phantom power will not damage dynamic microphones.



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Choosing a Condenser Microphone

For many years, theatres have used boundary mics—low profile flat surface microphones—on the floor, typically positioned downstage by themselves or in tandem with hanging mics positioned upstage. When using a boundary mic, stagers should always use a unilateral direction pattern, either Cardioid (heart shaped) or Hyper-Cardioid (tighter pattern on the sides). A unidirectional pattern will help to reduce feedback and restrict audience noise from entering the sound system. Additionally, stagers should always place foam or a piece of felt beneath the boundary mic to help minimize foot noise from dancers. If a show choir has very intense dance routines, there may be too much foot traffic picked up even with foam or felt beneath the mic.

Hanging condenser microphones can also be effective. The biggest mistake when miking a choral group or choir is in using too many mics, which can contribute to increased feedback. A good condenser mic will be able to cover up to twenty stationary people. However, a show choir of twenty will typically cover twice as much square footage as a stationary choir. Even with a smaller show choir of fifteen singers or fewer, two or more microphones will be needed. Despite this limitation, use the least number of microphones and maximize their coverage. Imagine a 60° cone emitting from

the microphone; the best coverage is within the imaginary cone.

When equipping an area with multiple microphones, stagers should take care to avoid a phenomenon known as phase cancellation. Since sound travels in a wave, two microphones amplifying the same sound source can be hit by the same sound wave but at different intervals. The positive wave from one signal can cancel out the negative phase of another signal. The usual result is a dropout of certain frequencies. This situation is referred to as “comb filtering.” To avoid this issue, stagers should always utilize the 3:1 rule: Multiply the distance of the sound source, or singers, to the microphone by three. Simply put, that is the distance the two microphones need to be from each other.

Stagers will need to determine whether mics will be hanging from above or placed on the platform. If hanging the mics, there are many manufacturers to choose from. Today’s show choirs, however, perform in many different rooms, so hanging microphones are often not an option. A good alternative is to place condenser microphones on stands. Since many show choirs are on risers, one of the biggest challenges is getting the microphones high enough to adequately pick up the higher rows. For example, Audix makes a very low profile 50" or 84" carbon fiber boom arm-MicroBoomT that utilizes

When equipping an area with multiple microphones, stagers should take care to avoid a phenomenon known as phase cancellation. Since sound travels in a wave, two microphones amplifying the same sound source can be hit by the same sound wave but at different intervals.



PHOTO BY STEPHEN STARK / STEPHEN STARK PHOTOGRAPHY

the M1250B miniature condenser or higher output M1255B. The MicroBoom attaches to a standard mic stand. This product is a unique solution for show choir miking when seeking a low-profile, high-reach solution and flexibility of placement.

Doug Secor, owner of Rockin Robin Productions in Ohio, shares some experienced insight for sound engineering a show choir:

For the past six years, we have been hired to do sound for show choirs in our region. It has been difficult to get the vocals out in front of the mix. We have learned from other sound companies that they, too, experienced the same frustrations. Most show choirs we encounter perform with drums, keyboards, amplified bass, and guitar. We recently tried the Audix Microboom utilizing the M1255B high output Micros series condenser with a shotgun capsule. The shotgun capsule has the enhanced ability to capture sound from a distance, and it allowed us to place the mic four feet in front of the first row of singers but still capture the back rows. We also have found that the slender low profile look of the MicroBoom actually gets lost from the audience's visual perspective. For most show choirs up to 24 voices we typically set up the shotgun mics 6 feet in from the edge of the choir on a 24-30' stage and

4' in front. We set the mic height at 7-8', angled in slightly from the sides to capture half the singers with each mic. In short, we have been amazed with the results. We also supply two or three Audix OM3 wireless units on stands for soloists. For larger performances, we are using three or four MicroBooms across the front. In these situations, we run every other microphone "out of phase" to minimize phase cancellation.

A Word about Monitors

Microphones should be placed behind the main speakers. If they are, and feedback occurs, the source of the feedback is most likely the monitors. Rule number one: Do not put the choir in the singer's monitor mix. The monitor mix should only have the recorded track or the instrumental accompaniment. Sound engineers and choir directors need to hold fast to this rule despite requests from the performers to hear themselves in the monitor mix.

Feedback is simply a microphone picking up itself from a speaker. Therefore, if the live mic is not in the monitor mix, the chances for feedback are reduced, and the ability to gain up the mics in the front of house mix is greatly increased. The goal is to have the singers project as much as possible and to listen to each other. That being said, live musicians must understand that they

are team players and that it is important to keep the stage volume down in order for the singers to better hear themselves on stage. Also, unlike the singers, instrumentalists do need some kind of choir mix in their monitors. Stagers need to make sure that the band monitors are positioned away from the live microphones. Singers and instrumentalists should be encouraged to go out front during a sound check to hear the positive results of teamwork and compromise.

Parting Shot

Not all venues are created equal; room acoustics can vary greatly. Compromises may need to be made at times, as performers may not hear exactly what they want in a monitor, or an instrumentalist may want to play louder than is necessary. Make sure that the choir director, singers, and instrumentalists are all on the same page and that everyone is working as a team to achieve the best sound and performance as possible.

Let the show begin!

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Gene Houck is the National Sales Manager for Audix Corporation. Celebrating its 28th year, Audix manufactures a broad product line based on high-quality professional microphones. For more information, visit www.audixusa.com



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IT'S TIME FOR YOUR CLOSE-UP



JEFFREY BOWEN

MUSIC ARRANGEMENT SERVICES

QUESTION:

What got you into arranging and show choir arranging?

In the summers during my college years, I was a member of the Decatur Park Singers in Decatur, Illinois. Dave Alderman and Steve McClarey were arrangers, and I learned a great deal from them. Also during those years, I was accompanying Craig Tornquist as he hosted large show choir competitions. I collected the programs and sent letters to schools to get arranging work. I wrote my first chart in 1987, and it has grown ever since.

QUESTION:

What sets your arrangements apart from others?

I constantly work to improve the quality of work by writing comprehensive arrangements. After adjudicating for almost thirty years, I have learned to apply the advice I give to groups to my own work. Keeping vocals in a singable range and writing out all drum, percussion, and guitar parts is key. I also write very limited horn and percussion parts that play over vocals, which gives the singers the opportunity of being heard.

QUESTION:

When a group chooses you, what can they expect from Music Arrangement Services?

An arrangement that works for their group; communication is the key to that. With plenty of details from the director, my job is to create exactly what they need. I understand that there may be some tweaks or additional ideas for the piece. On a new arrangement, the first edit is free of charge.

They may also expect communication from me regarding pricing and licensing. A price quote is sent for financial clarity. I will help as much as

possible to help with licensing. I do my best to set realistic goals in delivery, as well. They can also expect courtesy and professionalism.

QUESTION:

If our reader was sitting in front of you, what question should they ask you that they might think of?

“What happens if I can’t get licensing on the song that is considered the lynchpin of my show?” Consider having me write an original in the same feel and theme.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Jeffrey Bowen is Chairman of Music Arrangement Services, Inc. Contact him at jeff@showchoirmusic.com. www.showchoirmusic.com

IT'S TIME FOR YOUR CLOSE-UP

CALLING ALL SONG- WRITERS



Attention, Show Choir Directors

Do you have any budding young songwriters in your choir who would love the opportunity to explore the craft in a class with show choir kids across the country? Please share this information and spread the word: ShowChoirStock.com is starting an annual Songwriting Workshop this January, and we'd love for your students to join us in the very first class.

The Vision

We envision a weekly meeting for young songwriters to get together and learn techniques and tools to improve their craft; a space that's safe and welcoming for students to share their ideas with each other for encouragement and helpful feedback; a forum where older, more experienced songwriters can share their ideas and wisdom. Overall—we anticipate that this will be a fun and rewarding experience for all who participate. The leaders and guest songwriters will primarily be female, and we strongly encourage young women to participate, but the workshop will be open to all students of any gender.

Workshop Leader Anita Cracauer

The workshop will be led by Anita Cracauer, president of ShowChoirStock.com. She started arranging music full time in 2002, and her publishing career took off when she began licensing and selling her arrangements starting in 2005. As a

songwriter, she wrote her first pop song when she was twelve, and over the next twenty years continued writing original songs for the bands she performed in. But her career as a songwriter didn't really take off until she woke up one morning with a fully finished show choir chorus in her head—and it was then that she realized that her passion was not arranging other people's songs but writing her own songs for show choirs. Over the last five years, she's written close to one hundred songs for show choir, and she feels like she's just getting started. Anita is inviting many other songwriters to feature as guest participants as well.

Where and When

Participants will be able to join the workshop online in their own homes, meeting on a weekly basis for twelve weeks, starting in January 2022.

Pre-requisites

The workshop has no prerequisites. Some people might assume participants might need to play an instrument in order to write a song. In reality, thousands of successful songwriters don't play instruments. All that songwriters need is an ability to write lyrics and a musical ear to help create and sing a melody. When it

comes down to it, that's all a song is—words sung to a particular set of pitches. When your song is complete—if you don't play an instrument—Anita will create an accompaniment track for you so you will have a finished product to share if desired.

The Exciting Part

At the end of the course, you'll receive a certificate of completion, and you'll have a finished song. If your song has "show choir appeal," it will be considered for publication



on ShowChoirStock.com, where choirs around the world will be able to purchase and perform it. Let's find, nurture, and support the next generation of songwriting talent directly within our own community.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Anita Cracauer is the founder of ShowChoirStock.com, an online catalog of show choir arrangements. She has worked as a freelance arranger, songwriter, and publisher in the show choir industry since 2001. In addition to writing and publishing, she judges competitions across the country and educates others on the topics of arranging, songwriting, and copyright licensing and publishing.

IT'S TIME FOR YOUR CLOSE-UP

GARRETT BREEZE

BREEZETUNES.COM



QUESTION:

What got you into arranging and show choir arranging?

Truthfully, the thing that got me into arranging was the fact that middle school trombone parts are *incredibly* boring. And so, my early experiences arranging were really centered around my instrument and trying to figure out how to play all the things I wanted to play—which eventually worked itself into a desire to start composing original music. My teachers saw this and encouraged me to continue in some pretty remarkable ways. I had my first “premiere” in the 8th grade when my orchestra teacher, Carol Dennis, put my (terrible) first composition on the spring program. And all through high school, my band teachers were letting me put things in front of their ensembles to sight read and record and perform.

My first experience with show choir came my sophomore year at North Central in Indianapolis. I was conscripted to join the Counterpoints band, and I literally had no idea what I was in for. And to be honest, I had fun playing the music, but I still came at the activity with this attitude of pop music being inferior to instrumental composition and jazz. However, I was just blown away by the amazing musical moments the choir was able to make out of all this “boring” pop music. And it was all because of their arrangers, Mike and Pamela Runyan, who came in every week to work with the band and became really important mentors to me.

I loved arranging, but I always viewed it as a steppingstone to composition because I assumed that there just wasn’t enough work out there. But I always seemed to find myself gravitating towards vocal music. Even though my goal in college was to become a film composer, I was still arranging for Pat Wiehe’s prep group at North Central. I got a campus job

arranging for the BYU Young Ambassadors, and I was playing trombone for Mack Wilberg and the Tabernacle Choir in Salt Lake City, for whom I would eventually start writing orchestration. Those opportunities started snowballing into more work to the point that when I finished graduate school at Belmont in Nashville, I realized that I was busy enough to keep at it full time.

QUESTION:

What sets your arrangements apart from others?

What I try to do is approach show choir arranging from a cinematic standpoint. A good film score is all about subconsciously telegraphing to the audience how they should feel, through the shape of the line, the choice of orchestration, and so on. It’s not a perfect analogy, but when you’re arranging for show choir, the music has to support the visual and dramatic elements of the show. And whether or not it has a story, the show still has an arc—you’re still taking the audience on a journey. With vocal music, the song lyrics do a lot of the emotional heavy lifting, but I still try to make sure that the accompaniment can stand on its own and tell the same story.

QUESTION:

When a group chooses you what can they expect from Breeze Tunes?

For some people, an arranger is just another online shop where they can go and buy music—and if that’s all you want from me that’s okay—I’ll still take your money. But I get the most fulfillment out of being involved with my schools as a part of the creative team because it doesn’t really matter how good an arrangement is if it doesn’t fit the show.

It’s kind of like buying a house. I’ve got lots of houses I can sell you, and I’ve got lots of designs for new houses I can build, and they’re all great. But you’re the one that has to live in it. So, my job is to figure out what your style is, figure out what you like, and then get you in that house.

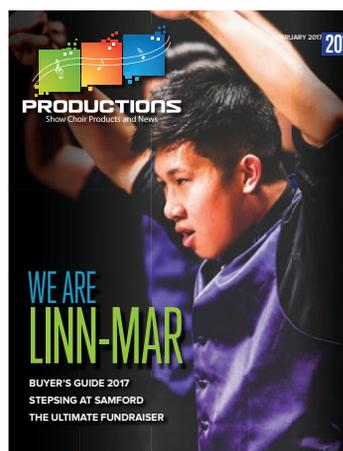
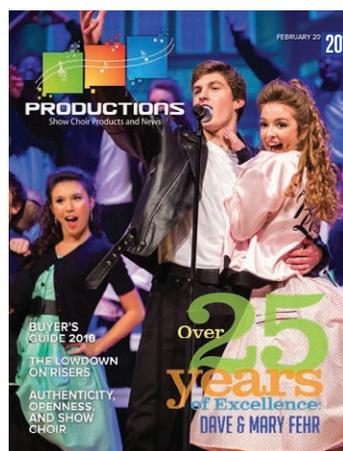
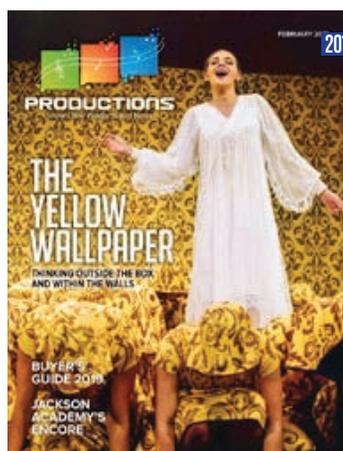
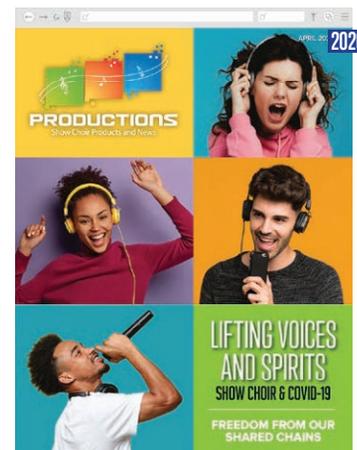
QUESTION:

If our reader was sitting in front of you, what question should they ask you that they might not think of?

I would assume most of your readers are involved in music education, so I would want them to ask me about how they can incorporate commercial music into their curriculum. My whole career exists on this very unusual intersection between music education and the music industry, and it’s made me realize just how much of a disconnect there is between how music exists in academia versus how it operates in the real world. Even if your focus is on classical repertoire and traditional choral music, I still believe that incorporating songwriting, arranging, technology, the music industry, and contemporary music history is only going to help your students. If that’s something you’re interested in doing, please don’t hesitate to reach out.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: With more than 1,000 show choir arrangements in circulation, Garrett Breeze is a sought-after clinician and adjudicator whose credits include film and television, Broadway stars, and Grammy-winning classical artists. His show choir music is available at breezetunes.com and he recently launched a new catalog of music for concert and church choirs at holidaychoirmusic.com.

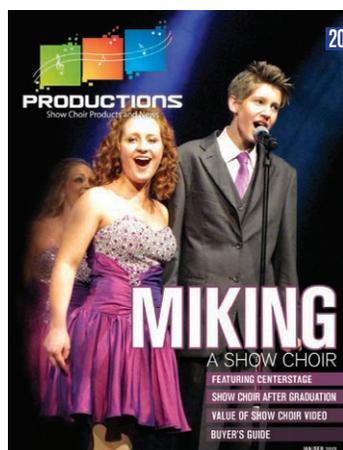
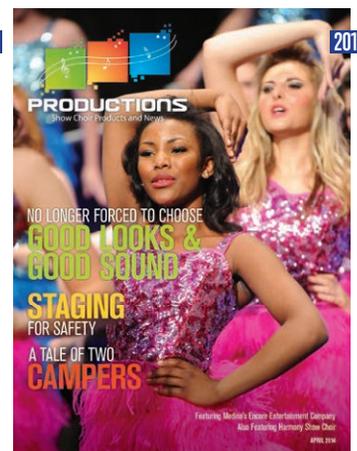
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