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FROM SKEPTIC TO CHAMPION

**DR. PATRICK
MCCORMICK'S SHOW
CHOIR REVOLUTION**

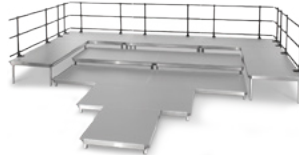
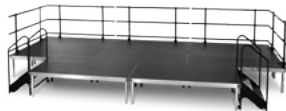
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FROM SKEPTIC TO CHAMPION: DR. PATRICK MCCORMICK'S SHOW CHOIR REVOLUTION

Now in his third year as the director of choral activities at Prattville High School Dr. Patrick McCormick knows some choral-music purists see show choir as taboo. He used to be one of them. So how does Spotlight—the show choir he directs at Prattville High—consistently score at every competition it enters?

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editor's letter

Dear Show Choir Community,

As we kick off another exciting season of show choir, I am thrilled to present an issue all about the vital topics of fundraising and staging equipment—two essential components that truly make a difference in a program's success. From creative event ideas to tips on getting the right equipment for your performances, we've packed this issue with everything you need to ensure your group's needs are met and your shows continue to dazzle audiences. We're also highlighting some of the most trusted vendors who can help provide the tools necessary to elevate your performances.

In addition to these helpful resources, we are thrilled to feature a very special show choir in this issue. Their dedication and passion have left a lasting impression on the community, and we know their story will inspire you. We would love to include one of your choirs in an upcoming issue! If you have a standout group, don't hesitate to reach out to us—we'd love to hear all about your journey and successes.

However, amid the excitement, we are also reminded of the challenges faced by many in recent weeks. The hurricanes that have swept through parts of the country have left devastation in their wake, and our thoughts are with those impacted. As a show choir community, let's come together to support in any way we can, whether through donations, outreach, or simply keeping those affected in our hearts and prayers. Recovery is a long road, but with our collective strength and generosity, we can help ease that journey for those who need it most.

Thank you for allowing us to be a part of this incredible community. It's a privilege to share in your successes, offer support, and provide the resources you need to continue shining on stage. Together we are stronger, and it is my hope that we can continue to uplift each other through every triumph and challenge.

Warm regards,

Ed Bauer
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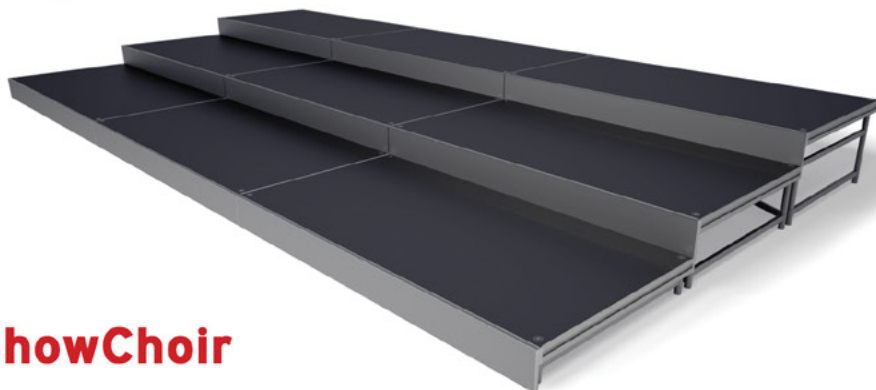


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FROM SKEPTIC TO CHAMPION

DR. PATRICK MCCORMICK'S

SHOW CHOIR REVOLUTION

by Rosalind Fournier



Dr. Patrick McCormick, director of choral activities at Prattville High School, remembers the first time that he watched a competitive show choir.

“Whatever this is,” he told the colleague who introduced it to him, “it is not singing. That is not a proper vocal technique. They are screaming.”

At the time, McCormick was starting as the director of choral activities at Albertville Middle School in Albertville, Alabama and assistant director at Albertville High School. The new opportunity incorporated a competitive middle school show choir and two competitive high school show choirs. For all his years as a serious student of music, he was, to use his words, “ignorant” and “close-minded” when it came to show choir.

He set out to learn, traveling throughout the United States discussing show choir with directors, and observing show choir rehearsals and performances, which ultimately changed his perspective. “It’s a completely different sound, and I wasn’t accustomed to it,” he says. “But quickly I understood, ‘Okay, I can buy into this. This is fun. Show choir is very engaging for this generation, and it’s so innovative—it allows you to tap into your creative mind and create things that no one has ever seen before.’”

When the pandemic hit McCormick had just hit his groove at Albertville, and schools quickly shifted to remote learning. The pandemic ended his time at Albertville, but after spending

some time at other schools, he got the call to become the director of choral activities at Prattville High School which included directing Spotlight—a small mix competitive show choir entering its 28th season this year.

While its tradition and success loom large, Spotlight's size is small, with just 13 students this year. Shortly after McCormick arrived at Prattville High School, he discovered that roughly 66 percent of the current show choir members would graduate following the 2024 season. Spotlight went from 29 members in 2023 to 14 members in 2024, and 10 of the 14 were seniors. McCormick was able to recruit nine new members to join Spotlight for the 2024-2025 season, and he believes that this year's group has a great opportunity to be successful.

"I'm excited because I have a lot of students who have never done show choir before," he says, "and now I can teach them, 'this is what facials are, this is what blocking is.' It is something some of these students have never experienced before."

McCormick adds: "What I have learned is it is not about the size of the group; it is the quality of the group. We had not won our division in years here at Prattville, and last year we did it. We placed at nearly every single competition last season." The only exception was an open division competition in Texas—where groups of all sizes competed together—but they still won best overall female performer.

Spotlight is now the seventh-ranked small mixed-show choir in the South and the second-ranked in Alabama. "The kids I have this year are good, they are determined, and

that is what it is all about. Everyone is buying in. Meanwhile, the older kids are educating the new kids on what show choir is. It is a beautiful thing to see."

Building a Show Choir Community

McCormick, who earned his PhD in Music Education from Auburn University last year and wrote his dissertation on "Keeping Choir in Show Choir," says he continues to research and learn. He encourages his kids to do the same, inviting them to watch videos of other groups and

"I'm excited because I have a lot of students who have never done show choir before and now I can teach them, 'this is what facials are, this is what blocking is.' It is something some of these students have never experienced before."

offer critiques in class. McCormick also goes to Showchoir Camps of America—where students come from all over to hone their skills and get rare opportunities to see Broadway performers in an intimate setting—every year, a rare chance to network with other show choir directors.

Seeing the value in those annual events prompted McCormick to launch the National Association for Show Choir (NASC), which currently boasts about 225 members on Facebook.



“As I’ve grown as a director, I’ve made so many connections, built so many friendships, and have so many mentors,” he says. “I want to see more show choirs doing that moving forward. As directors, we tend to go back to our cubicles and not talk to each other. I am trying to connect all the directors and future directors so we can continue to move competitive show choir forward.”

At Prattville High School, he would like to see the concert choir course added as an option for students, giving him another venue to teach the

fundamentals of singing and giving him somewhere else to pull from in building up the show choir. McCormick would also like to see better collaboration between band and show choir, including coordinating schedules to make it easier for students to do both if they want to. (This year he successfully recruited a trumpet player from the band, who will not only sing but also play in performances.)

One recent innovation was adding a new show to the calendar year :Halloween Spooktacular at the end of October. “It helps serve as an intro to

their competition show, gets their feet wet, gets them learning simple choreography and such, and then they’re ready to learn a completely different show for November.”

This year’s competition show itself is a departure, with a theme of challenges service men and women face after returning from overseas missions. He says it hits close to home in Prattville, home to many military families.

“I’ve paired up with Maxwell Air Force Base here, and their psychologist is going to come talk to the group and help put it in perspective,” he says. “In the end, our message is that you can get out of this darkness you’re in, and the reason I’m doing this show is I see the effects in my students when their parents are grappling with these issues.” The choir will also hold a fundraiser in January to benefit a local veterans’ association.

Anything Goes

Talk with McCormick for a while, and you get the sense that he sees every challenge as an opportunity, including his transition from show choir skeptic to one of its biggest champions (“I would like to wear a button that says, ‘Ask me about show choir,’ he says.) If the kids do not have a foundation in proper vocal technique, he is ready to teach them, helping them build the endurance they need to make sure they can still hit the high notes as a performance nears its end. Show choir gives him the chance to write whatever show he wants and incorporate music no one expects—including this year a song by the heavy-metal group Five Finger Death Punch.

Most of all, McCormick loves challenging the students themselves. “It’s amazing to watch the students grow throughout the year in their confidence,” he says. “Show choir is more than just the costumes, music, choreography, and competing. They learn life-long lessons here. I have students

come back and tell me how much show choir has helped them get out of their shells when they get to college. They are confident in who they are, and they learn that in show choir.”

He continues: “I want them to enjoy the journey. I tell them over and over, ‘My passion is to see you guys get on that stage and just pour your heart out and realize your full potential. I see your potential. You may not see it, but I do!’”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Rosalind Fournier is a freelance writer/editor in Homewood, Alabama where she lives with her husband and kids. She loves to read and looks forward to March Madness every year, though her bracket is usually a disaster.

SPOTLIGHT'S 2024 RESULTS

Albertville Diamond Classic:

- Small Mix Grand Champions

Biloxi Gulf Coast Classic:

- 4th Place in the Small Mix Division

Opelika Southern Showcase:

- 1st Runner-Up in the Small Mix Division

FAME Show Choir Finals:

- 2nd Runner Up Overall
- Best Female Performer

Lone Star Invitational in Fort Worth, TX:

- Best Overall Female Performer



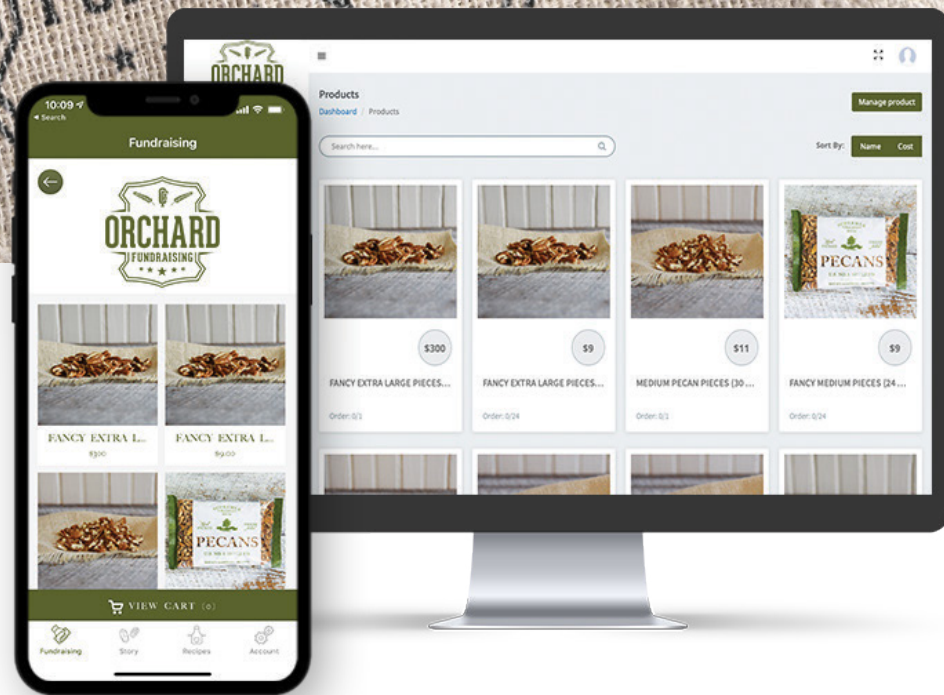
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GROWING SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISING ENGAGEMENT



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

Easy and Intuitive

Orchard fundraising is built on simple and intuitive web and mobile app platforms, which allow your fundraising organizations to present, order, and track their shipments in real time. A mobile-responsive link is also available to share on all social media platforms to further their reach.

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For each fundraiser, your organization has its own unique URL to send via text message, email, or share on their social media platforms. Team members have their own login where they can see their fundraising stats compared to other students, allowing for friendly competition.

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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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The background of the page is a solid red color. Overlaid on this are various dark silhouettes of people in dynamic poses, suggesting a performance. Some figures appear to be singing into microphones, while others are in dance-like stances. The silhouettes are layered, creating a sense of depth and movement.

SING DANCE FUNDRAISE!

TIPS FOR HOSTING YOUR BEST FUNDRAISING EVENT YET

Ed Bauer

As a show choir director, you're not just managing the choreography and harmonies of your group—you're also responsible for ensuring your students have the necessary resources to thrive. From costumes and music rights to travel expenses and auditorium rentals, the financial burden can be substantial. Luckily, fundraising events can provide a fun, engaging way to bring in the much-needed funds while strengthening community support. Here's a guide to help you organize and execute a successful show choir fundraiser that resonates with donors and keeps your group thriving.



Understand Your Needs and Set Clear Goals

Before diving into event planning, it's crucial to determine what you're raising money for and how much you need. Whether you're targeting funds for costumes, new audio equipment, or travel costs for an upcoming competition, be specific. Donors are more likely to contribute when they understand exactly where their money is going and can see the impact their contribution will make.

For example, if your show choir needs \$5,000 for costumes for a spring performance, let donors know. If travel costs to a national competition will run you \$10,000, break that down for them. Transparency builds trust and creates a sense of purpose around the event. Once you know what you need, set realistic

financial goals for the event based on past fundraising efforts and the potential audience size.

Pick the Right Event Type

Not all fundraising events are created equal. What works for one show choir might not work for another, depending on your community, resources, and the needs of your group. Below are a few event ideas that have proven successful for show choirs:

- **Benefit Concert:** Showcase your students' talent by hosting a performance. Sell tickets to family, friends, and the community, with all proceeds going toward your specific needs. Add a donation table in the lobby where attendees can contribute more if they feel moved to support the cause.
- **Silent Auction:** Partner with local businesses and families to donate items or experiences that attendees can bid on. You could auction off gift baskets, vacation packages, or even front-row seats to your choir's next big performance. Adding a silent auction to a concert or dinner event is a great way to increase fundraising potential.
- **Dinner and Show:** Turn your event into an experience by hosting a themed dinner alongside a choir performance. This kind of event can attract larger donors, especially if it's marketed as an elegant or formal evening. You can add live or silent auctions to the event to boost revenue.
- **Talent Show:** Engage the whole community by organizing a talent

show where your choir students, parents, and even faculty members can showcase their skills. Sell tickets for entry and offer donation options for people who want to support specific performers or needs.

- **Crowdfunding Concert Livestream:** For choirs with a strong online presence or community members spread across different locations, consider hosting a virtual concert with a crowdfunding component. Platforms like GoFundMe or Patreon allow you to accept donations from viewers who can't attend in person.

Target Special and Specific Needs

One of the most powerful strategies for fundraising is aligning your event with a specific need. Here's where you can be strategic: instead of hosting a general fundraiser, consider tying the event to something tangible. When people know they are contributing to a specific cause, like buying a new sound system, upgrading costumes, or funding a trip to a national competition, they are more likely to give.

For example, during a benefit concert, you might highlight different giving levels that correspond to your needs. A \$50 donation could fund one costume, a \$500 donation might cover the cost of a student's trip to a regional competition, and a \$2,000 donation could sponsor the entire choir's new microphones. Providing these tiers helps donors visualize the impact of their contribution.

Additionally, consider creating a wish list that's available at the event, showing exactly what items or services the choir needs. This approach makes giving more personal and impactful.

Incorporate Personal Stories

Fundraising is most effective when there's an emotional connection, so it's essential to personalize your cause. Sharing the stories of individual choir members, especially if they have overcome challenges to participate in the group, can be incredibly powerful. For example, you



PHOTO BY ANGEL BAKER

One of the most powerful strategies for fundraising is aligning your event with a specific need. Here's where you can be strategic: instead of hosting a general fundraiser, consider tying the event to something tangible. When people know they are contributing to a specific cause... they are more likely to give.



PHOTO BY BURBANK IN SYNC

might tell the story of a past student who dreamed of a career in music but needed help with travel expenses to attend a national competition; donors chipped in, and the student now has a full scholarship to study music in college. More generally you can highlight the impact the choir has had on students' lives, whether it's improved confidence, teamwork skills, or giving them a valuable creative outlet.

Incorporating these narratives into your event—whether as part of a video, a live speech, or printed on event materials—will give your donors a sense of connection and show them the real-world impact of their support.

Leverage Corporate Sponsorships and Partnerships

Local businesses are often eager to support community initiatives and show choir events are no exception. Consider approaching businesses in your area for sponsorship opportunities. In exchange for their support, you can offer advertising space in your event programs, recognition in social media posts, or even

naming rights for specific event elements.

For example, a local restaurant might sponsor your Dinner and Show event, providing food or discounts in exchange for recognition at the event and in all marketing materials. A music store might donate an instrument or equipment for a raffle. The key is to find businesses that align with your goals and audience and structure the partnership in a way that benefits both parties.

Create Lasting Engagement Through Follow-Ups

One of the biggest mistakes directors make after hosting a fundraising event is not following up with donors. Don't let the relationship end when the event is over! Send personalized thank-you notes or emails to everyone who attended or donated. Let them know how much money was raised and, more importantly, how that money will be used.

For larger donors, consider going the extra mile by offering them exclusive updates. For example, if a donor funded a new set of costumes, send them pictures

of the students wearing them during a performance. If they helped cover travel expenses, invite them to a post-trip reception where they can hear about the competition experience firsthand.

This kind of ongoing engagement not only shows appreciation but also helps build long-term relationships. These donors are much more likely to contribute again if they feel valued and see the impact of their generosity.

Promote Your Event Strategically

No matter how fantastic your fundraiser event is, it won't be successful if no one knows about it. Promotion is key, and you'll need to get the word out early and often.

Start by reaching out to your show choir's immediate network, including parents, friends, and family members. Use social media platforms to share event details and encourage community members to attend. Create an event on Facebook or use Instagram stories to showcase rehearsal snippets and event

planning in action. Additionally, reach out to local newspapers, radio stations, and community bulletin boards to advertise your event.

If possible, create promotional materials such as flyers or posters to hang in local businesses, libraries, and schools. And don't underestimate the power of word-of-mouth marketing—encourage students, parents, and faculty to invite their own networks.

Consider Seasonal Events

Timing can play a crucial role in the success of your fundraiser. Consider hosting your event during the holidays or in conjunction with other school events. For example, a "Holiday Spectacular" concert can bring in families eager for festive entertainment while supporting a good cause.

Or, piggyback on a larger school event like Homecoming or a spring festival. By

holding your fundraiser during an already planned gathering, you can attract larger crowds and tap into existing school pride and enthusiasm.

Maximize Profit with Creative Add-ons
To boost the fundraising potential of your event, consider incorporating some additional revenue opportunities. For instance:

- **Raffles or Prize Draws:** Partner with local businesses or families to donate prizes.
- **Merchandise Sales:** Sell choir-themed merchandise like t-shirts, mugs, or posters.
- **Photo Booths:** Set up a photo booth at your event and charge a small fee for fun snapshots.

These small touches can add significant revenue without requiring much extra effort.

Final Thoughts

Organizing a fundraising event for your show choir can be an incredible way to engage your community, raise essential funds, and provide your students with the resources they need to shine. By focusing on specific needs, personalizing your message, and creating an enjoyable event experience, you'll foster stronger connections with donors and ensure that your choir thrives both now and in the future. Just remember: your passion for your students and their success is contagious. With a well-planned event and clear communication, your donors will be as excited about supporting your show choir as you are about leading it.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Ed Bauer has been in publishing for over twenty years. He was introduced to Show Choir by his daughter and he is forever grateful to her for this wonderful gift.

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SETTING THE STAGE

HOW TO STAGE FOR THE PERFECT SHOW CHOIR PERFORMANCE

by StageRight



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A layperson can be forgiven for thinking show choir is exclusively about choosing the right show, mastering the music and choreography, and executing a perfect performance. Show choir directors, however, know that while the performance is the heart of the show, it's not the whole show. A lot of other factors can make the difference between a good production and one that's unforgettable.



That's where staging comes in. With years of industry experience and a commitment to innovation, Stage Right is a leader in providing custom staging tailored to the unique needs of show choirs. We're happy to share our secrets about the critical elements of effective show choir staging—from the importance of durability and flexibility to the dramatic impact of good acoustics and aesthetics in elevating your next performance to new heights.

The Basics of Show Choir Staging

Staging for show choirs is a specialized field that requires a deep understanding of performance dynamics, acoustics, and visual presentation. Below are some insights to help you understand the key aspects of show choir staging:

Role of stage risers: Risers are a key component of show choir staging. They elevate the performers, improving

visibility and creating a dynamic visual effect. Good risers are designed to be sturdy and stable, with non-slip surfaces and adjustable heights to accommodate different performance needs. This way any choreography at any pace can be executed safely and the way it was intended.

Stage layouts: The layout of a stage has a significant impact on the performance. A well-designed stage layout can enhance the audience experience. Show choir's most common stage layout is the traditional tiered risers. Many of these choir riser layouts come with stairs on the side to provide easy access from backstage to the middle or the top riser for seamless stage entrances. Some choirs prefer stage platforms in the middle of the risers for larger props or unique storytelling.

Importance of sightlines: Sightlines refer to the unobstructed views that the audience has of the performers. Good

sightlines ensure that every audience member can see the performance. Sightlines are built into great choreography, which is in turn complemented by appropriate stage design. Platforms with height adjustments expand the range of ever-more creative performance movements.

Safety considerations: Safety is always a top priority in performance settings. At the end of the day, performers need safe equipment. Buying from a staging company with backing from show choir customers who have used the product for years will result in no worries and a product you can trust.

The Impact of Quality Staging for Show Choir

The right stage can enhance the visual appeal, improve acoustics, and ensure the safety and comfort of performers. Here are some key considerations when selecting staging for show choir performances:

Durability and stability: Show choir performances are dynamic and require risers that can withstand vigorous movement. High-quality risers are engineered with robust materials that provide a stable platform, ensuring safety and reliability. Durability is not just about the materials used but also the design and construction of the decking. Trusted manufacturers use state-of-the-art technology to create stages that can endure time and the rigors of performance life.

Flexibility and adaptability: Every performance space is unique. Great riser solutions are designed to be adaptable, allowing for various configurations to fit different venues and performance needs. This flexibility is crucial for show choirs that perform in diverse locations. Modular stage and riser designs mean you can expand or reduce the size as

needed, creating an optimal performance environment regardless of the space constraints.

Acoustic enhancement: Proper staging and risers can significantly impact the acoustics of a performance. High-quality riser decks are designed to enhance sound quality, ensuring that every note is heard clearly and evenly throughout the audience. It will be made from materials and designs that minimize sound absorption and maximize sound projection, creating a balanced acoustic environment that enhances the choir's vocal performance.

The right stage can enhance the visual appeal, improve acoustics, and ensure the safety and comfort of performers.

Ease of setup and breakdown:

Time is a critical factor in performance settings. Great stages and risers are designed for quick and easy assembly and disassembly, allowing for efficient transitions between performances. Show choirs often have tight schedules, and great staging solutions are designed to minimize setup time while maximizing stability and performance quality.

Aesthetic appeal: The visual impact of a performance is paramount. High-quality risers provide functional benefits and contribute to the overall aesthetic, enhancing the visual experience for the audience. Most offer a variety of finishes and customizations to match your show choir's theme and branding. Stages and risers are not just

Making the right decision on performance risers is 90 percent of staging, but too often show choirs stop there without taking advantage of the wide array of other stage-design elements.

platforms; they are integral parts of the performance that can be tailored to enhance the visual storytelling of your show.

Making Strategic Staging Decisions

Making the right decision on performance risers is 90 percent of staging, but too often show choirs stop there without taking advantage of the wide array of other stage-design elements. In the 2024 show choir season, there were many impactful tools choirs employed to keep the audience absorbed in the narrative:

Closure panels: Aesthetics play a powerful role in a performance, just like costumes. The stage is one of the first—and often most prominent—things the audience sees. Closure panels offer a simple yet effective way to transform your stage's appearance without needing to remove platforms or add large graphics. These hard panels fit neatly at the front of each riser, covering the gaps between different heights and creating a seamless visual experience.

Props: From small boxes to large, eye-catching set pieces, props are a fantastic way to engage your audience in your story. Over the past year,



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we've seen everything from benches and street signs to picnic tables and elaborate backdrops on show choir stages. When securely placed on platforms, these props enhance the narrative, making it easier for both performers and the audience to immerse themselves in the performance.

Fog: Adding temporary fog can inject a sense of mystery and excitement into any choreographed story. Whether it's fog cascading down the risers, performers emerging through a cloud of mist, or a dramatic entrance, this effect can captivate the audience while still allowing performers to move confidently on stage. It's an excellent tool for building suspense during your show.

Stage layout/extra platforms: While the traditional tiered riser system is a reliable choice, experimenting with different layouts can elevate your storytelling. Adjusting the heights of platforms or adding extra ones to the sides for solo performances are effective ways to create a fresh, dynamic

stage setup. This approach can highlight key moments and make your performance stand out.

Where to Start

Begin with trusted manufacturers:

When it comes to selecting the perfect staging for your show choir, the best place to start is with trusted manufacturers. Reaching out to these experts is an invaluable step in gathering information on products, obtaining quotes, and getting recommendations tailored to your choir's size and specific needs. Many reputable manufacturers employ highly qualified professionals who have spent years in the industry, helping choirs just like yours find the perfect staging solutions.

Working with a manufacturer who understands your goals, needs, and aspirations is essential. These professionals do more than just answer your questions—they provide creative solutions for unique



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layouts, challenging room sizes, or specific performance requirements. Whether your venue has tight constraints or you're looking for something that sets your performance apart, a trusted manufacturer will help you navigate these challenges with ease.

Seek out specialized products:

Manufacturers that specialize in products designed for show choirs should be at the top of your list. These companies often offer stage decking specifically engineered for movement, which means quieter and more resilient surfaces that can handle even the most dynamic choreography. Portability is another key factor to consider, especially for choirs that travel frequently. Specialized products are often designed with travel in mind, making setup and breakdown quick and easy without sacrificing quality or stability.

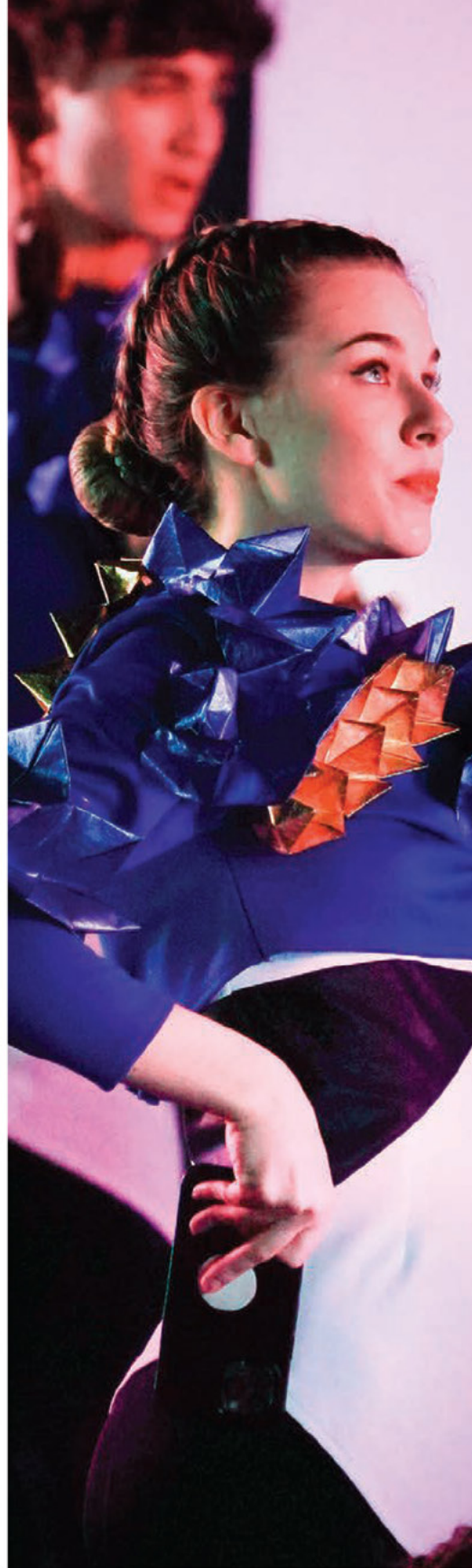
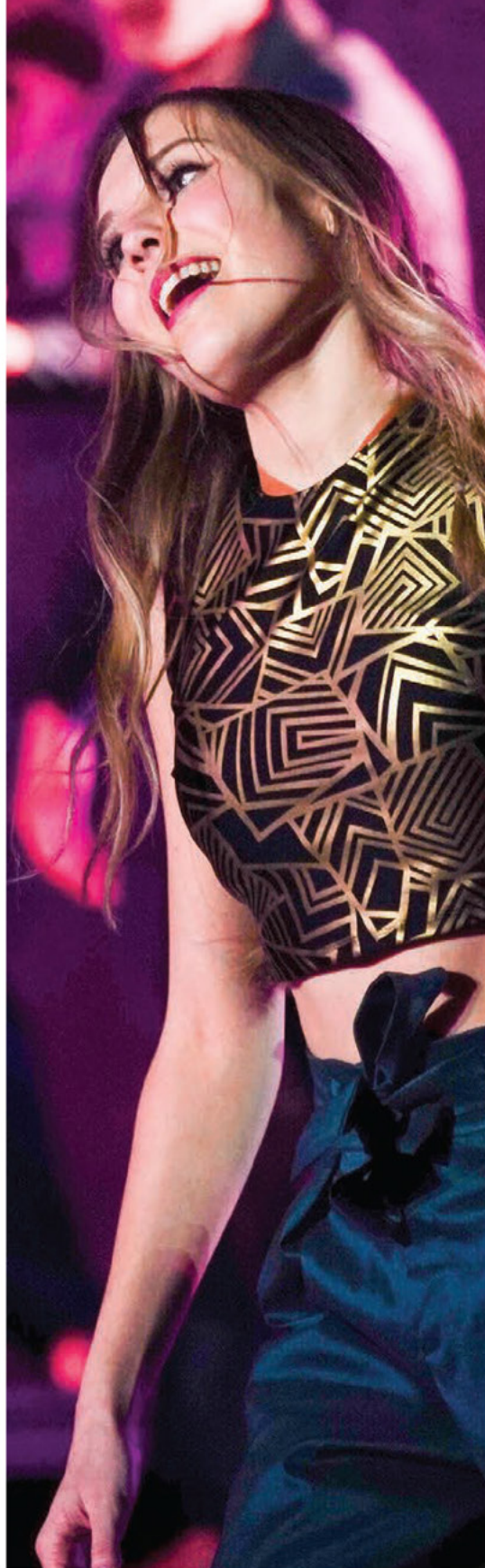
Leverage the wisdom of peers:

If you're new to show choir directing, don't underestimate the power of peer recommendations. The show choir community

is known for its collaborative spirit, and experienced directors are often more than willing to share their insights. Ask questions, seek advice, and tap into the collective knowledge of your peers. They can provide firsthand experience and recommendations on which manufacturers they trust and why. These insights are invaluable as you make decisions that will impact your choir's performance for years to come.

By combining the expertise of trusted manufacturers with the wisdom of your peers, you can ensure that your show choir is equipped with the best staging solutions available. It's not just about finding a product; it's about finding a partner who will support your choir's success every step of the way.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: StageRight is a company built on delivering solutions that allow spaces to be transformed to meet the demands of the ever changing performance environment. For over 30 years our design team has created innovative products and application solutions that have revolutionized the portable platform market. Spanning a range of Markets from Professional Arenas and Stadium to Theater, Worship and Education, we have products and services that will continue to exceed their needs for years to come.



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ORCHESTRATING THE PERFECT SCHOOL MUSIC SUITE

by Wenger



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When planning the construction of a school music suite, there are many important factors to think about to make sure it's a space where students can learn, practice, and perform music effectively. A well-designed music suite will not only enhance students' education but also provide a space that is safe, comfortable, and easy to use. We looked at the five most critical factors that will transform your music suite into a masterpiece for musical education.

Acoustics

One of the most important things to get right in a music suite is the acoustics—how sound behaves in the room. Good acoustics help students hear themselves and others clearly, which is vital when practicing and performing music. There are several factors that affect acoustics, such as the shape of the room, its size, and how well it is insulated from outside noise.

The shape of the room can influence how sound travels. For example,

rectangular rooms with higher ceilings tend to distribute sound better, making it easier for students to hear themselves and the rest of the group. Also, the volume of the room should be planned to avoid too much echo, which can make it difficult to focus on music and instruction.

Soundproofing is another key factor, as music rooms are often noisy, and the sound from them can disturb other classes. Similarly, music rooms need to be free from external noise. Acoustic panels can absorb sound waves and reduce the amount of noise that escapes the room. These panels can be strategically placed to manage sound reflection, preventing echoes and minimizing the transmission of sound outside the room.

Floorplan

The layout of the music suite should be designed for maximum functionality. A well-thought-out plan makes it easier to manage different activities like large and small group rehearsals, individual

practice sessions, and performances.

Large rehearsal rooms need to have enough space for students, their instruments, and for the conductor to move around easily. Smaller practice rooms should focus on privacy and sound isolation, so students can practice without distracting others. An efficient floorplan also makes sure that students can move through the space without interrupting classes or rehearsals.

For example, designing hallways and entry points in a way that avoids traffic jams will allow a quicker transition between classes. It's important to analyze how different rooms connect to one another so that it's easy to go from practice rooms to performance areas without hassle, including transport of instruments and equipment.

Storage

Storage is a crucial aspect of any music suite but is often overlooked. Music programs require a wide variety of instruments, sheet music, uniforms, and

other equipment, and all these items need to be stored in an organized and accessible way.

Proper storage helps keep classrooms tidy and makes it easy to find what's needed for rehearsals or performances. Wenger's Music Library System, for example, offers high-density storage for sheet music and other materials. Adjustable cabinets and shelves are essential for holding instruments of all sizes, from piccolos to timpani.

Security is another concern—musical instruments are valuable and need to be stored safely. Rooms for uniform storage should also be considered so that performance attire is kept in good condition and easily accessible.

Safety

Safety is a priority in any school, and a music suite is no exception. With many heavy instruments, equipment, and busy rehearsal schedules, it's important to ensure that the space is designed to minimize accidents.

Clear pathways should be provided to prevent tripping over instruments or stands. The flooring needs to be non-slip to avoid falls, especially in rooms where students move around frequently with their instruments. Additionally, good lighting is crucial to make sure that all areas, including storage and practice rooms, are safe and students are visible to teachers.

Equipment

The right equipment can make a huge difference in the overall success of the music suite. Durable, high-quality furniture and instruments not only improve the function of the space but also enhance the student learning experience.

Music stands, chairs, and conductor's podiums need to be sturdy, adjustable, and easy to move. Wenger's Flex Conductor's Stand is a great example of a product that offers both versatility and durability. Wenger's chairs and stands

are well known for their durability and easily stack on carts for transport or storage.

Overall, the equipment you choose should meet the needs of your music program today and in the future, whether it's for a choir, orchestra, or band. By investing in quality equipment, you ensure that students are ready to learn and teachers can focus on instruction.

Planning and building a music suite can feel overwhelming, but a reputable provider of music-education and performance equipment will offer resources to help teachers, administrators, and architects through the process. These resources should offer valuable insights to help you make informed decisions about the design and equipment for your music suite. Whether you're just starting the planning process or are in the middle of construction, consultation with an industry expert can go a long way in helping you create a space that meets the needs of your students and music program.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Wenger is a leader in music, theater, and sports, providing innovative, high-quality products that elevate every performance. From rehearsal rooms to grand stages, we're there, creating unforgettable experiences and building a legacy of excellence.



PHOTO BY WENGER



NEWSLETTER

With over 220 members, the National Association for Show Choir (NASC) has set an audacious goal: to unite the show choir community in identifying common objectives, finding solutions to shared challenges, and championing the art of show choir. We recently celebrated our first anniversary on Facebook.

The NASC held its inaugural, virtual meeting last September with approximately 30 members in attendance. While the number of attendees has dropped at subsequent meetings, they are filled with intriguing conversations and connected members from coast to coast.

Why does it matter? Since 2015, show choir programs in the United States have significantly declined by over 800. Music educators are quick to blame the pandemic for the decline, but blaming ourselves for becoming insular would be more appropriate. In July, I had the opportunity to collaborate with some of the best directors, choreographers, arrangers, and costume designers in the show choir world at Showchoir Camps of America. The week's experiences were incredible, but everyone left camp and returned to their respective cubicles once it was over.

Show choir pockets have become more common throughout the U.S., which makes it difficult for show choir programs to attend and host competitions. Show choir will flourish when we start advocating, educating, and inspiring current and future music educators outside our program through consistent collaboration. In most cases, show choir directors are the only choral music educators at their school, limiting opportunities to collaborate with someone who understands what we do. NASC provides a safe platform for monthly collaboration among music educators throughout the United States.

The short-term goal for NASC is to identify a common meeting time for monthly meetings and bring in compelling guest speakers who will appeal to a large audience. A longer-term goal is to have NASC representatives from each state advocate for show choir at state and regional music educator conferences.

This is essential to reinvigorating the show choir community in schools. Too often, show choir is considered taboo. NASC wants to shatter the stigma surrounding show choirs by continuing to educate vocal associations, music educators, and administrations how these dynamic programs not only foster students' creativity, teamwork, and self-confidence but also ignite a sense of community spirit, drawing audiences together to celebrate the arts and support young talent.

The National Association for Show Choirs' mission is to advocate, educate, and inspire current and future music educators to progress show choir throughout the United States.



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