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**THE ROAD TO THE
SPOTLIGHT**

WHY COMPETITIONS
ARE THE BEATING
HEART OF SHOW
CHOIR GROWTH

**THE SWEET
SOUND OF SALES**

HOW THE BEST
FUNDRAISERS KEEP
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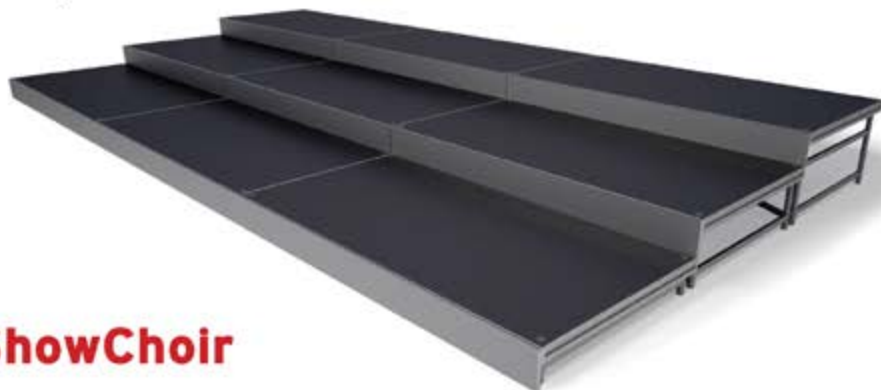


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2026 SHOW CHOIR COSTUME DESIGNS: A CONVERSATION WITH RANDALL LANOUE

Randall Lanoue is feeling inspired. As founder of Haus of Lanoue, a company specializing in custom costuming for show choirs, he's seeing directors willing to take more risks and witnessing the dawn of a new age in show choir menswear. He found time in the middle of the busy production season to share the highlights.

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BUILT TO LAST, DESIGNED TO PERFORM: WENGER'S NEW ENDUR™ MUSIC STAND SETS A NEW STANDARD FOR CHOIR AND BAND PROGRAMS

Strong. Stable. Smart. Wenger's new Endur™ music stand redefines reliability for show choirs and bands built to perform—season after season.



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HOW THE BEST FUNDRAISERS KEEP SHOW CHOIRS IN TUNE (AND IN BUSINESS)

The secret behind a show choir fundraiser isn't choosing the best product.



editor's letter

Dear Show Choir Friends,

As the leaves turn and the holidays inch closer, we're thrilled to bring you another vibrant issue of *Productions Show Choir Magazine*. This edition is packed with inspiration, insight, and practical tips to keep your ensembles performing at their very best—and thriving.

We're especially excited about our in-depth interview with Randy Lanoue, one of the brightest minds in the world of show choir costuming. Randy shares his thoughts on the latest trends, from bold patterns and sparkling details to creative ways to let each performer's personality shine through on stage. Whether you're designing a new show wardrobe or simply looking for fresh ideas, his insights are a must-read for any director or booster team.

Of course, it wouldn't be show choir season without celebrating the competitive spirit that drives our art form. In this issue, our competition feature highlights some of the most exciting contests across the country, with tips for preparation, performance, and staying focused under pressure. We hope these insights help your students bring their best to every stage—and inspire a little friendly rivalry along the way!

We also dive into fundraising, one of the most vital elements for keeping your program strong. Our feature explores creative approaches to boost your bottom line while promoting your choir beyond the walls of your school. From tried-and-true sale events to building seasonal traditions that keep supporters coming back year after year, these ideas are designed to help your program thrive financially and build lasting community support.

We'd love to hear from you! If your show choir competition isn't already on our radar, send us the details. We want to shine a spotlight on your event, helping it gain the recognition it deserves while inspiring other directors and students nationwide.

As Thanksgiving approaches, it's worth pausing to reflect on the incredible gift of show choir—the joy it brings to performers, audiences, and communities alike. It's a unique art form that spreads happiness, connection, and the pure thrill of music and movement. We're grateful every day for the chance to celebrate it with you.

Thank you for letting *Show Choir Magazine* be part of your year. Here's to the students, the directors, the boosters, and the audiences—together creating something magical on every stage.

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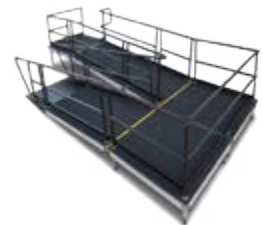
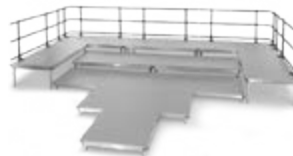
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PHOTO COURTESY HAUS OF LANOUE & KNIGHT IMAGES

A group of show choir members are performing on a stage. They are wearing blue sequined dresses with pink accents and silver jackets. The members are in various dynamic poses, some with arms extended. The background features stage lights, including a vertical strip of orange lights and a cluster of purple lights on the right. The overall atmosphere is energetic and festive.

2026 SHOW CHOIR COSTUME DESIGNS

**A CONVERSATION WITH
RANDALL LANOUE**

BY ROSALIND FOURNIER



PHOTO COURTESY HAUS OF LANOUE

Randall Lanoue is feeling inspired. As the founder of Haus of Lanoue, a company specializing in custom costuming for show choirs, he's seeing directors willing to take more risks and witnessing the dawn of a new age in show choir menswear. He also loves the variety in the orders he's receiving—from glitz and glamour to classic but stunning.

We spoke to Lanoue right in the middle of production season as he and his team were working around the clock to keep orders moving and every detail just right. Here's what he shared about the art of advising clients, getting period pieces right, and what trends he sees for 2026.

Productions: What is one of the big trends you're seeing right now in show choir costumes?

Lanoue: Something I'm seeing more of this year is going back to group looks, whether it's the entire group in the same thing; the girls in one thing, the boys in another; or all in the same look but different colors. We're seeing a lot more group costuming than individual character costuming. There will always be groups who do shows with individual characters, but I feel it's flowing away from that. Instead, we're seeing some really beautiful costumes designed for large-scale groups rather than individuals.

I would also say that, with the exception of thematic or period-piece looks, people are wanting to go more modern. They're wanting to see bright colors, new fabrics, and exciting new silhouettes.

Productions: Are there any big shows or performers right now influencing what show choirs want?

Lanoue: There are some very iconic performances and costumes happening in life and in productions and movies right now. But the customers I find who are having the most success are not doing a recreation of something. They're taking elements but then making it into something refreshing and new for show choir. The hardest thing for me as a costumer is trying to reproduce something that someone has seen on one person for a group of 40 and bringing the same magic to the group. The original probably looks incredible on the original performer, but with the limitations of what we do in show choir—all the movements and the scale of it—it's not the same effect. Instead, we can take elements from the look and combine it with other things to really create beautiful pieces. The best garments we make are often inspired by something, but we adapt them for show choir to create a jaw-dropping experience.

Productions: Are tearaways still as popular as ever?

Lanoue: They're changing. There are some directors who've tried it and said, well, we tried that and we're not doing it again. There are other directors who have tried it and really spent time with it and figured out how it works for them.

I'm proud of the advances we're making in our tearaways, but I am also very careful to make sure directors fully understand tearaways don't just happen. There are repairs that need to be done when you're taking force to a garment to remove it quickly, so they need to be prepared for everything that goes with that.

As you're looking at groups that maybe have never made finals before and they're still developing, what might be best for them is a really great-looking costume that's as low-maintenance with

as few potential problems as possible, so they can focus on the things they need to do to elevate their performance to that next level instead of spending hours upon hours in rehearsal just trying to get a tearaway off. I want to make sure the costumes that each customer gets is going to work flawlessly for them and be an asset to what they're doing.

There are some very iconic performances and costumes happening in life and in productions and movies right now. But the customers I find who are having the most success are not doing a recreation of something. They're taking elements but then making it into something refreshing and new for show choir.

Productions: You mentioned period-piece costumes earlier. What are the secrets to pulling that off?

Lanoue: We challenge ourselves—how do we keep doing it in a new way? Every year we're going to have several groups come to us and say, 'We're doing the 1940s.' How do we keep doing the '40s in a way we haven't done before to keep it new and fresh?

It's really important that the customer has a clear vision of the period as well. Sometimes, when listening to the



PHOTO COURTESY HAUS OF LANOUE

customer, they may be saying '1940s' but what they're describing is more like the 1960s. We need to make sure we're all on the same page and we're all talking the same talk.

The other challenge is being sure the costumes will function like they need to. Through history these outfits were not all meant for singing and dancing, so we need to adapt them in a way that arms have full movement, and it's not corseted to the point where there can be no rib expansion for singing. We need to sure the lengths work for dancing, so the costumes aren't going

to be stepped on constantly. And we make sure it's not loud on stage, because some historical fabrics are very loud. We need to be adapting these for full functionality while still keeping the aesthetic.

Productions: Are some fabrics off limits for show choir?

I don't ever say, 'I'll never use that fabric.' I use plenty of fabrics without stretch. I'm using some wool chenille fabrics, which are popular with the House of Chanel this year, but we're using them in ways where there aren't going to be tension points that would cause the fabric to tear in the seams. It's about using the correct fabrics in the correct places for the use. In the hands of the right designer who knows their history, a fabric can be used in a way that gains the aesthetic without putting it at risk of damage.

Productions: Do you have a certain type of client that defines Haus of Lanoue?

Lanoue: Not at all. I'm really proud that we work across the entire spectrum of show choir, everything from non-competition groups to competition groups that are what I would call minimalist in style or competition groups that only do one costume all the way to competition groups who seem like a Vegas revue of how many costumes can we do, and how much glitz and glamour can we add? What's fun for me this time of year is seeing completely minimalist costumes next to something that is feathered, rhinestoned, and over-the-top glamour. I love seeing the different types of presentations that the directing teams are putting together.

Productions: Overall, what are the most daring choices people are making this year?

I wouldn't say that there is one hot look this year, but there are costumers taking risks to push fashion and costume further than where they've been before.

I love being part of that, but I also raise an eyebrow when something doesn't feel in character for who they are as a program—or if I have concerns that they don't have the technical support of a sewing team to deal with anything that might happen with the fabric. We want to make sure the costumes are an asset to the show instead of being a sideshow of the show.

I'm lucky to work with so many customers who allow me to be as honest as I possibly can be. For some customers I may be too honest. But I would be remiss if I didn't give them the benefit of my background and technical expertise of what might happen with a garment onstage once it starts moving, or the upkeep required with some costumes. We make sure these customers are prepared to budget the time to learn the costumes and problem-solve anything that has been addressed before they go on stage before an audience or judges.

A great costume emphasizes the best qualities of your show and never brings in negative distractions.

Productions: What about men's costumes? Are there any big changes there?

Lanoue: Men's costumes are progressing lightyears beyond what they have been for years. I would say 10 years ago it was hard to break out of the box we were in of what boys in show choir could wear, and it is so exciting to see directors taking risks, trying new colors, new shapes, new concepts. I hope I have played a small part in that by encouraging customers to think more about a universal look on the stage, not just, 'This is a great dress and this is a great suit,' but how do we create a personality for the group so that everything on that stage looks like it belongs in that world?

There really are no rules anymore. People want short sleeves on suits, they want shorts, they want one short leg and one long leg, they want no sleeves at all. It's different, it's new and I'm so happy that I get to be a part of this time. Not all risks pay off, but the groups who are taking some risks are (a) learning a lot and (b) benefiting from it. It's very cool what I see happening in terms of men's costuming.

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.

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Built to Last, Designed to Perform: Wenger's New Endur™ Music Stand Sets a New Standard for Choir and Band Programs

BY WENGER CORP.

In the world of show choir, every detail matters—from the precision of choreography to the reliability of the gear behind the scenes. Directors and boosters know that dependable equipment is essential to keeping rehearsals efficient and performances flawless. That's why Wenger Corporation, long trusted by music educators and performing arts programs nationwide, has unveiled its latest innovation: the Endur™ Music Stand.

Strength Meets Smart Design

Engineered with input from music educators and performers, the Endur™ stand embodies Wenger's trademark blend of durability, function, and thoughtful design. Built to handle the daily demands of rehearsal rooms, band shells, and performance venues, this new stand is more than a tool—it's an investment in longevity and reliability.

Every component reflects Wenger's commitment to quality. The Endur™ features an all-metal construction with a 22-gauge rolled-edge steel desk, 18-gauge steel post, and a welded steel base. Its bolt-through desk attachment ensures stability even during the most energetic show choir rehearsals or pep-band performances. The smooth rolled edges protect

instruments and uniforms alike, while the heavy-duty balanced base keeps the stand upright—no wobble, no tipping.

Performance Without Distraction

"For nearly 80 years, Wenger has built products that let musicians focus on their art—not their equipment," said Dave Thomas, President and CEO of Wenger Corporation. "The Endur music stand is another example of our dedication to innovation and reliability. It's designed to perform flawlessly year after year."

That commitment to consistency makes the Endur™ a perfect fit for show choir programs that rely on quick transitions and tight schedules. Directors can trust the stand to maintain position and height without slipping, even in fast-paced settings where every second counts.

Practical Features for Real-World Use

The Endur™'s height adjustment range of 23" to 43-¾" (desk lip to floor) offers flexibility for singers, accompanists, and instrumentalists alike. Its rugged black powder-coat finish resists scuffs and scratches from travel and storage, maintaining a professional appearance through countless seasons.

Adding to its appeal, the Endur™ is UL GREENGUARD certified, meeting strict chemical emission standards to protect indoor air quality—an important consideration for choir rooms and auditoriums. And like all Wenger products, it's backed by a 10-year warranty, providing peace of mind for programs investing in quality equipment.

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From classroom rehearsals to show choir competitions, the Wenger Endur™ music stand delivers the strength, stability, and reliability that directors, students, and boosters can count on. It's more than just a music stand—it's a silent partner in every performance.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Since 1946, Wenger has

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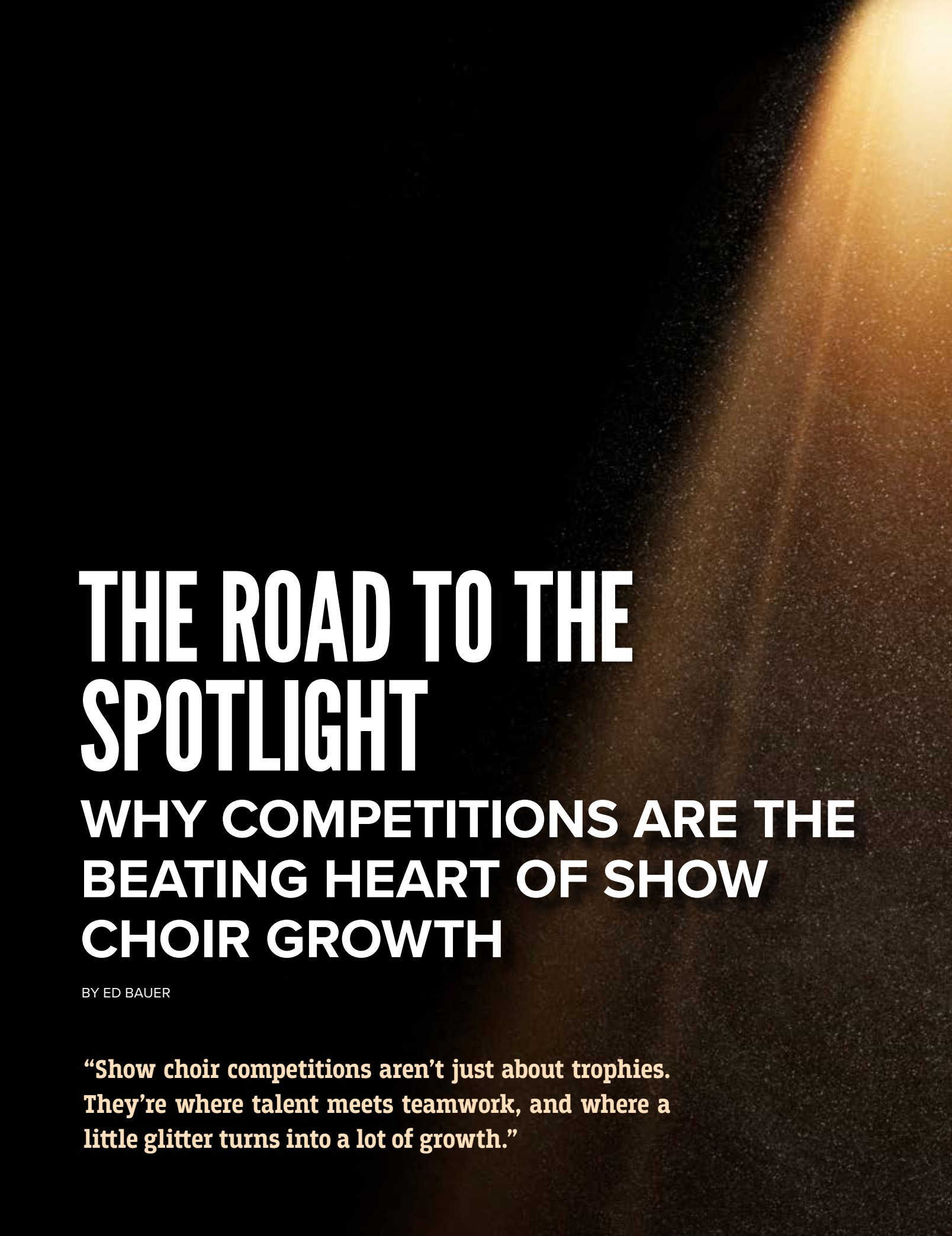
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THE ROAD TO THE SPOTLIGHT

WHY COMPETITIONS ARE THE BEATING HEART OF SHOW CHOIR GROWTH

BY ED BAUER

“Show choir competitions aren’t just about trophies. They’re where talent meets teamwork, and where a little glitter turns into a lot of growth.”





PART ONE: WHY COMPETITIONS MATTER

The Program: Building a Legacy, One Jazz Hand at a Time

For many directors, competitions are the spark that transforms a small show choir into a campus institution. When your group steps onto the competition stage, you're not just performing—you're putting your program on the map.

Administrators start to notice the arts program. Parents get involved. Sponsors call back. Before long, your once-overlooked choir room becomes the heartbeat of school spirit.

Competitions also raise the creative bar. Directors push themselves to outdo last season, choreographers invent new ways to defy gravity, and your costume

designer develops opinions about sequins that border on philosophical.

It's healthy artistic pressure—and the results are growth, innovation, and the kind of teamwork that can't be taught in a textbook.

The Students: Confidence, Character, and Camaraderie

Competition season teaches students more than how to hit the high notes. It teaches life skills wrapped in rhythm.

Discipline comes from those early Saturday rehearsals. **Resilience** develops when a set doesn't go perfectly, or a judge's comment stings. And **teamwork**—that's the core. Every performer matters; one offbeat move can throw the visual balance, and one missed harmony can ripple through the sound.

By spring, you see it—students who once hid in the back row are volunteering for solos, helping younger members, and talking about “vowel shaping” at lunch like pros.

And let’s not forget the friendships forged on those long competition trips. Nothing bonds a group like singing “*Don’t Stop Believin’*” at full volume on a charter bus at 1:00 a.m.

The School: Spirit and Spotlight

When your show choir performs well at competitions, the pride spreads across campus. Students, teachers, and even the principal start humming your closer in the hallway.

For administrators, it’s tangible proof that the arts matter. For communities, it’s a reminder that creativity still thrives in schools. And for the program itself, a successful competition season can boost recruitment, funding, and prestige.

Show choir competitions give everyone—students, staff, and supporters—a reason to celebrate excellence. And in the process, they keep the performing arts shining where they belong: center stage.

PART TWO: HOW TO PREPARE YOUR SHOW CHOIR (AND KEEP YOUR SANITY)

Preparing for competition season is part rehearsal, part logistics marathon, and part group therapy. To help, here’s a breakdown of the **judging categories** and how to prepare your group for each—without needing a caffeine IV drip.

“There’s nothing like watching a shy freshman become a fearless performer. That’s when you know the season was a win—trophy or not.”

VOCALS — The Heart of the Show

What Judges Look For:

Pitch, tone, diction, blend, phrasing, and overall musicality.

How to Prepare:

- Start with solid warm-ups that target tone and blend.
- Record rehearsals—students rarely know how they sound until they hear it.
- Use sectionals for detailed harmony work.
- Remind your group that vowels, not volume, win the day.

Director Tip:

Keep a stash of throat lozenges and water bottles. Hydrated singers = happy judges.



PHOTO COURTESY CLINTON ATTACHÉ

CHOREOGRAPHY — The Sparkle that Sells the Song

What Judges Look For:

Execution, synchronization, energy, and showmanship.

How to Prepare:

- Drill until the routine feels muscle-memorized.
- Use rehearsal videos—reviewing footage is like instant replay for art.
- Coach facial expressions (“You look like you’re solving algebra—smile!”).
- Make it fun: host “Choreo Olympics” with goofy awards for most dramatic hair flip.

SHOW DESIGN — The Story You Tell

What Judges Look For:

Theme, song choice, pacing, flow, and transitions.

**PRO
TIP**

Test your costumes under stage lights. What looks “gold” under classroom fluorescents can turn into “traffic cone orange” under LEDs.

How to Prepare:

Design your show like a movie: an exciting opening, a powerful emotional core, and a finale that leaves audiences cheering.

Transitions matter as much as the songs themselves. Keep the energy alive as you shift between numbers—mini-moments of storytelling make your show unforgettable.

BAND & ACCOMPANIMENT

— The Unsung Heroes

What Judges Look For:

Balance, rhythm, energy, and blend with vocals.

How to Prepare:

- Schedule joint rehearsals early.
- Teach students to listen across the ensemble.

Involve your sound team—mixing in a gym is a different animal than in your auditorium.

VISUALS & STAGING —

The Full Picture

What Judges Look For:

Stage use, formations, transitions, props, and overall visual impact.

How to Prepare:

Plan every move like choreography—no dead air, no confusion. Every student should know where they're supposed to be and why.

Simplify props. If it takes longer to assemble than perform, it's too much.

Director Tip:

Designate a "Stage Captain" to manage risers, props, and set pieces. It saves you from the dreaded "Where's the ladder?!" moment five minutes before showtime.



- ✓ **Balance vocals and band in multiple environments**
- ✓ **Assign a student to "ears" duty during run-throughs**
- ✓ **Rehearse with full amplification before competition week**

"Plan every move like choreography—no dead air, no confusion. Every student should know where they're supposed to be and why."



PRO TIP

Add audience focus to rehearsals. Perform for parents, faculty, or anyone who will watch. Real reactions help refine the energy and timing.

SHOWMANSHIP & OVERALL EFFECT — The Wow Factor

What Judges Look For:

Energy, emotion, professionalism, and audience engagement.

How to Prepare:

- Remind your performers that they're storytellers. Encourage them to connect emotionally to lyrics and movement.
- Rehearse every detail—from entrances to bows—as if it's part of the competition. It is.

The audience can only love your show as much as your students love performing it.

PROFESSIONALISM & ETIQUETTE — Winning Beyond the Score Sheet

Even if it's not officially judged, directors know the truth: your reputation travels faster than your bus.

Remind your students:

- Cheer for other choirs.
- Thank hosts and volunteers.
- Leave dressing rooms spotless.
- Keep the post-show pizza party clean, too (we can dream).

These gestures make your program memorable for all the right reasons—and they reflect the heart of what show choir's about: respect, community, and class.

DIRECTOR'S SURVIVAL GUIDE

Let's be real: running a show choir through competition season is not for the faint of heart. It's for the organized, the passionate, and those armed with caffeine and a color-coded binder.

Top Survival Strategies:

- **Plan backward.** Start from competition day and reverse-engineer your rehearsal schedule.
- **Delegate.** Trust your section leaders and parent boosters.
- **Prioritize health.** Students can't perform their best if they're burned out.
- **Celebrate small wins.** When the tenors finally lock that chord? Throw confetti.

THE FINAL CURTAIN

At the end of the day, competitions are about far more than rankings and medals. They're about growth—of programs, of performers, and of the people who make the magic happen behind the curtain.

They give students confidence, directors purpose, and schools pride. They turn a simple set of songs into a full-blown experience that unites communities and fills auditoriums with applause.

“You can survive on coffee and adrenaline for a while—but joy and teamwork last the whole season.”

And as every seasoned director knows, the real reward isn't in the trophy case—it's in that one shining moment when your choir nails their closer, the audience erupts, and you realize every long night was worth it.

Because in show choir, the greatest victory is the moment they find their spotlight—and absolutely own 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.

2026 COMPETITION LIST

COMPETITION	DATE & LOCATION (2026)	CONTACT INFO
Show Choir Nationals 2026 (SCN)	March 19-21, 2026 – Nashville, TN	Phone: +1 205-305-8543 Email: scnhost@gmail.com Address: 2453 Kenvil Circle Vestavia Hills, AL 35243 https://www.showchoirnationals.com/
FAME National Finals 2026	March 14 & March 21 & April 11, 2026 – Orlando & Branson (various)	Phone: 800-289-6441 Fax: 480-654-2553 Address: 7255 E Hampton Ave Suite 127, Mesa, AZ 85209 https://www.showchoirs.org/
Heart of America Show Choir Contest 2026 (HOA)	2026 – Nashville (Gaylord Opryland Hotel) & Orlando (Hilton Disney Springs)	Address: 5348 W Vermont St Ste 200 Indianapolis, IN 46224 Phone: 317-683-0933 Email: info@hoachoir.com https://www.hoachoir.com/ show-choir-competition.html
Indiana Show Choir Championships 2026	Saturday March 21, 2026 – Noblesville High School, IN	(Use NHS Choir Dept contact) – Registration form listed on NoblesvilleChoirs.org
Hart Encore Show Choir Competition 2026	March 20-21, 2026 – Hart High School Auditorium, Newhall, CA	Contact: sanders@hartdistrict.org https://hartchoir.boosterhub.com/ about/4641

2026 COMPETITION LIST

COMPETITION	DATE & LOCATION (2026)	CONTACT INFO
America! Choral Festival (Show/Choir) 2026	March 19-21, 2026 – Washington, DC (National Cathedral)	See Music Celebrations International website – general contact info on site https://musiccelebrations.com/choral-festivals/
San Diego Youth Choral Festival 2026	June 25-30, 2026 – University of San Diego / San Diego, CA	Email: (see application on site) – festival contact listed on SDChoir website https://www.sdcchoir.org/festival
American Choral Festival Anaheim 2026	2026 – Anaheim, CA	Choirs of America / Harmony Productions Contact via Go2Harmony website https://www.go2harmony.com/2026-american-choral-festival-anaheim
Show Choir Spectacular (SCVA) 2026	May 16, 2026 – Rowland Heights, CA (Rowland HS)	Contact: Rowland Schools (SCVA host) – website shows event info
Show Choir Invitational (Regional Listing) 2026	Various dates & locations	Contact info varies by host school/organization – check CarmenScoring listing & local host websites





SOUND OF SALES

HOW THE BEST FUNDRAISERS KEEP SHOW CHOIRS IN TUNE (AND IN BUSINESS)

by Ed Bauer



PHOTO COURTESY VESTAVIA HILLS HIGH SCHOOL ALABAMA

If you've ever stood at a booster meeting trying to explain to a group of well-meaning parents why sequins cost more than their first car, you already know the truth: show choir runs on rhythm, harmony, and cold hard cash. Those buses, hotels, meals, costumes, rights fees, and microphones don't pay for themselves, and the school budget rarely hums along to your tempo.

That's why fundraising isn't just a necessity—it's part of the show choir identity. Whether your students are hawking cookie dough, coffee, candles, or calendars, these fundraisers are more than dollar signs; they're lifelines. They keep the lights on, the music loud, and the magic alive. And if done right, they also build community, promote your program far beyond your school's four walls, and turn every sale into a

standing ovation for your choir.

Let's take a deep breath (from the diaphragm, of course) and explore how fundraising fuels your program's growth—and how to turn your sales season into a tradition people look forward to, year after year.

Part One: The Harmony Between Sales and Success

Keeping the Lights On (Literally)

A director once joked that her show choir's annual show was "powered by cookie dough." She wasn't far off. Between travel expenses, competition entry fees, and those gorgeous new risers, a single competition weekend can cost what it would take to fund an entire sports season.

Without strong fundraising, the hard truth is that opportunities shrink. Directors have to scale back the set list, pick simpler choreography, or skip the out-of-state competition that can be a life-changing experience for students. Fundraising keeps the program thriving, not just surviving.

But beyond keeping the van wheels turning, a strong sales campaign helps establish independence and pride. It shows administrators that your group can sustain itself and take initiative. And for students, it's a practical life lesson in ownership: they're earning their spot on stage.

Raising Funds, Raising Fans

Every box of chocolate bars or bag of coffee beans sold is a conversation starter—a moment where someone outside your school learns about your choir. “Oh, you’re in that group that won Nationals last year?” or “I saw your performance online—amazing costumes!” These small exchanges grow your audience and brand.

When you think of fundraising, don't just think of dollar signs. Think visibility. The best fundraisers make your choir recognizable in your community. Maybe it's the annual “Sing & Serve” pancake breakfast, or your signature cookie sale. Maybe it's a “Caroling for Cash” event in December where the group performs door-to-door for donations (bonus: free vocal warm-ups in the snow).

The point is: every sale tells the world your choir exists—and is worth supporting. Fundraisers plant seeds for new fans, future members, and maybe even sponsors who'll write bigger checks next season.

The Student Side of Sales

If the students roll their eyes at the word “fundraiser,” it's probably because they've only seen the cardboard box, not the bigger picture. Fundraisers

teach communication, confidence, and teamwork—skills that matter just as much as hitting that high F#.

Students learn to make a pitch, handle rejection, and follow through—skills that employers drool over later in life. Plus, they get the joy of seeing their

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efforts pay off directly: “We sold enough fudge to pay for new wireless mics!” That's tangible, and it's motivating.

Fundraising gives your students a chance to be proud ambassadors. They're not just kids selling snacks; they're performers funding their art. They're showing people what passion looks like—and you can't put a price tag on that kind of education.

Part Two: Building Your Own “Cookie Season” Tradition

Now, here's where it gets really fun. You can take a page out of the Girl Scouts' playbook and create a recurring fundraising season—something the community looks forward to as much as the performances themselves.

We're talking about turning your fundraiser into an event, a tradition,

even a brand. Done right, your choir's sale could become as anticipated as pumpkin-spice season (if you're into that; no judgments here).

Step 1: Pick the Right Product (and Stick with It)

Consistency is key. Girl Scouts sell cookies, and everyone knows it. People plan for it. They crave it. That's the kind of familiarity you want for your choir fundraiser.

Done right, your choir's sale could become as anticipated as pumpkin-spice season.

Pick a product that fits your choir's personality and your community's taste. A few examples that have proven crowd-pleasers:

- **Coffee or tea sales:** Perfect for early-morning parents and caffeine-loving supporters.
- **Popcorn or pretzel sales:** Great for movie nights and game days.
- **Holiday greens:** Perfect for a December drive—plus they smell amazing.
- **Show-choir branded merchandise:** T-shirts, tumblers, hoodies—bonus: free advertising when people wear them.
- **Sweet treats:** Cookie dough, fudge, or chocolate always win hearts (and wallets).

Once you find your signature item, make it annual. Brand it around your group: “Encore Chocolate Season,” “Treble Treats,” or “Harmony in a Bag.” That's how you build recognition year over year.

Step 2: Set the Stage (Make It a Show!)

If anyone knows how to add flair, it's a show choir. So use that showmanship! Launch your fundraiser with a kickoff concert or pep rally. Have students perform snippets of their set list between sales pitches. Post teaser videos on social media: “The Sopranos are selling sweets! The Basses are baking up competition funds!”

You can even turn it into a competition within your group. Maybe the section that sells the most gets first dibs on pizza at rehearsal—or the losing section has to perform an interpretive dance at the next meeting (which will definitely go viral).

By turning your sales drive into a mini event, you build buzz and boost participation.

Step 3: Make It Easy for People to Buy (and Rebuy)

One reason the Girl Scouts succeed is because they make it ridiculously easy to buy. These days, people can Venmo a Scout from across the country.

Take that same approach:

- **Online stores:** Set up a digital order form linked to your choir's social media.
- **Delivery options:** Offer “student delivery” for local supporters and shipping for distant relatives.
- **Reminders:** Use email lists and social posts to remind your buyers each year when “Show Choir Sales Season” begins.

And don't forget the power of data.

Keep track of repeat buyers. Next year, reach out directly: “Hi Mr. Taylor, ready for your annual ‘Treble Blend’ coffee order?” People love being remembered—and it guarantees repeat sales.

Step 4: Tell the Story Behind the Sale

Every fundraiser is a chance to tell your story. Don’t just sell a candle—sell the dream it supports.

Your students aren’t funding a random field trip—they’re funding the chance to perform under the bright lights, to compete at Nationals, to represent their school with pride.

Give buyers a peek behind the curtain. Add photos of rehearsals, post “thank you” videos, and let your students share why show choir matters to them. When people see the impact of their purchase, they stop thinking “I’m buying coffee” and start thinking “I’m supporting excellence.”

That emotional connection turns one-time buyers into lifelong fans.

Step 5: Celebrate Like You Just Won Nationals

When the fundraiser wraps, don’t quietly deposit the checks and move on. Celebrate! Host a mini “Thank You” concert for the community or a social media shoutout series for top sellers and supporters.

Recognition not only motivates your students, but it also builds anticipation for next year’s sale. If people see how appreciated they are, they’ll be waiting with open wallets and hearts when the next season rolls around.

Judging the Sales Performance

Directors spend countless hours preparing for competition judges. The same principles apply here. If you want your fundraiser to score “Superior” ratings, think about the same criteria



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competitions use:

- **Vocal Performance** → Your pitch—literally! Train students to speak clearly and enthusiastically about the product and program.
- **Choreography** → Presentation & delivery. Create a fun, organized setup with eye-catching posters, clean uniforms, and cheerful energy.
- **Show Design** → Branding & packaging. Use a consistent logo, tagline, and visual style for your fundraiser each year.
- **Overall Effect** → Emotional connection. Share your story, express gratitude, and help buyers feel part of something meaningful.
- **Teamwork** → Group participation. Set clear goals, assign roles, and keep spirits high with friendly competition.

See? It's not so different from the stage. Fundraising is just another form of performance—one that happens in parking lots, coffee shops, and Instagram feeds.

Encore: The Long-Term Payoff

Once your choir builds a fundraising tradition, something magical happens: momentum.

Each year, participation grows. Your community starts asking when “Show Choir Season” begins—not just for the concerts, but for the sales. Businesses reach out to partner. Alumni come back to buy their favorite fudge or sponsor the next trip.

And your students? They learn what it means to sustain something beautiful through hard work. They see the direct connection between effort and opportunity. They understand that excellence isn't just practiced on the risers—it's earned, dollar by dollar, cookie by cookie, handshake by handshake.

Closing Notes (Cue the Standing Ovation)

At its heart, fundraising isn't about selling things—it's about building connections. Every transaction is a

bridge between your choir and your community, a shared belief that the arts matter, that music deserves support, and that those sparkling costumes are worth every penny.

So the next time someone groans about another fundraiser, remind them that they're not just selling coffee—they're fueling a dream. And if you do it right, your “Show Choir Cookie Season” will become as beloved and anticipated as your spring show itself.

Because in show choir, the sweetest notes aren't always sung—they're sometimes baked, brewed, or boxed.

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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