



The Definitive Ear

The Official Newsletter of the Spartanburg Community Band – A Non-Profit 501(c)(3) Organization
Edited by: Sharon Brown
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General Musical Instrument Care

Always keep your instrument in its case when not in use. Make sure case handles, hinges, locks and zippers are working properly.

Never set anything on top of your instrument, and never store anything on top of your instrument inside its case.

Don't leave your instrument in extreme temperatures, as fluctuations can warp and damage your instrument.

Don't leave your instrument in a car, where it's susceptible to hot/cold temperatures as well as humidity fluctuations.

Don't leave your instrument unattended, whether inside or outside of its case.

If your instrument is being brought inside from colder temperatures, allow it to warm up to room temperature before playing.

Keep your instrument clean of fingerprints and everyday dust and residue. Do this by wiping your instrument down with a clean, soft, non-treated cloth before storing.

Never attempt to repair an instrument at home. If a repair is needed, take your instrument to a trained instrument repair technician.

Consider insuring your instrument against theft or damages.

Ice Cream Sunday Concert Series



Red, White & Boom



Setting the Stage

By Sharon Free, President

What do you get when you put an eclectic group of musicians and a conductor in a band room? A community band! Every Tuesday, we gladly come to rehearsals to make music with others who also love music. We enjoy the camaraderie and challenges which solitary or solo work might not offer. Rehearsals satisfy part of our desire to make music with a group but for most of us, the ultimate satisfaction is achieved with a public performance. We look forward to walking on-stage and performing.

A concert, however, does not just happen. Before we show up for our first rehearsal, John has already planned a theme and selected the music. Dan Steadman (French Horn) has diligently prepared our music folders. We rehearse and practice the music until we are ready for prime time. We then pack up our horns, put on concert black, grab our folders and head, not to the school auditorium, but to a concert hall.

The band is getting bigger and the Chapman stage seems to be getting smaller. The band shell doesn't even fit behind us anymore. Twichell has a larger stage but the auditorium seats 1500, a cavernous area for our typical audiences. For these reasons, Chapman with its fine lobby and cushy 476 seats is currently our top choice. However, to perform here, a date has to be selected and the auditorium reserved. Arrangements need to be made for band seating and special needs. Fortunately for us, DJ Johnson (Board member, tenor sax) handles the reservation to obtain the best date possible and Bobbi Albert, our Treasurer and percussionist, pays the rental fee. John manages the stage and performance logistics and lines up any guest performers to make our event extra special.

So now we have the music prepared and a concert hall reserved. Everything is a go for the bright lights, right? Not so fast. An audience is needed and the larger, the better. Rick Meehan (Vice President, tenor sax), Bobbi Albert (Treasurer, percussionist), Twedis Walker-Merrell (Board member, clarinet) combine forces to develop the advertising artwork and to print the posters. DJ and Coleen work together to place ads with the Herald Journal and other advertising venues.

Are we ready for the downbeat now? Not quite. Most of us throw our instruments into the car and drive to Chapman. But would we sound as good without a full percussion section? Timpani, a xylophone, chimes, assorted cymbals, mallets and all sorts of percussion equipment must be transported to our concert site. Our hard-working percussionists load and unload the band's trailer which Harold Page (trumpet) has been graciously willing to tow. Please give Harold a heartfelt thank you and consider helping with the loading and unloading. After all, our percussionists really do cover our backs.

As an additional benefit for our audience and sponsors, programs are prepared, printed and assembled. Twedis steps in once again to accomplish this. Liz Crawley (piccolo/flute) donates her professional photography skills to showcase the band on the program cover.

So you can see, it takes all these people plus others I have not mentioned specifically to stage a concert. In conclusion, I would like to thank John, Dan, Harold, the entire board and all of you for making our concerts so successful. I am looking forward to a tremendous 2018/2019 season.

THE DOG AND PONY SHOW

By: Rick Meehan

We, the Spartanburg Community Band of Spartanburg, South Carolina, started in 1996 with no money. In fact, obtaining funds was not even on our radar. As a nonprofit 501(c)(3) charitable organization performing both for free and offering free concerts to the public, we just wanted to play our horns and beat our drums. But, things changed. As the years went by, inflationary economic forces made everything costlier. No longer were venues available at no charge. No longer would local newspapers run cheap ads for nonprofits. No longer could we support the needs of fifty musicians wanting to play free concerts as a gift back to the community. Suddenly, or so it seemed, we had to get some regular dough.

It was 1996 when we launched our symphonic Titanic. Our budget was zero and the bank account close to it. We weren't thinking about the monetary iceberg until we were nearly upon it, but an adjustment in our course brought us to monetary stability. Today we average \$15K per year in expenditures to stay true to our inception statement: Offer quality performances for free to the public. That's a lot of money just to sit down and play for the fun of it. Obviously, the old saw about nothing in life being free proved true.

Before I explain our steps to sound financial backing, let me first say that not all concert bands are the same, but we do have similar problems. Groups of people contain individuals with many talents. Therein lies the secret to the fundraising riddle. It is important to identify and recruit those members with the ability to approach others for money, both in writing and verbally. Even more crucial is to transform the whole band into a fundraising machine. Any efforts should be accompanied by a band policy of one hundred percent participation. After all, if you want to play you've got to pay. This should be the mantra of any nonprofit concert band. So, how can all this be made to happen? By pulling the old dog and pony show, naturally. We're all in the business of staging performances, so now we must learn to over-stage them!

Once the controlling body, whether a managing individual, committee, or board of directors, assembles those talented folks from within that are comfortable talking about money, then the fun can begin. Fun is the keyword, the first three letters in fundraising. Any plan should be simple, straightforward, and easy for even the most novice member of the group to discuss with others. Most especially, the plan must be sustainable. Fundraising for the band never stops, just as the show must go on, no matter what. Ever. Period. Therefore, any fundraising efforts must begin with the band membership.

Originally, we asked for donations from our membership in the suggested amounts of \$25 per adult and \$10 per student each January. That brought in around \$900 per year to be used on latest music, equipment, etc., and members felt ownership in their organization. It was enough to handle our needs at the time. We still suggest that members donate regularly, but we no longer rely solely on those funds.

Now, our membership is encouraged to tell band fans, friends, and family about several newer support opportunities. We have a store on CafePress.com where we sell logoed items of all kinds, from magnetic car signs to coffee mugs, all sporting our official band logo. This kind of store is simple to incorporate into the mandatory web advertising that should be happening with all bands. CafePress.com pays us the profits from the sales, of course.

Along the same lines, Amazon.com offers a fabulous opportunity for nonprofits called "Amazon Smile." Simply sign up your nonprofit organization for the program and then tell everyone to login in with smile.amazon.com to make purchases. The first time they go to Smile, they are asked what nonprofit they wish to support. The system saves the choice, and from then your organization automatically receives a donation from Amazon, at no extra cost to the buyer, of .5-3% of every purchase. We have placed this information in every piece of advertising literature we create, but especially the concert programs. Each year we get enough through Smile to buy several new selections of music. And, as you know, each symphonic arrangement can run as much as \$400. Take advantage of this excellent opportunity.

The next step is to ask members to speak with their employers or schools. We offer sponsorship levels for a wide range of donors. For instance, \$250 per year gets a business card advertisement in every program. For our outdoor concerts, we offer banner advertising opportunities. There are many ways to structure a printed advertising sponsorship system, but don't overtake the plumbing. Keep it simple.

Now to the external fundraising possibilities. Start local. We started with the Mayor. Yes, city governments should be aware of fine concert band institutions in their midst. Just about every town has some sort of public auditorium or outdoor park for performances these days. Our band is sponsored by the City of Spartanburg to play the July 4th celebration, "Red, White, and Boom!" on our largest park bandstand. Ever heard of the Warbirds Fly-in? WWII airplanes are brought in to the local airport. In times past, we were paid to play in a hanger. Several of our local universities and colleges have sponsored us on campus for events. Currently, our six-concert Ice Cream Sundays signature spring series is graciously hosted by our famous private women's institution, Converse College. Here's the point: be creative in picking venues. Look for groups that are willing to sponsor. They will defray the venue costs. Build a relationship with them of excellent performances for their investment.

Opportunities must be created, and who better to create them than music types? Aren't we creators? Find your best writers and ask them to apply for grants from local, state, and federal arts commissions, and most certainly, the National Endowment for the Arts. Tie this effort into working with the local theater or art center, wherever the public stage resides.

Write about the benefits brought to the community by your institution's existence. After all, band music is an important part of our heritage. Point that out!

Local businesses are not necessarily interested in putting tiny ads in little programs, but sometimes they are attracted to supporting community projects through benevolence, especially if that benevolence begets further community support. Ever thought of offering half the donated proceeds from a concert to the local children's shelter around Christmastime? While I cannot divulge some of our own benefactors, at their request, I can say that many corporations are searching for worthy causes to support. Show them why you are just such an institution. Most times all it takes is a gracious phone call the HR manager. Get your best salesperson in the band involved with this. Remember too that members of the band do business all over town; banks, lawyers, doctors, malls, etc. I believe that my suppliers should help support my cause just as I support theirs. All they can say is "no," but what a chance they take with one of their own supporters—heh, heh, heh.

Next, don't be afraid of the local media. Their job is to find good stories to put on the news, talk shows, newspapers, magazines, the web, and so on. One of our top supporters is Diane Lee of WSPA TV, our local, talented, news reporter. She sings with us periodically and announces during some of our shows, a beautiful person in all aspects. Whenever she is involved with a concert, she mentions us on the air. The same goes for the local newspaper, the Spartanburg Herald Journal. While we use them for our paid advertising, they also grace us with multiple articles and mentions on both the web and in print every season. We can't thank our media enough. Cultivate the local reporters, search for a way to incorporate them, perhaps as the "Voice of the Band." They appreciate the mention as much as you do.

Social media is a big way to get the word out these days. We have been fortunate enough to have an actual Facebook database technician as one of our tuba players over the last several years. Ben Stanfield has opened my eyes to the power of Facebook. Utilize this fabulous tool to keep your fan base and benefactors informed.

We invite a couple of food vendors to our outdoor events. These folks make money from our performances. The tradeoff for them is they not only make a little money, but get advertising in front of a crowd, while we get a cut donated back. Don't go wild with this idea. After all, if there are too many vendors, they won't be able to make a profit, hence, no donation.

Many of our members have been around for our entire existence. That means some of us are aging out. We are most thankful to several unnamed benefactors gracious enough to remember us in their wills, and even create an endowment that will help support us for many years to come. Here's the deal: we believe in what we do, and we want it to keep going after we're unable to be there any longer except in spirit. I'll bet someone in your group knows how to discuss these beneficial monetary instruments, pun intended, with your band. Don't wait until it is too late.

Your fan base, the audience, is your greatest asset for support. Spend the effort to create that web store with logoed items, thank them profusely for attending your concerts, but most of all, plan to ask them for money at every event. Once again, you must be creative. Our past October concert was themed, "Heroes and Villains." Yours truly and Trace Miller, Treasurer and trombonist, created a skit to open the event—in costume as Batman and Robin. It was funny; the crowd loved it. In our advertising we called for attendees to come as their favorite good guy or bad guy, and the whole band participated by coming in costume themselves. We packed the house. We also packed the steel Bat Donation Box.

Here's the fundraising plan in a nutshell:

- * Tap your internal talent.
- * Tap your local government.
- * Tap your state arts commission
- * Tap the federal Endowment for the Arts
- * Tap your local businesses for sponsorships
- * Tap your media – in all forms
- * Tap your event vendors for a slice of their profits off your efforts
- * Tap your veteran members
- * Tap your audience

A final word. We artsy musician people tend to get a little stuffy occasionally. Who us, you ask? Well, let me tell you, the quickest way to put the kibosh on fundraising is to inadvertently snoot-ify a few of your contributors. Anyone willing to give even a penny to support your band should be treated the same as your greatest benefactor—with humility and respect! At every concert announce to the audience, "Thank you for your support. Without you we would not exist." Have the band secretary send out copious thank you letters and cards to anyone willing to aid either monetarily or physically. Ever helped the stage volunteers set up for a concert? There's sweat involved. In fact, perspiration is what it takes to make all this happen. So, roll up your sleeves, get your hands dirty, and use the ideas presented here for your own dog-and-pony-show. Your fundraising efforts will secure a stable future for your band!

Calendar of Events



Moldie Oldies

October 14, Fall Concert

3pm Chapman Cultural Center



November 27th Dickens of a Christmas

City of Spartanburg Tree Lighting

Plaza in front of Denny's Building Main Street



December 16th Christmas Concert

Chapman Cultrual Center

Free Admission and After Concert Refreshments

DONATIONS

Friends of the bands may utilize PayPal to make donations through this button on the band website.



FACEBOOK

Please visit our facebook page to learn more about our band and upcoming events. You can now use the birthday charity drive to raise money for our band. A special thanks to Daniel Hedgpeth and Coleen Felty for raising over \$200.00



SPONSORS



Thank you to all our Sponsors:

Spartanburg Day School

Law Insurance Agency

Trendz Salon

Marko Janitorial Supplies

Denny's

Mellow Mushroom

Liz Crawley Photography

Bruster's Ice Cream

A Very Special Thank You to:

SC Arts Commission

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Chapman Cultural Center

Converse College