

Conductor as Producer

The Music is one part of the event experience

Conductor as Executive Producer

Executive Producer

- The head or lead producer who oversees the creation of a film, television show, radio broadcast, music album or live performance
- Executive producers work primarily on the business side of production - #1 job is funding and the budget
- Ensures that a production meets goals and production deadlines
- Concept design and implementation so everyone knows what's to be done or what the “show” is about
- Quality control - ultimately responsibility for EVERYTHING... good or bad

Producer

- Manages production staff - hires/fires the people who do the actual production/performance (assistant conductors, sound design people, lighting people, and, yes...performers)
- Skilled in a wide range of technical areas - lighting, sound, staging, recording, public relations, marketing, politics, etc.
- Responsible for the production schedule and meeting production goals including what is done in rehearsals
- Maintains the master calendar for the production/show/concert (from getting the music rented/purchased for the first rehearsal to the actual performances/shows)
- Oversees all aspects of the production/concert including **marketing** (marketing includes public relations and ticket sales)

Music Director/Conductor

- Responsible for all things artistic/musical relating to the production...especially the performers
- Make artistic/music selection decisions
- Organizes performers as needed
- Communicates to the performers
- Conducts rehearsals and performances

NOTE: Most often in a school setting, one person does all of these things - as Band Director or Choir Director or Orchestra Director - you are the Executive Producer, Producer and Music Director

Production values - all elements of a production (concert, stage show, theater presentation, etc.) that are not specifically the music/musical performance.

- ▶ **Venue/facilities** - the space you need and will use. Restrooms, ADA issues, dressing rooms, parking lots, access in all areas, and the location of the facility are considerations
- ▶ **Staging** - risers, equipment, set pieces, anything needed on stage
- ▶ **Lighting** - to focus attention (pit and stage lighting are different than theatrical lighting)
- ▶ **Sound design** - includes sound reinforcement, sound effects, amplification and monitoring
- ▶ **Special effects** - range from flags to pyro-techniques
- ▶ **Costumes/uniforms/concert dress** - what the performers are required to wear. This area often includes make-up. As the conductor, don't wear anything that distracts from the music!
- ▶ **Back stage and Front-of-house** - your house manager and your stage manager are vital to every production!
- ▶ **Box office** - services include selling tickets and dealing with customers. Issues include ticket pricing/ scaling of house; accounting; and information retrieval
- ▶ **Printed materials including programs, posters, flyers, etc.**
- ▶ **Production values can have as great an impact on the success of your production as the music/ show...often more so if things go badly. Remember - an audience "hears with their eyes"**

The KEY to successful concerts/events is planning...

ADVANCED planning

- The CALENDAR drives just about everything - get a schedule fixed early - research significant historic events that can be a good theme for your event/concert
- Coordinate your calendar/schedule with school, city, county and state events as best you can. Try to avoid conflicts with other similar events
- The **BUDGET** determines what really will/can happen - the more time you give yourself to meet budget demands the more successful your events will be
- ALWAYS submit your budgets early...never at the last minute

Budgets are simple - just two moving parts

INCOME and EXPENSES

Types of Income

State Funding

Ticket Sales

Donations (individuals)

Grants - Private Foundations

Merchandising (T-shirts, etc.)

Institutional Funding

In-Kind (goods & services)

Grants -government

Grants - Corporate Foundations

Types of Expenses

- ▶ Personnel
- ▶ Production
(sound, lighting, video, etc.)
- ▶ Guest Artists
- ▶ Rentals
- ▶ Licensing/Copyright fees
- ▶ Awards/scholarships
- ▶ Design
- ▶ TAXES (must account for this)

Venue

Marketing

(publicity, public relations)

Transportation

Hospitality (food/beverage)

Depreciation

Ticketing (box office; ticket stock)

Printing (programs, flyers, posters, etc.)

Legal council

Every Executive Producer/Producer knows that the Budget is THE guide to a successful event...advanced, thorough planning is essential.

INCOME - EXPENSES = \$0 or better...you have a good event financially

INCOME - EXPENSES = \$XXX you did not have a good event financially

Always estimate INCOME low and EXPENSES high

Plan for the unexpected/surprises so you are ready

Be absolutely brutally honest about income and expenses. NO “pie in the sky” projections. Just be realistic...not optimistic.

Event Planning

THE BASICS

1. The purpose/reason for the event

- ▶ You must have a clear understanding of the MAIN goal of the event.
- ▶ Academic Artistic Fundraising Community relations Entertain
- ▶ Celebration Holiday Political Special Event Educate

- ▶ A very BAD reason to have an event is “Fall Concert” or Spring Concert” - boring, boring, boring!!!

- ▶ Make sure your “boss/bosses” know what you are proposing and why!!!

2. Date - check to see what your competition for an audience might be. Have your event added to “community calendars.” The best events have at least one year lead- time.

- ▶ • INEXPENSIVE - FAST - GOOD, you can only have TWO of these at a time
- ▶ • Poor planning costs money and drives people away
- ▶ • The calendar is vitally important - be the first to get dates established/coordinated

3. Determine performers/ensembles involved

- ▶ This is everyone and anyone performing or required to be on stage or in the building
- ▶ Guest Artists - “out of town” guests; often publishers/manufactures will help
- ▶ Announcers - use students, local media people or others who are well known
- ▶ Children’s groups - always a wonderful challenge
- ▶ Local performers - local “stars” are a good addition to a concert but quality is a must

4. Name the event! (NEVER just “Spring Concert or Fall Concert”)

- ▶ Give the marketing/advertising/promotions people something with which to work when creating a marketing campaign
- ▶ Names give a simple word picture of what is being presented
- ▶ Concerts can be “annual” only after the first year...never the first year
- ▶ If you are stuck for a name, consider using one of the music selection titles

5. Determine what staff you will need - these are the key people who will work with you for the duration the project:

- Operations - tech people - stage crew, lighting, staging, sound, audio/video
- Marketing/Publicity/Public Relations
- Office staff - administrative help
- Finance/accounting - budget
- Box Office (front of house) - ushers, ticket sales; interface with audience
- Directors/accompanists - assistants and back up people “just in case”
- Board/Parents Organization/community members
- Librarians - at least two
- Specialists (choreography, etc.)

6. Time/production schedule - set a specific beginning and ending time for every major event. All of your production planning centers around meeting time deadlines.

7. Place/venue - make sure the facility or area has everything you want/need:

- Date reserved/Confirmed _____
- Contact Person _____ Phone _____
- House manager/technician Contact _____ Phone _____
- POWER availability! Absolutely critical.
- Security Contact _____ Phone _____
- Emergency Services Contact _____ Phone _____
- Parking Contact _____ Phone _____
- Restrooms and dressing rooms
- Other services that may be provided either as part of the rental/contract fee or for additional expenses.

Staging
Audio/lighting equipment

Piano(s)/instruments
Ushering service

8. Performers/artists/guests

- Date contacted/contracted Contact _____ Phone _____
- Lodging Contact _____ Phone _____
- Transportation - air and ground transportation
Contact _____ Phone _____
- Special needs - depends on each performer and event
- Specifics in the contract/rider - read this carefully. If you don't have a formal contract then make one up to protect you and the performers
- Specific time of performance - what length is their part of the event/show
- Food, drink and other requests
- Keep clear, accurate records of all conversations and transactions. Make sure you know who, from the guest performer's side (agent, manager, personal assistant), can say "yes" and "no."

9. Set the Rehearsal Schedule - this will involve reserving facilities/ space and equipment.

- Follow the same procedures as in booking the performance space
- Schedule more than you may need...it's always easier to cancel than to add rehearsals

10. Set up the IN-HOUSE Communication network - this is WHO to call WHEN there is a problem and who has WHAT authority to make decisions.

11. Marketing/Publicity Plan - simple, clear, concise and effective

- Carefully plan for each specific method of advertising (social media, print media, radio, TV)
- Establish mailing dates for press releases - normally, for single events this is 6-8 weeks before the event. Check with EACH station or newspaper for their due dates
- Establish a marketing/publicity BUDGET and revise it according to ticket sales
- Follow proven, accepted marketing procedures - they work!

12. Ticket Pricing and Scaling the House - the big mystery of the business is how much to charge for a specific event. Rule - be reasonable but never cheap. People are used to getting what they pay for:

- Never base income on 100% of the house capacity
- Always hold “house seats” (your mom may show up)
- Scale the house so that the premium seats are also the best seats
- FREE...never a good price for anything. Sometimes we must offer things for free but if you have the choice, charge something for your events or people will consider them of no value at all...free

13. BUDGET

- Propose and follow a reasonable, intelligent and realistic budget - Everything flows out of the budget
- Income could include ticket sales, merchandising, donations (non-profit organizations), parking fees, etc.
- Expenses are all costs for the event including salaries/wages, taxes, employee benefits, artist fees, transportation, food - everything. Keep an accurate record of all expenses INCLUDING donated items that would have cost you money
- Trade-outs, In-Kind Service and other donated items - show them as income and/or expenses. You must account for everything.
- Keep all areas of the budget separate so you can accurately track every penny!
- Hold people to budget targets
- Base ticket sales on not more than 60-80% of house! Never assume a sell-out

14. **SUCCESS is in the DETAILS**

- Rehearse everything!
- Introductions are especially troublesome...the person's name is ALWAYS said last!
- Presentations...never a “surprise” to the recipient
- Ask questions and keep notes... never “assume”
- **Walk (absolutely do it) through everything yourself the first time!**
Physically go to the place and walk all of the spaces so you know what is there and what the problems will be (loading docks, back stage areas, hallways, dressing rooms, bath rooms...everything)
- You are responsible for the audience from the time they get out of their car in the parking lot until they leave and are on the road home
- Make yourself a production checklist and refer to it often

MAKE YOUR CONCERTS GREAT EVENTS BY BEING A GREAT EVENT PRODUCER!