



THE UNITED STATES COAST GUARD BAND

COMMANDER KENNETH W. MEGAN, DIRECTOR

Concert Host Handbook

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Introduction

The most important element in presenting a Coast Guard Band concert is

YOU - THE HOST!

Hosting a performance by the Coast Guard Band is easy! When the band is on tour, the Coast Guard pays for the Bands transportation, meals, and lodging. The four critical areas that you need to be concerned with are:

- Advertising
- Performance Site
- Printing of tickets and programs
- Distribution of tickets by mail or electronically

This Host's Handbook was put together to help you develop and implement a marketing and advertising strategy that will help you gain the most for your organization and community from this performance!

Please feel free to call and ask about anything that you feel is not covered in this handbook. It is in the best interests of your organization as well as ours to make this performance as big a success as possible.

Advertising Strategies

Proper advertising is a must for a successful concert!

There are many approaches to the promotion of any event. We have found that some work better than others and that some do not work at all. Here is what we recommend:

What Works:

- Full, half or quarter page ads with photos and art work
- Display ads of at least three columns
- Color photos and art work
- Coupons for ordering tickets
- Radio and TV promotion in addition to display ads

What does NOT work:

- Classified ad format
- Radio Public Service Announcements alone
- Arts and entertainment calendars alone

To help you in preparing for a Coast Guard Band Concert promotion, we have some press and photo materials available for your use along with a Sample Book containing examples of ads, tickets, programs, and general promotional strategies that have worked for other sponsors.

What we can provide:

- Photographs (color and black and white)
- Clip Art
- CD recordings for promotional advertising
- Brochures
- Press Releases

All in either hard copy or electronic versions.

Performance Site

The Coast Guard Band requires a stage size of at least forty feet deep by fifty feet wide and an auditorium seating capacity of approximately 1,000.

Preferred Concert Sites:

- Performing Arts Centers
- Concert Halls
- Theaters

Acceptable Concert Sites:

- High School auditoriums
- Permanent band shells with built-in audience seating

Least Preferred Concert Sites:

- Gymnasiums
- Portable band shells
- Municipal parks without band shells

Unacceptable Concert Sites:

- Most churches
- Small gazebo bandstands
- Fairs and carnivals

Before signing a concert site contract, please call the Coast Guard Band's Tour Coordinator at (860)701-6824. We can discuss our requirements with you and help you avoid problems that could result in the loss of a deposit.

Rain Sites: When scheduling an outdoor concert, you should arrange for a suitable indoor site in the event of inclement weather.

Programs and Tickets

The United States Coast Guard Band supplies brochures and camera ready program sheets of the musical selections, program notes, and personnel roster. The Host has the program sheets printed for the concert and inserted into the brochure. Often a local printer or commercial firm will print the program without charge as their contribution to this community event. We suggest that you include a printed insert in the program thanking all individuals and organizations involved in producing the concert.

The proper distribution of tickets is the single most important responsibility of the sponsor. If it is done improperly, the concert will fail as a community event.

- **Printing:** We provide the ticket stock for your concert with the color printing completed. You will need to overprint the tickets with the specific information for your concert. Please include a statement requesting all ticket holders to be seated fifteen minutes prior to the start of the concert as the remaining seats will be opened to the general public ten minutes prior to concert time (see "Sold Out" below).
- **One Third More:** You will need to print and distribute one-third more tickets than the seating capacity of the auditorium. This excess ticket amount is based on a twenty-five percent no-show rate you can expect at your concert. It may sound high, but years of experience have proven it to be an accurate projection.
- **Distribution:** The most effective way to distribute tickets is to run a mail-in coupon in your display ads. Those who wish to attend the concert will fill out the coupon and mail it to your office with a self addressed stamped envelope for tickets. Tickets should be limited to four per customer.
- **Sold Out:** In most cases, when the promotion is done right, the tickets will be "sold out" in less than a week. We recommend that you answer all requests after that with a form letter explaining that the response was so great that all tickets are gone, but the auditorium will be open for general seating ten minutes prior to the concert.
- **Outdoor Concerts:** Tickets are not provided for outdoor concerts or rain sites.
- **Concert Duration:** **Indoor concerts** last approximately one hour and fifty minutes (1:50) and **include a fifteen minute intermission.** **Outdoor concerts** are approximately one hour and thirty minutes (1:30) and **do not include an intermission.**

Important Notes:

- Do not place stacks of tickets at "convenient" locations for the public to pick up.
 - Do not send large blocks of tickets to schools, clubs, or organizations unless you can confirm that they will use all the tickets they have requested.
 - Do not mail out tickets as enclosures in your routine mailings unless they have been specifically requested.
- **Coast Guard policy expressly prohibits selling tickets or awarding them as prizes in raffle or other contests in which exchanges of funds take place.**

Financial Responsibilities

The United States Coast Guard Band does not charge a fee for any appearance. However, the host must pay for the expenses specifically connected with the concert, which may include the following:

- **Newspaper, television and radio advertisements**
- **Printing of tickets, flyers, programs and posters**
- **Concert site rental and insurance**
- **Janitor services**
- **Other miscellaneous items**

As a host, you are encouraged to approach corporate members of your community for sponsorship to help offset the costs of these services.

If we are on an official tour in your area, the Coast Guard pays for our basic travel expenses – transportation, meals, and lodging. However, our travel budget is not sufficient to pay for travel other than our annual tours.

The United States Coast Guard Band presents concerts as a public service. All Coast Guard Band concerts must be open to the general public regardless of sex, race, color, religion, national origin, age, or handicap.

No admission charge may be levied.

Promotional Materials

We can supply you with public relations materials that will help you fill your concert hall. They can be found on our website under the Tours/Tours Publicity Materials link, or can be sent to you in a compact disk or as e-mail attachments.

Press Book

The Press Book contains background information about the Coast Guard Band and its activities. It will help you prepare new releases and feature stories to promote your concert. Biographies of the Director, Assistant Director, and various special groups as well as a personnel roster are also included.

Press Releases

The Band will email you a press release prepared specifically for your concert with suggested dates for release to media.

Samples Package

Our Samples Package contains stock samples and examples of print ads and other promotional materials that can help you develop your advertising campaign.

Proclamations

Community leaders are often eager to be involved in promoting the concert. One of the most successful ways of doing this is to invite the mayor, city manager, or city council to declare the concert day as "United States Coast Guard Band Day in the City of ..." This declaration can develop the feeling of community interaction with your organization and can help in the publicity of the concert. We suggest a wording similar to the one below.

Whereas, the United States Coast Guard Band has established an international reputation as one of the five premier service bands of the United States.

Whereas, the 55 member Coast Guard Band is the official representative of the United States Coast Guard, established in 1790 as the United States' oldest continuous seagoing service.

Whereas, the Coast Guard Band holds the Coast Guard Unit Commendation for "...devotion to duty, teamwork and outstanding performance..."

Whereas, this versatile musical organization appears in concert on (date) at (time) as part of (occasion),

Now, therefore, I, (name) in recognition of the honor bestowed upon the residents of (town) by the Coast Guard Band, proclaim (day, date)

United States Coast Guard Band Day

in (place) and urge all residents to attend the concert given by the Coast Guard Band at (place).

In witness whereof, I have set my hand and caused the Seal of the (town) to be affixed this (date).

Signature
(official office)

For bonus Public Relations, you can arrange for the local press to be present at the concert when the proclamation is read.

A word of caution:

Avoid offers from elected officials to make a speech during the concert, especially during election years. Never invite a political candidate to speak unless he or she already holds office. We must avoid the appearance of supporting a political candidate or party.

Soliciting Reviews

"By now I should just come to expect the remarkable level of musical excellence from the band...This is music making at the highest level, and I am honored that NPR was privileged to distribute it."

**Andy Trudeau, Cultural Programming
National Public Radio, Washington, DC**

**".....with musicality, accuracy, energy...top-flight performance!"
The Commercial Appeal, Memphis, Tennessee**

**"...diversified, entertaining...bravo!"
Evening Journal, Wilmington, Delaware**

YES! Please invite your local reviewer to attend the concert and write a review. A short note requesting a review, like the one below, usually works if you cannot arrange to see the reviewer in person.

Dear (reviewer):

The U.S. Coast Guard Band will be performing in (your town) on (date). (your organization) invites you to attend our concert and review it for your readers. We would also appreciate receiving a copy of the review.

Enclosed is a copy of the program for this concert, two tickets, and a compact disc.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

(your name)

Introduction & Ushers

We will be very happy to have you or a representative of your community welcome the audience and introduce the Coast Guard Band at the concert. We ask that your remarks be limited to two minutes. We will arrange for you to meet with CWO Richard Wyman, the band's concert commentator, backstage approximately 15 minutes before the concert begins. Mr. Wyman is responsible for coordinating the opening of the program.

On the evening of the concert, several ushers can be used to pass out programs and collect tickets. They can also escort any VIP's to the reserved seating that you may have established.

Some clubs and organizations which may be able to assist you are:

Coast Guard Auxiliary

ROTC

American Legion

VFW and other veteran's organizations

Local Music Clubs

Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts

College and University Alumni Clubs

Fraternities and Sororities

Churches and Synagogues

Professional/Civic Clubs - Jaycees, Lions, Rotary, Elks, etc.

High School Band/Orchestra/Chorus

Press Club

Local Arts Associations

If obtaining volunteer ushers is not feasible, we suggest that you use a table in the lobby on which the programs can be displayed. A box for ticket collection is optional but recommended. (If your auditorium is seating "general admission" for this concert, tickets should be collected because the audience expects them to be).

Host's Report

We ask you to supply the Coast Guard Band's Marketing and Media Coordinator with copies of each piece of publicity material related to the Coast Guard Band's appearance in your community:

- **Newspaper articles and advertisements**
- **Flyers**
- **Posters**
- **Tickets**
- **Newspaper reviews of the performance**

We also ask that you provide us with copies of letters to the editor and any other correspondence you receive regarding our appearance. Finally, we invite you to send us a letter with your comments regarding the appearance of the Coast Guard Band in your community. If you were pleased with our appearance, your letter will help us secure future concert sponsors. (Coast Guard Headquarters requires that our post-tour reports include these materials.) If you were displeased, we need to know why, so we can make the necessary changes.

Making It Work!

Some Notes For The Less Experienced Host

The Host

Your importance as the host cannot be overemphasized. As noted earlier in the Host's Handbook, you have several responsibilities. Your primary responsibility is to promote the concert. Telling everybody in your community that the U.S. Coast Guard Band will perform is not going to be easy, especially for one person. We suggest that you form a committee to assist you.

The Committee

In forming the committee, persons to be considered are: newspaper editors, publishers and owners; executives of local radio and television stations; and civic, social and educational leaders. They will be valuable because they not only control the media you want to use, but they also know how to use it to your best advantage.

Sponsor

Also noted in the Host's Handbook is the fact that expenses do occur. Having the above-mentioned personnel on your committee should help. By offering them the title of sponsor, they will be getting free publicity for their organization and should therefore be willing to assist you with the costs.

Working With Radio and Television Stations

Approach the station owner, manager, and/or program director for assistance. Stress that all time devoted to advertising the United States Coast Guard Band, including use of slides and recordings, can be logged as public service time.

Working With Business and Industry

Check to see if the large business and industrial firms in your area publish in-house newspapers or retain other information outlets for their employees. If they do, ask them to print several articles on the concert in your city, and seek permission to place posters throughout their plants and office buildings.

Working with Newspapers

Your area newspapers are exceedingly important to your committee. Whenever possible, enlist your leading newspaper as co-sponsor of the concert. The United States Coast Guard Band has never had an unsuccessful concert when the local newspaper served as co-sponsor.

Get to know each paper's publisher, editor, entertainment editor and music critic. Give them a press kit, along with a request for any help they can offer.

One of the most effective ways of informing the public of the concert is through a full page ad in one or more of your local newspapers. A number of newspaper sponsors have provided this service in the past. At other times, concert sponsors have been successful in getting local merchants to sponsor these ads. It is strongly suggested that one full page ad be used to begin your newspaper campaign.

Request that the newspaper(s) compose advertisements for the concert and run them daily on the entertainment page for a week prior to the performance.

Sunday supplements are widely read. A picture story in one of these weekly supplements just before the concert would provide an excellent opportunity for many to learn of the concert.

Reviews and post-concert articles are extremely important to the mission of the Coast Guard Band. They can tell those who did not attend what they missed, and those who did attend will have something specific, written by what we hope will be an expert, to point to when they tell their friends about the performance. Provide the music critic with a printed program when it arrives (about one month before the tour concert) so that he or she can become familiar with the music prior to its performance.

Newspapers normally require six to eight weeks lead time for Sunday supplements, big feature stories, etc. Remember, in all of your publicity efforts, but especially in working with newspapers, much of your success will depend on careful advance planning.

Following is a sample outline which you can adapt to your newspaper campaign:

3 weeks prior to concert:

Full page ad with coupon stating that The United States Coast Guard Band will perform in your community, including the time, locations, the fact that admission is free, how tickets may be obtained, etc. Use pictures from the press kit.

2 weeks prior to concert:

Feature story about the Band's Conductor. Use pictures from the press kit. Run second coupon ad.

7 days prior to concert:

Stories on soloists listed on the program, including pictures from the press kit.

6 days prior to concert:

Run an ad in the entertainment section.

5 days prior to concert:

A feature story on the Dixieland Jazz Band or The Masters of Swing (one or the other will perform on your concert - check the program and releases in the press kit) plus an ad on the entertainment page.

3 days prior to concert:

Story on a local area person who is a member of the Band or is related to one. Use pictures and run an ad on the entertainment page.

2 days prior to concert:

Picture and feature story on the Band's Conductor, stressing his guest conducting appearances, plus an ad on the entertainment page.

1 day prior to concert:

List the program's highlights. Stress again that this is a free admission cultural and community event presented in your area by the U.S. Coast Guard through you, the local sponsor. Give all details again. Run a picture of the Band along with a large reminder ad on the entertainment page.

Day of concert:

General news story again stressing that the concert is free. Run a picture of the Band. One final ad on the entertainment page. If all tickets have been distributed, run an ad containing the following:

“There’s Still a Chance To Hear The Band.”

“Although no tickets are left for the free concert tonight at (auditorium) sponsored by (sponsor), music fans who failed to get tickets may still have a chance of being admitted by being at the auditorium at (10 minutes prior to start of concert). If there are any vacant seats at that time, people will be admitted with or without tickets.”

Notifying Clubs and Organizations

Below is a list of some clubs and organizations which may be located in your area. Request that they inform their membership of the concert and possibly enlist their aid in some way on your committee.

Coast Guard Auxiliary

Local ROTC, American Legion, VFW and other Veteran's groups

Navy League, Marine Corps League

Local arts associations and music clubs

Boy/Girl Scouts

College/University Alumni Associations or Fraternities/Sororities

Churches and Synagogues

Local High School band/orchestra/chorus

Civic clubs such as Kiwanis, Jaycees, Lions, Rotary, Elks, Moose

Press Club

Country Clubs

Lawyers' and other professional clubs and organizations

Importance of Continued Publicity

One purpose the United States Coast Guard has in sending the Coast Guard Band to your area to provide these free concerts is to place the words "United States Coast Guard" in this cultural light as much as possible for several weeks prior to the concert and for several days thereafter. Therefore, even though all your tickets for the concert may be distributed well in advance of the actual performance, please do not let up on your publicity campaign ~ especially in the newspaper.

This continued publicity will serve at least two purposes: (1) The people must be reminded frequently to make certain that they use these valuable tickets. (2) Virtually all of the people in your area will be made aware of this mutual endeavor by your organization and the United States Coast Guard Band. In connection with this, do not be afraid of having an overflow audience. If you will follow the instructions in the Sponsor's Handbook on tickets, you can be assured of having the necessary controls to guarantee a full house.

More Words on Tickets

Our experience has proven that people will attend in great numbers to hear the United States Coast Guard Band in a free admission concert, and a full capacity audience can be expected for every program when tickets are used. In the past, some concert sponsors have been concerned with having to turn people away, and have become so overconfident that, in the last few days, they relaxed their efforts to attract people to the concert. When this has happened, several hundred seats in the auditorium were unoccupied at concert time. Since each empty seat represents government funds and co-sponsor funds wasted, it is necessary that strict guidelines be outlined and followed. Printed tickets will provide crowd control and will enable the sponsor to have an accurate idea of how the information campaign is progressing.

Print and distribute 33 1/3% more tickets than the auditorium has seats. Even when free tickets are carefully distributed, only about 75% of the ticket holders actually attend the concert.

(75% of 133 1/3% is 100% – this is generally what you can expect under this plan)

Outdoor Concerts

With only a few exceptions, we do not recommend using tickets for outdoor concerts. The public knows that they do not need a ticket to set up their lawn chair in the park to hear a free concert. A little more promotion is needed for outside concerts than inside concerts. The time and effort that would have gone into tickets now goes into the extra newspaper articles, display ads and radio/television announcements.

They Didn't Follow Our Advice

One sponsor arranged for the Coast Guard Band to perform in cities X and Y. The promotion was handled with coupons in the weekly local papers only. Because they only distributed tickets reflecting the hall's seating capacity, and other display ads and articles were not used, the halls were only 1/2 filled.

Another sponsor arranged for the Coast Guard Band to perform in the civic auditorium. They only distributed 2,500 tickets (the hall's seating capacity). By not overselling by 1/3, the hall was only 3/4 full.

Yet another sponsor arranged for the Coast Guard Band to perform in a local school. They distributed tickets to the students and left stacks on store counters. The concert was only sparsely attended.

Ticket Philosophy

We have placed a big emphasis on using tickets for indoor concerts for two reasons. One is that we (you, the host) and we (the Coast Guard Band) want to see a full house. The full house is an indication of the time and effort you have invested, as well as a morale boost to the musicians. The other reason is that the ticket procedure works. The use of free tickets creates in the public mind the concept that the concert is a quality event for which there will be a large demand. Once the public has put their time and money into coupon cutting, stamps, and envelopes, they are committed to attending.