

# Planning and Executing A Successful Show

Walt Ogburn & Mark Bergland

Croix Chordsmen Chorus

Land O' Lakes District Leadership Academy

January 5 & 6, 2024



# Planning and Organizing Work

## Project Plan for Spring 2023 Chordsmen Show

All red cells prior to current month should be complete or at least in progress

TASK	ASSIGNED TO	# Months Prior to Show	2021		2022												2023				
			Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May
<b>Dates</b>																					
• Set Show Date	Mark	18 months	■																		
• Set Dress Rehearsal Date	Mark	12 months							■												
• Communicate Date to District	Steve P.	12 months							■												
• Request ASCAP/BMI Clearance	Steve P.	12 months							■												
<b>Role Assignments</b>																					
• Location Lead	Mark assigns each role to a volunteer	18 months	■																		
• A/V Lead		18 months	■																		
• Ad/Sponsor Chair		12 months							■												
• Guest Quartet - Ensemble Host		12 months							■												
• Script Writer		9 months									■										
• Ticket Lead		6 months										■									
• Publicity Lead		6 months											■								
• Program Lead		6 months												■							
• Stage Manager		6 months													■						
• Props/Set-up lead		6 months														■					
• Emcee		3 months															■				

- A balance between delegating and doing
- Organizing by time



# 18 Months in Advance

- Evaluate success and challenges with past venue
  - Capacity
  - Acoustics
  - Technology
  - Accessibility
  - Multiple venues
  - Multiple shows

TASK	ASSIGNED TO	# Months Prior to Show
• Set Show Date	Mark	18 months
• Location Lead	Mark assigns each role to a	18 months
• A/V Lead		18 months
• Identify Venue Options (appropriate with show style)	Mark	18 months
• Key personnel review Venue Options	Mark et. al.	18 months
• Finalize selection and contract with Venue	Mark	18 months
• Determine if guest groups will be included and how much time they will be allocated	Mark	18 months
• Determine the budget for guest groups (including expenses)	Mark	18 months



# 13 – 17 Months in Advance

- Don't dwell on every point equally
- This section is when you evaluate the ability of your chorus to learn music

TASK	ASSIGNED TO	# Months Prior to Show
<b>Show Theme</b>	Mark	16 months
• Determine length of chorus portion and number of songs	Mark & Music Team	16 months
• Determine style of show (risers, skit, etc.)	Mark & Music Team	16 months
• Identify songs	Music Team	14 months
• Determine which songs are already owned (charts & tracks)	Librarian	14 months
• Purchase charts & tracks	Treasurer	14 months
• Identify and prioritize potential guest group(s) and designate contact person	Mark, Music Team, Contact person	17 months
• Contact potential guests and request bids with 2 wk deadline	Contact person	17 months
• Select guest group(s)	Mark	16 months
• Contracting	Mark	16 months
• Rehearsal schedules	Music Team	14 months



# 12 Months in Advance

- Deciding and confirming logistics
- Contracting

TASK	ASSIGNED TO	# Months Prior to Show
• Set Dress Rehearsal Date	Mark	12 months
• Communicate Date to District	Steve P.	12 months
• Request ASCAP/BMI Clearance	Steve P.	12 months
• Ad/Sponsor Chair	Mark assigns each role to a	12 months
• Guest Quartet - Ensemble Host		12 months
• Assign Quartet Host	Mark	12 months
• Contact guests well in advance to share show song lists to avoid duplication of music.	Quartet Host	12 months
• Determine if guest groups will be included and how much time they will be allocated	Mark	12 months
• Determine the budget for guest groups (including expenses)	Mark	12 months



# 6 Months in Advance

- Budgeting gets serious
- Logistic planning starts turning into action

TASK	ASSIGNED TO	# Months Prior to Show
• Stage Manager	volunteer	6 months
• Props/Set-up lead		6 months
• Select guest group(s)	Mark	6 months
• Contracting	Mark	6 months
• Assign Ensemble Host	Mark	6 months
• Draft Script and Characters	Script Writer	6 months
• Identify various media options for show promotion	Publicity Lead	6 months
• Develop/update the “sales pitch template”: Value proposition, free tickets, etc.	Ad/Sponsor Chair	6 months
• Design Print Tickets	Ticket Lead	6 months
• Design On-line Ticket Site	Ticket Lead	6 months
○ Identify all needed properties		6 months
○ Identify all A/V requirements	A/V Lead	6 months
○ Identify availability of equipment and operator(s)		6 months



# 2 – 5 Months in Advance

- The implementation phase
  - Communication with all involved parties
  - Chorus members get familiar with script – story line

TASK	ASSIGNED TO	# Months Prior to Show
• Emcee	Mark assigns each	3 months
• Contact ensemble well in advance to share show song lists to avoid duplication of music.	Ensemble Host	5 months
• Identify people to be characters	Music Team	4 months
• Finalize Script	Script Writer	3 months
• Develop messaging, logos, etc.	Publicity Lead	5 months
• Design flyers, website page, Facebook content, etc.		5 months
• Identify partner community groups that will help promote the show		5 months
• Implement publicity plan		3 months
• Provide list of past participants and encourage renewal	Ad/Sponsor Chair	3 months
• Provide prior year programs to members to share with potential advertisers/sponsors		3 months
• Initiate sales		3 months
• Print Tickets	Ticket Lead	3 months
• Distribute Tickets to Members	Ticket Lead	3 months
• Launch On-line Ticket Site and Coordinate with Publicity Lead	Ticket Lead	3 months
○ Acquire all properties	Props/Set-up Lead	3 months



# 1 Month or less in Advance

- Completing plans
- Acknowledgement in program

TASK	ASSIGNED TO	# Months Prior to Show
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Payment - a check for the performance fee to be given to the group after the show. Expenses for meals can be paid at the same time. However, airfare can be reimbursed as the expense is incurred.</li> </ul>	Treasurer	At show
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Payment - a check for the performance fee and expenses to be given to the group after the show.</li> </ul>	Treasurer	At Show
<b>Show Program (To Include:)</b>	Program Lead	1 month
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Deliver and remove all properties</li> </ul>		Day of
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ensure system functions properly for show</li> </ul>		Week of
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show run throughs</li> </ul>	Music Team	1 month
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stage Management (people in the right places at the right time)</li> </ul>	Stage Manager	1 month
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dress rehearsal</li> </ul>	Mark	Week of





# Organizing By Topic



# Guest Quartet

TASK	ASSIGNED TO	# Months Prior to Show
<b>Guest Quartet</b>		
• Determine if guest groups will be included and how much time they will be allocated	Show Chair	18 months
• Determine the budget for guest groups (including expenses)	Show Chair	18 months
• Identify and prioritize potential guest group(s) and designate contact person	Show Chair, Music Team, Contact person	17 months
• Contact potential guests and request bids with 2 wk deadline	Contact person	17 months
• Select guest group(s)	Show Chair	16 months
• Contracting		
○ Written Contract Completed		
▪ Special Considerations (hotel rooms, table to sell CDs, etc.)		
▪ Date/Time of Show		
▪ Venue Address	Show Chair	16 months
▪ Contact Info/Both Parties		
▪ Performance Fee		
▪ Travel Expenses		
○ Contact hotel and arrange rooms as needed		
• Assign Quartet Host	Show Chair	12 months
• Contact guests well in advance to share show song lists to avoid duplication of music.	Quartet Host	12 months



# Guest School Ensemble

TASK	ASSIGNED TO	# Months Prior to Show
<b>Guest School Ensemble</b>		
• Determine if guest groups will be included and how much time they will be allocated	Show Chair	12 months
• Determine the budget for guest groups (including expenses)	Show Chair	12 months
• Identify and prioritize potential guest group(s) and designate contact person	Show Chair, Music Team, Contact person	9 months
• Contact potential guests	Contact person	9 months
• Select guest group(s)	Show Chair	6 months
• Contracting	Show Chair	6 months
○ Written Agreement		
▪ Date/Time of Show		
▪ Venue Address		
▪ Contact Info/Both Parties		
▪ Performance Fee		
▪ Travel Expenses		
• Assign Ensemble Host	Show Chair	6 months
• Payment - a check for the performance fee and expenses to be given to the group after the show.	Treasurer	At Show
• Contact ensemble well in advance to share show song lists to avoid duplication of music.	Ensemble Host	5 months



# Example: Croix Chordsmen Spring Show

**'The Magic Jukebox'**  
and  
*Cabaret Show*

**SAVE THE DATE**  
Saturday | April 15, 2023

*Guest quartets: Vocality, Spice    Chapter quartets: SummerTime, Warm and Fuzzy*

<b>Magic Jukebox Show at 3:00</b> Trinity Lutheran Church 115 4th Street N., Stillwater MN	<b>Cabaret Show at 5:00 (approx.)</b> Grand Banquet Hall 301 2nd Street S., Stillwater MN
Magic Jukebox Show \$15.00 <small>Children 10 and under free</small>	Cabaret Show \$15.00 <small>Pizza provided + cash bar</small>
<b>Both Shows \$25.00</b> <small>Magic Jukebox + Cabaret</small>	

Tickets at [www.croixchordsmen.org](http://www.croixchordsmen.org) or call (715) 441-9948    Seating is limited-get your tickets today!



# TIMELINE

**Spring, 2019:** Concept of Juke Box show developed, to use original arrangements by Jay Althof. Show was originally scheduled for Spring 2021, to follow our Disney Show in 2020.

**2020-2021:** COVID delayed Disney show, which was moved to April 2022. Section leaders created learning tracks for Jay's arrangements, posted online.

**May 2022:** Began introducing chorus to songs for Juke Box show.

**June, 2022:** Committee began writing show script (show PDF).

**August – December, 2022:** Show songs were performed at Como Park, Red Wing, and District. Worked on show logistics (e.g. guest quartet contracts finalized, show set construction began, worked with sound and lighting technicians at Trinity Lutheran, video of actual juke box produced to be projected above stage when chorus 'juke box' sang, advertising graphics developed, cabaret show logistics worked out).



# TIMELINE

**January 2023:** Chorus 'actors' read script and songs were rehearsed in show order, at each rehearsal.

**February 2023:** Online ticket sales system developed and implemented.

**March 2023:** Advertisements placed in publications in eastern Minnesota and western Wisconsin.

**April 2023:** Two dress rehearsals at Trinity Lutheran (one a week before show, the other the day before show).

**April 15:** Show day! (show selected portions of video)





Malts		Judd's Malt Shop	Food	
Chocolate	\$1.50		Hamburger	50c
Strawberry	\$1.50	Cheeseburger	75c	
Vanilla	\$1.50	French Fries	50c	
Butterscotch	\$1.50	Onion Rings	50c	
Hot Fudge	\$1.50	Chicken Cutlet	50c	
Pineapple	\$1.50			

Pick Up  
Order  
Here

Place  
Order  
Here

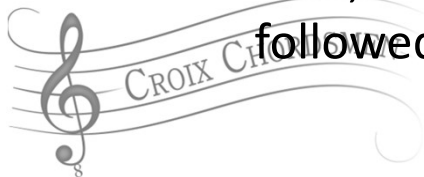


Croix Chordsmen 'The Magic Jukebox' Concert  
April 15, 2023



# LESSONS LEARNED

- Advanced planning and implementation of the plan is essential, especially for a show involving script and sets, lighting, and sound. The delay due to COVID enabled us to have a much more elaborate show than originally envisioned.
- Learning tracks need to be available and show songs performed in public well in advance of the show date. The script should be used during rehearsal as soon as it is available, so that the actors and chorus can become comfortable with reading and reacting to lines.
- Venues and guest quartets need to be identified and formalized early in the planning process. Chapter and guest quartets must be informed of the show theme to give them enough time to work up songs that flow with the show script.
- A detailed budget must be created and regularly updated (in our case, this was especially important because our main show was followed by a quartet 'cabaret show' that included food costs).





- Key players in the chorus must be willing and available if the show is to go beyond a standard concert. In our case, this involved song arranging, script development, set construction, production of the 'juke box' video, and other key tasks. The chorus must include members who have the skillset and time to put that kind of effort into show planning and production.
- Timing of the show is critical – will there be an intermission? If not, how long should the show be (85 minutes max, in our experience). Guest groups must be aware of the time allocated for their performances and not go over time, especially if no intermission. Emcee must perform duties efficiently. Show should begin with a bang, then brought down and gradually increased, ending with maximum impact. Order of groups that perform should reflect this.
- Other thoughts on the planning process?



# Table Topics

- Think about the last couple of shows
  - What roles have been assigned?
  - How many people were on the “core team”?
  - How far in advance of the show was the show chair identified?
  - Discuss any of the points from the previous discussion that caught your attention.
  - Report back.



What do the comments  
have in common?



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