

*Houghton  
College Choir*

*Concert Tour  
Promotions*

# *The College Choir Winter / Spring Tour*

## Steering Committee Meeting

Concert date:

Concert time:

Concert location:

Sponsor:

Ticket price:

Housing accommodations:

Choir:

Conductor/ Manager/ Bus driver:

Committee chairs:

Alumni in the area:

Next meeting time and date:

*Thank you for all of your help!*

# *Houghton College Choir Winter / Spring Tour*

## *Committee Heads*

General Chair –

### **Subcommittees**

Facilities and Arrangements Committee-

Housing & Reception Committee-

Meal Committee-

Ticket Committee-

Publicity and Special Advertising Committee-

Special Groups Contact Committee-

Treasurer (single person)-

In the following pages you will find helpful handouts to give to each of the committee heads. These handouts are designed to make their job easier and to provide direction.

# *The General Chairperson*

The general chairperson assumes the overall coordination of the choir concert. The general chairperson will select committee chairpersons; coordinate meetings, lend assistance wherever needed; give encouragement and advice to committee members; and assume some of the duties him/herself, perhaps being one of the special chairpersons.

The goal for each concert is a full audience. The general chair assumes the overall responsibility for doing everything possible to attain this goal.

He/she should double check all local matters such as proper rental, if any, of the auditorium, be thoroughly acquainted with the problems encountered and arrangements being made by each division chairperson.

He/she should make the concert a community affair and not just one for the members sponsoring the organization. All schools, colleges, churches, civic organizations, music societies, artist series and community orchestras should be contacted. We want to encourage everyone whoever attends a concert in your area to be there.

The enthusiasm and pep of the sponsoring organization, coupled with the hard work in the sales campaign, are what makes a successful concert. It must always be remembered that advertising alone will never guarantee a large audience.

## **Checklist**

\_\_\_\_\_ Appoint committee chairpersons

Facilities Committee  
Housing & Reception Committee  
Meal Committee  
Ticket Committee  
Publicity and Special Advertising Committee  
Special Groups Contact Committee  
Treasurer (single person)

\_\_\_\_\_ Call all regular meetings of your committee chairs so you can strategically organize for a successful concert. Committees must function on schedule.

\_\_\_\_\_ Work with the publicity committee in arranging for a music critic to attend and review the concert. See that they are given complimentary tickets.

\_\_\_\_\_ Send committee "Thank You" letters. It is extremely important that we acknowledge the efforts of those who helped make the concert a success.

## **Datelines**

### **October/November**

Each committee head should outline their committee's strategy. Tickets should be printed, mailing lists of churches and schools compiled, arts calendars and pertinent magazines contacted, music critics and newspapers contacted, radio and television stations contacted, news releases re-typed, all gearing up for the mid-January promotion.

### **December**

All preparations should be set. December and the Christmas holidays usual take up the majority of the committees time.

### **One month prior the concert (mid-January/February)**

Set a date as the "kickoff" date for the public promotions campaign to begin. At this time all promotion goes public with posters and flyers etc. Generally the date is 4-6 weeks before the concert, depending upon the size of the area.

### **One week prior to the concert**

- Be sure arrangements have been made for ushers
- The Choir will bring their own programs
- You should have received an arrival departure schedule from the Choir Manager
- You may receive mail for choir members. Please hold until our arrival.

### **The typical schedule for an evening concert**

The choir will arrive around 4:00 to set up and rehearse

Dinner at 5:30

Return to concert hall at 6:30

Concert at 7:30 or 8:00

Meet hosts of stay in the hotel after concert

# *Housing and Reception Committee*

If time permits, receptions are welcomed and are a great way for the Houghton College Choir and the community to meet hosts, community leaders, alumni of the College, and the committee members who put the work and effort in to making the concert a success.

Area musicians, high school students, directors, clergy, civic leaders, club presidents, and any other interested people from the area should be encouraged to meet informally with the members of the choir.

Receptions should be planned to follow immediately after the concert. However, it is important that you contact Dr. Johnson in advance, since an unusually early departure or extremely long travel might make a special reception inadvisable.

It might be suggested that certain companies, alumni groups, or other community organizations host the reception and take care of the details and costs.

## **Checklist**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Secure a list of persons who would be willing to host about 70 students in groups of two or more.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Secure a list of the choir members from the Dr. Johnson
- \_\_\_\_\_ Arrange housing and see that all performing organization members are placed in groups of two or more.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make sure arrangements for the reception are made: location, tables, coffee, punch, cookies, etc.

## *Meal Committee*

- \_\_\_\_\_ An evening meal is normally provided by the sponsoring organization. It provides an excellent opportunity for the sponsors to meet the members of the choir. A catered meal or potluck works very well. Please avoid excessively heavy meals and milk.
- \_\_\_\_\_ You will need to get the list of student allergies and vegetarian students from Dr. Johnson.

# *Facilities Committee*

The facilities and arrangements committee is responsible for arranging the concert hall for the College Choir concert.

## **Concert Hall-Auditorium Committee**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Concert Hall reserved- usually at the earliest possible date, since all other committees revolve around this information.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The hall should have a stage area of at least 30' by 15'. Somewhat smaller areas can be utilized. The hall with the best acoustics is of primary importance.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Dressing rooms are needed for both the male and female performers. Dr. Johnson's dressing room should be some distance from choir with a place to hang a tuxedo and a bathroom nearby.
- \_\_\_\_\_ No special lighting effects are needed as long as the stage lighting is strong. We prefer that no spot lights or footlights are used. Use overhead lights in full. The house lights should be about a third to half on during the concert.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Staging: A shell is desirable if available. If a shell is not available we would prefer a bare hall. Soft absorbent banners should be removed. Overhead teasers and lights should be raised as high as possible. Curtains should be open and remain open for the entire performance.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A microphone is not needed for a performance.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Two banquet tables are required in the lobby for the sale of CD's and college materials.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Stage hands will not be needed unless it is a union hall.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ushers will be required to collect tickets and pass out the provided programs for the concert.

# *Ticket Committee*

The ticket committee, working with the treasure, is responsible for the printing of tickets; securing and distributing the tickets to the maximum number of ticket sellers; handling all finances; and preparing a financial summary immediately following the concert.

Despite the excellent job the PUBLICITY COMMITTEE is doing, remember that advanced sale of tickets is extremely important. Poorly managed ticket sales dictate a poorly attended concert.

The vast majority of tickets will be sold by individuals personally contacting prospective concert-goers. In today's hectic world our tickets will not sell themselves. Efficient organization is necessary. Here are some helpful suggestions.

-Determine whether you will

- (A) use a reserved seating arrangement with prices scaled higher for the better seats,
- (B) reserve seating arrangement with all seats at the same price
- (C) a general admission arrangement with a single ticket price and no reserved seating.

-Have tickets printed or arrange for the printing with the concert hall. Have them printed early so that they can be sold as Christmas presents. Keep ticket printing costs to a minimum. Investigate the option of "Quick print" or off set printing, etc. rather than type setting. You can make a good ticket master for copying with the supplied ticket layout and a laser printer.

-Be sure to include:

- The name of the organization
- Date, time and place
- Sponsor
- Ticket price(s)
- no refunds

- You might consider a group rate for church or school musical organizations

## **Checklist**

- \_\_\_\_\_ When tickets are received from printer, distribute them to the sellers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Plan the ticket campaign with a full set of helpers covering various areas of the city or in small communities, a 30 mile radius.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Distribute tickets to any ticket selling agencies in the area.
- \_\_\_\_\_ See that all funds from sales are turned over to the treasurer.

## **Additional thoughts**

Complimentary tickets when handed out discriminately will pay off. They should be given to local music critics from newspapers, pastors, school officials, high school choir teachers and civic club leaders for example.

The key to any successful Houghton College Choir concert is a good audience! **The best assurance of a good turnout is advanced sales of as many tickets as possible.**

Advanced sales commit the person regardless of the weather or other uncontrollable circumstances.

It is important not to assume that tickets will sell themselves and that no organization is necessary. The more organized the ticket selling promotion, the better the audience for the concert. **BE ENTHUSIASTIC!** Sell the experience of listening and observing a top notch live choral performance.

## *Treasurer*

The treasurer should be a member of the steering committee for the concert campaign and oversee the total promotional budget.

They should establish a separate bank account for the campaign, deposit all money collected from ticket sales and pay bills incurring in the sponsorship project.

Following the concert, the treasurer should compile a complete financial report and draw a check for the choir's share of the concert proceeds. The check should be made payable to:

### **The Houghton College Choir**

Although the manager of tours would like an estimate of the income and payment at concert time, the final settlement can be completed one or two weeks later after the bills and ticket revenue have been paid.

Send all correspondence, the final financial report and the check, if not already presented, for the full share of the organization's proceeds to:

**Dr. Brandon Johnson**  
**The Greatbatch School of Music, Houghton College**  
**1 Willard Ave**  
**Houghton, NY 14744**

## *Publicity and Special Advertising Committee*

The Publicity Committee is responsible for working with any and all forms of media to promote the Houghton College Choir concert. The goal is to fill each concert with an enthusiastic audience. To ensure this we must publicize the concert to entice prospective ticket buyers and attract those who will not be personally contacted.

As soon as final confirmation has been established for the concert, see that an announcement is made to the local newspapers, radio stations, and television stations. It is assumed that the chairperson will personally contact these key media personnel to get the publicity campaign under way. Arrange with your ticket committee for complimentary tickets to be appropriately distributed to news and editorial personnel. When you talk with the editor about publicity, also request a review and give two complimentary reserved tickets to the reviewer. Reviews are important for future publicity.

Please clip all articles and mail them to Dr. Johnson after the concert.

Advertising through the local **public radio stations** reach the target audience without a spending an exorbitant amount of money. As people have less time to read radio announcements can be very effective.

A limited number (one or two) of **paid ads** lend the concert a professional air in the minds of the prospective audience. That is important since the Houghton College Choir is an internationally touring organization striving for professional quality.

Utilize **FREE PSA's** (public service announcements) available through television and radio stations. They are usually 30-second spot announcements that air at all times of the day. Don't pass up the free opportunity to potentially reach your entire surrounding community.

**City Magazines** are becoming increasingly popular and very often they are looking for publicity materials for upcoming events. Deadlines are generally very early, especially if are to use photos, so contact them early. It is better to be too early than too late.

Visibility is the key to catching the mind of the prospective ticket buyer. Two ways to call attention to the concert and provide all necessary specifics regarding time, place, date, ticket costs and where to purchase tickets are the posters and flyers.

**POSTERS:** 11x17 tour concert posters including your concert information are provided by the college. Try to place as many of these in appropriate places as possible.

**FLYERS:** 5 ½ X 8 ½ are particularly important, especially for publicity in churches. They should be distributed to churches about three weeks ahead of the concert for insertion in the Sunday bulletin, mailing with the churches newsletter, or separate distribution as a hand-out after worship services. Check the possibility of inserting the flyers in local newspapers and shopper. The flyers will not be supplied by the college but the cost can be covered by the concert proceeds.

# *Special Groups Contact Committee*

## **General Information**

The committee responsible for contact with the special groups must coordinate its work with both the ticket committee and the publicity and special advertising committee. Each committee's work should supplement that of the other, working for maximum contact without coming to the point of alienating a special group because it has been "bothered too often by too many different people."

When concerts are scheduled in small towns of small city areas it is good to contact all schools and churches within thirty-mile radius. Contacts with civic organizations should reach nearly as far. Concerts scheduled in large metropolitan area need comprehensive work by the contact committee throughout the urban and suburban complex, while contacts with schools and churches should reach out as far as the market will allow.

Whenever possible, contacts should make in a personal visit. When personal visits are not feasible, letters and phone calls can be used. It is important that no group with potential audience members be omitted. The drawing power of the Houghton College Choir and its program of sacred music can reach across all backgrounds, interests and denominational lines.

Do not hesitate to promote the Houghton College Choir when you make your contacts. The Houghton College Choir has a rich choral tradition the choir has toured internationally and nationally for over 70 years.

## **Congregations**

Contact with Wesleyan congregations is among the most important promotion item. Wesleyan congregations are our biggest constituency. Contact by mail **every Wesleyan pastor or music director in your working area** and suggest that each congregation have its own ticket chairperson and publicize the coming concert with posters and announcements in the church bulletin on the preceding Sundays. Follow up your letter with a personal phone call or visit. It will be essential to provide churches with bulletin inserts to maximize attendance.

Work through every local ministerial association or Council of Churches in your region to announce the Choir Concert.

Suggest to the pastor, the president of the congregation, or the church choir director that some congregations may want to buy tickets which could be given to each member of the church choir as a special "thank you" or Christmas present for his or her regular participation in the ministry of music.

Be sure not to omit other denominations, especially those with strong music programs. They too may want bulletin inserts. Houghton College is affiliated with the Wesleyan Church but the majority of its students are from other denominations. Methodist, Lutheran, Episcopalian, and Baptist congregations should be included in the contact focus.

## **Schools**

Send out a letter (see sample) to all high school and college choir directors announcing the concert. Be sure to include flyers and posters with the letter. A week or so later follow this up with a phone call. Ask if they received the material and discuss the possibility of group discounts. High school choral conductors should be given comp. tickets and encourage them to bring students to the performances.

It may also be possible to arrange a clinic with Dr. Johnson depending on the tour schedule. Dr. Johnson enjoys working with high school students and would like the opportunity to meet high school directors and students. There are several options for high school singers to join in the tour concert, have the directors contact Dr. Johnson directly to investigate these possibilities.

It is important to understand that the nature of the tour is not only to provide excellent choral music but also to provide the college an opportunity to get to meet potential future students. With that goal in mind it is essential to get young people to the concerts. It is strongly recommended that discounted rates or free admission be given to all high school juniors and seniors.

## **Civic Groups and Organizations**

Find someone in every organization such as Rotary, Lions, Kiwanis and Optimist Clubs who will announce the coming concert and encourage advance purchase of tickets. Retirement homes are always interested in their residents attending. Perhaps a bus can be arranged to pick them up.

Contact leadership of community arts and music organizations in your area and ask that they recommend the concert to their members. Community choirs and semi-professional choral organizations should be targeted as potential concert members. Those who participate in choral singing at some level are more likely to come to the concert.

Notify special music organizations like American Choral Directors Association and the local chapter of the American Guild of Organists for their assistance. These groups usually have direct access to every choral organization, both church and civic, in the community.

Make sure that and civic calendar of events list the concert. Usually the Chamber of Commerce handles this material. Be sure not to overlook on-line resources.

## **Special mailing lists**

In some cases you may have a special list of names such as local arts supporters, Christian groups, to whom you would want to mail information.

Make sure that you coordinate your activities with those of the Special Groups Committee. All of the above materials should be delivered or sent to all churches (across denominational lines) within a 30 mile radius in the case of a small town. If the concert is in a metropolitan area, blanket the total urban and suburban complex. The same breadth of distribution should be planned for the schools. A good way of distributing flyers and posters is to have members of your church choir, community choir and youth group take several and post them in prominent areas.

## **Checklist**

- \_\_\_\_\_ Make sure you order enough posters and flyers with correct imprint information
- \_\_\_\_\_ Contact your local radio and television stations (public and commercial)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Contact your local newspaper
- \_\_\_\_\_ Contact the editors of the church bulletins and supply posters and bulletin inserts.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ask your newspaper to review the concert.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Check into any on-line arts calendars that may be available in your area.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Contact any city magazines that are published in your area.

# *Schedule for Mailings*

**October 15** Prepare mailing lists: churches (all denominations), high school/college choir directors, civic groups, special interest groups, etc.

**November 1** First mailing- the initial letter should include ticket prices, where to get them and availability of group and student rates. Include a notice that the pastors should expect a phone call regarding the number of bulletin inserts they can use. These letters should be addressed to each group individually.

Perhaps you will want to organize another group meeting to address envelopes, stuff letters, etc.

Prepare a press kit for each radio, television and newspaper person you will contact in person. Give them copies of the poster, flyer and picture of the conductor and choir.

**November 15** Make phone calls regarding the number of flyers each church will need to stuff bulletins in the first week of January.

**December 1** Second mailing- prepare another cover letter including several retyped news release plus some flyers.

**January 15** Third mailing-Flyers, posters plus a cover letter reiterating concert details.

*Deliveries- If flyers and posters can be hand delivered the third mailing is not necessary. In some cases the second mailing is omitted and a cover letter is delivered with the flyers and posters.*

*Suggested Announcements for:*

**Church bulletins**  
**Civic Organizations Newsletters**  
**Commercial organizations**

*(The following announcements for church bulletin and similar publications are templates which should be adapted for use.)*

THE DISTINGUISHED HOUGHTON COLLEGE CHOIR COMING February 20<sup>th</sup>

The Houghton College Choir from Houghton, New York will present a concert of sacred choral music at First Wesleyan Church on Saturday at 7:30 p.m. Reserve seat tickets may be purchased in advance from Pete Jones.

HOUGHTON COLLEGE CHOIR SPONSORED BY First Wesleyan Church Choir

The concert by Houghton College Choir in Main Concert Hall in Springfield on February 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 p.m. is being sponsored by the First Wesleyan Church Choir. Tickets for this important event may be purchased from Pete Jones.

Announcements of this nature should begin three or four weeks ahead of the concert and continue up to the time of performance.

# Sample Letter

*Initial letter to schools, colleges, and churches to be retyped on choir stationary and photocopied*

*Schools, Colleges, & Churches*

Date

Dear Friend:

The Houghton College Choir of Houghton New York will be performing in \_\_\_\_\_ next year on the choir's annual tour.

The concert in \_\_\_\_\_ will be sponsored by \_\_\_\_\_ and will be held at the \_\_\_\_\_ auditorium on \_\_\_\_\_ beginning at 7:30 p.m.

The 60 voice Houghton Choir has been touring nationally and internationally for over 70 years in churches and concert halls.

The conductor of the Houghton College Choir is Dr. Brandon Johnson. He is a graduate of Concordia College, Moorhead Minnesota, and holds his Masters of Music, and Doctor of Musical Arts degrees, in Choral Conducting, from the University of Arizona.

**OPTIONAL-** Insert a brief paragraph here about the sponsoring organization. Make a special note if the concert is to be a "benefit" concert.

Please mark this special date on your calendar and make announcements to you choral organizations.

Do not hesitate to contact me regarding single and group ticket sales which will begin on \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_.

Flyers are available for posting and distribution during our promotion campaign and we will contact you again at that time.

Thank you for your cooperation and support in this very special event for our community.

Sincerely yours,

Concert Chair