

Ohio Valley Chamber Music Presenters
Meeting Notes
August 28, 2004

Members Present: Jo Anne Warren, Nancy Nolan, Audrey Luna, Reuel Ash, Roger Cranos, Bob Wilhelm, Acton Ostling, Mary White.

Respective Strengths and Challenges

We began with a brief review of our organizations and the challenges we each face this year. To summarize, we have vastly different budgets but largely deal with the same set of issues: funding challenges, lack of "diversity" for state Arts Council grants, and graying audiences. But each of our settings offers unique strengths and problems:

Columbus has excellent funding sources and a superb source for young audience members through the Chamber Music Connection (training program for kids) but challenges getting venue dates and very little endowment.

Louisville has a strong funding base through tiered subscriptions, a competition that attracts younger audience members, and administrative support through the university, but this connection also imposes problematic constraints.

Cincinnati has working board members transitioning to paid staff, a huge endowment, and strong funding potential, but a seemingly shrinking audience and underutilized volunteer potential.

Yellow Springs has terrific volunteers, a loyal audience, and superb venue, but clear limitations on funding sources due to town size.

Reporter:

Nancy Nolan was approached by a reporter from Cincinnati Magazine who wants to do a story on our organization. While we don't have a great deal to show for ourselves in terms of collaborative projects, we agreed that the exposure can only help us. We do have the accomplishment of simply making the effort to share our experiences and learn from each other, in this way helping promote the cause of chamber music. We also have one coordinated booking for next season--the Belcea Quartet is coming to Columbus and Yellow Springs. We may be able to do more of this, and/or consider a joint commission. The Pacifica commission with Jeff Mumford (Columbus is a participant, Concert on Oct 23rd) also would not have happened without this organization.

If anyone who did not attend the meeting does *not* want to be part of this story, please let me know and I will not give your contact info to the reporter.

Marketing

Orion Quartet. As a group project, this has yet to be roundly endorsed. Jo Anne and I brought up the possibility of Doug Lowry at CCM helping with the costs in return for a couple of master classes, but others were still uncertain of how to balance the Orion and Beethoven against the fact that 1) CCMS is having a festival of Beethoven trios this year; 2) Louisville is having the Orion this year; 3) Columbus is having the Takacs play

Beethoven this year; 4) Yellow Springs probably can't afford them even at \$6000. So the prospects for the Orion idea seem to be dimming. That said, Reuel said he would talk it over with his booking committee. Dick Waller and the Linton series, are supportive, if others are interested. Might any of you in Indiana, Cleveland, Pittsburgh or West Virginia be interested?

Marketing strategies we discussed: CCMS is having its 75th season this year and is letting the city know with a terrific season of concerts and numerous free public events in new venues ("Chamber Raves") that will be promoted by WGUC. The new venues should take care of their own marketing. It is hoped that the media will find this attractive as well. They also have some giveaways (via raffle), including a vintage diamond ring.

Louisville, Cincinnati and Columbus all had their brochures out in May, some do (or did) additional newsletters every few concerts. Some of us use the radio for marketing, and even spots on movie screens. Louisville distributed their brochure in *NY Times*. Columbus has a system for giving subscription discounts for subscribers who recruit friends--both the new subscriber and the recruiter benefit.

Yellow Springs has less orthodox tactics: a tennis tournament and art show this year. (We forgot to mention the year-long raffle, which is both a good fundraiser, great promotion, and great loot, in the years when it happens.)

Brochure headers: "Music up close and personal"
"Good things come in small packages"
"Close encounters of a musical kind"

On the question of whether presenters use crossover concerts (jazz, traditional acoustic) to attract new audiences, none of us does this. Fleeting discussion of whether we need a new series for just this kind of music. Reuel spoke of the need to keep the integrity of classical music in clear focus.

Grant Sources

Public libraries have databases of grant sources. This can be purchased for about \$1000. In Cincinnati, the library also has trainings. Database includes history of who has granted what, to whom.

CCMS funding sources: Western Southern Financial Services
Columbus: Nationwide Foundation, National City, Huntington Bank, Greater Columbus Arts Council, Ohio Arts Council, Columbus Foundation.

Most major corporations have funding associations. See the National Society of Fundraising Executives--they have resources for members, and organizations can join.

See also the Foundation Center in Cleveland--has a website.

We agreed that we could all do more to seek grant funding. But it is taxing work. Be aware that when asking for funding, have something to offer. Ask what the funder would want.

NEXT MEETING: Saturday, November 13, 12:30-4:00.

Topics: More on Marketing and Fundraising, and perhaps applying for a CMA consulting grant (\$2000).

Unfortunately the CSO is not playing that weekend, but perhaps we will find something else that is enticing and have dinner together after the meeting.