

Fundraising and Marketing for the College Orchestra

College Orchestra Directors 2012 Conference
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Southern Illinois University Carbondale

Introduction

- Review the challenges and opportunities of sustaining a viable orchestra program at a university that has difficulty attracting high quality students, especially in the string area.



- Focus on the challenges of fundraising and marketing, using my 17 years experience as Director of Orchestras at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

Introduction

- Discuss internal and external revenue sources, including individual, corporate, foundation and governmental grants.
- Discuss a variety of inexpensive marketing strategies for college orchestras.
- Feel free to ask questions or interject comments

Southern Illinois Symphony Orchestra

- Orchestra at SIU Carbondale, a state university attracting average students. 6 hours S of Chicago and 2 hours SE of St. Louis, in city of 25,000
- Only 3 IL HS string programs S of Springfield
- SISO now includes:
 - UG and Grad Music majors
 - UG and Grad non-music majors
 - Music faculty (only when needed, part of Handbook)
 - Non-music faculty
 - Volunteer Community members
 - Accomplished high school students
 - Paid local professionals for every rehearsal
 - Paid out-of-town professionals for dress rehearsals and concerts

Southern Illinois Symphony Orchestra

- Started in 1994 with budget of \$2300, 2 violin GAs, a half dozen string majors, 1 concert per semester and typical audience of 100.
- Have since increased budget 1000 fold, increased audience size to 400–1200 per concert (larger audiences by far than any other university ensemble), tripled number of concerts, and cultivated fuller string section
- Timeline:
 - 1996: Established Symphony Patrons Committee
 - 1998: Changed name from SIUC SO to SISO, to reflect community ownership
 - 2004: Established Klassics for Kids
 - 2005: Established 3-week long professional music festival

Not for Everyone

- Enormous time commitment, but necessary for the desired musical product
- I enjoy meeting members and leaders of the community and touting our cultural offerings
- I am the top fundraiser in my college, having raised over \$1 million for Southern Illinois University
- Efforts well received, with many unsolicited contributions

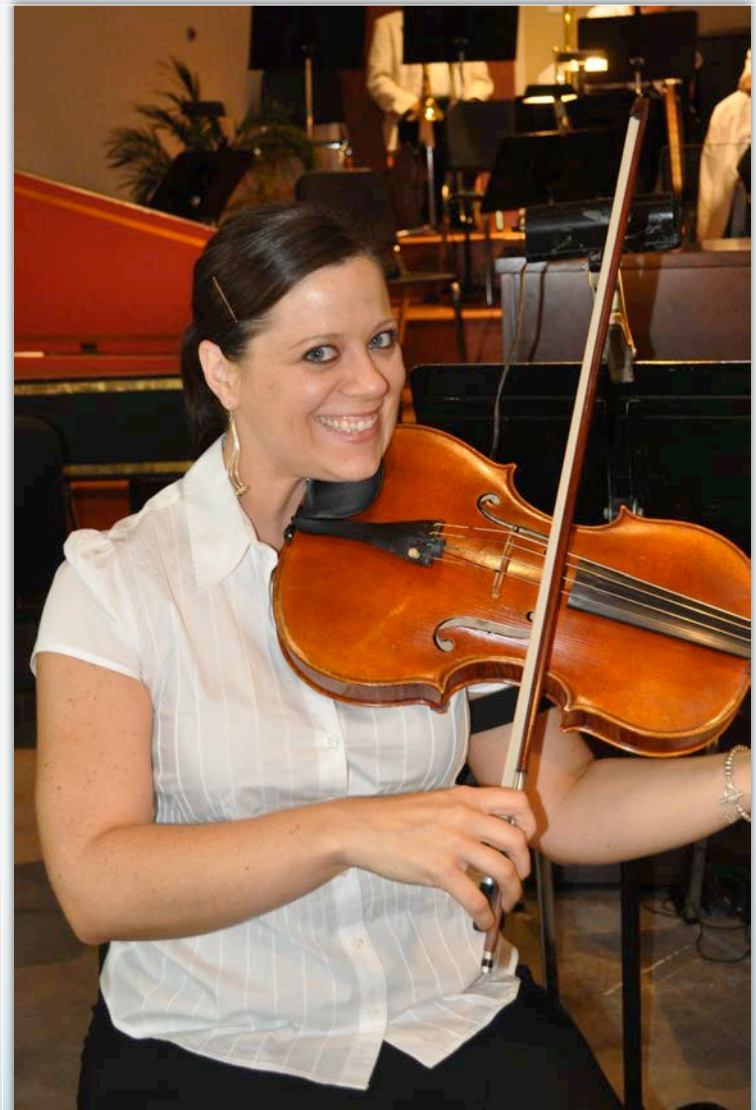
Fundraising Summary

- Why Do You Need to Raise Money?
- Where Do You Start?
- Where is the money?
- Fundraising Hints



Why Do You Need to Raise Money?

- Hire additional musicians for rehearsals and performances
 - Can plan an entire season without concerns of personnel limitations
 - More flexibility in establishing concert themes (discussed by Jason), and thus Fundraising ties into Marketing
- Hire additional student staff



Why raise it?

- Buy and rent expensive music
- Hire well known soloists



Why raise it?

- Give your orchestra a classier look
 - Concert programs (See example)
 - CDs/DVDs



Why raise it?

- Match private funding with internal and external grants
- Ensemble touring and recruiting
- Establish Scholarship Endowment
- Keep ticket costs low
- Pay for marketing and thus increase your attendance

Where Do You Start?

- Establish Patrons Committee (Handout p. 5)
 - 5 active fundraisers
 - Others contribute, plan social events, youth concerts
- Ensure blessing of your Chair and University Foundation, by demonstrating need for greater resources
- Establish levels of support and mechanism for acknowledgement (Handout p. 6)
- Use personal contact whenever possible. Much harder for a donor to say no to your face

Fundraising: Start

- Make and constantly update database of donors and patrons
 - Time consuming, but important
- Start with merchants you do business with:
 - Doctors, Banks, Lawyers, Financial Planners
 - Restaurants, Other Merchants
- Join local chamber of commerce, other civic organizations
 - Luxner: Jewel in town; Good for business
 - Keeping the Arts in Business Award

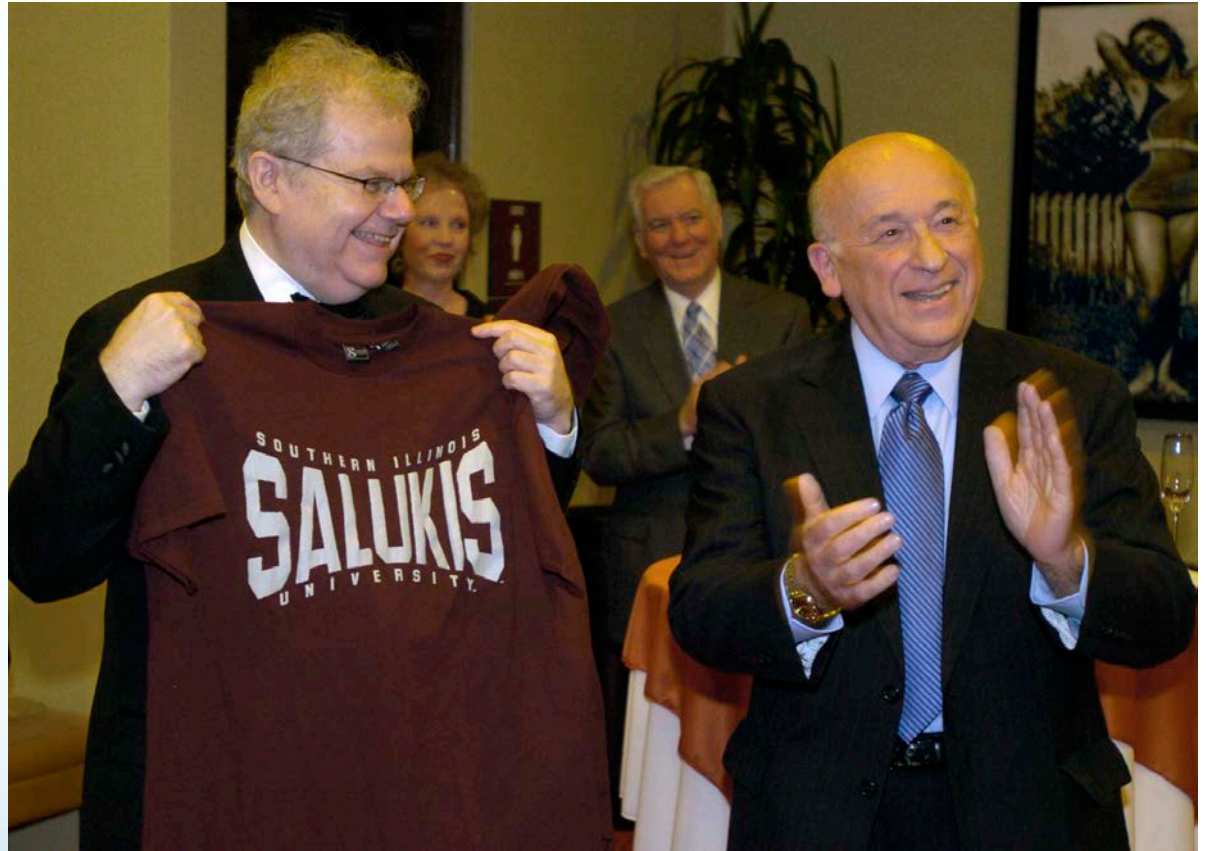
Ownership

- Find something each potential donor can own (See Program p. 29 and 14–15, Handout pp. 6–7):
 - Concert sponsorships
 - Youth concerts



Ownership

- Soloists
- Named Chairs
(Program p. 9)
- Outreach activities
(Program p. 15)



Start Fundraising

- Make administrators aware of your needs:
 - Suggest they match outside sources of funding (Handout pp. 8–12)
- Make nice looking CD/DVD to give to potential donors (See examples)

Class

- Develop an Aura of Class about Orchestra concerts which bands and choir cannot match
- Most of my patrons can't distinguish between SISO and SLSO, but they take pride in *their* orchestra



Where is the money?

- Use institutional support to leverage external sources
- Use external sources to leverage institutional support
- University internal resources, including personal requests to:
 - Chair, Dean
 - Vice-Chancellors for Research and Institutional Advancement (Foundation)
 - Chancellor, President
 - Apply for Graduate and Undergraduate Assistantships
 - Keep track of all institutional support for grant application purposes, including professor, GA and UGA salaries (Handout p. 9, line 30a)

Money

- Bi-annual mail solicitation (Handout p. 13)
- Print contribution information in your programs (Program pp. 77–78 and 107)
- Do not leave envelopes on the chairs
 - A \$1000 donor might only leave you \$50
- Personal Requests:
 - Individual donors (Handout p. 14)
 - Corporate donors (Handout p. 15)
- Private foundation grant requests
- State and Local Arts Council Grants (Handout pp. 8–12)

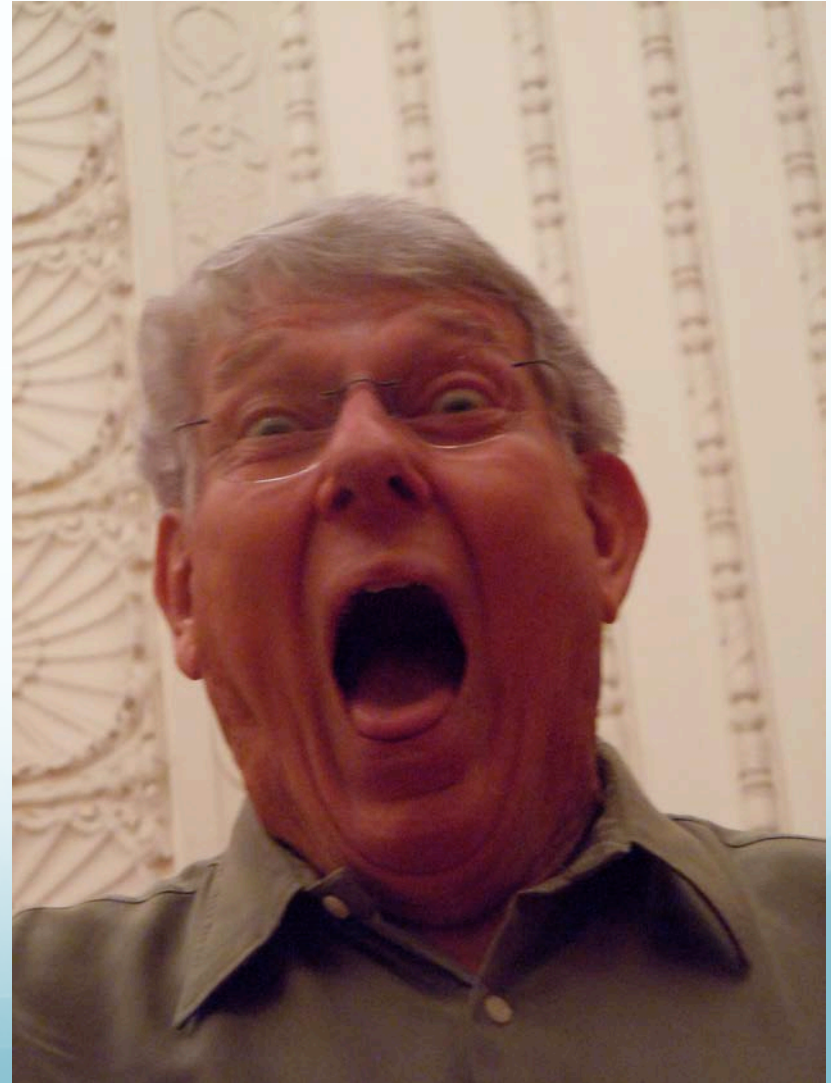
Fundraising Hints

- People give to people, more than to institutions
- Donors want to support something successful
- Number one reason people never give:
 - *They were never asked*



MARKETING

- General Notes
- TV and Radio
- Newspapers
- Electronic
- Printed Materials
- Personal Appearances



General Notes

- Make friends with editors, reporters
- Arrange media trade sponsorships: In-kind contributions (Program inside front cover)
- Public radio and TV, cable TV, commercial radio

Local TV Station

- Request interview (morning spot, 2 minutes)
- Send details in advance, including what information to put on the screen and suggested questions to ask.
- Provide them a graphic page in your program (Program p. 4)
- Use their talent at concerts
 - Narrator
 - Master of Ceremonies
- Give them footage for PSA spots and help with production
- Invite news crews to film dress rehearsal

Local Public Radio Station

- Provide them a graphic page in your program
- Sign underwriting agreement (Handout pp. 16–17)
- Arrange longer interviews (5–10 minutes)
- Arrange/produce season preview (60 minutes)

Public Radio

- Meet their mission
 - Youth programming
 - Angelina Ballerina (Program inside front cover)



Local Newspapers and Topical Magazines

- Special section, where the paper sells the ads (Thomas Publishing example)
- Feature stories
- Paid ads in print and online
- Annual cultural preview listings
- Personal contact with music critics, travel and entertainment writers
- Draft press releases; distribute through university communications

Electronic Marketing

- Orchestra website (including major sponsors)
- Website linkages to local tourism bureaus
- Website linkages with other cultural attractions
- Local business marquees
- Email blasts
- Social networking
 - Tone/content concerns
 - Need to keep current



Printed materials

- Annual brochure (including major sponsors; see examples)
 - Campus mail
 - Direct snail mail
 - Tourism office distribution
 - Area distribution personally and through students to local businesses, libraries, chambers of commerce, local high school and junior high music programs and local religious institutions

More Printed Materials

- Annual and individual concert posters
- Concert program, listing all contributors and corporate graphic sponsorships (Program pp. 77–78)
- Street banners
- CD/DVD recordings and Symphony apparel sales



Personal Appearances

- Rotary
- Kiwanis
- Learning in Retirement
- Television and Radio (noted previously)