

Check This Out Project Descriptions

Check This Out Session #2: Audience Development, Marketing and Development Innovations

June 5, 2014 from 11:15am-12:30pm

Presentations in the following order:

Baltimore Symphony Orchestra

Top Fives, Quizzes, and Listicles: Exploring New Ways to Tell Your Story

Laura Soldati, director of public relations; Alyssa Porambo, public relations coordinator

The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra has begun to produce and promote the underreported stories of the orchestral world through its own story feed. Every week, our audiences explore a broad range of topics and tap into what's 'buzzin' in pop culture, current events, lifestyle and the entertainment industry --- with a BSO twist. These stories are posted to the BSO's enhanced website and throughout social media channels and other online media. Our methods of telling the BSO's story and incorporating the BSO into a broader conversation are by creating content that more audiences can identify with, that they can easily share, that they can interact with, and that they expect to see. Learn how we do this... in 8 minutes or less!

For more information, please contact Laura Soldati at lsoldati@bsomusic.org

Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Sounds and Stories

Philip Koester, vice president for sales and marketing

One of the CSO's latest experiments is "Sounds and Stories," launched last December, which aims to present the orchestra's extensive video and radio projects in the form of an online magazine, surrounded by and linked to contextualizing stories about classical music and performing artists. The CSO hired a veteran of the Chicago Sun-Times to be its first full-time digital content editor, who in turn has begun commissioning arts writers from Chicago and around the country to give the site the vibrancy of daily features. By gradually bringing all the CSO's former "micro-sites" under one roof (four journals, its "Beyond the Score" project, program notes, radio series) and with context and interface reminiscent of familiar news outlets, the CSO hopes to be seen as a reliable source not only for great performance but also for great explanation and dissemination of its art form. The site is optimized for mobile devices.

For more information, contact Philip Koester at KoesterP@csso.org

Spokane Symphony

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Contemporary Programming/Attracting New Audiences

Brenda Nienhouse, executive director and Eckart Preu, music director

Responding to community input, the Spokane Symphony recently created a new series, “Symphony With a Splash”, with a two-fold purpose: 1) to attract new audiences, especially the younger crowd, who are interested in fresh, exciting new experiences and 2) to offer programs that predominantly feature contemporary works by cutting edge composers. “Symphony With a Splash” experiences start out as happy hour parties at five-o’-clock on Fridays (three per season) with cocktails, food and performances by local bands in the theater lobby, followed by Symphony mini-concerts in the hall featuring music by living composers as well as one piece from the core repertoire familiar to audiences.

For more information, contact BrendaNienhouse@spokanesymphony.org

Orchestra Iowa *Opus Concert Café*

Robert Massey, chief executive officer

Following catastrophic flooding in 2008, Orchestra Iowa had to rebuild its offices, school and performance home, the Paramount Theatre. A cornerstone of the restoration was the creation of the Opus Concert Café, an 88-seat upscale performance destination. Opened in 2012, Opus serves as a venue for chamber music, jazz, cabaret and comedy. Connected to the Paramount, Opus also functions as a donor lounge, post-concert reception area and is available for rent. In addition to high-end furnishings, amenities include theatrical quality A/V systems, catering kitchen and full-service bar. Constructed for a cost of \$1 million, Opus has expanded the portfolio of Orchestra Iowa’s artistic creations by providing a venue for more than 20 additional performances each season, helping to fulfill the Orchestra’s strategic vision of providing an exceptional patron experience and generating \$100,000 each season, providing diversified revenue streams that has strengthened the financial stability of Orchestra Iowa.

For more information, contact Robert Massey at rmassey@orchestraiowa.org

New Jersey Symphony Orchestra *The Centennial Legacy Challenge*

Anne DeVivo DeMesa, director of major and planned gifts and Brittany Lavalleur, manager of individual giving

Generating revenue for both the endowment and annual fund simultaneously, the Centennial Legacy Challenge can be implemented by any other orchestra. For every documented planned gift, Challenge donors match those gifts at 10–25% with a contribution to the annual fund. “Rockefeller Model” style commitments merit the maximum match. Each planned gift is accounted for using a deferred-gift commitment form signed by the donor and the NJSO; corresponding paperwork pertaining to the gift is

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required. Since March 2013, the NJSO has raised more than \$600,000 in cash for the annual fund and identified \$5.6M in corresponding legacy gift commitments!

For more information, contact Anne DeVivo DeMesa at ademesa@njsymphony.org

Charlotte Symphony Orchestra

Symphony Yes: Expanding the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra family

Robert Stickler, president and executive director

In 2013, the Charlotte Symphony Orchestra was looking for ways to energize its Board around fundraising. The Board came up with an idea for a fundraising reception “in a box.” Directors, or friends of the CSO, agree to host receptions in their homes. Working with the CSO, they create an invite list and are responsible for beverages and hors d’oerves. The CSO brings the program, which includes a short talk by the music director, introduction of musicians who play and describe their experience and a soft ask by a board member. Attendees leave with a thank you note including a specific ask. In 2013, these Symphony Yes receptions accounted for more than \$400,000 in multi-year gifts. As importantly, they created a buzz in the community and brought musicians and patrons together in a new way. We now have attendees asking to present their own receptions.

For more information, contact Robert Stickler at RobertS@charlottesymphony.org

OKC Philharmonic

Overture: Friends of the OKC Philharmonic

Michelle Winters, director of marketing and public relations

Overture: Friends of the OKC Philharmonic is a program of the OKC Philharmonic's Associate Board. “Overture” went through several formats before finding success. At the core, the program is a marketing package. However, Overture has created a buzz in the city and made the OKC Philharmonic the hot place for music, fun, networking and community support for the young and young-at-heart. A three-concert “membership” that includes post-concert parties with guest artists, group seating, monthly happy hour meet-ups, and volunteer opportunities is offered for \$120 per person. For the last 6 seasons, Overture memberships have brought more than 400 new, young patrons into the Philharmonic base.

For more information, contact Michelle Winters at mwinters@okcphilharmonic.org

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Utah Symphony | Utah Opera

Digital Scavenger Hunt and Outside-the-box Press Conference

Presenter: Renée Huang, director of public relations

Digital Scavenger Hunt leads to Season Announcement: The fact that Utah Symphony was announcing a new season was not news – but how we created buzz surrounding the news was. We launched a contest with the grand prize of a subscription to our 2014-15 season by dropping “clues” to the 2014-15 Masterworks repertoire across our social media channels over 8 days leading up to our season announcement. The hints to each work came in the form of anagram, a word search, pictogram and even incited participants to use Google translate to decode clues. The result? We had more than 120 participants, and generated a ton of interaction on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Five entries answered all eight clues correctly, so we rewarded all of them with ticket vouchers (we call them Utah Symphony Bucks) and merchandise.

Outside-the-box press conference to announce tour: We wanted to create a big impact with the announcement of our upcoming tour to southern Utah’s national parks, dubbed “The Mighty 4 Tour”. The media received mysterious invitations with a sandstone arch (signifying southern Utah) and an invite requesting their presence at a local climbing gym. We elicited 10 pairs of advanced level rock climbers wearing branded shirts to ascend as a reed trio played, and had our president/CEO, music director and director of the tourism office speak. The idea was to pair live classical music with a setting befitting of the experiences we hope to offer in the parks this summer. The result was spectacular. We had one local ABC station book a live interview with our President/CEO on the 4 PM news (without even knowing the news) and the other three local stations sent cameras to cover the announcement. We landed a virtual media coup in our market – coverage on the afternoon and evening news on all FOUR TV stations, plus features in the two daily newspapers.

For more information, contact Renée Huang at rhuang@usuo.org