OKLAHOMA CITY ORCHESTRA LEAGUE

Awards of Excellence: Tues, Jun 6  9:00am, #3
Music Competitions: An Enduring Legacy
Presenter: Carol McCoy

CLICK TO BEGIN

Slide 1: Title Slide: Opening Remark

Good morning! I am pleased to share with you the Oklahoma City Orchestra League’s Music Competitions ... it is our enduring legacy.

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Slide 2: League Overview

The Oklahoma City Orchestra League has been in existence since 1948. Through the years the number of members has changed and we have 250 members.

CLICK The mission of OCOL is to educate, enrich, and inspire the community by supporting orchestral music and promoting volunteerism.

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Slide 3: Competition Goal

The goal of Music Competitions is to encourage young musicians to continue to pursue their musical studies by showcasing them in an educational and rewarding environment.

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Slide 4: The Beginning  1948
Shortly after World War II, Merle Buttram, an accomplished violinist, who founded the first symphony orchestra in Oklahoma, collaborated with the Women’s Committee of the OKC Symphony, now called OCOL to establish awards to young string musicians.

The goal and challenge was to find a way to encourage more high school students to continue their studies in string music. She and her family underwrote the competition….and it BEGAN. It was successful and the competition grew.

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Slide 5: A Decade Later 1958

A decade later, in 1958 the OCOL took over the project, and it continued with expansion of the competition.

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Slide 6: Fast Forward 1970’s

Twenty years later, in the late 70’s a violin instructor and her husband (Margaret and Drake Keith) provided funds to establish string awards for elementary students……and it expanded even further.

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Slide 7 Keith Strings (pic: elementary Students competition)

This is Sophia Deng, cello winner in the Keith competition for elementary students with Margaret Keith, who is also a member of the Orchestra League

CLICK TO ADVANCES.
Slide 8: And More Recently ...

And more recently, the success of the string competition was noted and members of OCOL recruited additional underwriters to competitions.

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Slide 9: Competitions Divisions

Awards are now given for all six divisions, as shown on this slide.

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Slide 10: Today

Today over 100 applicants compete for $10,000 in awards.

The OCOL Music Competitions are known throughout the state. Once the site is opened on the web. Applications begin. All applications are made on-line and the application fee ($25) is through PayPal.

The Competitions in all six divisions take place on one day.

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Slide 11: Competition Day (pic: pop up sign on stage)

The venue is provided through the Bass School of Music at Oklahoma City University. Performance and rehearsal rooms are donated with the cost to OCOL for housekeeping and piano tuning. Grand pianos are available but other contestants must bring their own instruments.
The day of competition begins early with competition and warm up rooms ready and volunteers waiting to in check applicants.

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**Slide 12:**  The Process

The Competitions Chair obtain the venue. In addition, the chair updates the web page, works with each co-chair and the OCOL office to ensure all tasks are completed and ready for the day. Chair may only serve for two years.

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**Slide 13:**  The Process continued

Each division has 2 co-chairs. The co-chairs review all applications for the division, establish repertoire, venue layout, and logistics for their contestants. They communicate with students, set performance schedule, obtain judges, and communicate with the underwriters and obtain volunteers for their competition. The co-chairs are committed to the project and, unlike the Chair, have continued to serve in the same role for years. I might add, that is one of the reasons for the success and smooth operation of the Competitions....it is not a big learning curve each year.

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**Slide 14:**  The Day of Competition - waiting to perform

A well worked out schedule for each division has the contestants ready to perform at their scheduled time. This picture shows a competing quartet and their accompanist.
Slide 15: The Day of Competition: Awaiting Results

Judges are paid a minimum honorarium, yet they readily agree to participate, several were awardees decades ago. Judges select 1st and 2nd place to perform at the Winner’s Concert held a few weeks later.

The Oklahoma City Philharmonic’s Maestro and Executive Director select the student to perform in the side-by-side concert with the OKC Philharmonic.

The OCOL co-chairs make the announcements and award the medals.

The slide shows contestants, family, and friends awaiting the announcement of the Gilliam elementary students’ piano competition.

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Slide 16: Awards (pic: awards medals)

Each contestant receives a certificate and the winners receive medals. The cash awards are not given until the Winner’s Concert. All applicants must agree to play for the Winner’s concert if they are a 1st or 2nd place winner.

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Slide 17: Meinders Piano Competition (pic: competition winner)

Mariya Pirumyan is the first place winner for Meinders piano competition for high school students

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Slide 18: Haire Classical Guitar (pic: competition winner)

Matthew Elder won the Haire Classical Guitar competition
Slide 19:  The Winners

All are winners, each contestant gains the educational experience of evaluation by knowledgeable judges as well as performance experience. This slide shows all the contestants in the Buttram strings and quartet competition along with the underwriter, Randy Buttram.

Slide 20:  Volunteers (pic: volunteer group at food table)

The talent of the young musicians is so amazing that it is not difficult to obtain the 60-plus volunteers required for the day of competitions.

An important component of the competition is food. The contestants come from all over the state and are there all day, so there must be food. The Hospitality co-chairs obtain all the food for lunch from OCOL members. A special table is set up for the judges as they also will be present all day.

Slide 21:  COSTS

The goal for Music Competitions is not financial gain, but we do want to break even. We advertise over $10,000 in awards but the number awarded is determined by the contestants and their musical instrument, for example, we may not have a harp contestant every year or the judges may decide to not award in a certain category. In 2016, we had a cost of $13,300 and revenue of $13,600 for 2016 but that can vary from year to year.
EVALUATION and continual assessment is also a key ingredient to the success of the program. The co-chairs for the six divisions report on their competition and make suggestions for changes if needed. As a group, policies and changes are made for the following year.

Due to the increase in the number of home school applicants we found it necessary to clarify age/grade requirements. A change that has truly improved the competition was for the CLICK strings co-chairs to invite music teachers to evaluate the existing repertoire and make suggestions. Not only has this expanded the selections but also created a greater involvement from the music teachers.

We also found the need to confirm receipt of scheduled time for each competition. Many of today’s youth respond to text but not email.

Challenges each year include scheduling students competing in more than one division and accompanists that assist more than one contestant.

Today’s youth involvement in multi-activities at the expense of music
Continuance of financial support from underwriters
To inaugurate music competition in your organization it may seem like an overwhelming task, it is doable.

- Start small
- Recruit and gain support from music teachers
- Obtain underwriters with monetary awards
- Provide opportunities to showcase winners

70 years strong, Music Competitions has provided immeasurable opportunities for generations of Oklahoma musicians and a legacy for the Oklahoma City Orchestra League.