HOSTING THE LUTHER COLLEGE CONCERT BAND

Joan de Albuquerque, Conductor
Kate Ailabouni, Tour Coordinator

Dear Concert Organizers,

Thank you so much for hosting the Luther College Concert Band concert in your community! This planning packet will guide you through the four areas of concert hosting responsibilities:

1. Publicity and advertising
2. Performance facility arrangements
3. Student Housing
4. Pre-concert meal

I suggest you create a concert planning team of five people: one chairperson to oversee the entire process and four individuals to handle the details of each responsibility area.

As you work through this packet, keep in mind that not all the information will be applicable to your particular situation, so regular communication with me will be necessary as we both prepare for the concert.

Again, thank you for hosting the Luther College Concert Band. Please know that I welcome questions or suggestions at any point during our work together.

Sincerely,

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Timeline for Concert Planning

This timeline is a general listing of responsibilities for the planning committee chairperson so he/she can monitor the general concert preparation process. The packet also contains detailed, step-by-step checklists for each planning area. The general chairperson should read both this general checklist and each area’s specific responsibilities and checklists.

July
- Read this entire planning packet
- See that concert date and time is posted on all organization calendars
- Read, sign, and return hosting agreement.
- Reserve any necessary rooms
  - performance space
  - Four dressing rooms: male students, female students, conductor, and soloist
  - pre-concert gathering space
  - dinner area/kitchen
  - locked space to store large instruments overnight between the concert and the morning departure.
- Email me a list of key radio and online media where Luther should advertise the concert.
- Email me a list of your organization’s newsletter/bulletin publication deadlines.
- Educators: Determine a way to incorporate concert attendance into curriculum (i.e. joint concert, required attendance, etc.). Write this into the syllabus and events calendar for the year.
- Connect with Luther College Music via social media. We’ll “like” and “follow” you back!
  - Facebook: @Luther College Music Department
  - Twitter: @musicatluther

October
- Appoint concert planning committee members
- Committee meeting with me at concert site

November
- Second meeting of the concert planning committee to solidify details regarding concert promotion, facility logistics, housing, and meal arrangements.
- Make arrangements to borrow additional music stands if needed.

February
- Deliver and hang posters to key community locations at least three weeks prior to the concert. These will be sent in a bulk mailing to you in early February.
- Call area ELCA churches and high schools to see if a concert poster sent by Luther has arrived. Ask churches of all denominations to promote the concert in their newsletters, bulletins, social media, and by word of mouth.
- Contact newspapers and radio stations to request publication of press release (sent out by Luther College).
- Make arrangements for ushers to help with greeting concert-goers and passing the freewill offering plate during the concert. (We will bring our own printed programs for the concert.)
One Week Before the Concert

- Active social media and word of mouth promotion throughout week
- Tune piano (the closer to the concert date, the better)

Day of the Concert

- Clear and clean the stage of any unnecessary items prior to ensemble's arrival. As necessary, remove altar railings, altar, choir chairs/risers, front/side pews, etc. to create a flat stage area.
- If available, set up acoustic shells.
- The ensemble will arrive at the concert hall 4-5 hours prior to the concert start time to set up and rehearse. Arrange for personnel to be on hand the entire time to help locate rooms, adjust stage lighting, answer facility questions, etc.
- Dinner will be two hours before the concert and take approximately one hour.
- After the concert, help connect host families with students and direct stage strike efforts.

Promotion and Publicity Area Responsibilities & Planning Steps

I cannot overemphasize the need for an organized advance publicity and promotion campaign. The concert hosting experience is most rewarding for all involved when the music can be shared with the largest audience possible.

News releases, pictures, and radio public service announcements will be sent to your area media directly from the college, but it is essential that you also develop a personal contact with these organizations if we want to actually see the materials published. In addition to asking for publication of our press release, please request a concert review and mention any ensemble members from your city to create a hometown connection (I will provide a list by October). If this is a ticketed event, arrange for complementary media tickets.

Investment in the promotional aspect of a Concert Band concert is well worth the effort for your community and our students. The band is an outstanding group of talented musicians, and a large audience turnout is the main objective Joan deAlbuquerque and I consider when selecting a concert site. Therefore, please let me know additional promotion suggestions not listed below with which I can help.

Promotion Focus Areas:

Radio
Luther College will send out radio announcements to your local stations, but follow-through on your end to request a free public service announcement is necessary.

Paid Radio Advertising
If you have a suggestion for a regional classical music and/or public radio station with high listenership where we could advertise, please communicate with me at least four months prior to the concert.
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Digital Media
- Post the concert announcement, pictures, and press release (when you receive it) to your organization’s website. If you have a rotating main feature or hero image on your organization’s homepage, include a concert promotion photo in the rotation. Hyperlink to the appropriate Luther pages regarding the ensemble and event to boost traffic.
- Forward Luther’s professionally formatted concert announcement email to your organization’s email list when you receive it in the month prior to the concert.
- Luther will post to Facebook and Twitter regarding the tour in general and specifically your concert. Like, comment, and share these posts on your organization’s feed.
- Create your own social media content about your particular concert and tag @Luther College Music Department on Facebook and @musicatluther on Twitter.

Posters
Notify me when posters are received (which should be no later than six weeks prior to the concert). Posters should be distributed three weeks before the concert. Target bulletin boards and windows of local churches, community centers, libraries, schools, downtown businesses, coffee shops, etc. Choose visible locations and areas where people tend to wait in lines (drinking fountain and restroom bulletin boards, café lines, bus stops…).

Announcement at Clubs and Organizations
Announcements and flyers at club and organization meetings can reach a large number of people. Use the local publicity resources your Chamber of Commerce offers.

Outdoor Marquees and Letter Boards
Promote the concert on your organization’s letter-board or marquee.

Churches
- Luther College will send mailings with posters to every ELCA Lutheran church within 25-50 miles of the concert site depending on the concert location.
- We will also send newsletter/bulletin text via email to these same churches.
- Please bring posters and newsletter/bulletin text to key non-ELCA churches of all denominations in your area.
- Follow-up with ELCA churches to see that sent materials have been posted.

Special Groups
Contact special groups in your community such as college music departments, music organizations and ensembles, civic organizations, arts councils, and retirement communities. Arts councils and other community music groups are usually willing to help advertise and may agree to share their mailing lists with you. Make sure that any civic or community calendar advertises the concert.
Promotion Checklist

_In chronological order:_

- Email me a list of key radio, digital, and print media in your area where Luther should advertise the concert. (I am most likely to place paid advertisements on public radio stations with high listenership.)
- Email me your organization’s newsletter/bulletin announcement deadlines.
- Brainstorm ideas as a committee for community groups and clubs where announcements can be made.
- Ask community groups, particularly arts councils to include an announcement about the concert in their newsletters. (Contact them at least 8 weeks prior to the concert.)
- Outline and implement your digital promotional strategy:
  - Web
  - Social Media
  - Email Marketing
- Check with local businesses regarding the use of their letter boards or marquees.
- Contact your local radio and television stations. Request a phone interview with the conductor or hometown ensemble members. I can help arrange interviews if there is interest.
- Visit the local newspaper editor. Ask him/her to do a feature article, or to accept news releases from Luther College. Request a phone interview with the conductor or hometown ensemble members in addition to a review of the concert. (Media personnel do not need to give a concert donation.)
- Distribute posters throughout the community at least three weeks prior to the concert.
- Call or visit local churches to encourage concert promotion.
- After the concert, send a copy of any concert reviews to Luther College.

Performance Facilities Area Responsibilities & Planning Steps

Reserve the performance space as soon as you finalize the concert date so there will be no danger of cancellation. It is essential that the concert date does not conflict with nearby loud events within the same building.

You will find our tentative stage plot at the end of this document. This will change slightly once our personnel is finalized in September 2015. Concert Band requires a minimum stage area of 38 feet wide by 35 feet deep of a consistent height (no level changes).

The ensemble usually arrives at the concert location 4-5 hours before the concert start time. This schedule will need to be adjusted if the meal is being served away from the concert location, traffic delays, or inclement weather.
You will receive an itinerary for the day/evening in advance of our arrival. Be sure the facility is unlocked upon arrival and staffed by someone who is familiar with the layout of the facility and stage area lighting. It is very important that all facility arrangements have been completed prior to arrival.

We ask that four total dressing rooms be available for the ensemble members, our conductor, and our soloist. The ensemble members need two large rooms for the men and women and two small rooms with private restrooms nearby are required for the conductor and soloist. All windows in dressing rooms should be covered with shades or paper.

We also need one large room for a pre-concert meeting. If dinner is at the concert site, an eating area should be reserved.

We request the use of acoustic shells.

Please have a standing microphone for the conductor.

We will need 55 chairs and 60 music stands. Borrow or rent extra stands as necessary.

We will use a piano for the concert. A grand is preferred, but a nice upright will be fine, especially in smaller performance spaces. The piano should be in good performance condition and tuned the week of the concert.

Ushers should be familiar with the performing space prior to the concert. We will furnish concert programs. The ushers should arrive at least 45 minutes before the concert begins and plan on staying for the entire concert. Ushers will also be responsible for collecting the freewill offering/donation.

A person familiar with the sound and lighting system should be on hand for rehearsal and the performance.

We will need two medium-sized tables in the lobby area to display recording and admissions materials. Members of the ensemble will staff it during intermission and following the concert. Tables should be very visible and accessible, and if they are not close to an outlet, an extension cord should be provided.

We ask that that you receive permission from the Music Marketing Office before making any audio or visual recordings of the concert.
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Performance Facilities Checklist

*In chronological order:

- As soon as the concert is confirmed, complete facility arrangements, ensuring against cancellation. Reserve rooms 5 hours prior to concert start and 3 hours after concert start.
  - Performance area
  - Large male and female dressing room
  - Large pre-concert warm-up room
  - Small dressing room(s) with private restroom(s) for the conductor and another for the soloist
  - One large, secure room to store instruments overnight until morning departure.
- Contact meals/reception chairperson to coordinate any necessary reservations and other details for meal and/or reception.
- Make arrangements to borrow or rent extra chairs and stands if necessary.
- Arrange for a staff member to run lights and sound for the concert.
- Arrange for custodial staff to be on hand to empty trash bins and stock bathrooms prior to the performance.
- Arrange for ushers familiar with facility surroundings. Inform them they should arrive 45 minutes prior to concert.
- Arrange for person familiar with the concert arrangements, facility surroundings, and technical equipment to unlock building and be there to give directions to tour manager upon the ensemble’s arrival. The ensemble may run ahead of schedule, so be prepared for an early arrival.
- Send me the work and cell phone numbers of the contact who will greet the ensemble upon its arrival.

- Day of or evening before:
  - Strike the stage of any unnecessary items as decided on site visit. This could include removing altar railings, choir chairs/risers, altar, font, front/side pews, etc.
  - Vacuum/sweep performance and audience area.
  - Set up acoustical shells.
  - Set up display tables outside concert hall.
  - Chairs and stands out and ready to be set up.

Housing Overview

Luther College music tours would not be possible without the gracious hospitality of community members opening their homes to our students every concert night. The Concert Band is a large ensemble, and will require housing for around 60 students. Therefore, it’s best to start organizing hosts early in the planning process. Although you won’t have a specific rooming list until about a month before the concert, you can still secure homes far in advance of the student list.
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The rooming list will be forwarded to you approximately four weeks before the concert, complete with any allergies or dietary sensitivities. I will indicate on the list any ensemble members who have made arrangements to stay with relatives or friends. I will make hotel arrangements for the staff.

The following guidelines will help to ensure a positive experience for both the students and the host families:

- We ask that no student be sent to a host home alone under any circumstances.
- Know the families with whom the students are staying to ensure that the family situation is safe.
- Keep track of hosts with cats or dogs and make a note if a host smokes inside the home or vehicle. Pets and smoke are common allergies, so avoid placing students with pet or smoke allergies in these homes.
- Arrange for 2-3 “emergency households” that can take students in the event that a scheduled host is unable to take students.

Host families should gather in the performance space after the concert to meet the students who will be staying with them.

Please make one master list of students paired with their host families, with host addresses, phone numbers, and pet and smoke information and send it to me two weeks prior to the concert. Give me an updated copy to reflect any changes the day of the concert.

Make large signs for the hosts with the names of their students in large print. After the concert, the hosts will hold their signs and students will find their names at a time that works with their teardown duties. Students must stay at the venue until their teardown duties are complete, so hosts should be prepared to wait for the students after the concert.

Housing Checklist

- Solicit host families for around 60 students and notify families of their responsibilities:
  - housing for two or more students (shared beds are ok)
  - post-concert snack or evening meal (afternoon concerts only)
  - breakfast
  - transportation from and to the concert site (instruments remain at concert site overnight)
- Complete the housing list and submit to me at least two weeks prior to the concert. Homes will take either males or females but not both without prior approval from the tour coordinator.
- Prepare signs with students’ names and give to all hosts.
- Notify host families of the time and place for pick-up and return.
Pre-Concert Meal

We prefer that the ensemble and staff (around 60 people) be served the evening meal as a group two hours prior to the concert. The ensemble often has a few students with special dietary needs; you will be notified of these on the housing list.

We strongly encourage hosts to plan healthy, balanced meals that emphasize vegetables and fruits. Tours are very intense and everything we can do to prevent sickness is appreciated! If you have questions or need meal suggestions contact me.

Sometimes a reception is held for the ensemble following the concert. This provides an opportunity for the ensemble and conductor to meet the audience and visit with host families. If you wish, this may be coordinated by your organization (thank you!), or a Luther alumni group may volunteer to host a reception. If an alumni group organizes the reception, they will contact you themselves to make specific arrangements.

Meals and Reception Checklist

☐ Find a location for the evening meal.
☐ Plan an evening meal for up to 60 students, faculty, and staff.
☐ Decide on the menu and method of preparation (potluck, catered, or a combination of both) and who will help prepare, serve, and clean up.
☐ Inform the tour coordinator if and where a reception is to be held.

Additional Information

Don’t be shy! Email or call me with ANY questions kate.ailabouni@luther.edu, 563-379-6165). Additionally, much of the information (bios, photos, etc) you need can be found at http://www.luther.edu/music/concert-band, with hosting information found under the “Sponsor Information” section.

On behalf of the Luther College Concert Band and Joan deAlbuquerque, many, many thanks! Enjoy the process of bringing a wonderful concert to your community.