

PROGRAMMING RESOURCES AND GUIDELINES

Successful programming results from an organized, broadly focused response to the needs of the membership. The first step is to consult your members for their ideas and needs. Additional inspiration can be found in the “Chapter News” section of THE AMERICAN ORGANIST, where other chapters share what they have done. Program committees should balance the types and topics of programs, so that an interesting blend of information, education, and entertainment satisfies the needs of your members and your community. Chapters should recognize the diversity of AGO membership and the community when scheduling recitalists and designing programs.

The AGO is classified by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)(3) organization. This designation means more than exemption from federal income tax. It means that the Guild is recognized as an organization that provides a needed service to the community. To uphold AGO’s part of the covenant, chapters should work to meet the needs of their communities.

ARRANGEMENTS

In order to execute each program thoughtfully, carefully, and graciously, attention must be paid to logistics.

1. Determine the cost to the chapter (rental of space, custodian’s fees, fees of the program presenters; cost of program aids such as programs, handouts, and audiovisual equipment; postage, copying, and telephone expenses for publicity) and budget for these expenses. A blank worksheet for planning an event budget is included in this chapter.
2. Finalize the time, place, and meal arrangements (including the cost to the individual members, reservation procedures and deadlines, and the number of complimentary meals, if any) well in advance of the event. Take care that the facilities are accessible to all in terms of uniform access for the disabled regardless of whether the chapter is holding a private function or a more publicly sponsored AGO event.
3. Arrange for the set-up of equipment, including projectors, amplification systems, and video or audio playback equipment.
4. Arrange for on-site personnel (page turners, registrars, greeters, ticket takers and sellers, audiovisual assistants and ushers).
5. Provide hospitality for guest presenters (accommodations, social involvement, transportation, adequate and comfortable practice arrangements).

PROGRAM FORMATS

There are several different types of chapter meetings, depending on the type of program and the agenda to be covered. What follows is a listing of some general types of meetings with a few of the options available for their presentation.

1. Regular Chapter Meetings

These are usually held on a regular basis from September through June. There is no national requirement that a chapter hold monthly meetings. Schedule as many meetings as your chapter needs and can afford. They should be scheduled well in advance, so that members will be able to make other commitments without conflicts, and at times that as many people as possible may attend.

Refreshments play an important role in the social aspect of meetings. Time should be allowed before and/or after the meeting for members to socialize and talk shop. Something as simple as coffee and doughnuts will encourage them to mingle, building a sense of community within the chapter. Other ways to offer food include potluck dinners, catered parties, and the popular organist-clergy dinners.

Even in small chapters, members are not always familiar with one another. Name tags should be part of every meeting, and time should be taken to introduce new members.

The program should be the focus. Usually there is a certain amount of chapter business to be conducted (reports from the treasurer, announcements, votes on specific issues), and this may be combined with another component, such as a film, recital, speaker, workshop, or other educational forum to create interest in the event. While a business-only meeting should be a rarity, in reality most chapters separate business sessions from outreach functions.

There are a wide range of programs appropriate for a chapter meeting. Here are a few:

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| recital | repertoire sharing session |
| lecture-recital | organ crawl |
| lecture-demonstration | competition |
| Guild service | tour of organ shop or other business |
| choir or hymn festival | recognition of group or individual |
| master class | colloquium |
| workshop | conference |
| panel discussion or debate | symposium |
| mock wedding | handbell workshop |
| audiovisual presentation | choral conducting workshop |
| repertoire reading session | |

2. Recital Series

Sponsoring a recital series can serve several purposes: admissions or voluntary contributions can help support the chapter or pay for the programs; individual performers of note may be showcased; the chapter can use the public forum to raise community awareness of the Guild's work and the cultural heritage of organ and choral music.

Recitals may be scheduled at regular times and places - for example, every other Thursday at noon at "ABC Unitarian Church." Depending on the recitalists available, the chapter's sponsorship may provide the continuity for the series. You can choose to feature local

member artists, or you may wish to invite visiting artists to attract broader community interest.

Some chapters have found it advantageous to sponsor their series jointly with a church, a school, other chapters and/or other arts organizations to gain more publicity and to develop stronger ties with these groups.

Funding for a recital can come from a number of sources: local foundations, local or state arts councils, private patrons (who should be listed in the program), businesses that place ads in the program, and sale of season tickets. A little research can bring results that will expand your recital possibilities enormously.

3. Educational Series

The Guild is officially recognized by the federal government as an educational organization. The goal of much chapter activity is to educate its members, that is, to develop their professional abilities and musical knowledge. In addition, each chapter should seek to educate its community regarding the professional status of organists and choral directors, as well as the musical traditions that the Guild represents. Educational programs should be one of the most important aspects of a chapter's schedule.

A number of forums are possible for an educational program. These are a few of the more common varieties:

FOR MEMBERS:

workshops
masterclasses
special courses
mini-course
professional certification preparation
seminars
repertoire sharing

FOR THE PUBLIC:

children's concerts
lectures in schools
public demonstrations in churches
presentations for adult groups:
 music clubs
 civic organizations
 senior citizens' group
 nursing homes and hospitals
POE and Pipeworks

These programs can be used for single events or may be offered as classes over several weeks or months, depending on the format.

As with recital series, it is sometimes profitable to sponsor an educational series with the extension or continuing education division of a local college, possibly for credit or continuing education units (CEU's), with other music organizations, with local or regional church bodies, or with an ecumenical group.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES

1. Evaluations

It is helpful to know how useful or successful particular events have been so that past

mistakes can be avoided and popular topics or speakers can be repeated. Here are some ways to collect this information:

- * Discussions - the entire chapter, the executive committee, or the program committee.
- * Word-of-mouth reports to members of the executive and program committees.
- * Questionnaires handed out at individual programs or recitals.
- * Year-end questionnaires.
- * Reviewing attendance records from each event.

2. Post-Program Publicity

In conjunction with the above, always do post-program publicity by means of a review, or at least an announcement, for the chapter newsletter and national journals (especially the Chapter News of THE AMERICAN ORGANIST Magazine).