

MINUTES
Central Iowa Symphony Board
September 2, 2008

Attending: Donita McCoy (presiding), A. M. Fink, Kathleen Foster-Wendel, Noelle Fultz, Karl Gwiasda, Sara Markley, Jane Ringwald, Sam Wormley

Administrative

President McCoy called the meeting to order at 7:20 pm.

The minutes for the meeting of August 5 were approved.

Treasurer Ringwald distributed copies of the Budget Review. She noted that donations have already exceeded the total amount received last season.

Gala

Markley reported on the preparations that she has made for the Gala to be held on October 12. The Ames Country Club has been booked for the event. Heated hors d'oeuvres will be prepared by the Country Club, while cakes and desserts have been ordered from other sources. So far, the costs for food are running below the amount for last year's Gala. Decorations used for a previous Gala will be adapted for re-use. In addition, Wormley will set up a slide show of orchestra photos.

Markley noted that she is still seeking more items for the silent auction. She also needs a list of the mailing addresses for the orchestra players so that they may be notified of the event. Wormley has asked Clayton Murphy to provide the list, but a computer glitch has delayed Murphy's response.

Opening concert and season preparations

Posters

Gwiasda will print posters for the season's concerts. The posters for the November concert are to be ready in time for the October 7 meeting. Ringwald will set up delivery routes for putting up the posters. She suggested that copies of the season brochure be used as posters to announce the entire season.

Publicity and advertising

Fultz will be in touch with staff at *The Tribune* about publicizing the November concert, with emphasis upon the guest appearance of a Russian conductor. She will also inquire whether WOI-FM would be willing to air interviews with this season's conductors.

Fultz will also determine the cost of running one or two ads per concert in *The Tribune*. The board agreed that newspaper ads should be run unless the cost proves prohibitive.

Fink remarked that the *Ames Bulletin Board* lists the wrong date for the December concert. Ringwald said that she would look into having the date corrected in the publication's next issue.

Business advertising

By email, Markley has distributed a list of businesses that have placed ads in the CIS program playbills in past seasons. The list offers a guide to potential advertisers but does not replace looking for other possibilities.

Ringwald volunteered to visit Hickory Park and Hy-Vee to seek their renewal of a playbill ad. Foster-Wendel will seek ads from Mary Greeley Medical Center, McFarland Clinic, and Sigler Printing. McCoy will speak to Hoshaw Fine Violins, Rieman Music, and Russell Piano Service.

New board members

So far, no new board members have been identified. When the address list for orchestra players becomes available, Foster-Wendel will send them a letter asking their suggestions for possible board members.

Young Artists competition

McCoy reported that the date for the Young Artists competition has been set as January 17, 2009. She added that the organizers of a competition in Waterloo called her to ensure that their event did not coincide with the CIS's competition.

Ringwald said that she and Jane Johnson will serve as co-chairs of the YA competition.

Sample the Arts

McCoy reported that she, Markley, and Wormley attended the CIS booth at the *Sample the Arts* fair last month. Markley prepared an attractive table display, while Wormley set up a slide show depicting the orchestra in performance.

Drawing and audience building

McCoy reported that 70-75 people submitted their names in the drawing for a free pair of tickets to any CIS concert. The drawing will be made at the October meeting.

Wormley suggested that the drawing be expanded to allow more than one winner as a stimulus to increasing the size of audiences. There followed an extensive discussion of how far the CIS should go in distributing free tickets. Free tickets could work to entice people to sample a concert and then return as purchasers of single-concert or season tickets. On the other hand, an overuse of distributing free tickets might discourage people from buying tickets once it was known that free ones were readily available.

No one on the board disputed the desirability of gaining larger audiences. The less certain matter was the effectiveness and possible consequences of promotions based upon giving away free tickets. During the discussion, various alternatives were mentioned—e.g., make attendance free and seek to make up the lost revenue through grants, make attendance free for elementary, middle, and high school students; reduce the present price of tickets; offer reduced-cost tickets for adults attending with children; employ a 2-for-1 promotion by which a ticket purchaser could bring along a friend or family member at no extra cost.

In the end, the board agreed that the best way to proceed would be to try a pilot promotion focused on a particular group. For that trial, free tickets might be offered to middle and high school pupils, including home-schoolers. Under the proposed plan, a certain number of free tickets would be supplied to music teachers who would then distribute them as the teachers saw fit. Wormley said that he would look into finding out the number of music teachers and pupils—whether private, home school, or public school—so that the board would have some idea of how many free tickets to provide and to whom. He will report his findings at the October meeting, at which time the board will decide what consequent action to take.

Thank you

McCoy expressed the board's thanks to Fultz and Wormley for their diligence in getting the season brochures prepared in time for an August mailing, and also to Markley and Wormley for their work in setting up the CIS display at *Sample the Arts*.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:50 pm.

Karl Gwiasda
Secretary

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, October 7, 7:15 pm