



Associated Male Choruses of the Upper Midwest

Big Sing Guidebook

The Big Sing Guidebook

1. The intent of this guidebook is to provide the minimum planning requirement for hosting the Big Sing in the Upper Midwest District of the Associated Male Choruses of America.
2. The Guidebook may also contain helpful information and suggestions for the host chorus.
3. Each chorus will be provided one copy of the guidebook. Additional copies will be available by written request of the District Secretary.
4. A list of guidebook holders will be maintained by the District Secretary. Revisions and updates will be distributed as they occur.
5. Requests to change or update any guidebook item or procedure should be made in writing to the District Secretary.

Preface

One key to a successful Big Sing is advance planning. Since Big Sings are awarded five years prior to the event, that is when serious planning should begin. A host chorus representative is required to be in attendance and give progress reports which are due each fall at the District meeting. Worksheets to help you organize your reports are located in the back of this guidebook. They are numbered #1 through #5, to cover each year of planning that leads to your Big Sing.

Before you bid on a Big Sing, you need an assessment of how you intend to “pull it off”. Ask yourself questions like:

1. Is your chorus firmly behind hosting a Big Sing?
2. Are there sufficient housing accommodations available?
3. Have you developed a basic plan?

This data should be included in your bid for a Big Sing. Your bid must be a written proposal to the District Board of Directors not later than thirty (30) days prior to the fall meeting and five and one half (5 1/2) years prior to the anticipated Big Sing. District Big Sings will not be held during years of the International Big Sings.

Awarding of the Big Sing will be at the District Spring meeting five (5) years prior to the Big Sing.

Management

Since most choruses accomplish major events by using committees rather than having one person do all of the work this guidebook is divided into sections to provide for ease of committee assignments. Each item can be further divided or two or more can be combined, depending on your chorus, the talent you have to work with and the support in your local community.

Details relative to each committee are on the following pages.

General Chairman

- A. Communications
- B. Human Logistics
- C. Workshops
- D. Recital
- E. Concert
- F. Afterglows
- G. Spouse programming
- H. Publicity, Advertising and Programs
- I. Budget and Finance
- J. Repertoire
- K. Directors Meeting

Communications

1. Prepare the Big Sing bid.
2. Prepare written progress reports for the Upper Midwest District meetings.
3. Solicit workshop titles from other choruses
4. Attend Upper Midwest District meetings at least two (2) years prior to the Big Sing.
5. Organize written communications to other choruses with input from other committees. Several mailings will be required in preparation for the Big Sing. In some choruses, individual committees may want to communicate directly with guest choruses. This could result in conflicting information being sent to guest choruses. As communications chairman, it is your responsibility to be aware of and coordinate all communication with the Upper Midwest District, guest choruses conductors and guest choruses.

Human Logistics and Housing

1. Provide a bus guide or host & hostess for each visiting chorus.
2. Make sure that sufficient time is allowed for choruses to get from one point to another, i.e. from workshops to meal to recital, etc...

3. Check facilities and buildings for handicapped access for singers and audience.
4. Motel, hotel and housing facility lists should be provided not less than two years prior to the Big Sing. Sufficient numbers of rooms should be listed to accommodate all those planning to attend. In some communities it may be necessary to list accommodations in nearby cities (see progress report #2).
5. Hotel and motel information and monitoring is an ongoing process up to the time of the Big Sing. Reservation availability should be a part of your progress report.
6. The host chorus should attempt to get room rate commitments from the motels and hotels to discourage them from rate increases for that weekend.
7. The host chorus is not responsible for making reservations for guest choruses.
8. Have a medic or first aid person on duty and visible during all major events or large gatherings during the weekend.
9. Provide and staff a registration/information booth near or in the lobby of the headquarters hotel or conference center.

Workshops

1. Provide sufficient numbers of rooms at the Big Sing hotel/motel headquarters or other location to accommodate workshops of 20 to 60 or more participants each, depending on the topics offered.
2. Host choruses should attempt to get complimentary workshop rooms at the headquarters hotel. Get written confirmation of room location, the time of use, and what will be provided.
3. Chairs should be provided for all participants. Bleacher type seating should be avoided if possible.
4. Coordinate special equipment such as overhead and slide projectors, screens, tape players, etc. as requested by workshop leaders. Workshop topics could be, but are not limited to:

Tours	Diction
Publicity	Vowel Sounds
Newsletters	Humming Technique
Fund Raising	Maintaining Pitch
Budgeting	Stage Presence
Membership Drives	Vocal Production
Ticket marketing	Attacks and Releases
Sight Reading	Voice projection
Enunciation	Choreography
Posture	

Several of the above titles could be combined to form one larger workshop. Use your imagination for additional potential workshop topics. When possible, make the workshop title “catchy” to encourage attendance.

Recital

1. Provide seating for all choruses and spouses.
2. Lighting needs to be adequate for performing chorus as well as for audience to mark their evaluations.
3. Risers and shell should be provided for the reciting chorus.
4. Arrange for two (2) adjudicators
5. Accommodations for adjudicators.
 - A. Plan on two adjudicators and possibly assistants
 - B. Lighting - desk lamps
 - C. Electrical power for tape recorders
 - D. Table and chairs, writing area
 - E. Contact adjudicators in advance for any special needs that may not be listed here.
 - F. Consider using a video recorder
6. Arrange two years in advance for ballots and tabulating equipment from the Upper Midwest District
7. Solicit solo numbers from choruses in advance so you can print programs.
8. Encourage choruses to warm up prior to the recital so that choruses can participate to the maximum in the adjudication process.
9. Provide an assembly area outside of the recital area for choruses to line up prior to their recital.
10. Total time for each chorus should not exceed 10 minutes including entrance and exit.

CONCERT

SOLO SELECTION

1. The Upper Midwest District has determined which choruses will solo each year. This list is available from the Upper Midwest District secretary.
2. Solo numbers must be submitted to the host chorus in writing at the fall meeting. The host chorus will attempt to confirm the selection, in writing, by January 1 of the Big Sing year. Any special requests pertaining to sound,

staging, lighting, props, etc. should be included in the bid for the solo.

3. Solo selections must not exceed four minutes in length.

DIRECTORS OF MASSED CHORUS SELECTIONS

4. Directors of the massed chorus numbers are to be notified in writing as to which number they will be directing within thirty (30) days after the Fall meeting prior to the affected Big Sing
5. Directors are not to make major modifications to the selection they are directing. Minor modifications must be made in writing to each participating chorus by January 1 of the year of the Big Sing.
6. Directors and accompanists of massed chorus selections should endeavor to be in place, ready to direct upon completion of the MCs' introduction in order to avoid unnecessary delays.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

7. The host chorus is encouraged to retain a professional. Sources could include local or area radio or television broadcasters or individuals known locally for their public speaking ability.
8. Narration should be brief, informative, humorous and just long enough to give proper and equal introduction to each group.
9. All narration should be from script to ensure concise, accurate and appropriate remarks. Adequate information on each chorus should be supplied to the MC to ensure good scripting.

SET UP AND ORGANIZATION

10. Solo risers with a shell are encouraged for most auditoriums.
11. Entrances and exits of solo choruses should be planned to minimize program delays.
12. "Grandstand" entrances are discouraged.
13. Contact the International AMCA for banners.
14. Choruses may not use their own banners or logos for entrances.
15. Provide high quality, in-tune pianos as required.
16. If appropriate for your concert hall, a spotlight could be used to add staging as choruses enter the hall.

17. Use monitor speakers to allow massed choruses to hear the piano.
18. Arrange for the rapid collection of scholarship donations during the rehearsal.

AFTERGLOWS

While afterglow activities are not controlled by the Upper Midwest District, there are some suggestions for the host chorus to consider.

Friday Evening

1. Should be casual, without structured singing. Although singalong could be considered since it will probably be spontaneous anyway if not planned.
2. Should end at midnight to encourage participants to retire early.
3. Primary focus should be social.
4. Should be a well ventilated or non-smoking area.

Saturday Evening

1. Good amplification should be provided for the solo choruses as well as the announcer to project the programmed material rather than have it overcome by crowd noise.
2. Choruses not soloing in the concert should have precedence as determined by the host chorus.
3. Risers and/or staging area should be provided.
4. Solo time limits should be established and enforced.
5. Depending on the facilities available, afterglow singing could be in one room with other activities in other rooms.
6. Afterglow numbers should normally begin as soon as possible after the afterglow starts.
7. Should be a well ventilated or non-smoking area.
8. Provide for sufficient beverage options and outlets.

SPOUSE PROGRAMMING

If the host chorus has an auxiliary, consider having the Spouse Programming chair come from that organization.

Spouse programming should be coordinated with special concerts and other Big Sing activities.

Friday Afternoon Activities could include:

- Shopping center trip
- Cultural event
- Bowling
- Local Tours
- Workshop on auxiliary fund raising
- Local Spa

Saturday Activities could include:

- Items from above listing
- Local entertainment
- Luncheon

PUBLICITY

1. Program, posters, displays and correspondence should display the AMCA/District Logo.
2. You should consider local and area promotion and advertising for your Big Sing.
3. Check with District Officers for any assistance in your publicity effort. Any requests should be in writing and include media involved with total anticipated costs.
4. Concert programs could include advertisements to offset the cost of publicity and program printing.
5. News releases should be sent to local and area media.
6. Newspaper ads might be appropriate for some communities.
7. Use of all forms of media might be desirable.
8. Investigate local arts councils for any grant monies to assist you in promoting your Big Sing. Arts councils exist in most communities.
9. Planning is a key to advertising since advertising can be a bottomless pit. A Big Sing should be a money maker for the host chorus and as such should not anticipate nor accept a deficit financial statement.

BUDGET AND FINANCE

1. Primary committee responsibilities are cash planning and profit from the Big Sing.
2. This committee should be made up of chairmen or members of other committees.

3. Accumulate costs from other committees and prepare the general budget.
4. Anticipate and plan cash flow from the first expenditure through the payment of the last bill relative to the Big Sing.
5. Requests for funding for recital and workshop costs to be paid by the District must be completed by January 1, the year prior to the Big Sing to allow appropriate District planning.

REPERTOIRE

1. Members of this committee should include the host chorus music committee which usually includes the director.
2. Committee should be responsible for massed chorus selections and director assignments within the guidelines of the common repertoire, Constitution and By-Laws of the AMCA and the Upper Midwest District. If possible, directors whose chorus will not solo that year should be given preference when director assignments are made for the massed numbers.
3. "O Canada", "The Star Spangled Banner", and "Salutation" are to be the first three selections of the concert. The visiting nation is to have the honor of having their national anthem sung first, followed by the other national anthem and "Salutation".
4. Solicit bids and assign concert solos based on the Upper Midwest District list of eligible solo choruses for that year.
5. Schedule afterglow solos based on information located in the afterglow section of this manual.
6. As a guideline, it is generally agreed that a good concert provides a variety of listening for the audience.
7. Ideal concert length is one hour and thirty to one hour and forty-five minutes.
8. Work with the MC so there is continuity in the concert program.
9. See the concert section of this guidebook and work with that committee.

DIRECTORS MEETING

1. Should be planned and chaired by the director of the host chorus with responsibilities delegated so that it does not consume an inordinate amount of host director's time.
2. Recital results from adjudication sources could be shared with directors on an individual basis.

3. Provides a good forum for the Professional Adjudicator to share overall impressions and critique of the recital, as well as ideas for improvement.
4. Accompanists should also be invited to attend.

DIRECTORS/ACCOMPANISTS BRUNCH/LUNCHEON

1. Should be paid for by each chorus.
2. Director and accompanist spouse or guest attendance should be at the option of the host chorus &/or director, depending on the facilities available.
3. Reasonable efforts should be made to keep the cost per meal in the moderate price range relative to an inexpensive/moderate/expensive classification.

REPORTS TO BE SUBMITTED

PROGRESS REPORT #1

Due at the Fall Meeting, 4 1/2 years prior to the Big Sing
Report on the General Plan for the Big Sing

Facilities
Hotels
Workshops

PROGRESS REPORT #2

Due at the Fall Meeting, 3 1/2 years prior to the Big Sing
General Report and Update

Progress on facilities
Progress/Plans for Workshops

PROGRESS REPORT #3

Due at the Fall meeting, 2 1/2 years prior to the Big Sing
Contracts for :

Concert Hall
Recital Hall
Afterglows
Massed Chorus Workshop

PROGRESS REPORT #4

Due at the Fall meeting 11/2 years prior to the Big Sing
Hotel /Motel list provided to include prices, number of rooms, amenities such as pool, sauna, restaurant, parking, etc.

Submit massed chorus selections for District consideration.

Update on:

Concert Hall
Recital Hall
Afterglow Hall

Friday & Saturday Workshops
Report on General Sequence of Events
Submit estimated costs to the District for Workshops and request advance funds if needed

PROGRESS REPORT #5

Due at the fall meeting prior to the Big Sing

Cost to singer for:

Saturday Afterglow

Spouse Luncheon

Concert

Arranged Meals

Directors/ Accompanists Luncheon

Approximate distances between major venues

Availability / Costs of public transportation

Maps Provided

Announce conductors of massed selections

Restaurants, locations, general price ranges

Emcee selection

General sequence of events

FINAL REPORT

Due at Fall Meeting following the Big Sing

Accounting of use of advance funds

Report of Scholarship Collection

Confirmation of payment of District and International Fees

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Resolution adopted by the Board of Director which states:

“Therefore be it resolved that the District shall decree any chorus not represented by at least 75% of its membership in attendance at any annual joint concert to be ineligible for a solo opportunity at the next joint concert in which said chorus is scheduled to sing a solo selection

Further be it resolved that exemptions to the above attendance requirement may be granted upon a 2/3 majority vote of the District Board at the SPRING MEETING ONE YEAR PRIOR TO THE AFFECTED JOINT CONCERT.”

Protocol statement approved by AMCA International Board, October, 1989

Protocol in dealing with the President at District Sings

1. Place President on your mailing list to receive copies of key correspondence, minutes of business meetings and other appropriate mailings.
2. Each District should give consideration to extending an invitation to the president

to attend their Big Sing.

3. Upon issuing an invitation to the president asking for his attendance at a District Big Sing, the District/Host Chorus should accept responsibility for the reasonable expenses incurred by the President. When this is not possible, the extent of the expenses being covered should be made clear at the time the invitation is issued.
4. Occasionally, the President may contact a District/Host Chorus initiating the "invitation" either to make a presentation or to fulfill his constitutional obligation. Such a request should be honored and treated the same as if the invitation had been extended by the District/Chorus involved.
5. When the President has been invited to a District Sing but is unable to attend, he may with the agreement of the District/Host Chorus initiating the invitation, appoint a delegate as his substitute. Such delegate will be an elected member of the Executive of the Associated.
6. The following items of protocol should be observed by a District/Host Chorus:
(For President read, President or his Delegate)
 - a. assign a representative to meet and greet the president on his arrival.
 - b. provide all tickets gratis
 - c. reserve seating for the President and his party at the concert
 - d. invite the president to address the men at the rehearsal eg. re scholarship fund and/or motivational comments, etc.
 - e. if there is to be a Directors Meeting or Luncheon, invite the President to attend as a representative of the membership
 - f. provide a place in the program (max. 3 minutes) for the President to address the concert audience and/or make a presentation
7. Consider involving the President (and/or his Executive), in your Workshop as a resource person. eg. Speaker, Roundtable Discussions, Panel Discussions, etc

Amendment to District Constitution, Adopted October 1990

Article VI Section 1 Common Repertoire and Program Committee

The conductors of the member choruses shall comprise the Common Repertoire and Program Committee. Which shall be responsible for recommending Mass Chorus selections for the year after next Big Sing at the Fall Meeting. It shall be the duty of the District President to appoint its chairman, preferably the conductor of the host chorus for the year after next Big Sing. The committee will announce its recommended selections at the Fall Meeting. Proposed Mass Chorus selections for the Big Sing will be voted on at the Annual Meeting one year in advance of the affected Big Sing.

(Received from Jim Egan on 15 Feb 2003)