

Air Force Band Sponsor Information Guide

In the near future, the *Air National Guard Band of the Gulf Coast* from Carswell Field in Worth Forth, Texas will perform in your community. We know you would like as many people as possible to enjoy this cultural event. This guide will assist you by outlining your responsibilities to assure the best possible presentation of our performance. In some cases we will have done some of the work for you. As our on-site representative, you should monitor the events leading to the performance and notify us if any changes become necessary.

Your responsibilities will fall under two general areas:

1. Obtain a performance site
2. Advertise the performance

Perhaps you have experience in sponsoring a service band performance or have accomplished most of the required tasks by now. Regardless, this guide can assist you by providing some of our ideas and delineating our policies. The following pages define our logistic requirements and your financial obligations in accordance with military policy. If you have any questions not answered by this guide please contact us by directing your questions to the address and phone number on the cover of this guide.

Public Service Concerts

The Air Force provides concerts open to the general public **free of charge** as a service to the community. The sponsor must insure that the handicapped have reasonable access to our performance in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and local regulations. The Air Force will not tolerate the exclusion of concert goers based on race, religion, cultural, or national origin. A sponsor shall not offer preferred ticket access or limit concert site information to its subscribers or business patrons at the exclusion of the general public.

Air Force Policy On Expenses

Under the policy in effect circa 1999, the United States Air Force covers all expenses incurred in travel, including housing and meals. The Air Force does not charge an admission fee for its performance.

Local sponsors or authorities must absorb the costs of auditorium rental, technician fees (stage manager, electrical or lighting engineer, or sound technician), hiring of union labor (when required), electricity access fees (mostly for out door city park performances), and all forms of advertising.

Many performance sites require the purchase of an events insurance policy. We will supply you with documentation proving our carrier of Air Force insurance upon your request. You may also have to submit an events or noise permit accompanied by a small fee as regulated by some municipalities. Your city government will provide you with the correct forms.

Concert Site Criterion

The selection of a concert site often depends upon the type of ensemble performing. The following lists the most desirable settings for our primary ensembles.

Concert Band

An auditorium that seats at least 300 with a stage dimension of 50 feet wide by 50 feet deep provides the most optimal conditions for our largest ensemble. We can compress the ensemble to fit on an area as small as 30 feet wide by 20 feet deep. Auditoriums with a permanent stage work best. We will consider gymnasiums and smaller auditoriums with portable stages. Auditoriums often have schedules laid out a year in advance; for this reason we suggest you aggressively procure the facility for the agreed upon date before another event or organization acquires it.

Jazz Band

Like the concert band, auditoriums enhance the quality of the jazz band performance better than anywhere else. However, this ensemble can more easily adjust to a less spacious room. Although it requires less stage area than the concert band (30 feet wide by 20 feet deep to as little as 20 feet wide by 12 feet deep) it does require much in the way of access to electrical power. Dance halls, multipurpose rooms (as found in community centers, senior centers, or civic organization buildings) with a minimum 75 feet by 100 feet dimensions will also facilitate this ensemble. Smaller auditoriums frequently service a busy daily schedule. Make sure that you allow for our set up time (1 to 2 hours) and pack up time (1 hour) so that we do not interfere with other multipurpose facility activities such as bingo, lunch, exercise class, etc.

Brass Quintet

This group prefers the ambiance and acoustics of small auditoriums or lecture halls and the more intimate stages found in public buildings or museums. They can fit in a stage area of less than 100 square feet. This group does not need electrical power.

Popular Music Ensemble

A small stage or alcove of about one hundred square feet (depending on the venue and purpose of music) easily satisfies the needs of this group. They have electrical requirements for the non-acoustic instruments and amplified vocals. They can also perform as a featured ensemble in a medium to large outdoor stage or auditorium. Gymnasiums also frequently host the popular music ensemble.

Ceremonial Band

Although the function differs from the concert band, the ceremonial band requires approximately the same floor area as the concert band minus large percussion and electric keyboard. Often we require some electrical source to support a public address system.

General Requirements For Each Concert Site

(Primarily relating to the needs of the Concert and Jazz Band)

- We ask that the performance area has electricity for, at the very least, an amplified announcer whom may publicly acknowledge your sponsorship.
- The site should have about 45 chairs **without arms** available at the time of our set up.
- We can supply our own music stands but greatly appreciate when you have them ready for us if you have any at your disposal.
- The commander should have his own private dressing room.
- In addition to the commander's private room, securable dressing rooms (one for men and one for women) make our engagement at your facility more satisfying for all the musicians thus enabling them to better prepare for the performance. Please note that **public restrooms are not appropriate** due to lack of size and security.
- An equipment truck will need to approach the performance site or loading dock within a reasonable distance. Because we have many large cases of equipment, a clear and easy path to the stage area will expedite our set-up. The empty equipment boxes should have a temporary holding area either back stage or away from audience view. After unloading equipment, the truck will need an area to park for the duration of the concert that will not compromise patron parking. A bus will also need to park out of the way after our members have disembarked for the concert site.

Concert Promotion

Promotion of the concert is the responsibility of the sponsor. Because of our distance away from the performance site, we require a local sponsor to actively oversee the advertising process for the concert. Some advertisers and organizations with circulating notices or public bulletins will offer free airtime or page space as a matter of community service. Other advertising avenues may ask for remuneration. We ask that you use every advertising method available to you while employing your sensibilities and discretion when advertising requires a burdensome financial compensation.

A sparsely attended performance poorly reflects the true spirit of your community and can inadvertently lessen the chances of future performances in your area by our organization and possibly other military bands. We hope that you understand the importance of aggressive advertising and great value we place upon you in pursuing this task. A well-attended concert allows us to recognize your efforts and those of fellow sponsors before a greater population of the community you serve.

If you have a military base near you, especially an Air Force base, the Public Relations Office will often know about our visit to your area. They can offer you guidance and assistance with advertising in many cases.

For your convenience, we have listed different types of advertisement media that you should employ and a sample outlined timetable that you can adapt to your promotional campaign. We realize that your budget will determine the extent to which you follow our ideal promotional program.

Types Of Media

- Most *newspapers* have a person that routinely handles this type of event. Local merchants or clubs will often agree to cover the cost of an ad. Ads paid for by merchants may state that the merchant paid for this ad as a community service. It must not give the impression that the Air Force endorses their business.
- *Television* spots that occur at prime viewing times obviously reach more people. Ask them about their community calendar; provide date, time, and location data.
- *Radio* news releases prove most effective when released near the date of the concert (refer to our “What to do” time table). The band superintendent, a band representative or the commander may agree to offer a scripted broadcast phone interview if asked. Provide concert information to all radio stations regardless of music genre.
- Other – Although you may find many free forms of advertising (church bulletins, organization event boards, etc.) the sole reliance on these no-expense forms of advertising does not enhance the professional image of our organization. We ask that you consider these forms as an augmentation of your primary advertising efforts and use your common sense.

What To Do

(Time prior to the concert)

4 to 8 weeks – Full-page ad with photos and a ticket coupon (if you decide to provide tickets). The ad needs to state that the **Air National Guard Band of the Gulf Coast** or the 531st Air Force Band – will have a concert in your community. Give the date, time, location, and how to obtain free tickets (if you decide to provide tickets).

Some municipalities in association with public utilities companies will often agree to post a notice about the concert in the utility bills as a public service.

2 weeks – Two general announcements stating that the **Air National Guard Band of the Gulf Coast** will perform in your area. Include the information stated in the previous ad.

10 days – Story on the history of the band. Stories on the soloist(s) listed on the program, including photos from the press kit. Run an ad on the entertainment page.

7 days – Run an ad on the entertainment page. Provide date, time, and location information to local organizations so that they can post fliers at their facilities or place notices in their bulletins. Consider contacting the following: high school music directors and their band booster organization, local university or community college music directors, veterans homes, veterans organizations (American Legion, V.F.W.), the local Air Force recruiter, high school J.A.F.R.O.T.C. or college A.F.R.O.T.C., Civil Air Patrol, city recreation centers, Senior centers, Civic groups (D.A.R., Lions Club, Rotary, I.O.O.F., Masons, B.P.O.E., Y.M.C.A., P.A.L., Kiwanis, etc.) churches, local arts council, local National Public Radio or Classical radio stations, local cable network (for their community announcement scroll) etc. Remember that many of these groups will advertise at no charge but you must make an effort to inform them and remind them as the date approaches.

5 days – A feature story on the band plus an ad in the entertainment page.

4 days – General announcement providing date, time, and location information about the performance. Run ads on billboards or electronic marquis (at banks, coliseums etc.)

3 days – Story on a band member who formerly resided in your local area. Provide a general announcement with the date, time, and location of the performance.

2 days – Photo and feature story on the commander/conductor. Run an ad in the entertainment page. Remind radio and television stations to announce concert information.

1 day – List the program. Stress that the concert will have “free admission” presented to you by the United States Air Force through your local sponsor. Run a large ad or a full-page ad detailing concert information.

Day of concert – Run a general news story that stresses the concert charges *no admission fee*. Run a photo of the band and provide a map with directions to the performance site if necessary. Have radio and television advertisements running up to the time of the concert. If you decide to regulate attendance by distributing tickets, please inform the public that we will not turn anyone away at the door short of grossly violating fire ordinances when applicable. Often, sponsors will bring undistributed tickets to the concert and simply distribute them on a first come basis.

As a general policy when the sponsor decides to distribute tickets, we ask that you provide ushers to collect tickets. You may ask those without tickets to wait for those who have tickets until ten (10) minutes before the beginning of the performance. At that time allow all those who do not have tickets to take the available seats.

In the past, some sponsors have relaxed their efforts to attract an audience in the few days before the concert for fear of exhausting tickets and overfilling the auditorium. In these instances many potential patrons forgot about the performance leaving several seats unoccupied. For best results, advertising must start with an initially large notice followed by a period of light yet consistent advertising that gradually intensifies up to the day of the performance. We appreciate you informing us about your promotional efforts.

Please present a copy of all publicity, including ads, programs, and tickets to our operations representative. We use successful copies as samples in future publicity packets. Please mail follow-up publicity to us at the address below:

NCOIC Publicity
531st Air Force Band
200 Hensley Avenue
Carswell Field, Fort Worth, TX 76127-1672

Promotional Materials

Our publicity kit can save you time and effort. Although it provides mostly general material, you may adapt this information to suit your advertising ideas. We can provide, upon request, a CDrom or electronic format of this information if it accelerates your efforts.

Mayor's Proclamation

We greatly benefit from having the city and community officially behind your promotional efforts. You may request the mayor and city council to put their official influence behind this musical event for the people of their city. In the past, many mayors

have declared the concert date “**Air National Guard Band of the Gulf Coast Day**” with all the appropriate regalia and official newspaper proclamations. If you believe this will occur, please notify us immediately so that we may prepare to reciprocate with letters or plaques of appreciation presented simultaneous to our receiving honors during intermission or at the very beginning of our program.

Printed Programs

You will have to bear the expense of printing programs when applicable. We will notify you if we require this service from you. A camera-ready program, with space for your logo, comes with the publicity kit.

Miscellaneous

(Refer to the *Stage Manager’s Guide* for more detailed information about our staging and pre-concert preparation logistics.)

Ushers and Color Guard

R.O.T.C. units, American Legionnaires, and Boy Scout troops have willingly provided this service in the past. Not only can they distribute programs, control parking lot/pedestrian traffic, collect tickets and assist handicapped and elderly with seating but they can also participate in the opening of the program by posting the flag. Notify us if you have volunteers so that we may coordinate efforts. Many military bases have a Color Guard unit suited to our needs. Contact your local military base Public Relations Office; in almost every instance, they will know of our performance in the area and will gladly offer assistance.

Reserved Seating for Special Guests & Dignitaries

You may wish to reserve a section of audience seating for dignitaries – we encourage you to do so. Your local military base may wish to coordinate with you in setting aside an area for high-ranking military officials. Remember that the smaller you can keep the restricted area the easier it will be for you to control it.

Our Arrival at the Concert Site

We will expect to meet you or your representative at an agreed upon time at the concert site to guarantee our access to the hall, stage, stage equipment, and dressing rooms. We will also want to discuss projected audience numbers and the degree of advertising efforts accomplished.

You should provide for us a list of sponsor names and businesses including the names of all those who have contributed to bringing this concert to fruition. We will recognize VIPs (the Mayor, Base Commander, local Air Force or Air National Guard recruiter, retired military dignitaries, etc.) at intermission. Because all band members will have thoughts and efforts focused on the performance and its logistics, we ask that you take it upon yourself to socialize with as many audience members as possible in effect serving as our liaison. Afterwards, you can give us feedback and your perception of audience response. Many times an audience member will come up to you saying that he once belonged to our band or has a relative in our band. It shows favorable community outreach for us to verbally acknowledge them.

Introduction of the Band

If a sponsor representative or local official wishes to publicly thank the band for appearing, let us know before the concert begins and we can arrange it. Otherwise, the band has a standard opening production where we will need no introduction.

Thanks

Thank you in advance for all of your hard work. We understand what it takes to put together this concert and appreciate your efforts. Please contact us if you have any questions.

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