

Needs of Student Music Groups  
A SYTA Associate Guide



Presented by Festivals of Music and Music In the Parks

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## **Types of music tours**

### **Performance/workshop tours**

**Auditioned performances and parades-** For these events, groups must submit audition materials and be accepted for a specific performance. Most of your major parades have some type of audition procedure

Pros- groups get regional or national recognition

Cons- application procedure can be lengthy and approval might take months which can make planning challenging.

**Non-auditioned performances and parades-** Many attractions offer the opportunity for public performances.

Pros- you can plan a public performance just about any time of year. Usually no charge

Cons- Facilities and equipment will vary. You might have to scramble to find needed equipment. Sometimes there might not be much of an audience.

**Workshops or clinic-** These are usually scheduled just for an individual group. At a clinic or workshop, a clinician (usually a performer or college professor) will observe the group perform and then work with the students. The clinician will discuss different sections of the performed work and might ask them to play specific sections again.

Pros- available any time of year

Cons- you need to find space for them to have the clinic and locate a clinician. Although cost is less than a festival, there are still costs involved in paying the clinician and renting the facilities. Clinician might point out weaknesses that could be perceived as a criticism of the teacher.

### **Festivals and competitions**

Festivals can be either competitive or non competitive. Either way, you have judges (adjudicators) who evaluate and rate the performance of the group. Many include a clinic where one of the judges works with the ensemble after their performance. Most competitive events will allow groups to perform for evaluation and not compete.

Pros- offer an educational component that can help sell the trip to the administration.

Cons- Can have a major impact on your itinerary since you have to work around their schedule.

## **Needs of student performing groups**

### **Performance Venues**

Things groups will ask:

Will there be an audience?

If an outdoor performing venue, what about inclement weather?

Where will the group unload? Are there changing facilities?

### **Choral Groups**

There are basically two types of singing ensembles: groups that move and groups that don't. Their needs are slightly different.

*Stationary Groups*- number between 15-100 performers average group is 50

Concert Choirs, Chamber Choirs, Gospel Choirs, Vocal Jazz Choirs

Venue- stationary groups are the most flexible needing a minimum of 20' wide by at least 12' deep

Well tuned piano acoustic piano (if you need to plug it into the wall, it's not acoustic)

You will need choral risers or area with steps. Steps need to arch towards the conductor.

Microphones and PA system- since some of your groups might use prerecorded accompaniment, the PA system should have a monitor and CD playback capability.

Music stand for the director and podium (small raised platform) if this is a larger group.

*Groups that incorporate movement into their performances*

Show Choir- Between 10- 30 performers

Venue-larger flat unobstructed performing area should have at least a 30' wide by 20' area. Carpet can be an issue. Since movement is involved, the performing area should be raised at least 2 feet above the audience floor level so that the movement may be seen by the audience. Watch out for lights and wall mounted speakers. Large props and stage sets may be used.

Some show choirs and vocal jazz groups might have a live combo of guitar, piano, bass and drums. That will need to be accommodated at floor level and will need several power sources.

Microphones and PA system- about half of show choirs use prerecorded accompaniment, the PA system should have a monitor and CD playback capability. You should have at least 4 microphones for show choirs. They would prefer at least one be cordless.

Music stand for the director and podium. Electric or acoustic keyboard may be needed.

## **Instrumental Groups**

Since they will have instruments, there are several additional concerns:

Motor Coach loading and unloading

Access to performance area (walkway, building entrances)

Steps can be very difficult for large instruments

Storage area for cases.

Two sizes of groups- Jazz Ensembles or Concert Bands/ Orchestras

*Jazz ensembles*- 10-25 performers

Venue-can fit into smaller area about 20' by 20'

They are loud and will carry over crowd noise.

You will need a keyboard (electric or acoustic)

PA system with at least 4 microphones for soloists. They will have to be placed at several locations in the band, and will need to be able to reach to the back of the stage.

Several power sources.

Chairs and music stands for each performer.

Some groups will request risers for their second and third rows.

You might need to locate bass, guitar amplifiers and a drum set since they do not always travel with them.

*Concert Bands and Orchestras*-25-85 performers

Venue- at least 35' wide and 30' feet deep at the minimum

Chairs and music stands for each performer

Music stand for the director and podium (small raised platform) if this is a larger group

You might need a keyboard (electric or acoustic) especially if it is a younger string ensemble.

You will need to have access to large concert percussion

Chimes

4 tympani- 23, 26, 29, 32 inch

Concert Bass Drum

Xylophone

In addition, they might need a vibraphone or marimba. A local music teacher is an excellent resource for this equipment.

Orchestras have cello and string bass players which need extra room and have trouble with hard floors.

## **Transportation and storage concerns**

### Uniforms

Most choral and instrumental groups will have uniforms to transport in addition to their regular luggage. Uniforms must be stored in a secure, dry area when not being used.

### Instruments

Most instruments will fit in the storage area on coaches. Many instruments (especially the string instruments) are very sensitive to temperature and moisture. Arrangements should be made to secure space at the hotel for delicate and expensive instruments. If you are flying to a destination or have large equipment, consider renting an equipment truck and transporting by ground.

### Instrument rentals

Before you contact a professional rental company, check with a music teacher in the area where your group is performing. For a donation, they might lend you the instruments for the day at a reasonable price.

### **Where to start:**

Choirs require the least amount of equipment and are more flexible in types of space.

Jazz Ensembles would be the next step, since they do not have the space and equipment needs of concert bands and orchestras

Have information on the performance space and available equipment preprinted so that it can be sent to the teacher and travel planner.

### Stage dimensions

Number of microphones

Where to enter and exit

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