



# ONLINE AUCTIONS: THE DO'S AND DON'TS

ZOOM PRESENTATION FOR NEW JERSEY CHORAL CONSORTIUM

**APRIL 11, 2021; 3:00 - 4:30 PM**

JAMIE GREEN, FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT CHAIR, MONMOUTH CIVIC CHORUS

## Monmouth Civic Chorus—Who We Are

- Community chorus in our 72d year, based in Red Bank, Monmouth County
- Middle-class, middle-aged, white, with 80-100 auditioned members.
- Repertoire: Choral music appropriate for the larger chorus, though also works for smaller ensembles; languages, eras
- No employees; Board primarily singing members

## What's Notable About MCC

- High level of member volunteerism
- Scholarship program: \$80,000 in funding for 100 high-school seniors over 35 years
- International tours every three years (2018-Baltic States)

# SOURCES OF FUNDING—NORMAL TIMES

- Member dues
- Concert tickets/season subscribers
- Government money and some corporate grants
- Solicited donations for four fund-raising campaigns yearly
- Unsolicited donations from supporters and members
- Annual fund-raising gala—paid tickets; with silent, chance auctions



# SOURCES OF FUNDING: ABNORMAL TIMES

- Member dues—maintained at pre-Covid level
- No charge for virtual concert(s) and Sings of major works
- Government money and some corporate grants
- Unsolicited donations from many supporters and members
- Solicited donations for major campaigns
- Annual fund-raising gala—NOT ticketed; follows one-week online auction

# ONLINE AUCTION: WHY

- We needed the money
- We wanted to replicate a 'normal' auction
- We had left-over gifts from 2020
- Fellow board member had experience using Charity Auctions Today platform
- The price seemed right

# ONLINE AUCTION: HOW

- Multiple platforms exist; choose carefully
- Tailor platform to your needs
- Charity Auctions Today (CAT)



# THE BOTTOM LINE: WHAT IT WILL COST YOU

- 'Free CAT' auction takes 5% of what you sell through its platform (*NOT* donations); Prepaid: \$297-25 items, \$497-100 items; Custom
- Remember the fees charged by the credit card companies
- Payment promised from 3-5 business days—all electronic

# WHAT WE'VE LEARNED (SO FAR)

- Start planning and acting much earlier than usual for in-person auction
- Don't do it alone; get a good team with a broad range of skills, especially online technology and photography
- Create (free) demo auctions before hand; use to 'sell' concept to stakeholders
- Set a realistic budget





# MONMOUTH CIVIC CHORUS

JAMIE GREEN, FINANCIAL DEVELOPMENT CHAIR

[MONMOUTHCIVICCHORUS.ORG](http://MONMOUTHCIVICCHORUS.ORG)

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# The Do's and Don'ts of Running an Online Auction

Presented by Maryann McGuire  
Director of Development  
Rise Up Chorus

# Software for Your Auction

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[www.32Auctions.com](http://www.32Auctions.com)

[www.biddingowl.com](http://www.biddingowl.com)



# How to Solicit Donations

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Ask local merchants including, but not limited to

- Restaurants
- Theaters and Performing Arts Venues
- Specialty shops
- Movies
- Mom and Pop stores
- Local businesses such as a Photographer, Bakery, Spas, Candy or ice cream shop, Car Wash

# How to Solicit Donations

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## Ask Chorus Members

- Re-gift something they don't need
- Clearance items found while shopping
- Purchase new items from Outlets and favorite stores
- Ask each voice part (SATB) to contribute to a group basket
- Handmade items
- Donation from their "Side gig"
- Lessons or experience they can provide

# How to Solicit Donations

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## Employers of Chorus Members

- Employers may donate from their products
- Employers may donate money towards expenses
- Employers may provide a discount on services such as printing



# How to Solicit Donations

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Ask your “Partner Businesses” if they can help.

- The company that prints your programs or letterhead
- The company that made your T-shirts,
- The company that supplied your music folders
- The company from which you purchased printed music or instruments

# Soliciting Donations from Online Merchants

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Many online Merchants will donate to your Auction.

The process is time consuming but may have a big pay-off.

Some vendors have firm deadlines such as 60 days or even 6 months prior to your event.

Use Excel or Google Sheets to organize your work.

# Soliciting Donations from Online Merchants

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## Cold Calling

- Draft a brief script/description of your Chorus and why you are raising funds. (what makes your Chorus unique?)
- Ask who handles donations to Nonprofits.
- Ask how they prefer to be contacted. (email, phone call, online form, etc.)
- Keep good notes for each call.
- Be patient and polite.



# Soliciting Donations from Online Merchants

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Online Vendors may have a dedicated link for seeking donations.

Look for key words.

- “Donations”
- “Community”
- “Contact us” or “email us”

# Soliciting Donations from Online Merchants

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Pinterest has hundreds of sources for your Auction.

- Not all information is up-to-date
- Some “pins” are looking to sell you something
- A good place to start
- Can be overwhelming

# Engaging Participation of Your Chorus Members

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Create an Auction Committee.

- Chairperson
- Someone to oversee the Auction website
- Someone to manage the spreadsheet
- Photographer (for pictures for the Auction site)
- Editor to write descriptions of each “basket”
- People to solicit donations (as many as possible)
- People to wrap or package the baskets
- Person(s) to manage advertising

# Engaging Participation of Your Chorus Members

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All Chorus members can

- Purchase something to donate.
- Solicit donations.
- Ask friends and relatives to donate.
- Ask friends and relatives to support the Auction by bidding on baskets.

# Engaging Participation of Your Chorus Members

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Encourage each voice part to contribute to a group basket.

- Maybe the Altos are all contributing to a lottery basket
- Maybe the Basses are all contributing to a “Poker Night basket” which could include cards, poker chips, snacks and some adult beverages
- Maybe the Auction Committee will contribute to a “Basket of Cheer”
- Maybe the Board can all contribute towards a large screen TV.



# Advertising Your Auction

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Start advertising your Auction about a month before your event.

- Facebook Event
- Other Social media
- Flyers
- Print media/Newspapers
- Email
- Chamber of Commerce
- [www.TrickyTray.com](http://www.TrickyTray.com)
- Your Chorus website

# Before you start...

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Your Chairperson or Marketing person should create the following

- A Donation letter on letterhead should include Auction website, what you are raising funds for, dates of Auction, pick-up or delivery options, etc.
- Flyer (PDF & jpeg) for use on Social Media and in local newspapers
- Draft and keep essays needed to complete online donation requests.
- Copies of ST-5 for anyone soliciting donations.
- A place to store the donated items.
- A suggested list of ideas for baskets to share with members

# Supplies

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Decide how you will package your Prizes.

- Prizes could be packaged in boxes
- Prizes could be packaged in baskets
- Both baskets and boxes

# Supplies

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Packaging in boxes you will need

- Boxes
- Bubble wrap for breakables
- Packaging tape
- Markers

# Supplies

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Packaging in baskets you will need

- Lots of baskets (donated and from Thrift stores)
- Cello bags in various sizes
- Pipe Cleaners or cable ties to close the bags
- Colored ribbons
- Tissue paper and/or shredded paper to line the basket
- Tape



# Good Ideas for Your Online Auction

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If a Chorus member belongs to a Theater group, he or she is the person who should ask for a donation from that Theater group.

# Good Ideas for Your Online Auction

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Create a system for record-keeping so that each Vendor is not approached by several people.

# Good Ideas for Your Online Auction

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Be sure to recognize the individuals and vendors who donated to your Auction.

# Good Ideas for Your Online Auction

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Not all Auction visitors want to buy stuff. Include information on how to **donate** to your Chorus for those who may be so inclined.

# Make Music Happen, A Virtual Auction

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[www.32Auctions.com/RiseUpChorus](http://www.32Auctions.com/RiseUpChorus)



# Contact me

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