2018-2019: A Year in Review

I am writing to you through two lenses this year: as Chair of the Development Committee through mid-June and as Interim Executive Producer, having served in this capacity from mid-October to mid-January and then again, as of June 1.

The Singers program was blessed with the artistic expertise of Michael Stanek who both created the show concept and choreographed Nothing’s Gonna Stop Us Now. As we left the 50th year of Wisconsin Singers behind us, the title was a fitting call to action for our troupe, alumni, and audience members as everything we did was dedicated to the continued growth of this invaluable program. With 29 shows on the schedule, the Singers entertained audiences from The Villages, Florida to Hayward, WI.

The performing season began with a frigid show at the Outlets in the Dells. The temperature 30 degrees and with electrical needs that seemingly shorted out the Mall’s huge holiday tree, the troupe scrambled to get the show onstage in time to entertain shoppers even while experiencing frozen trumpet valves that refused to cooperate with the weather!

Singers carried on Homecoming parade tradition, renting a generator, loading the rhythm section into a trailer and walking behind with mics for vocalists and horns as one of only 2 live music acts to entertain the thousands in attendance.

The On Campus shows at the Overture are always the focus of the first semester’s long hours of rehearsal and behind the scenes work by our stellar business team. Dozens of hours go into the promotional planning of the only shows we do that are “self-sponsored” by the students themselves. Just weeks before their Overture show, the Singers’ Executive Producer took an unexpected emergency medical leave. In true Wisconsin Singers fashion, the troupe accepted these abrupt change in personnel with grace, maintaining their self-discipline, work ethic, and dedication moving forward through a successful weekend of On Campus events and on to the end of the semester.
Second semester kicked off with our annual trip to Hayward following the return of the Executive Producer. After two long days of what is called “reboot camp”, the troupe headed to northern Wisconsin where they were treated like visiting rock stars. From the music student assembly and Q & A session with 200 middle/high school musicians to the two back-to-back evenings of shows, every minute is spent building an even stronger sense of community that serves us well throughout the rest of the semester.

Throughout the semester, the Singers business team worked on eleven “SPS” (Singers Partnered Shows) events, taking full responsibility for everything from media promotions to ticket sales and volunteer management. Our B-team, as they are fondly called, was particularly connected to the performing troupe and often traveled with us to assist even when it was not for an SPS event.

Spring break was another resounding success as well. The Bahama House in Daytona Beach welcomed the Singers to their family hotel that is situated oceanside. Our shows at The Villages, expertly promoted by the Wisconsin Clubs and David Sturm, saw an increase in attendance and the days spent on the beach were warm and much appreciated by our exhausted troupe of touring performers. With their batteries recharged, the semester of performances finished strong with standing ovations at every show.

The Executive Producer resigned in late May but with their show title in mind, Nothing’s Gonna Stop Us Now!, the troupe ended with two outstanding summer shows including our annual visit to Communityfest in Neenah on the 4th of July. The students said their goodbyes at the traditional Friends and Families banquet in early August where they rounded out their season together by paying tribute to the good times and memories, while expressing appreciation for each other developed throughout the course of 13 months of hard work, impressive entertainment, and leadership training.
Our Development Committee, comprised of Singers alumni and parents of Singers past and present, was hard at work throughout the entire year. Coming off of a successful 50th anniversary fundraising effort that increased donor income from around $50,000 to nearly $100,000, the Committee chose to increase its annual goal to $120,000. This 20% increase was created with the intent to begin to build reserves for emergency equipment needs or in the case of lower concert income.

The DC hired a new development consultant, Jen Davie, who is located in the Madison area. With the incredible enthusiasm and professional planning by WS alumnus, Greg Schultz, our second annual Giving Tuesday fundraising event in November increased from our 2018 total of $5700 to $23,840. We grew our mailing solicitations to twice per year and continued to work on building relationships with monthly and major donors. Our end of year donor totals topped $120,000 allowing us the opportunity to begin our 52nd season with reserves and a stronger cash flow.

I remain eternally grateful to the students of the 18-19 troupe for their patience and perseverance and to the WS Executive Board and Development Committee who maintained their dedication to growing the educational excellence of our 51 year tradition of outreach.

Robin Whitty Novotny ‘74
Executive Producer/Director Emerita
Wisconsin Singers

Development Committee – Friends of Wisconsin Singers
Robin.whittynovotny@wisc.edu
608.332.8245
THE WISCONSIN SINGERS' MISSION STATEMENT

The Wisconsin Singers provides quality music education to collegiate level musicians without regard to race, color creed, national origin, sexual orientation or identity.

We specialize in teaching music in performance through a variety of American Pop genres.

We supply professional stage performance and teaching experiences nationwide.

We serve many diverse communities and audiences that include public and private school K-12 music students, University of Wisconsin Alumni groups, and community service organizations, as well as the entertainment needs of select corporate patrons.

Education

Wisconsin Singers provides a unique, high quality, educational experience in the staged performance of American popular music that is both career focused and leadership oriented.

Outreach

Wisconsin Singers provides a dynamic connection between the University of Wisconsin-Madison and in-state and out-of-state high school music education programs by conducting workshops, master classes, and through concerts and public performances.

Public Relations

For fifty years, the Wisconsin Singers has promoted a positive public image for the University of Wisconsin–Madison. It supports the UW’s educational prominence through its delivery of a superior level of learning, entertainment, and public service as well as providing significant student employment and scholarship opportunities.
2018 – 2019 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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WISCONSIN SINGERS 18-19 FACTS

- Singers completed its 51st anniversary season in existence at the UW.
- 33 students participated in Wisconsin Singers, representing over 25 different majors across campus.
- Performers spent approximately 350 hours this performing season in rehearsal.
- Performers spent more than 400 hours this academic year traveling and performing in more than 33 different venues - plus another 40 hours during the summer.
- The troupe toured during spring break to do 2 shows for alumni chapters in the Villages in Florida.
- Performers donated over 50 hours of time to shows for campus events.
- Our 7 Interns worked 6-10 hours per week throughout the academic year and student staff members who double as performers donated another 4-6 hours per week.
- Singers cliniced and shared the stage with over 600 K-12 students in workshops geared to improve performance skills, followed by a question and answer session where WS students articulated information about their Wisconsin Experience.
- Performers entertained more than 30,000 throughout the state and nation.
- The Singers again hosted On Campus at the Overture Center, attaining over 93% attendance at both performances.
- The program raised more than $20,000 in scholarship funds for UW students.
- Singers remained financially independent from the UW for the 26th year.
18-19 YEAR END BUSINESS REVIEW:

Season number 51 is in the books, and it was certainly one to remember. It was a year that once again showcased the talent and resiliency of the Wisconsin Singers, as the group once again mounted a world class stage show for tens of thousands of audience members in over 35 communities, while dealing with behind the scenes personal medical struggles and the ultimate resignation of our Executive Producer. We are lucky and thankful that Robin was able and willing to step out of retirement to provide leadership and stability to finish the season. It is a showcase of her talents, but more importantly, a verification of the strength, fortitude, and passion from all of the Wisconsin Singers to be able to adjust and adapt to changing leadership and challenges without missing a beat.

Financially, the 18-19 season was a bit of a mixed bag. We were able to bring show revenue up and essentially maintain our new strong donation base. (Thank you to all who contributed to our success!). We did see a dip in On Campus revenue due to the 50th anniversary the year before, but that was to be expected. The biggest changes were in our expense profile this year. We naturally faced some additional expenses due to increased bookings, but also absorbed a mandatory salary / fringe increase imposed by the UW, as well as some higher equipment expenditures due to more mics needing to be replaced as a result of FCC bandwidth changes.

However, we did end the year in positive financial territory, which is a huge success, and were able to continue to grow our reserve to begin the 19-20 season.

We continue to rely upon the support of our alumni, fans, and friends to ensure our continued success and existence. Such is the way of most non-profits. However, with your help we have been able to weather some difficult times in the past, and are now instead focused on growing for the future. That makes it a very exciting time for the Wisconsin Singers!

On Wisconsin!

Christopher Novotny
Director of Business Operations
Wisconsin Singers Alumnus 1993 – 1997
### FINANCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2018-2019</th>
<th>2017-2018</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Revenue</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Performances</td>
<td>$154,791</td>
<td>$139,310</td>
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<tr>
<td>Donations / Grants</td>
<td>$120,249</td>
<td>$126,563</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scholarship Matches</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Merchandise Sales</td>
<td>$18,253</td>
<td>$17,289</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Revenue</strong></td>
<td>$303,294</td>
<td>$293,162</td>
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| **Expenses**         |           |           |
| Program Service      | $255,041  | $230,281  |
| Scholarship          | $17,838   | $19,552   |
| Equipment            | $14,412   | $6,473    |
| **Total Expenses**   | $287,291  | $256,306  |

**Profit / Loss**

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>2018-2019</th>
<th>2017-2018</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Profit / Loss</strong></td>
<td>$16,003</td>
<td>$36,856</td>
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**Merchandise sales include wristbands (on site).**
2018-2019 REVENUE

- Performances: $120,249 (39.65%)
- Donations: $154,791 (51.04%)
- Scholarship Matches: $10,000 (3.30%)
- Merchandise Sales: $18,253 (6.02%)

Total Revenue: $343,391
2018-2019 EXPENSES

- Program Service: $255,041 (88.77%)
- Scholarship: $17,838 (6.21%)
- Equipment: $14,412 (5.02%)

- Program Service
- Scholarship
- Equipment
Wisconsin Singers Spring 2019
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In honor of Bob and
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Wisconsin Singers Spring 2019
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WI Singers New Additions!