

PERFORMANCE FESTIVALS + VENUES GUIDE

7 WAYS FESTIVALS BENEFIT YOUR PROGRAM

6 TIPS TO ENHANCE FESTIVAL PERFORMANCE, ENJOYMENT, AND GROWTH

2026 FESTIVALS + VENUES LISTING

Music festivals, are they worth the effort? They can be some of the very best moments in shaping the musical development of students, as well as personal growth as an educator. Most festivals are sponsored by their state music education associations. These festivals allow groups the opportunity to progress through a tiered system, based on the outcome of their performance rating or score. Often, a group will perform at a district level, then move on to the state level or they perform at preliminaries (prelims) and ultimately can have a chance to perform at finals.

Festivals are your program's BFF

Let Simple Raise help you create learning opportunities and performance memories that last a lifetime.

Fundraise Faster with **ZERO FEES**.
You keep 100% of your donations.

Download our starter kit and get raising at
simpleraise.com/festivalfundraising26

Made even sweeter with  **CutTime**

Simple♥**Raise**

7 WAYS FESTIVALS BENEFIT YOUR PROGRAM

- **Sharpen your students' ability to sight read** both as an individual and as part of an ensemble.
- **Expose your program members to new literature and styles** that they will likely fall in love with as they work towards the festival performance experience.
- **Allow your students to see and hear their peers perform** from across their district, state, region and potentially the nation.
- **Visit new destinations** your students otherwise may not have the opportunity to see.
- **Challenge each individual performer** to enhance their technique, artistry, and musicality.
- **Enable you with a rare opportunity to observe your peers** in action and take inspiration for your program and teaching style.
- **Bring you, your students, and supporters closer together** as a performing fine arts community.

If you have a younger, less experienced group, we recommend approaching your first festival more as a 'discovery' opportunity. Some festivals will allow your group to attend and perform for 'comments only', allowing you and your students to receive constructive critique without the pressure of scores from the adjudicators (judges). This way, everyone can relax and focus on enjoying the overall learning experience without undue pressure.



6 TIPS TO ENHANCE FESTIVAL PERFORMANCE, ENJOYMENT, AND GROWTH

- **Consider starting with a local festival event to simplify fundraising and travel logistics.** You also might consider combining with another music program at your school to optimize costs as well as planning and chaperone resources.
- **Prepare students to focus more on the music performance aspect of the festival experience, rather than just the score.** Teach them ratings are an important part of the development journey, not a final judgment on their total abilities as a musician.
- **Select pieces that will challenge students to grow beyond their musical comfort zone.** Literature choices should be well rounded for the individual and the ensemble—not an attempt to impress the adjudicators with composer notoriety and difficulty.
- **Schedule reflection time with your students post festival.** Play back the performance if the recording is available plus ask them about the overall experience and discuss with you and each other what worked well and what could be even better the next time.
- **Communicate the success of your students' festival performance.** Brag on both the performance achievements AND learning journey successes to the school, district and community-at-large.
- **Educate your students, parents, and other community stakeholders on the true meaning of the festival rating/scoring system.** Help them understand that the score is just one assessment element in their student's learning journey. Emphasize the positive growth experiences along with the honors and skill achievements the individuals and ensemble received at the festival.

It's pure joy to witness individual and ensemble growth through a festival experience. What are you waiting for? Make festivals your best friend ever! A well-suited festival experience will help you accelerate your student's progress towards their goals. Your administrators/district leaders will see that success and excitement emanating from your program. It's a win-win!

WRITTEN BY JEFF DODD.

Jeff Dodd is a retired educator from St. Johns County, Florida, where he taught band, choir, color guard/winterguard, piano, and musical theatre for 30+ years. He is now a Customer Education Specialist with CutTime and Simple Raise.



PERFORMANCE FESTIVALS + VENUES GUIDE

ACCENT PERFORMANCES

(708) 560-1431
www.accentperformances.com

ALABAMA THEATRE

(843) 272-5758 x4410
www.alabama-theatre.com

ANDREW JACKSON'S HERMITAGE

(615) 889-2941
www.thehermitage.com

ANIMADO EVENTS

(407) 345-4899
www.animadoevents.com

ANNAPOLIS TOURS & CRUISES BY WATERMARK

(410) 268-7601 x200
www.watermarkjourney.com

ATTRACTIONS4US & MIAMI BOAT CRUISE

(212) 512-0515
www.attractions4us.com

BALTIMORE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

(410) 783-8071
www.bsomusic.org

BILLY GRAHAM LIBRARY

(704) 401-3200
billygrahamlibrary.org

BILTMORE

(828) 225-1400
www.biltmore.com

BOSTON BALLET

(617) 456-6366
bostonballet.org/groups

BOSTON RED SOX

(617) 226-6423
www.redsox.com/tours

BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA & BOSTON POPS

(617) 638-9348
www.bso.org

BRANSON'S IMAX ENTERTAINMENT COMPLEX

(417) 335-3533 x135
www.bransonimax.com

BOCH CENTER

(617) 532-1114
www.bochcenter.org

CARNEGIE HALL

(212) 903-9705
www.carnegiehall.org

CHOIRS OF AMERICA

(970) 325-2500
www.vocalmusic.org

COUNTRY MUSIC HALL OF FAME & MUSEUM

(615) 291-6746
www.countrymusichalloffame.org

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

(702) 481-0673
www.cirquedusoleil.com

CLAY COOPER THEATRE

(417) 337-7123
claycoopertheatre.com

COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG FOUNDATION

(800) 228-8878
www.colonialwilliamsburg.org

DANCE THE MAGIC!

(714) 315-3632
www.dancethemagic.com

DISNEY IMAGINATION CAMPUS

(321) 230-9455
www.disneycampus.com

DISNEY ON BROADWAY

(212) 703-1040
www.disneytheatricalsales.com

DOLLY PARTON'S STAMPEDE

(865) 505-3320
www.dpstampe.com/pigeon-forge/groups-information

DOLLYWOOD

(865) 428-9674
www.dollywood.com

DR. PHILLIPS CENTER FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS

(407) 455-5550
www.drphillipscenter.org

EPN TRAVEL SERVICES

(888) 323-0974
www.epntravel.com

FLORIDA FILM ACADEMY LLC

(407) 782-4302
www.flfilmacademy.com

FORUM MUSIC FESTIVALS / FORUM EDUCATIONAL TRAVEL

(888) 763-6786
www.forummusicfestivals.com

GATEWAY MUSIC FESTIVALS & TOURS

(800-331-8579)
www.musicfestivals.com

Continued...

GRACELAND & GUEST HOUSE AT GRACELAND

(800) 238-2010
www.graceland.com

GRAND OLE OPRY ENTERTAINMENT GROUP

(615) 882-5451
www.opry.com/groups

HARMONY TOURS / CHOIRS OF AMERICA / HARMONY PRODUCTIONS

(800) 284-2177
www.Go2Harmony.com

INTREPID MUSEUM

(212) 381-5010
www.intrepidmuseum.org

KINGS DOMINION

(804) 449-0143
bit.ly/syta-kd

KINGS ISLAND

(513) 754-5733
bit.ly/syta-ki

KNOTT'S BERRY FARM

(714) 200-5147
bit.ly/syta-kbf

LEGENDS ATTRACTIONS

(323) 376-8944
www.legends.net/global-attractions

MANHATTAN CONCERT PRODUCTIONS

(212) 279-1147
www.mcp.us

MEDIEVAL TIMES ENTERTAINMENT, INC.

(469) 342-5055
www.medievaltimes.com

MIRVISH PRODUCTIONS

(800) 461-3333
www.mirvish.com

MUSIC FESTIVALS & TOURS / MUSIC SHOWCASE FESTIVALS

(800) 545-0935
www.musfestivals.com

MUSIC USA

(800) 654-3018
www.MusicUSA.org

NATIONAL CONCERTS

(917) 580-3020
www.nationalconcerts.com

NEW YORK PHILHARMONIC

(646) 661-1585
www.nyphil.org

NIAGARA PARKS

(905) 356-2241 x2219
www.niagaraparks.com

O MUSEUM IN THE MANSION - THE SECRET DOOR MUSEUM

(202) 496-2070
www.omuseum.org

ORLANDO MAGIC

(407) 916-2495
www.orlandomagic.com

ORLANDOFEST, LLC

(407) 770-5969
www.orlandofest.com

PARADOX EXPERIENCE LAS VEGAS

(702) 545-8502
www.lasvegas.paradoxexperience.com

PACIFIC SYMPHONY

(714) 755-5788
www.pacificsymphony.org

PATRIOTS POINT NAVAL & MARITIME MUSEUM

(843) 881-2727
www.patriotspoint.org/visit/groups

PERFORMING ARTS CONSULTANTS FESTIVALS & TOURS

(732) 475-6200
www.usafest.org

PIER 39

(415) 705-5511
www.pier39.com

ROCK THE BOAT CRUISES

(407) 654-2500
www.rocktheboat-cruises.com

RON JON SURF SHOP

(321) 799-8880 x1048
www.ronjonsurfshop.com

SEGERSTROM CENTER FOR THE ARTS

(714) 755-0236
www.scfta.org

SHAW FESTIVAL THEATRE

(905) 468-2153 x2220
www.shawfest.com

SILVER DOLLAR CITY / SHOWBOAT BRANSON BELLE

(417) 336-7170
www.silverdollarcity.com

SIX FLAGS ENTERTAINMENT CORPORATION

(704) 248-3114
www.sixflags.com/youth

SMOKY MOUNTAIN RESORTS / LIBERTY RECEPTIVE TOURS

(865) 908-3015
www.smokymountainresorts.com

ST. LOUIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

(314) 286-4155
www.slsso.org

TENNESSEE PERFORMING ARTS CENTER

(615) 782-4060
www.tpac.org

THE ISLAND IN PIGEON FORGE

(865) 441-0130
www.islandinpigeonforge.com

THE METROPOLITAN OPERA

(212) 362-6000
www.metopera.org

TITANIC MUSEUM ATTRACTION

(800) 381-7670
www.titanicbranson.com

TOBY'S DINNER THEATRE OF COLUMBIA

(410) 730-8311
www.tobysdinnertheatre.com

UNIVERSAL DESTINATIONS & EXPERIENCES

(321) 436-4160
www.universalyouthprograms.com

US SPACE AND ROCKET CENTER, HOME OF SPACE CAMP

(256) 721-5432
www.rocketcenter.com

VALLEYFAIR

(952) 496-5338
bit.ly/syta-vf

VIRGINIA ARTS FESTIVAL

(757) 282-2819
www.vafest.org

WORLDS OF FUN / OCEANS OF FUN

(816) 454-4545
bit.ly/syta-wof

VisitRichmondVA.com



BOOK TODAY, BENEFIT TOMORROW

Plan your next school trip to the Richmond Region and make a positive impact beyond the classroom. Our travel incentive program rewards schools with a donation for every overnight stay, helping to fund future educational and performance experiences. Explore our vibrant history, museums, and attractions while supporting your students and school community—book today and watch your trip give back.

