

**Public Events Committee
Annual Report
May 28, 2008**

Committee Members:

Jonathan Andelson (Chair)
Claire Moisan (faculty)
Shawn Womack (faculty)
Julia Bottles (student; first part of the year)
Daniel Furuta (student)
T.J. Hawley (student)
Celeste Larkin (student, second part of the year)

Rachel Bly (Director, Conference Operations)
Pam Montgomery (Assistant, Conference Operations)

Duties of the Committee

The Public Events Committee every year has three main responsibilities: hosting the events selected by last year's committee, making selections of performers/events for the next (academic) calendar year, and preparing a budget proposal for the next calendar year. This year, in addition, we dealt with policy questions relating to ticketing for events, requests from other organizations to contribute to their performing arts programming, and how to attract larger audiences.

Major Events Presented, 2007-08

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|---|-----------------|---------------|
| Second City (comedy troupe) | Wed., 9/12/07 | Harris Center |
| Thomas Meglioranza, '92 (baritone) | Thurs., 11/8/07 | Herrick |
| St. Petersburg Ballet (ballet) | Sat., 1/26/08 | Roberts |
| Ladysmith Black Mambazo (world) | Sat., 2/9/08 | Herrick |
| Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center | Thurs., 3/6/08 | Herrick |
| Bonnie Koloc (folk, blues singer) | Tues., 4/8/08 | JRC 101 |

Additional Programming Support

Asian American Coalition, Stepping Stones (\$500)

Music Department, Catch Quartet (\$2,000)

Commentary

The Public Events Committee was generally pleased with the performing arts programming that we sponsored during 2007-08. As always, the main concerns are the quality of the performances and the size of the audiences.

Regarding quality, differences of opinion are normal, sometimes among members of the committee and sometimes between the committee and the general audience. The only serious concern about quality this year involved the St. Petersburg Ballet. The audience seemed more than satisfied, but some committee members were disappointed in the performance. We learned that several ballet companies exist in the city of St. Petersburg, and that merely bearing the city's name and being promoted by one of the biggest agencies in the United States are no guarantee of quality.

Regarding audience size, a total of approximately 1,600 people attended all of our events – a respectable number, though we did not attract as large an audience as we had hoped for in all cases. The largest audience, not surprisingly, was for Ladysmith Black Mambazo (650 tickets distributed, and probably that many people in attendance; Herrick Chapel was overflowing). Audience size for the other events was, in order from largest to smallest: St. Petersburg Ballet, Second City, Tom Meglioranza, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and Bonnie Koloc. The chair of the committee, for one, felt that what turned out to be the three best performances, in terms of quality and sophistication, drew the three smallest audiences. This raises the question of how to draw larger audiences to performances by less well-known artists or artists renowned within their respective fields but less known to a general audience.

Publicity for Public Events Committee events is handled effectively through the Office of Communication and Events. This includes posters, brochures, announcements on the college's website, and notices in the Campus Memo and the Grinnell Herald-Register. The committee discussed the value of announcing its major events in faculty meetings. The fact is, students are more likely to come out to see or hear performers with "name recognition" or who conform to certain tastes in student popular culture. This is not a new concern, and we all should help stimulate student attendance at all events.

Another issue that the committee faced involved the incongruity of making program selections for the next academic year in the absence of information about the available budget. This year our budget proposal was reduced by \$3,000, and we will need to modify our plans slightly. Fortunately, we do not have to change our programming selections. The time lag has not created any truly serious problems in recent memory, but the committee would benefit from as much advance information about the college's budget as possible.

The committee developed a set of “Ticketing Procedures for Public Events” (attached) in response to a few concerns about ticket allocation between campus and community and ticket availability.

The committee discussed an issue, raised by several people in Fine Arts, involving the Bucksbaum Roberts Theatre loading dock on Park Street. The committee supports efforts to improve that facility, though we do not feel it would be appropriate to use funds in our budget for that purpose.

The committee continues to receive help from Georgia Dentel, who has worked with us for many, many years to bring quality acts to the college at a reasonable cost.

We would like to extend our thanks to Rachel Bly and Pam Montgomery, especially, for all of the essential work they do to keep the committee on track and “in the know” about various performing artists. We also thank Kate Worster, Jim Powers, Paul Nelson, Erik Sanning and others for their assistance in various capacities. We thank several faculty members for their suggestions about possible acts to bring to campus.

Public Events for 2008-09

We are excited about the roster of performers the Public Events Committee has lined up for next year.

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| Sonny Fortune (jazz) | Thurs., 9/4/08 | Herrick |
| Ahn Trio (classical) | Thurs., 9/18/08 | Herrick |
| Inti-Illimani (Latin American ensemble) | Tues., 11/11/08 | Herrick |
| Bridgeman-Packer (dance) | Wed., 1/28/09 | Roberts |
| Alicia Svigals (klezmer-style) | Thurs., 2/26/09 | Herrick |
| Tallis Scholars (choral classical) | Wed., 4/1/09 | Herrick |

We also plan to host receptions for many of these artists following their performances, as a way to increase opportunities for students to have contact with them. The Ahn Trio will be doing a performance in the Grinnell-Newburg school, and Bridgeman-Packer will also create a student work in conjunction with their visit to campus as part of the Department of Theatre and Dance’s upcoming season.

Respectfully submitted,

Jonathan Andelson
Chair
May 28, 2008