

THE ABCs OF DO RE ME: A GUIDE TO PLANNING AND STAGING A CONCERT IN THE PARK

Your neighborhood park is a great place to hold concerts and other events, four seasons a year. Clear weather and twinkling night stars make for a perfect evening—and while you can't count on the weather, things are guaranteed to go better if you have planned ahead and covered your bases. Events require planning, hard work and asking the right people the right questions. The following is a guide on how to go about planning and staging a concert in the park.

Some steps are borough specific, while others can be applied citywide. **In planning any event in your park, it's always important to let key people know what you're doing, including your Park Supervisor and Manager, your Outreach Coordinator, and the Special Events Office.** They have experience in planning such events, and may be able to help you.

WHY HOLD A CONCERT IN THE PARK?

- **Concerts help to improve the quality of life.** Successfully executed events, concerts in particular, make people feel good about their communities and their parks.
- **Concerts make your group look good.** Use the opportunity to recruit new members, solicit donations and inform the public about your mission.

GETTING A SPECIAL EVENTS PERMIT

- **You must have a permit from Parks for your concert.** To get one, contact the Parks' Special Events Office for your borough one to two months in advance. Be sure to let your Outreach Coordinator know your plans as well; they can sometimes help expedite the permit.
- You can fill out the application in person at your borough's office; download it from the Parks Department's website www.nyc.gov/parks; or submit a form online at home.nyc.gov/portal/dpr/gen/forms/special_events_1.jsp?catID=99.
- There is a \$25 processing fee, to be paid preferably by check or money order.

AMPLIFICATION

- While applying for a special events permit, inquire about amplification as well. If a musician doesn't bring his/her own amplifiers, a **Wenger wagon with sound equipment** can be arranged. This is a portable stage with amplification access. Wenger wagons can cost up to \$500, but can vary. Please contact your outreach coordinator for more information. Wenger wagons are generally booked early, so contact the Special Events office well in advance and they can help schedule it for you.
- **Pole Taps:** If a musician brings his/her own amplifiers, you'll need to get electricity by tapping a light pole in the park. Poletaps are handled by the Department of Transportation (DOT); however, if you request one, the Special Events Office can contact DOT for you.

NOISE PERMITS

- With the exception of Flushing Meadows-Corona Park in Queens, which has a noise permit included on its special events permit, you must apply for one at your local police precinct 3-4 weeks before the event. There is a processing fee of about \$45. Contact your local precinct for more information.
- Note that a special events permit is required **before** you apply for a noise permit, so be sure to leave enough time for both permits to be processed.

CHOOSING YOUR MUSIC

- **Multicultural Appeal** — People often feel more connected to an event if the music comes from their culture. Think about who lives in your neighborhood and consider inviting musicians with the same background.
- **Anything Goes** — There are very few concerts that nobody likes. And of course, the longer the event, the more bands you can have.

FINDING MUSICIANS

- **Network** — Ask your members and everyone you know for names of local bands looking for a place to play and some free publicity.
- **Use Local Resources** — Contact local radio stations, dance clubs, churches, community centers, art councils, high schools and boys' and girls' clubs, any organizations that might have better connections to the local music scene.
- **MUNY** — Try "Music Under New York," (MUNY) a program administered by the Metropolitan Transit Authority (212) 362-3830 or (212) 878-7024. They have a list of over one hundred musical performers, of varying cultures and musical tastes. If you tell MUNY the types of music you're looking for, they'll try to match the musicians to your event

NEGOTIATING WITH MUSICIANS

- **Price** — First look for musicians who are willing to work for free or who have their own sponsors. Local musicians in particular are in need of community exposure. Concerts in parks offer free publicity, thus many are willing to work at no cost. If you end up hiring a musician, payment is usually rendered after the performance.
- **Contracts** — Generally, extensive contracts aren't necessary for small events like these. Still, be sure notify performers of your rain date so they won't expect to be paid if the event is canceled. Remember, local performers have as much to gain from these events as you do. It's unlikely they won't show up.