

San Francisco Girls Chorus



Wallace Excellence Award

- In its Wallace proposal, the San Francisco Girls Chorus sought funding for audience-broadening initiatives targeting three specific audiences:
 - Classical music patrons
 - Families with young children
 - Young women and young adults



SF Girls Chorus focus group research

- Our goal was to increase attendance of SFGC by classical music patrons.

Baseline audience research and focus groups of classical music patrons took place in 2007-2008.



Specific objectives of the focus group research were to explore and understand:

- Awareness and imagery of SFGC
- Barriers to attendance
- How SFGC fits within the broader cultural landscape of the SF Bay Area
- What kinds of programming or messaging would remove barriers and attract classical music patrons



Girls choruses, and the SFGC in particular, were not top of mind

- Few seemed aware of girls choruses or SFGC.
- Among those who were aware of SFGC, the depth of awareness was low.
 - Respondents knew little about the SF Girls Chorus, other than its name.
 - Some mentioned that they had – or at least thought they might have – seen the Girls Chorus perform with SF Opera or SF Symphony.



Subjects thought choruses could be interesting but more likely

- Structured and boring
- Lacking in energy, intensity and variation
- Not visually engaging
- Potentially amateurish
- Seasonal concerts and sing-a-longs at performing arts and church venues



Lacking familiarity, respondents were unclear what to expect in terms of the quality of the chorus.

- Was this just an “after-school” activity or something more accomplished?
- Was the chorus comprised of a range of ages or just younger girls? (Most seemed to imagine littler girls, or a range of ages from 8 up to 18).
- There was an assumption that the Chorus was a youthful training ground -- more “amateur” than “professional”.



As they imagined the concert, few respondents thought they would feel compelled to attend again.

- While some imagined the SFGC concert as a pleasant enough experience, it would not compete for their cultural time.
- Some noted the expectation that these types of concerts were all “more or less the same” – no need or compelling reason to return.
- Respondents needed to know that there would be something truly different to engage them the next time.



What we learned from the focus groups

- It is clear that to be considered by classical music patrons, a chorus must meet certain criteria:
 - Be professional or of very high quality – not amateur
 - Offer programming that classical audiences want to hear
 - Offer the hope of something visually engaging
 - Offer contrast – dynamic piece, soloist, guest artist
 - Perform at a known venue classical audiences enjoy
 - Have a clear and compelling identity



If SFGC wants to engage the classical music audience, it will need to:

- Express its identity consistently
- Deliver programs and concerts that this audience will enjoy
- Consider some experimentation





How research informed use of marketing funds

Quantitative tracking research

- Surveying audiences throughout current season (2008-2009).
 - Track success of marketing efforts in attracting classical music audiences.
 - Collect patron contact information.
 - Inform future marketing and communications efforts.



Preliminary Survey Results

- Results of Baseline surveys done in May 2008 compared to surveys done at the October 24 & 26 concerts indicate significant inroads in attracting classical music patrons were made:
 - Audience profiles show that significantly more choral music patrons who were not friends or relatives of chorus members were in the October audience and significantly more of them were first time attendees. This indicates the focused marketing efforts prior to the October concerts were successful.

	<u>May 2008</u> Baseline (N=65)	<u>October 2008</u> (N=295)
Choral music target*	18%	30%↑
Choral music target and first time attendee	5%	12%↑

*Choral music target=attend classical music events and are not a friend or relative of a chorus member

↑Indicates figures are significantly higher than their May counterpart at the 90% confidence level.

