

# **Siskiyou Singers Board Minutes**

**January 20, 2024 9:00 am**

**300 York Street – Ashland**

**Board Members Present:** Mark Reppert, Steve Thomas, Howie Seay, Mary Van Wesep, Laura Barlow, Mary Bergstrom, Loretta Barker, Michele Kyle **Absent:** Scott Nelson

**Meeting Called to Order at 9:20 AM**

**Approval of November 2023 Minutes**

***MOTION: Mary Bergstrom moved that the November 2023 Board Minutes be approved. Motion seconded by Loretta Barker. MOTION PASSED***

## **Written Reports**

**Director – Mark Reppert –**

If I do say so myself, I am pretty proud of the concept of the Spring '24 program. The Definition of Beauty is a wonderful piece by the recently departed Alice Parker set to very thought-provoking poetry by Emily Dickinson.

As you know, each of the four sections of the program reflect the ideas of each of the four pieces: Heaven, Nature, Spirit, Infinity. Since we are also taking this music to Italy and performing it for international audiences, the music represents our part of the world--all the composers and most of the poets are from North America.

I am looking forward to a relatively large, very competent group to sing this music. Our Spring concert will be great!!

**President – Steve Thomas –**

So... it's time to prepare for our Spring 2024 concerts. I feel that our Fall 2023 season went really well. We had relatively few problems and performed three great concerts that I believe our audiences really enjoyed. Lots of us received significant positive feedback!

As for my first term as president, I am happy with how it all went. We are short at least two board members and that meant that some of you took on more work than you should normally expect. I appreciate you "stepping up to the plate". However, I would ask everyone for help in recruiting more BOD members to join us and help reduce the amount of individual work we all have to do. I would also like to acknowledge those past BOD members who continue to contribute significant amounts of time and energy to the functioning of our organization, ie., Cynthia, Michael, Sally, Katherine, Jim, Marilyn, and Deborah. I'm sure there are others that deserve recognition that I haven't mentioned but you all know who they are.

And, of course, not only do we have a very exciting program to prepare, but for those of us who are joining the Italy Tour this coming June it promises to be a very wonderful and fulfilling term!

Thank you so much for all you do and let's continue to provide our best efforts to make Siskiyou Singers a very special and unique performing arts organization, not only in our local Rogue Valley community, but also as participants in the international choir community as well!

**Publicity – Michael Zuzel – no report**

**Choir Tour – Cynthia Tank – no report**

## **Membership – Howie Seay**

I am pleased to present the first membership report of this season, beginning with an overview of the delightful Winter '24 After Party. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Margaret and Keith Baldwin for once again generously hosting the Winter After-Party at their lovely home, which has proven to be an ideal venue for such a significant event. This year, we implemented their request for a more structured start-time, ensuring they had ample opportunity to prepare and welcome guests in the best possible way. While this adjustment presented a minor challenge for early arrivals, it ultimately led to a more organized and enjoyable experience for everyone.

We were fortunate to have Jen Marie Davidson attend the event with her exceptional piano skills, for which she was appropriately compensated at \$150. Her performance garnered positive reviews. I hope she is willing to perform those duties next year.

As is the custom, Laura Barlow provided the spiral ham, while I personally took the pleasure of providing the turkey. Contrary to rumors, these main dishes have always been provided by individual members and not by the board (a clarifying remark for the records). The cheese plate, we believe, was contributed by the group from the Manor, and we should ask them to make it their traditional contribution for future after-parties.

I recruited friend-of-the-choir, Caitlyn Abshire, to volunteer for kitchen support, aiding in the party's setup and kitchen management. This assistance was helpful and greatly appreciated by the Baldwins. Additionally, having not performed this season, I was able to contribute to the event's operation by assisting with setup and managing parking logistics.

The After Party Sign-up Form continues to be a resounding success (full results linked [here](#)). For the third season in a row, it has enabled us to efficiently plan for the number of members, guests, food and drink, and kitchen volunteers, creating a well-organized and memorable event for all involved. We had a total of 60 attendees, including 22 guests. A variety of food items were brought by members, including 8 main dishes, 13 side dishes, and 10 desserts. Additionally, 20 members contributed wine, and 15 volunteered for kitchen duty. These figures exemplify the strong community spirit and collaborative effort of our choir.

Looking forward, I recommend allocating a budget for kitchen help, a parking attendant, and the cheese plate. These enhancements will further elevate our events and show our appreciation to the Baldwins for their ongoing hospitality. This investment not only ensures a seamless experience for our hosts and guests but also exemplifies our commitment to fostering a warm and welcoming community atmosphere.

In conclusion, the Winter '24 After Party was a testament to the unity of our choir. It showcased our ability to adapt, collaborate, and celebrate together, setting a positive tone for the season ahead!

## **Box Office Manager – Howie Seay**

I just wanted to capture my experience as the Box Office Manager from last season. I really enjoyed having the opportunity to see the front of house this December. It was great to be able to see our audience file in and out, and the enthusiasm and joy they had for our event.

To my knowledge, these were the first concert dates where we accepted electronic payment for tickets. Using a PayPal product called "Zettle", I was able to collect payments via a card reader, as well as using the Zettle app on my iPhone. Both methods were surprisingly easy to use, but the Zettle card reader has the additional functionality of being able to swipe the card (very important for debit cards that still don't have the "tap" RFID functionality). It was nice to have my iPhone as back-up, as it helped the line move faster when the head usher was available to help with collecting payments. Laura also made my account with a level of permissions that seemed appropriate for a Siskiyou Singer volunteer. It was comforting to know I could still get support from PayPal, if needed, but I didn't have access to the administrator functionality or PayPal account info.

On the ticket envelope, I didn't realize that the ticket counts were supposed to be done in real-time and

weren't an *ex post facto* activity. I really dropped the ball on that. As most of the tickets were sold via Zettle, the counts could be closely approximated, but it should have been exact. With so much going on at the box office, there's a lot of pressure to move the line along quickly, and I don't think I would have kept an accurate count in real-time. If I had to do it over, I would have marked a stack of full-price and discount tickets with a count on the back (e.g., 1-30), so I could tell how many were sold by subtracting how many were left after the concert started for that evening.

Also, I noticed that most tickets didn't have a ✓ for full price or discount. As most of our tickets are full price, I wonder if we should just have the box for discount so the ticket doesn't look "incomplete". I don't think this causes any real issue other than the appearance of the ticket after the sale.

***ACTION ITEM: Howie will talk to Michael Zuzel about the possibility of putting only the \$5 box on future tickets.***

### **Communications & Connections – Michele Kyle – no report**

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AT BOARD MEETING:** The committee has not met since the November board meeting. Sally is acting chair. The committee needs to reorganize. Discussion about the taping of rehearsals was revisited without any resolution. And the board discussed the pros and cons of Bandlab.

***ACTION ITEM: Revisit the discussion about the taping of rehearsals at the February board meeting.***

***ACTION ITEM: Howie, Mark, and Michele will put together a Band Lab survey***

### **Treasurer's Report – Laura Barlow**

- **Concert Attendance** - Tickets Collected the Door – 576. Not quite back to pre-pandemic. Slightly less than last year's Mozart.
- **Concert History** - Despite slightly lower attendance than last winter, ticket revenues were up a little due to the increase in ticket price. Net income looks higher this year compared to last but last year we paid for an orchestra.
- **Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2023** - Keep in mind the funds in the Italy Tour account are not SS funds. Another group payment was made in early January so that account has less in it now.
  - CD matured on Dec. 21. I rolled it over into a 13-month CD at 4.89%.
  - Restricted Operating Reserve (ROR)– Balance equals the sum of the balances of the Savings account and the CD as directed by the Board. Does the Board wish to reconsider this and let the interest go into retained earnings and keep the ROR at \$40,000?
- **Profit and Loss Statement as of December 31, 2023** - The bottom line (net income) looks pretty good right now but some winter term bills have not been paid yet and we normally run a deficit for the spring term.
- **Development Committee Spreadsheet as of October 31, 2023** - We are still in a bit of a hole fund-raising-wise but the one of the grants still has not been received and some donations that have come in this month are not included. I think we will exceed my projection for ticket revenue since we are already at 73% of projected. We may receive some add additional ad revenue.
- **Fundraising**
  - **Grant Application Status**
    - Oregon Arts Commission – We were notified in late Oct. that we would receive \$2363 in “a few months.” **Update:** Still have not received this grant money. I will give them until the end of January then check on it if still not received. The application window for the new year starts in Feb.
    - James F. and Marion L Miller Foundation – Received \$2100.
    - Oregon Community Foundation – Declined to fund grant. We can try again in the fall.

***To access the full profit and loss (P&L) report, contact treasurer Laura Barlow***

## ACTION ITEM REVIEW

- Michele will check with Michael Zuzel how to make Sally Peterson the administrator of our Facebook page. **DONE**
- Michele will meet with Sally and, with computers in hand, explore the capabilities of Facebook. **ONGOING**
- Michele and Mark will talk to Michael Zuzel to find out what research he has already done regarding the taping of rehearsals. **DONE**
- Laura and Mary B will firm up where to place grant money in Sales Force. **DONE**
- Scott will continue to monitor the Rotary grant which funds Outreach. **TABLE** – *We did not get the grant*
- Steve will inform SORS of the board's decision to not loan or rent out our risers. He will also suggest to them that they apply for a grant to purchase their own risers. **DONE**

## OLD BUSINESS

**GOOGLE WORKSPACE & DROPBOX TO GOOGLE DRIVE** – Howie explained to the board that Google Workspace is more secure than Dropbox for document storage. Google Workspace allows for collaborative work on documents whereas Dropbox does not. Howie will provide a tutorial to the board on how to maneuver through Google Workspace.

***ACTION ITEM: Howie will meet with Michael Zuzel to transfer domains to Google Drive.***

**DATES FOR 2025 SEASON (DISCUSS/CONFIRM)** – We have a conflict with the May 2025 concert dates due to another party also needing the recital hall in May 2025. As of now, we are guaranteed one of two choices.

**May 2 – Drech rehearsal**

**May 3, 4 – Concerts**

**OR**

**May 9 – Drech rehearsal**

**May 10, 11 – Concerts**

Once the other party decides on their dates, we will be told which are our dates.

The December 2025 sates were granted as requested:

**Dec. 11 – Drech rehearsal**

**Dec. 12, 13, 14 – Concerts**

**TICKET DONATIONS** – **THIS ITEM IS TABLED UNTIL SPRING 2024**

## NEW BUSINESS

**DISCONTINUING OPTION TO BUY MUSIC** – Mark Reppert proposed that we phase out members being able to buy their music. Laura Barlow, treasurer, pointed out that we would lose \$700 - \$800 dollars in revenue if we did so. Mark withdrew his proposal.

**REVISE REGISTRATION PROCESS** – Steve Thomas revised the following registration documents: welcome letter, registration form, registration volunteer instruction sheet.

**ASSIGN JOBS FOR JANUARY REGISTRATION** – The following jobs were assigned:

**AUDITION HOST** – Loretta Barker

**WELCOME TABLE** – Mary Van Wesep, Steve Thomas  
**REGISTRATION TABLE** – Scott Nelson, Michele Kyle  
**PAYMENT TABLE** – Laura Barlow, Mary Bergstrom  
**NEW MUSIC** – Marilyn Reppert  
Howie will be a floater.

**REVIEW & IMPROVE THE PROCESS OF DISTRIBUTING REGISTRATION DATA** –  
Howie Seay, data base manager, assured the board that he will distribute registration data in a manner that will allow Mark and Steve to send their emails to the choir in a timely manner.

**REENACT BUDDY SYSTEM** – Mark Reppert arranged with Sally Peterson to reenact the Buddy System.

**NEW BOARD MEMBERS** – Steve Thomas shared his concern that we need more board members. Mary Van Wesep, secretary, announced that she will step off the board at the end of this term (July 2024). She will have served seven years on the board. The following names were suggested as persons to be approached to serve on the board: Inga Leed, Anne Petrovich, Ro Tutland.

**TICKET MANAGER** – Mary Van Wesep, interim Ticket Manager, asked if the Ticket Manager needs to submit a written report to the board. **ANSWER:** NO. The question did bring up some concerns about who does what with the tickets collected at the door. **ANSWER:** Laura Barlow, treasurer, wants the tickets. Howie, acting Box Office manager, wants to know what to do with the cash box take in each concert. **ANSWER:** Give each concert’s cash intake to the banker, Mary Bergstrom.

The board agreed to form a task force to look into ways to make clear the tasks for the Ticket Manager, Box Office Manager, Banker.

***ACTION ITEM: Box Office Task Force Was Established. Members: Mary Van Wesep, Loretta Barker, Laura Barlow, Becky Martin (house manager), Howie Seay.***

**ACTION ITEM COMMITMENTS** – Mary Van Wesep, secretary, read through the ***ACTION ITEMS.***

**MOTION TO ADJORN** – Mary Bergstrom moved to adjourn. Steve Thomas seconded.  
**MOTION PASSED.** We adjourned at 12:15 PM.

**FUTURE BOD MEETINGS:**

**February 10 / 9:00 AM**  
**Michele Kyle – 692 Vansant St. – Ashland**

**April 20 / 9:00 AM**  
**Host and location TBA**

**March 16 / 9:00 AM**  
**Laura Barlow – Ashland Public Library**

**May 18 / 9:00 AM**  
**Mary Bergstrom – 705 Roca - Ashland**