



Is It Time for a Change of Recital Venue?

by Wesley Schaum

You and your students may benefit from a different recital location. A change of venue can provide a new incentive to students and give them valuable experience playing in unfamiliar surroundings and on a different instrument. Family audience members may also appreciate the change.



It Pays To Shop Around

If you have not compared prices for several years, you may be surprised at the difference in costs when you shop around at other possible recital locations. For example, if your recital has always been at the same church, check out a different church.

Although your home church may offer what seems to be the best deal, parents, especially if you are teaching two or more in the same family, may help in getting a good price at their family place of worship.

Many Possible Locations

In addition to places of worship, recitals can sometimes be held in lodge halls, YMCA's, hotel meeting rooms, and shopping mall community rooms. Other possibilities are motels or restaurants with a large private room, public school auditoriums, choir rehearsal rooms, libraries, and halls belonging to local colleges, unions or veteran groups. Often your city or town hall will have a municipal meeting room available. A local music store may also have recital space.

Retirement Homes and Nursing Homes

Students who are willing to provide entertainment for residents of retirement and nursing homes are almost always welcome. These students would benefit from playing for a different audience and at a different location while providing a worthwhile community service. Certainly the residents would be very grateful, especially to see some young faces!

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How Many Recitals Should You Give Each Year?

by Wesley Schaum

For most teachers, one recital per year is adequate. Let's face it, preparing for a recital takes lots of extra time and can be expensive. However, there are advantages to having additional programs during the year. Careful planning can minimize the costs.

More Opportunities for Students

Although students may not wish to play in every program, having more than one recital per year gives them added opportunity, if they desire.

Students who are unable to play in an annual recital for whatever reason, have the chance to perform another time.

Joint Recitals With Other Teachers

Recital expenses can be shared if the students of two or more teachers participate together. Colleagues who teach string and wind instruments or voice could also be included with piano students.

Students benefit from being exposed to music for other instruments. This adds an attractive variety to the program for the audience.

If the combined program is long (more than 45 minutes), another possibility would be to have two programs on the same afternoon. For example, one program at 2:00 pm and another at 3:30 pm.

More Publicity for the Teacher

Added recitals, particularly joint recitals, are an opportunity for publicity in community newspapers and event calendars. Press releases can be submitted by e-mail. Be sure to use a standard press release format which can be obtained free at:

www.marketingsource.com/pressrelease/pressreleaseformat.html

Additional programs also provide an opportunity for a wider audience of family, relatives and neighbors at a different time of year.



Making Recitals Run More Smoothly

by Wesley Schaum

Often, it's such a relief when a recital is finished that we gladly put any thoughts of future programs out of our mind. However, it is good to reflect on what was good and what was not so good and look for ways to improve and refine our recitals.

Here is a checklist to assist you in evaluating past recitals and avoid problems in future programs. Although these may seem like small details, they are sometimes overlooked. It is best to review the checklist soon after a recital, while details are still fresh in mind.

SEATING

- Enough seats for everyone?
- Easy access and space for a wheelchair?
- Seating comfortable or crowded?

PARKING

- Any problems finding a parking space?
- How close was parking to the building?
- Did anyone have trouble finding the building?

RECITAL ROOM

- Space neat and attractive?
- Room temperature comfortable?
- Ventilation adequate, or did the room get stuffy?
- Was the entry to the room too close to the piano, resulting in distractions from latecomers or those who had to leave early?
- Disturbances from adjoining rooms or from outside?
- Nearby space where crying babies could be taken out of earshot?
- PA system? – Ability to record the performances?

LIGHTING

- Adequate light for students to read their music? This is especially important for evening programs.
- Any spotlights that blinded the performers?
- Did outside light from windows cause distraction?
- Did movement outside the room, visible through windows, cause distractions?
- Did lights from flash cameras or video cameras cause distractions?

PROGRAMS

- Enough printed programs for everyone?
- Programs neatly printed and professional looking?
- Titles and student names spelled correctly?
- Accidental omissions?


REFRESHMENTS

- If you served refreshments, did you have enough of everything – or too much?
- Adequate table space?
- Receptacles for trash?
- Refrigerator space available?

LAVATORIES

- Clean and adequately supplied?
- Sufficient lavatory space for the size of the audience?

INSTRUMENT

- Piano tuned?
- Mechanical problems: squeaky pedal, sticky keys, clicking noises, etc.?
- Bench wide enough for duets?
- Space for additional instruments: digital piano, electronic keyboard or synthesizer?
- Electric receptacle close by? 

Change of Venue • continued

Usually the room they provide is free of charge. There may not be a grand piano, but the price is right!

Good Piano Is Essential

Many locations either do not have a piano or it may be inadequate or poorly maintained. After narrowing the field by telephone inquiry, it is essential that you personally try out the piano before making a decision.

Also check out the acoustics of the room, how well the audience can see the performers, and whether there is PA system.

Hidden Factors to Be Considered

Is there an additional custodial fee for the facility or is it included in the room rent?

Can you bring in your own refreshments, or are you required to purchase them from the site?

Who pays for piano tuning, if necessary?

Is there another event that may be noisy, scheduled in an adjoining room or across the hall?

Who is responsible to clean and straighten up the room afterwards (put away chairs, etc.)? Sometimes you can save money if you do the cleanup yourself.

Be sure to consider the type of area around the facility, as well as parking and travel time for families. 