

Volunteer Orientation

Thanks for your help: Thank you for offering your time to assist Gotham Early Music Scene. Your volunteer efforts on behalf of early music are greatly appreciated. We offer these guidelines to make your work easier and more effective and to help raise the quality of the concert experience for the many patrons we serve.

Volunteer Coordinators: Paul Ross, Operations (646-256-4372), Naomi Morse (686-842-1351), and Gene Murrow (464-342-8145)

Confirming the obvious: It may seem obvious but be sure you're certain of the date of the concert, the arrival time, and the address of the hall and which door to enter to meet the volunteer coordinator.

What to wear: You will be the first contact many people will have with Gotham Early Music Scene, and we want to create the impression of a professional, well-run front-of-house operation for the groups we serve. Thus, dress should be "**business casual.**" For men this means pressed slacks and a dress shirt; you may combine these with either a tie or a sports coat and open collar. For women, this means an outfit with a tailored look: a blouse with sleeves (long or short, as weather permits) and either slacks or a long skirt.

When to arrive for orientation: The default arrival time for any GEMS event is **1 hour and 15 minutes before the time of the performance**, which is typically 45 minutes before the hall opens.

Please be prompt, since 45 minutes is the minimum time for getting calmly oriented to the physical space, coached in your particular assignment, and settled in ready to greet the public. Because it is inefficient to have people arrive after orientation begins, please be sure to arrive a few minutes early to gather with the other volunteers at the designated time.

Note: *You may be asked to come earlier for a given event.*

If you'll be helping to stuff or collate programs, you'll be needed *at least 15 minutes earlier* than the above default arrival time. Check with the volunteer coordinator for your specific assignment.

When you arrive: Check in with the volunteer coordinator (probably Paul); put a coat or a Reserved for Staff sign on your seat in the back of the hall to claim it for later; determine where the restrooms are and freshen up as needed; then gather for orientation. The volunteer coordinator should have a supply of the Reserved for Staff signs.

Help stuff or collate programs if needed, and help put up signage and put out literature, as directed. Then take your posts no later than 5 minutes before the doors open to the public.

If you're selling CDs, arrange them nicely and conveniently for sale, make an accurate inventory of the stock, and make sure it's recorded on a Consignment form (THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT).

If you're a ticket taker and there are people trying to get into the hall early, please help out by politely explaining to them when the hall opens and could they kindly wait.

When to leave: Please plan on staying till the end of the concert to help do a “sweep” through the hall, picking up extra programs, taking down signage, locating lost-and-found items, helping to load the “portable box office” into the car, and so on. If you need to leave before these tasks are done, please discuss your situation with the volunteer coordinator beforehand.

Getting a replacement: If for some reason you are unable to be at the event you volunteered for, please find a person willing to take your place. Since it is our mission to introduce people to early music, the person replacing you does not have to know anything about early music; they will have an opportunity to be introduced to the music for free. Either e-mail or phone the name and contact information of the new person to the volunteer coordinator as soon as you possibly can.

If you cannot find a replacement yourself, or if at the last minute you discover you cannot attend and cannot find a replacement, please call the volunteer coordinator.

Key people and their cell phones are Paul Ross, Operations (646-256-4372), Naomi Morse (686-842-1351), and Gene Murrow (464-342-8145).

Comp tickets: The default is for each volunteer to receive one comp ticket to the performance at which he or she works. Please be sure to pick up this ticket from the Will Call table, tear it, and turn in its stub with the others, so that we can have an accurate count of the number of persons in the audience.

Typical assignments:

Ticket taker	Will Call table
Usher	Ticket sales table
Program collating/stuffing	CD sales
Putting out literature	Posting signage

Other Stuff You Need to Know:

For all the items below, check with the volunteer coordinator in case things change for any given event.

- **Who’s performing.** Normally you’ll know who’s on the program as part of your assignment. But glance through the program to familiarize yourself with the details. It will come in handy as you deal with the patrons.
- **Location of facilities.** Check out where the stairs and elevators are, the bathrooms, coat room, entrances to the hall, and water fountains.
- **Seating plan.** Check out how the seats and sections are laid out, whether you’re ushering or just taking tickets.
- **Ticket prices and locations.** Be familiar with the prices of tickets and where the different price ranges are seated in the hall.
- **Late comers.** In case it falls to you to admit or not admit a late comer, ask what the policy is.
- **When you can take your seat.** Normally, you may take your seat at the time of the welcome/turn-of-cell phones announcement. During orientation, the volunteer coordinator should discuss this question, and if not, please ask. A lot depends on whether you’ll be handling late comers.

- **Key times:**
 1. when the lobby opens,
 2. when the hall opens,
 3. performance start time,
 4. intermission start and end times,
 5. end of the concert, and
 6. when the hall must be vacated (if you're staying till the end to help out). Note that patrons may ask you for this information.
- **Who does what:**

Ticket takers: Your main responsibility is to get people into the correct seats as efficiently and politely as possible. **Patrons don't necessarily know you're the ticket taker, so reach out to them, welcome them, and offer to take their tickets, rather than waiting passively for them to come to you. Then,** direct them to the appropriate door and let them know an usher will give them their program.

- DETERMINE seat and row numbering in your area of responsibility.
- DETERMINE whether there's an usher handing out programs at your entrance or where patrons can get programs.
- CHECK THE TICKET SECTION to make sure the patron is entering the correct door (clearly only if there is more than one entrance into the hall). If not, redirect them to the correct entrance or allow them to enter and then cross the hall to the correct section inside.
- Tear and keep the stub in the little bag you got from the volunteer coordinator, leaving the large ticket part with the patron. THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT for our concert metrics.
- Invite patrons to pick up their own program if there's no usher to hand them one.
- LATE COMERS: In case it falls to you to admit or not admit a late comer, ask what the policy is. The default is to ask late comers to enter after the first piece, or, possibly, at the end of the first set.
- You may be asked to take a seat right by the doors to keep them from closing with a bang (if they do that) when patrons enter or leave during the performance.
- Turn in your bag of ticket stubs to the box office before you take your seat.

Ushers: Make sure you have a supply of programs. Direct people to their seats and hand them a program as you do so. Take them to their seats only if absolutely necessary so as not to leave your post unattended. If you're stationed in an aisle with another volunteer, try to work out a routine (say, alternate who greets approaching patrons) to avoid "competing for customers." At least one usher must always be in a far-forward location to greet and direct patrons (as opposed to being closer to the stage showing people their seats). Be sure to bring your extra programs to the box office just before you take your seat.

CD Sales: First, determine when you are expected to sell (before the concert starts? after it ends?). We almost always sell during intermission. Check with Paul or his stand-in (typically, Gene or Naomi) to determine if there's time to sell before or once the concert is over.

Then, before you sell anything, inventory all stock accurately on a Consignment form (or double-check the form that's already filled out (VERY, VERY IMPORTANT). If you

have a cash bank separate from the box office cash box, count it and record the amount at the top of the Consignment form. Be sure you know the price of each item (CD default price = \$15).

Display the stock nicely and conveniently for you. Be sure to ask if you don't know how to use the credit card swiper (unless someone assigned to work with you does and will handle it during the sales).

Be sure to leave before intermission in time to open shop and be ready for customers once the intermission begins.

You are responsible for securing the cash box and credit card swiper, so keep them with you under your personal control until you turn them over to Paul.

Bring your cell phones with you. We want you to be able to communicate with us, (and we with you) without leaving your posts. Send us your phone numbers so we can put them in our phones in advance. Paul's cell phone is 646-256-4372.