

Music Worcester, Inc.

Request for proposals Website Design & Development

January 6, 2014

Summary and scope of intended project

Music Worcester is seeking to redesign its website, www.musicworchester.org. New leadership and a new focus in its marketing efforts are serving as the main catalysts for this RFP announcement.

The key goals for Music Worcester (MW) are to generate an eventual website that:

1. clearly presents who MW is, what MW does, and how MW does what it does in a clear, visually stunning manner with easy navigation;
2. integrates necessary elements of MW operations (social media, Salesforce-based CRM ticketing and donation systems, audio and visual files from performers) seamlessly and appealingly;
3. quickly and clearly confirms the quality of performers MW brings to Central Massachusetts as well as performance details to potential customers;
4. is built in WordPress or similar platform so MW staff can fully run the website after creation; and
5. functions on all types of devices (desktops, laptops, Apple products, notebooks, mobile phones, etc.) and works in all major web browsers (Chrome, Explorer, Firefox, etc.).

Please note – while MW is not seeking a full re-branding campaign, the organization has made recent decisions regarding a new logo and is seeking to have the new website reflect the vibrancy of its concert offerings. Also, MW is ideally looking for an entity who can take on all aspects of the website redesign itself and not sub-contract major parts of the job.

Critical development guidelines

The new website must take into account several “pieces” of MW’s current online presence, including:

- current main website, www.musicworchester.org,
- certain functionalities of the website of the MW chorus, Worcester Chorus, www.worcesterchorus.com (this site will be made forwarding only upon completion of the new site), and
- 2 Facebook accounts, Music Worcester and the Worcester Chorus, as well as a Twitter and YouTube account.

MW leadership feels strongly that the new website must present a compelling case, visually and functionally, for the great quality of MW programs and events. MW counts as its primary

stakeholders its subscribers (multi-buyers in any given season), donors, area foundations and their trustees, board members and corporators, greater Worcester press contacts, and those interested in classical music within 40 minutes of Worcester. Secondary stakeholders include area music educators, culturally-inclined residents of Massachusetts, jazz and folk music patrons, graduate students in Worcester, and Worcester families with children studying an instrument.

MW is seeking a website design that will trigger ticket sales from single ticket buyers who may only attend a concert every year or two, as well as return visits to the website by those who know MW well. To this end we are seeking a design and online presence that will allow for depth of information for those who want it (program notes, clips of performers coming to Worcester, media articles and reviews, information on pre-concert lectures or pre-concert gala events) as well as an easy navigation to purchase tickets quickly or make a donation easily for those who are seeking limited and targeted interaction with the website.

MW views its website first and foremost as a critical marketing tool. Ticket sales made online represent a greater percentage of overall ticket sales every year, and more donations occurred online in December 2013 than during the prior 18 months combined. Additionally, the website is the main tool used to communicate with press, including press releases, hi-res image download of performers, and full concert details. MW is increasingly using Google Analytics as well as AdWords to examine its ticket buyer population.

MW staff must be able to fully run, update, and organize the new website after it is created. MW must be able to annually completely overhaul the site from one season's concerts to the next. Each spring MW balances the need to start selling subscription series to the following season while still having to sell single tickets to current shows. At certain points during each season, key educational events like the annual youth music competition or an annual scholarship competition, must be promoted but not at the expense of current shows where there may still be hundreds of tickets to sell.

MW leadership is looking for a new website that can make a ticket purchase to the next concert occur in the fewest clicks possible, while also having space elsewhere for full program notes and detailed artist bios (with video imbedded or streaming) for the most discerning of buyers.

MW is most similar to groups like the Boston Celebrity Series or the Washington Performing Arts Society (albeit on a smaller scale). MW considers its competition to be its colleagues – Worcester's very active cultural sector including renowned museums, a thriving theater, and an active music scene in general.

Organizational overview

MW was founded in 1858, one year after Mechanics Hall was built. For a majority of those 150+ years, MW has produced and sponsored the events that have made Mechanics Hall known as a top venue for live acoustic music. Known first as the Worcester County Musical Association, several mergers during recent decades (Mass Jazz Festival, International Artist

Series) have created the current Music Worcester, one that prides itself on the great diversity of its programming.

While known primarily as a presenter of classical music, each season MW also engages in jazz, folk, and dance programming in venues across greater Worcester. Two subsidiaries, the Worcester Chorus mentioned above, and the Music Guild, a volunteer and educational arm of MW, add much to the organization's vibrancy. Upcoming concerts present a good glimpse of who MW is – Bela Fleck, Philippe Entremont, Simone Dinnerstein, ECCO, and a new consortium orchestra project with area colleges are all events in the next three months.

Recent seasons have brought up to 20 events annually to Worcester, and the upcoming years are expected to be around 15 events per season. MW announces the following season's programming each spring, and subscriptions are solely sold until early summer, when single ticket sales begin.

Project management

Two Music Worcester staff members will act as primary, direct contacts for the website design project – Adrien Finlay, Executive Director, and Midge Hamilton, Marketing Director. Additionally, the project will be evaluated periodically by the Marketing Committee of Music Worcester's Board of Directors as summarized below.

The Marketing Director will oversee details of the project implementation from start to finish and will generate final copy for all pages as well as supplying all images and photographs. The Executive Director will pay particular attention to the scope of the project, integration of the organization's fundraising and box office systems into the new website, and usability of the final product by staff to ensure Music Worcester's needs are met.

Intended scenario of planning and key dates

January	proposals accepted
February 1-15	Marketing Committee initial review and possible phone interviews
late February	finalists determined and invitations for in-person meetings with Marketing Committee sent if applicable
by mid-March	contract terms negotiated and signed, project begins
April, <i>tentative</i>	presentation to Marketing Committee to demonstrate intended final design layout and functionality

Guidelines for proposals

Proposals should be submitted to Adrien Finlay, Executive Director, at adrien@musicworchester.org before February 1, 2014. Materials that cannot be emailed, such as larger files on CD or DVD, may be mailed to 323 Main St., Worcester, MA 01608.

Please submit the following with your proposal:

- Letter/email of introduction
- Proposal that highlights how you and/or your firm would address MW's main concerns as outlined above (expected timetable for project components would be appreciated as well)
- Main qualifications of you and/or your staff
- Proposed budget and fees for the entire project
- List or links to your work that you believe best presents your and/or your firm's work as a website designer

Please note – MW has approximately \$12,000 set aside for this project and will consider proposals with budgets up to \$15,000. Your proposed budget must be all-encompassing – all costs associated with bringing a website from an idea to actuality and handing it over to MW staff must be included.

Contract terms to be negotiated by MW leadership and counsel upon selection of designer.