

Strings Music Festival Guild

GUIDELINES FOR LEAD HOSTESS & HOSTESS

2023

OVERVIEW

An important service of the Strings Guild is to volunteer for events held at the Strings Pavilion. Strings Music Festival has always relied on the Guild and Community Volunteers to assist with ticket scanning, ushers, box office and concessions. The Lead Hostess guides these volunteers and collaborates with two of the Strings staff:

The Strings Volunteer Coordinator manages volunteer signups, maintains the schedule of events with volunteer assignments and serves as the main point of contact for all volunteers. The House Manager is in charge of the Pavilion during performances and is the point of contact for the Lead Hostess.

The Lead Hostess is responsible for reminding Community Volunteers and Hostesses of their events one week prior to the event. On the day of the event, the Lead Hostess arrives early to set out name tags and, as volunteers arrive, confirm or assign positions. After the event, the Lead Hostess coordinates the volunteers in cleanup. The role of the Hostess is to assist the Lead Hostess in any way that is needed. This may include helping with reminders prior to the event. Typically the Hostess does not take a specific position, but is prepared to step in wherever necessary.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Our role is to assist the Strings Staff in the smooth operation of the event and ensure that audience members have a good time in a safe environment.
2. The "Guild Closet" (in the back of the Pavilion near Section A) is shared with House Staff. Programs, volunteer vests, penlights, name badge, trash baskets/gloves, etc. are stored here. When volunteers arrive, they report to the "Guild Closet" for check-in.
3. Enter the pavilion only through the lower C entrance (across from the Strings office) upon arrival and never enter if a "Tuning in Progress" sign is posted on the door.
4. The dress code for all volunteers is a solid white or black shirt and black, solid or neutral color bottoms. No shorts or blue jeans. Comfortable and quiet shoes are recommended.
5. The House Manager is in charge of the Pavilion at all times. The House Manager will conduct a short briefing with all volunteers 15 minutes prior to opening doors. This briefing will cover all of the bases from tickets sold, accessible seating, concert run, seating of late arrivals, etc.
6. Doors are opened 30 minutes before the performance by the House Manager. As the audience is arriving, if needed, tactfully point out that even if the usher meets friends, it is important to get the audience seated and to forego lengthy personal conversations. At sold out performances we must seat 569 people in less than 10 minutes.
7. Guild Hostesses and Community Volunteers should refrain from chatting in the back or even outside the Pavilion during events as the sound carries.

8. Do not stand directly behind audience members in the last rows. Audience members have paid to sit in these rows and will not appreciate any distractions from the program. Do not sit in front of or beside a patron, even if there is an open seat. The Guild and Community Volunteers are on active duty and it can be distracting to an audience member.
9. A water fountain/ bottle filling station has been relocated to the bathrooms/breezeway.
10. It is a Strings policy that only children six and older are permitted in the Pavilion for evening events. *The only exception is for Facility Rentals; the House Manager will mention this exception in their nightly briefing. This is stated in promotional brochures and on the website. Get assistance from the House Manager if necessary; be tactful.
11. It is also a Strings policy that no food is allowed in the Pavilion. Only water may be brought in; otherwise beverages need to be purchased from the bar.
12. Role of Spouses: If you would like your spouse to accompany you as a volunteer, they are asked to sign up as a community volunteer according to standard procedures. They are expected to attend the mandatory Volunteer Training which is scheduled bi-annually.
13. Always be polite and courteous; as the audience arrives, welcome them in a friendly manner. As the audience leaves, thank them for coming.

AT LEAST ONE WEEK IN ADVANCE OF AN EVENT:

1. Remind the Guild Hostess and Community Volunteers of the concert. Texting is the most effective means of communication, but if you are not comfortable with that, feel free to use email or a phone call. The Concert Scheduler Spreadsheet that is maintained by the Strings Volunteer Coordinator has a tab with contact information. It is important to get confirmation from each volunteer that they will be attending or, if necessary, who their substitute is.
2. The Concert Schedule Spreadsheet has a Standby list of volunteers who are available on selected concerts; Lead Hostesses are not expected to find substitutes. The Strings Volunteer Coordinator is the contact for Community Volunteers who need assistance.
3. Lead Hostesses and Hostesses who need substitutes should only contact other Guild members.

THE NIGHT OF THE EVENT:

1. The Lead Hostess is asked to arrive 1 hour and 15 minutes prior to the event. This is to layout name badges and revise the sign-in sheet if you know of substitutes. Badges are in the top drawer of a file cabinet (which is labeled).
2. All other volunteers are asked to arrive 1 hour prior to the performance. Ask the volunteers to sign in and select vests. Help with setting up a name badge if a volunteer does not have one. The badges have a white area on them where the volunteer's name can be written. There are blank badges in the back of the file drawer.
3. The Lead Hostess confirms volunteer positions and assigns them to specific locations in the Pavilion. If inserts to the program are needed (the House Manager will tell you), volunteers should start on that task immediately.
4. The Lead Hostess should confirm that Merch/Concessions and Box Office are present and send them to their positions as soon as they arrive.

ASSIGNMENT OF VOLUNTEERS:

1. Assignment of ushers and ticket scanners will vary depending on the number of tickets that have been sold. Assign at least two people to scan tickets at both the Front Entrance (Section B) and two people at the side entrance (Section A). For summer concerts, or any sold out concert, assign at least four people at the A entrance. Two will be scanning at the A entrance and two will be scanning at the bathroom/ breezeway entrance. Remind the ticket scanners not to give detailed seating instructions, but rather have the ushers escort ticket holders to their seats.
2. Assign one usher at the C upper entrance and window aisle, and one at the Accessible Entrance (lower C, near stage). Depending on the number of ushers available, assign one or two ushers at the top of the aisles between A/B sections and B/C sections.
3. Depending on the time of year, pen flashlights, available in the Guild closet, should be held by all ushers working at the aisles; they are used to assist late arrivals.
4. Don't place yourself in a specific position. Your role is to roam, identify any bottlenecks and reassign volunteers as needed.
5. The Guild Hostess can also be a rover, or assigned to a specific position if needed.
6. Box Office and Merch/concessions volunteers may leave when the Strings Box Office Manager gives permission. They are welcome to stay for the event, but if they do, they are expected to assist with cleanup.
7. The Lead Hostess gathers all volunteers for the House Manager's briefing 15 minutes prior to opening doors for the event. Please feel free to add any special instructions you may feel is helpful. Do remind everyone that they are expected to stay after the event to assist with cleanup.
8. As the event begins, instruct the ushers to remove the "Watch Your Step" signs and store them in the recessed areas at the back of the pavilion.
9. In case of injury or illness, immediately contact the House Manager. House Staff will take the primary responsibility for the situation.
10. If difficult or unusual situations come up, volunteers should find the House Manager. The sound booth can always alert the House Manager via headset if absolutely necessary. Please note that these technicians are working and might not be responsive.

AFTER THE EVENT:

1. The Lead Hostess should ensure that cleanup does not begin until a majority of the audience has left the Pavilion. The Guild Closet door, if opened, will obstruct an exit and is a safety issue. You may need to actually stand in front of the door, as volunteers are often eager to start cleanup and get home.
2. Occasionally a volunteer will ask to leave early, which is fine if the Lead Hostess agrees.
3. Programs left on seats are collected, and insert removed and returned to the front entrance. Paper, plastic and glass containers under seats are picked up in trash baskets and left where the House Manager designates for disposal by house staff.
4. Turn over all lost and found items directly to the House Manager; do not leave them on the desk in the Guild closet as the House Manager doesn't know what they are and could think they were left behind by staff or volunteers.
5. Be sure to remind the volunteers to sign out and thank them for coming.
6. If you have any observations, concerns, or problems with a volunteer, please follow up with the Strings Volunteer Coordinator.

HOW TO SIGN UP FOR CONCERTS:

Contact Daniel Kelley, Strings Volunteer Coordinator, daniel@stringsmusicfestival.com, to receive links for the Concert Scheduler and the Signup Form. The Scheduler will allow you to see what concerts still need volunteers, but you need to use the Signup Form or contact Daniel directly to get on the Scheduler.

A MILLION THANKS!!