

GUIDELINES

TO ASSIST ORGANISERS OF MANDOLIN FESTIVALS / CAMPS

The FAME “Camp” as it has been colloquially known usually consists of a week-long residential rehearsal camp culminating in a public concert. For the sake of clarity in this document the following word definitions are used.

“**Camp**” refers specifically to the residential rehearsal period and venue, not to the overall event;

“**Concert**” refers to the main public concert or equivalent performance/culmination of the week’s rehearsals;

“**Festival**” is the entirety of the event, including the residential rehearsal period, the concert and any pre-camp or post-concert workshops or other activities included in the plans.

These guidelines are for the information of future Festival committees so that the task of organizing a Festival may become less daunting. They are presented as the recommendations of those who have planned festivals and camps before – the results of previous experience and discovered pitfalls. Please consider them seriously. Some of them concern unavoidable legal requirements and indemnities and as such are really non-negotiable. They are not here as heavy-handed ‘Thou Shalt Not’s, but are requirements of the Law of the land. We don’t want you to mistakenly overlook them.

However, the guidelines are for the most part, recommendations ONLY as it was never envisaged that all mandolin festivals be organized in exactly the same manner. In fact, in order to have a musically rewarding, fun-filled time at a camp, it is preferable to use many different skills to individualise a camp. It is important to note that FAME Festivals have never been competitive between participating groups. It is very unlikely that the membership would wish to introduce this.

The cost of the Festival:

Please bear in mind that the profit generated by a FAME Festival is the principal income stream for FAME, providing the finance for FAME’s assistance to future Festivals. Budgeting for a loss is not acceptable practice. With that considered, Festival fees should be kept as low as budgetary constraints allow, so that as many of our members as possible can afford to attend.

TIME FRAME PRIORITIES (recommended period before Festival)

1. State intention to host Festival

3 - 4 years

Form a region-based group to present an Expression of Interest in Planning a FAME Festival as rostered by FAME. This group should present a broad outline and budget to FAME Committee for acknowledgement and ratification of their proposal. Such acceptance by FAME will bind the appointed Organising Committee to considering these Guidelines and meeting the agreed conditions. Ideally the Organising Committee should include an orchestra-nominated representative from each interested local group (this could be the orchestra’s President, Secretary or Treasurer) to maintain constant contact between the Committee and the FAME members in the region and to keep them informed and interested in the planning

process. Your regional FAME members' voluntary input and support will ultimately influence the success of your Festival.

Circumstances might arise that lead you to decide that it is not possible for a Festival to go ahead in your city. If your Committee and Host Orchestras reach this decision, then you must communicate this to the FAME Committee as soon as possible, so that an alternative event can be planned.

Agreement to the proposal by FAME Committee and the formal recognition by FAME of the Festival Organising Committee will be in a written Letter of Agreement signed by representatives of both parties. These Guidelines form part of the agreement.

- 2. Prepare a Budget** **3 - 4 years**
You will continue to refine your Budget as time progresses, but keeping aware of the likely expenses and income streams is vital to good planning. **If applying to FAME for seeding funds or grant monies**, prepare a budget to support your application – in any case a budget for internal use will be essential, as will a budget to accompany any other grant application. Put effort into finding external funding sources. Every dollar from outside FAME's circle is a real plus.
- 3. Commence negotiations to find conductor** **3 years**
The conductor plays a very important part in the success of a Festival. Conductors and soloists may well be professionals. As such their diaries can tend to be booked up to three years in advance. Move early! Points to be taken into consideration for selection:-

 - Musicality
 - Communication and conducting skills
 - Understanding the mandolin.
 - Understanding the orchestra: the Festival ethos, player expectations and capabilities
- 4. Residential venues -** **- as good venues fill quickly allocate at least 2 years**
Selection of suitable venue should take into account a suitable, accessible and secure rehearsal space preferably on-site. Space for secure storage of large instruments is important. In an ideal world, the orchestral seating plan and the acoustics in the rehearsal room should match those of the concert hall. Too big a change will be detrimental to the final concert. Ease of movement around the campsite for the less able is also a factor to bear in mind. Where possible, consideration should be given to a site that is easily accessible for 'out of town travellers' either by train, bus or from the airport. A non-metropolitan Camp increases the expense for local FAME members who might have been waiting years for an affordable Festival without travel or live-in costs. For those carrying large instruments it is important that assistance be readily available.
- 5. Concert Venue – Audio, Video or Photographic Recordings** **2 years**
A Residential Camp venue with an appropriate Concert Venue on site such as a College or Conservatorium is preferable. The minimization of transport needs and the convenience of the residential facilities pre- and post-concert cannot be over-emphasized. If the concert venue is on site, this would eliminate bussing costs to and fro and possibly save on the theatre hire.

Consideration must be given to :

- Choosing MC for concert
- Supper after concert
- Pricing structures
- Availability of stands/chairs/stools. Stage down-lighting to read music.
- Source someone to undertake producing CD etc giving a high quality result.

It is legally necessary to obtain the written permission of all performers (especially professionals) to record a concert. It is also becoming necessary to gain a similar permission to photograph or make video recordings of participants (especially minors) performing, rehearsing or in social activities at Camp.

Permission for audio and visual recordings in Concert, rehearsal and normal social activity of the Camp should be requested and signatures recording such agreement can be included in the Registration Form. In the case of a youth or minor, the guardian/parent must be a signatory to a release agreement condoning all video/audio recordings and photographs for all purposes. Each professional engaged, e.g. MD or soloist, would need to sign such a consent form as part of their contract.

This also applies to the amateur rank-and-file orchestra musicians. It is strongly suggested that FAME Festivals include in their Registration Form a clearly worded “permission to make audio and visual recording” consent that is signed and given upon sending in the form with payment, (a “no sign, no go” clause in essence rather like the software license agreements one has to tick before a computer program can be launched).

In the past some concert recordings have never seen the light of day because of a single objector, or because the recording company will not print the CDs without written evidence of every participant’s agreement. This is a serious blow to all the voluntary amateur performers who might miss out simply because the Organising Committee failed to get all the signatures in advance. It is also a serious blow to FAME, as the concert CD is a principal record of the Festival and is an irreplaceable archive of the music, often including premiere performances and commissioned works. Get “permission to record” in advance !

6. If applying for funds/sponsorships do so ASAP

2 years

Grant applications will usually be expected to have accompanying them a comprehensive Budget, and probably additional supporting material such as CDs or reviews of past FAME Festival concerts as evidence of “cultural value”. A list of FAME-commissioned music and composers would also be useful as examples of permanent outcome from our activities. Grant applications can close many months before your Festival and will then take even more months to be processed by the funding bodies. Find out deadlines, talk to the Fund management staff, and apply early. Be aware that any body or organisation offering grants or sponsorship is very likely to require complete and accurate financial accounts involving all Festival expenses and income. FAME expects organising committees to provide complete, accurate and detailed financial accounts to any organisation providing grants or subsidies for FAME Festivals if such are required.

7. Music Selection

18 mths- 2 years

The success and enjoyment of the concert is directly related to the music chosen. If new compositions are envisaged there are several issues to be considered, even if you choose not to seek funds from FAME to underwrite the cost of commissioning music:

a. FAME-funded commissions are intended to be available to orchestras after the conclusion of the FAME Festival and **FAME's Music Commission Contract for Composers** has been written to ensure that orchestras are guaranteed ongoing access to the music for rehearsals and performances. This contract must therefore be used if FAME is to provide a grant for commissions. Even if funding is NOT being sought from FAME for commissions it is strongly recommended that this contract be used. Its wording is suitable in either case. The **FAME Music Commission Contract is available as a PDF file** from the FAME Librarian via the FAME Website.

b. Applications to FAME's committee for a grant to pay for commissioning of music for a FAME Festival must include details of the fee(s) to be offered for the music, the proposed duration of the music, the composer's name(s), the reason for choosing the nominated composer(s) and general information of the composer(s) previous works especially works for mandolin orchestras.

8. Music Distribution

4+ months

Music should be distributed to participants well before the camp to give time for individual preparation. It has become usual practice to use email of PDF Files to speed distribution. Music commissioned using the FAME Contract specifically permits this, but copyright music bought from a Publisher or borrowed from an orchestra library may not automatically permit making and distributing copies this way. Be aware of this.

GENERAL ISSUES

ACCOUNTABILITY – open a bank account.

- This must be separate from any “host Orchestras” accounts.
- **Keep accurate, complete and up-to-date records.** Appoint a Treasurer who understands this and is prepared to do so. All records are to be made available to FAME, if requested.
- After completion of the Festival the final accounts are to be submitted within 3 – 6 months.
- Preferably use basic software so that future festival committees may benefit from past experiences.

ADVERTISING

- Appoint a volunteer to be in charge of Advertising/PR/Flyers
- Choose a THEME and a logo for use in advertising.

Ensure that FAME's Logo and name are present on all promotional materials and try to ensure that articles in newspapers and discussions in radio/television interviews promoting the FAME Festival mention FAME's involvement with the Festival.

ENTERTAINMENT

- “Getting-to-know you” gathering.
- Organised day/half day tour to feature highlights from surrounding area. It is preferable to include this in the cost of the camp.
- Social evening.
- Non-player support group activities. Plans should attempt to make their visit as rewarding as possible. Whilst these non-players may volunteer for duties it should be remembered that they are also visitors and should be allowed to plan to be ‘out and about’ as much as they desire.
- Break-up party.
- Provision of alcoholic beverages – it would be prudent to keep the provision of alcohol from the Festival Account to a minimum. Some amount of free drinks at a special dinner or for an after concert party is appropriate and it is a good idea to encourage a BYO culture.

MUSIC SELECTION

- Music to be selected by Conductor and camp Organising Committee, bearing in mind the general capabilities of an ensemble of amateur musicians so that some music is chosen to challenge the more accomplished, whilst easier music will be comfortably managed by beginners. Availability and cost of music should also be a consideration.
- To comply with APRA requirements, original copies of scores should be available at the concert.

WORKSHOPS - To create interest and/or encourage members out of their Comfort zone, Workshops (Dance, Percussion, Singing, Drama etc.) are often part of a mandolin festival.

SOLOISTS - To have a successful and interesting concert, an outside soloist may be engaged. Small elite ensembles from within the FAME attendees might be invited to perform also. Be aware however of the need to consider the “professional status” of the elite camp attendees – there may be issues of fees. This is a warning of a pitfall, not an instruction to pay!

TRANSPORT - Buses will probably be required to transport members to and from the Concert venue. Outings and possibly non-players’ entertainment need to be taken into consideration.

SECTION LEADERS

- There are probably two ways of choosing leaders – one is to wait until applications to attend come in and then select the leaders. Alternatively approaches to known past players can be made to encourage them to become interested in playing again. Generally, there would be a reduction in Festival participation fees for leaders.

FAME GENERAL MEETING AND ELECTION

- Time must be set aside (ideally within 3 days of the commencement of the Camp) for holding the AGM, and/or SGM and Executive Officers' Elections, allowing adequate time for the completion of business. Pressure to abbreviate the meeting because of a following inflexible event such as a catered meal or a lecture/performance should be avoided by appropriate scheduling of the meeting. The whole idea is that the business of a FAME General Meeting should not be required to compete with the business of FAME Camp. The timeslot of the morning after the final concert, as used in the past, is also inappropriate as it consistently clashed with members' homeward travel arrangements and did not allow the incoming FAME Committee any face-to-face time to discuss forward plans.

In closing, the cost of the camp should be kept to an absolute minimum so that as many as possible of our members can afford to attend. Only one aim of our festivals is to raise money as the main source of income for FAME. To quote one of the contributors to these guidelines, "... the first and foremost objective of FAME camps is to bring us all together for a week of music making and camaraderie, to give a good concert at the end of it, so promoting the Mandolin in general."

Certainly food for thought!