



Front Porch Music Festival Event Summary Report

Event Details

Title – Front Porch Music Festival

Coordinated by - Laramie Public Art Coalition

Host – Sharon Martinson

Event Dates - Sunday, September 15, 2019, from noon to 5:00 p.m.

Venue – Front porches in the “Tree Area” of Laramie (between 6th St and 11thSt, and between Grand Ave and Custer St)

Event Description

A front porch music festival in which local musicians and bands performed on private, but accessible to the public, front porches. Porches were close enough so that participants were able to walk or ride their bikes from one performance to another, but not so close that sound from one place would interfere with another. The event was held on Sunday, September 15, 2019, from noon to 5:00 p.m.

Live music took place on five porches and in the South garden of Albany County Public Library. A different act performed each hour at each site for a total of 30 musical acts comprised of 64 musicians from the community. Any musician that responded to the call for musicians was matched to a stage, which gave new musicians and established bands the opportunity to perform. The styles of music ranged from bluegrass and folk, to punk and classical. Students from the high school and local music classes were also featured. Emerging musicians included youth from Laramie Community Guitar, Beth Vanderborgh’s string students as well as two duos comprised of high school students. Unofficially, String Academy students also performed on a pop-up porch. In addition to the emerging musicians, a number of established musicians performed including Lost Birds, Birgit Burke and Jeff Evens, Opera Wyoming and Ten Cent Stranger.

Impact of Event

The primary goals of the project were to:

1. Expand the concept of "public art" as well as the location of public art in Laramie

2. Pilot the feasibility of collaborating with others to provide free outdoor music in a local neighborhood in Laramie
3. Raise awareness of local resources including talent and neighborhoods
4. Contribute to Laramie's reputation as a desirable place to live, work and visit by building a sense of community

We measured impact by monitoring attendance; gauging satisfaction of participants through evaluations distributed at the event as well as online surveys through Facebook and anecdotal feedback; documenting efforts and activities such as advertisements and media coverage; and discussions and feedback from those involved in putting on the event. In an attempt to learn which questions generated useful information, several different wordings and formats were used in the evaluations.

Attendance: Images, anecdotal evidence, and survey comments indicate that families and individuals were among the participants of the event and crossed the age span from young children to retired people. Graduate students from the UW statistics department took audience counts at each porch 3 times during the event. At one porch the audience count was taken 5 times, as well as a tally of the number of people who passed by and stayed for at least one song. Using these metrics, and assuming that some percent of the audience was present for the whole event, and there was some turn-over, and other people were not counted because they were between porches during the tally times, the estimated population served during the 2019 Front Porch Music Festival was calculated to be between 816 and 2,330 attendees. There was no way to know from this method if individuals were counted more than once.

The model for Front Porch Music Festivals is well-documented and has been implemented successfully in communities of various sizes around the country. Holding the first one in Laramie where we have many musicians gave us the opportunity to see if it would work here too.

Surveys completed during the day and then following the event (available online through Facebook) overwhelmingly indicated the strong sense of community that was felt during the five-hour event. They loved the music and the variety and the rare complaint was that there were so many good performances on at the same time that it was difficult to choose between them.

Since this was a pilot and we knew we had good, eager collaborators, we wanted to learn about logistics and organization here in Laramie; ways to get the word out and entice the public to attend; ways to evaluate the process and the event; and how to capitalize on what we learned.

Key lessons include:

- Advertising widely through many different media works. Channels used were social media, press releases which resulted in stories published in the Laramie Boomerang as well as on Laramie Live, street signs posted during the Pop-up Art walk and the

Farmer's Market, and VIP invitations to important stakeholders and posters around the community. Because of the broad awareness and buzz the event was covered by the Laramie Boomerang, Laramie Live and Wyoming News Now <https://www.facebook.com/kgwn.tv/videos/394907187889019/>.

- When people love an event and they are asked how to improve it, they provide valuable input on everything from access to more comfort facilities to blocking off streets to monitoring the presence of dogs (all issues we were aware of before the event and gave us greater insight on their importance to participants).
- Volunteers were readily available and well-used; more could be involved for various tasks in the future. Follow up discussions with volunteers, musicians and hosts are being planned to learn more from them, incorporate their perspectives into future plans and help build community.
- Doing the Front Porch Festival in an easily accessible neighborhood where people frequently walk and volunteer hosts were readily available was solid strategically for a first attempt and contributed to the events success. Doing another event elsewhere will present new challenges but will be beneficial in terms of outreach, access and building community.
- Following the Skatepark Stage with this Front Porch Music Festival is definitely expanding the definition of "public art" in Laramie beyond murals and sculptures and can be built upon. We will continue to work on documenting that learning.

Comments received of note include:

- *I liked that it was an intimate, get to know your neighbors, community kind of venue.*
- *I really enjoyed the feeling of open community. Children playing, music, all the adults were smiling. I came from Fort Collins for it. As soon as I heard about the festival I knew I wanted to come.*
- *The music was great but I really loved the spirit of community*
- *The feeling that the whole community was sharing something special*
- *"Maybe if I practice my trumpet more, I can play next year!"*
- 6th grade Laramie Middle School student
- *"[W]e experienced a manifestation of the bright side of our souls, the place where hope is born and nourished. Sunday afternoon, from 12:00 until 5:00, on six porches within a six-block stretch of town centered along Garfield Street, we made manifest the joy of community; . . . Thirty performances, five per porch. All afternoon, people strolled or biked this way and that, some carrying their lawn chairs with them. All were wrapped in*

the embrace of love that music can create. Some of the performers were playing in public for the first time, while others were well-known seasoned Laramie musicians. It is easy to let a moment like that go by with, "gee, that was fun." Don't. Dwell on it; feel the connectivity. Only in this way can we let the best of what it means to be human come to life;"

- Ken Gerow, Laramie resident

Fifty percent of the people surveyed made a comment about either the community or presence of neighbors being what they liked most about the event!

Fifty-six out of 57 responses indicated that public funds should be used to free, easy-access, family-friendly events such as the Front Porch Music Festival.

Meghan Goodner, Whiting High School Music Teacher, expressed a great deal of gratitude for the opportunity for two of her students to participate in the event. The performance served as a final project for a class in which they were responsible for organizing and communicating with the Music Director about their performance.

Community Outreach of the Event

Sharon Martinson and Laramie Public Art Coalition worked in partnership to advertise the event. Channels used were social media, press releases which resulted in stories published in the Laramie Boomerang as well as on Laramie Live, street signs posted during Pop-up Art walk and the Farmer's Market, and VIP invitations to important stakeholders and posters around the community.

The Albany County Public Library supported the event by offering their South garden as a music location as well as opening for the afternoon so participants could use the restrooms. The Parks and Recreation Department provided trash pickup following the event. Numerous volunteers were also involved. Names and numbers are available in project documentation.

Project Budget and Actuals

Frontporch Music Festival Event	Budget	Actual Notes
Talent		
Director	\$1,200	\$1,200
Musicians	\$6,400	\$6,400
Sound System	\$574	\$574
TOTAL TALENT	\$8,174	\$8,174
Advertising		
Graphic Design	\$300	\$- Donated
Printing	\$300	\$389
Tshirts	\$650	\$650
Signs	\$450	\$436
Boomerang Ad	\$50	\$50
WPR Ads	\$200	\$198
TOTAL ADVERTISING	\$1,950	\$1,723
Event Expenses		
Photographer	\$1,000	\$1,000
Misc.	\$500	\$- Chairs were donated; Other costs deemed unnecessary.
TOTAL EVENT	\$1,500	\$1,000

Administrative CostsLPAC Fee for
Service**\$2,850****\$2,850**

TOTAL**ADMINISTRATIVE****COSTS****\$2,850****\$2,850**

TOTAL BUDGET V**ACTUAL****\$14,474****\$13,747**







Comments received through paper and online surveys of the event:

- *I liked that it was an intimate, get to know your neighbors, community kind of venue.*
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- *The music was great but I really loved the spirit of community*
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Notes from Sharon:

Attendance: Graduate students from the UW statistics department took audience counts at each porch 3 times during the event. At one porch the audience count was taken 5 times, as well as a tally of the number of people who passed by and stayed for at least one song. Using these metrics, and assuming that some percent of the audience was present for the whole event, and there was some turn-over, and other people were not counted because they were between porches during the tally times, the estimated population served during the 2019 Front Porch Music Festival was calculated to be between 816, and 2,330 attendees.

Musician Attendance: During the event, over 5 hours and 6 porch stages, 36 bands performed, comprised of 64 musicians from the community. Any musician that responded to the call for musicians was matched to a stage, which gave new musicians and established bands the opportunity to perform. Students from the high school and local music classes were also featured. The styles of music ranged from bluegrass and folk, to punk and classical.

Feedback: LPAC / Trey did the survey and has those results. The event was covered by the Laramie Boomerang, Laramie Live and Wyoming News Now
<https://www.facebook.com/kgwn.tv/videos/394907187889019/>