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: CASE STUDY No. 1031 :

## HOW A CULTURAL PROGRAM CAN PRODUCE PR BENEFITS

Alert organizations are aware that sponsorship or conduct of activities which serve the public's cultural interests is sound public relations and often pays off in dollars and cents. The undertaking can be relatively inexpensive (e.g., donation of prizes for artistic or musical accomplishment of local school children or lending facilities for exhibitions) or it can be on a much broader scale. Some of the organizations which are profiting from such programs are Clairol, Hallmark Cards, IBM, S. C. Johnson & Son, Mead Corporation, and Jos. Schlitz Brewing Company.

Schlitz has for some years sponsored various free cultural events in its home city of Milwaukee, Wis. — art exhibits and concerts of different kinds. These activities are handled by a team consisting of Schlitz's PR Director Dae E. Shawl, CR Director Arthur P. Schmidt, and Barkin, Herman and Associates of Milwaukee (its PR Counsel). The original objective was to cement Schlitz's relations with the community, but the concerts have now begun to develop goodwill for the company in other cities, too. Every opportunity is being explored to establish a parallel between the quality of the company's product and skilful performance at the artistic level.

A highlight of Schlitz's home town concerts came in 1963 when Conductor Leonard Bernstein appeared in Milwaukee with the New York Philharmonic and drew the largest American audience (30,000 persons) in the orchestra's history. This led the company to hold a series of meetings with the Philharmonic and the City of New York in an effort to help the orchestra solve a serious problem: its annual concert series at NYC's Lincoln Center is so popular that many thousands of people are unable to get tickets. Schlitz and the Philharmonic offered to contribute \$50,000 apiece toward the expenses of twelve free summer concerts to be performed Aug. 10-28, 1965 by the full Philharmonic orchestra in six different parks in NYC. The City agreed to construct a large portable band shell (costing \$175,000). Only serious music with leading conductors and soloists was to be offered.

The unprecedented musical event was announced last December at a press conference attended by NYC's Mayor Wagner, Schlitz's President Robert A. Uihlein Jr., and Philharmonic's President Amyas Ames. The media greeted the news with enthusiasm and gave it substantial printed space and radio-TV time. . . . Publicity was given a big assist the day before opening night through a two-page ad by Macy's department store. The salute — to Schlitz, the Philharmonic, and New York City — reached the nearly three million readers of the Daily News and the New York Times.

Attendance at the opening concert broke all records. Its more than 70,000 listeners constituted the biggest audience the Philharmonic had ever played to other than by radio-TV. Nor had so large a group ever gathered in

NYC to hear a program of classical music. The whole series drew a total audience of nearly 500,000. Schlitz's role in the endeavor was announced at each concert and millions of additional people, through skilfully handled publicity, learned about the company's aid.

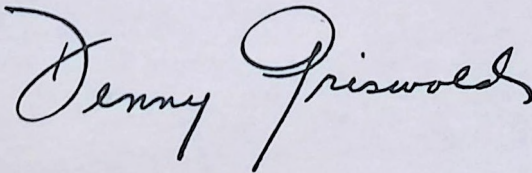
Without a single exception, the NYC dailies ran front-page stories and pictures. There were editorials, too. All referred to the brewery's financial contribution and its civic-mindedness. Several picked up a phrase in Schlitz's release to the effect that the company "brews fine music as well as fine beer." An editorial in the N. Y. World-Telegram & Sun exclaimed "Encore! Encore!" and called for "bravos" for the sponsors "for bringing great music into the parks." It was noted that no empty Schlitz cans littered the ground after the concert (plenty of trash baskets had been provided) and the Times quoted Uihlein as observing, in that connection: "Schlitz drinkers are quality drinkers. They use receptacles."

When it developed that attendance at the opening concert had topped that at a Beatles performance staged at a New York stadium a few nights later, Schlitz ran a full-page ad in the New York press. Titled "The Night Beethoven Outdrew the Beatles (or how Schlitz helped New York make musical history)," it reported that 15,000 more persons came to hear the serious music than the rock 'n roll program. The ad elicited wide editorial comment and was also used as part of an editorial feature on the Today TV show.

National publicity was gained through Time, the New Yorker, and the Saturday Review of Literature. (The last-named ran a picture and described the concerts as "unprecedented, unbelievable, and unforgettable.")

Another publicity salvo followed the series' conclusion. The huge total attendance made news since it was some 100,000 greater than the total for the Philharmonic's annual subscription series, which extends over an eight-month period. All stories referred to the diversity of the listeners; they were a true cross-section of New York citizenry. The Times said the audience was composed of "beards, guitars, bulky sweaters, black sheaths and pearls, dinner jackets, old, young, sophisticated musicians following scores, lovers, whole families..." and described its attitude towards the musical performance as "reverential." And there was jubilation at Schlitz because, in summing up, the highly respected New York daily said that the audience "took to the experience with gusto"; "gusto" is a key word in Schlitz advertising.

Analysis of the hundreds of letters received by Schlitz indicates that the effort is contributing to the company's rising sales. Many wrote not only to express appreciation for the concerts, but also to pledge customer loyalty. One correspondent keenly evaluated the PR benefits which accrued to the brewing company through the concerts. He stated that they "add a new dimension to your public image."



Editor