Welcome, and congratulations on becoming a Make Music New York Neighborhood Organizer! On behalf of Make Music New York, and millions of music-loving New Yorkers, thank you for taking on this leadership role.

Over the next six months, working with an experienced MMNY manager, you will meet and inspire hundreds of your neighbors to take part in this unique, participatory music festival on June 21st. In the process, you will develop relationships with talented local artists, local businesses, community leaders, and the other amazing MMNY organizers throughout the city.

In addition, if you so choose, you will have the opportunity to take on a special project in your area and create a MMNY mini-music festival of your own design (like last year’s “Punk Island” and “Lincoln Square Makes Music” events).

This handbook explains the MMNY Neighborhood Organizer program: how we will work together, between now and June 21st, to coordinate the third annual festival that has already become the largest day of music in NYC history.

I look forward to working with all of you on another successful year!

Aaron Friedman
President, Make Music New York, Inc.

Photo: “Anamanaguchi” in Tribeca (Jeremiah Johnson)
Make Music New York, PO Box 1164, NY NY 10013 • makemusicny@gmail.com • 917-779-9709 • www.makemusicny.org
Make Music New York is a one-day festival performed by anyone who wants to take part, and enjoyed by everyone who wants to attend. Last year’s festival featured over 875 free performances — from New York City Opera singers to underground MCs, Tuvan throat singers to high school rock bands — on sidewalks, streets, parks, gardens, cemeteries, and rooftops throughout all five boroughs of NYC. Each MMNY concert is free, outdoors, and open to the public.

Using our “matchmaking” website, developed and hosted by Time Out New York magazine, anyone can sign up to find a space for their music... or music for their space.

Once participants have made arrangements, Make Music New York organizers secure all necessary permits, coordinate performances with others in each neighborhood, and promote each concert through postcards, customizable posters, the timeoutnewyork.com website, an 8-page Metro New York program (50,000 copies), and full-page ads in Metro New York and Time Out New York.

There is no charge for musicians or for venues to take part. Everything is completely free.

“With Make Music New York ... the day literally exploded with live music, it could be heard emanating from each and every street corner.”

William Goodman
Spin Magazine, 6/23/08

Photos: “Heavy” in Flatbush (Richard Louissaint), “Face The Music” on the Upper West Side (Rick Levy)
NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZER RESPONSIBILITIES

As a Neighborhood Organizer, you will coordinate the MMNY events in the police precinct where you live or work (to find which precinct you’re in, visit www.nyc.gov/nypd). We hope to have teams of 2-4 organizers working together in each precinct.

Each team is responsible for the following projects, to be completed over the next six months. All of it can be done according to your own schedule: during the day, in the evenings, on the weekends, or whenever you have the time. The total time commitment is 69 hours — on average, about three hours a week for each team. Each team can decide how it wants to split up the work.

1. RECRUIT MUSICIANS. Some musicians will sign up online for Make Music New York with no special effort from us. Others, like many classical musicians, Salsa bands, and elementary school students, need to be recruited to take part. Between Feb. 1st and April 15th, organizers will approach musicians in their neighborhood — on subway platforms, at jam sessions, in musical instrument stores, at music schools/arts institutions, even going door-to-door in apartment buildings — and ask them to sign up for MMNY.

   Commitment: 2 hrs/week for 10 weeks

2. RECRUIT VENUES. In 2008, we had over 1,600 musicians sign up to perform, but only 400 venues for them. This year, we will redress the imbalance by recruiting more bars, restaurants, community gardens, storefronts, and buildings to host musicians on June 21st. The best results last year came from visiting locations in person, and talking to the owner/manager (or asking for that person’s number, and calling them).

   Commitment: 2 hrs/week for 10 weeks

NOTE: We will set benchmarks for the number of musicians and venues we expect each team to recruit, based on the number of concerts in that precinct in previous years — see graph on the left.

Jazz at Lincoln Center’s Jonathan Batiste on Upper West Side (Jorge Schuhmacher)

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3. FOLLOW UP WITH MUSICIANS AND VENUES. Once people have signed up on the website, some of them will make their own arrangements; others will need help figuring it out. Over one weekend in March, and another in April, we will call up everyone who still needs to schedule a concert, and guide them through the process. **Commitment: 4 hrs in March, 4 hrs in April**

4. THROW A PARTY IN THE SPRING FOR MUSICIANS. On June 21st, every New Yorker can wander around hearing the music of their neighborhoods... except for MMNY musicians themselves, who are often too busy playing! To solve this problem, we'd like each organizer to host a party beforehand (at a local venue, a park, or in your apartment) where musicians can meet each other, have a drink, and maybe perform for each other. More details TBD. **Commitment: 8 hrs**

5. COORDINATE WITH EVERYONE ELSE. You will not be working alone! To help you organize your neighborhood, you will be in constant contact with an experienced MMNY manager, who can help you figure out what to do. Every Monday, we will schedule a regular 5 minute phone call to check in and see how things are going. The last Monday evening each month, from 9pm - 10pm, we will have a conference call with all of the organizers, to discuss more general issues. In January, May, and June, we will put together events where all of the organizers can come meet each other. **Commitment: 6 hrs**

6. MAKE PROMOTIONAL DECISIONS. You will choose which performances in your precinct to highlight in our online listings, programs, and on locally-distributed fliers.

7. DISTRIBUTE POSTERS AND PROGRAMS. At the beginning of June, we’ll have 50,000 posters/programs to distribute around the city to performers and venues. Over a couple of days, each organizer will drop these off at their precinct’s venues, and put up extra copies in local libraries, bars, etc. We will also designate a location in each precinct where musicians can pick up copies for themselves. **Commitment: 4 hrs**

8. MANAGE THE PERMITS. On June 21st, neighborhood organizers will be the first point of contact for all permit issues. You will have copies of all sound permits and park permits — and each musician, venue, and community affairs officer in your precinct will have your cell phone number, if problems arise. To prepare for this responsibility, each organizer will meet ahead of time with the police precinct and community board. **Commitment: 3 hrs**

9. OPTIONAL: TAKE ON A SPECIAL PROJECT. In the past, MMNY organizers have put together Punk Island (on Governors Island), a classical music block party at Lincoln Center, and more. There are opportunities for all kinds of mini-music festivals as part of MMNY, depending on your interests. If you can do everything listed above, and still have time for more, let us know! **Commitment: TBD**
**PROJECT TIMELINE: IMPORTANT DATES**

*Mid-January* — Post-holiday party for organizers and other MMNY people.

*February 2* — MMNY / Time Out New York matchmaking website launches for sign ups; musician and venue recruitment begins.

*March 20* — Street closure applications due at community boards. Make initial contact with community board.

*April 15* — Website closes to new sign ups. Only acoustic musicians can still join after this date.

*April 21* — Community Boards process street closure applications.

*May 1* — MMNY gives complete proposed concert schedule, and copies of all parks permits, to NYPD liaisons.

*Week of May 4* — Kick-off event, with a list of 12-20 significant concerts released to media.

*May 1 - 21* — MMNY secures all sound permits from NYPD. Make initial contact with community affairs officers.

*May 15* — Street closures will be approved (or rejected). Website closes to acoustic musicians.

*May 25* — Program info all confirmed, complete concert list released to media. Web listings on Time Out New York site go live. Info sent to designer for program layout.

*June 1* — Metro New York program goes to print, program/poster distribution begins.

*June 21* — Make Music New York!

*June 26* — Wrap-up party for MMNY organizers.

“A cacophony of curbside concerts... more than 850 bands, orchestras, choirs and solo performers ranging in genre from rock to rap to bluegrass take to the streets to celebrate the second annual Make Music New York.”

Justin R. Silverman

**New York Post, 6/20/08**

*Photos: Punk Island on Governors Island (Adrian Kinloch), Roberta Flack with MS 50 students in Central Park (Larry Kerr)*

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Being an Effective Organizer

Almost anyone can be a good organizer — all you need is the courage to talk to strangers, and the discipline to stay organized. If you’ve never done anything like this before, here are some points to keep in mind.

1. As a neighborhood organizer, you will talk to many, many people each week, and will need a system of keeping track of the people you talked to, and what they said. **Being an organizer is mostly a matter of being organized.** We will send you spreadsheets, sign-up sheets, and other tools — the important thing is to set up a system for your team, and actually use it.

2. **Make Music New York takes place on one day — June 21st, 2009. This is our deadline. It will not change.** If you organize 200 musicians in time for them to perform in August, it won’t do us any good. We have firm deadlines for signups, permits, and media listings — please take them seriously, and stay on schedule.

3. When you talk to musicians about MMNY, **take a realistic attitude.** You should be able to know shortly after introducing yourself whether the person will take part on June 21. You should not spend a lot of time convincing musicians to take part – that is not to say you shouldn’t pitch them to do it; you should. But either they like the idea, or they don’t. Not everyone will want to join, and that’s fine. It’s much better for them to say “no,” than to say “yes” and then not show up.

4. Every musician and venue you talk to should leave the conversation knowing **EXACTLY what they’ve just agreed to do.** They should understand and be able to answer the following questions:

   - **WHAT** is “Make Music New York”?
   - **WHAT** will they be doing on June 21?
   - **HOW** will they promote their concert?
   - **HOW** will they set up their equipment?
   - **WHERE** will they perform?
   - **HOW** will they get there?
   - **WHEN** will they play?
   - **HOW LONG** will they play?
   - **WHY** is it essential to show up in the right spot on June 21?
   - **WHEN** will we be back in touch with them?

5. You’re not asking people to devote themselves to a life of poverty; you’re inviting them to have a party in their street and play music. There’s no need to be shy, to grovel, or to beg. Just **be straightforward, and ask.**

6. When you’ve gone around to businesses for an hour, asking them all to host musicians, it’s easy to feel like you’re reading off a script, just saying the same thing over and over. If you feel this happening, beware! **Don’t sound like a bland salesperson;** be yourself. Pay attention to the person in front of you, and have a real conversation.
7. It often helps to introduce yourself as a volunteer — this gives you credibility, since it demonstrates that you actually care about the project. (No one volunteers to sell insurance door-to-door.)

8. If people ask you questions about permits (for example), and you’re not 100% sure of the answer, don’t fake it — just say “I don’t know, I’ll get back to you,” and then bring the question up at your weekly call.

9. If people want to take part, tell them how to sign up on the website... and also get their name, phone number, and email address. Send them a two-sentence note within 24 hours, thanking them for talking to you, and giving them a link to the site. They will be delighted to get it.

10. Keep in mind that Make Music New York is a shoestring operation involving thousands of people. Not everything will work out perfectly; the important thing is to improvise, adapt, and overcome.

“Make Music New York will have something like 860 concerts in all five boroughs, 3200 musicians. They’re going to do every kind of music all day long on one day... What we have to do is keep New York doing new things... that not only bring tourists here but make New Yorkers proud of where they are and... get excited about their city and their country and their life. And this is going to help.”
Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg interviewed on Fox 5 Good Day NY, 6/19/08
WHY PEOPLE TAKE PART IN MMNY

When approaching musicians and venues about taking part, it may help to think about some of the things they will get out of the experience.

For **young and amateur musicians**, MMNY provides a chance to experience the joys of performing, for perhaps the largest crowds of their lives. It gives them a chance to develop as artists, and to appreciate the work professional musicians do.

For New York’s **professional musicians** — among the world’s finest and most diverse — MMNY provides a free performance opportunity, bringing their music to new audiences, and integrating them in their neighborhoods.

For **cultural institutions**, such as the Guggenheim, Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, and Jazz at Lincoln Center, MMNY has become a valuable community outreach opportunity — an “open house” that promotes the rest of the season’s performances.

For **venues**, MMNY brings foot traffic to commercial areas, builds community among neighbors, and shows off the potential of underused public spaces, such as gardens, small parks, and plazas.

Finally, for **listeners** on June 21st, MMNY inspires them to come out from under their headphones, and discover the cultural richness of New York, sampling new kinds of music risk-free. They can also experience a more livable city, as sidewalks, streets, and parks — usually characterized by traffic noise and the world’s fastest-moving pedestrians — become impromptu dance floors and social meeting points.

“The largest music event ever to grace Gotham.”
S. Spencer Scott
Metro New York, 6/20/08

Guidelines for MMNY Concerts

In order for Make Music New York to continue from year to year, we need to make sure musicians and venues are being safe and considerate. On June 21st, your neighbors will look to you for guidance on how to set up and what to do — here’s what to tell them:

• Don’t stack speakers in places where they could fall.

• Make sure extension cords are taped to the ground and out of the way.

• Don’t erect stages without the proper permits and insurance.

• If musicians are performing on the sidewalk, set up right against the building and allow at least five feet of sidewalk width for pedestrians to use. DO NOT BLOCK THE SIDEWALK! It’s illegal, and it won’t leave any space for people to stop and listen. Do not block the entrance to any buildings or businesses.

• Play at a reasonable volume. If neighbors or NYPD tell you to turn it down, turn it down.

• Introduce yourself to people at local businesses, and explain what’s going on. Get to know the other musicians in your area.

• We try to ensure that concerts don’t interfere with each other. But if you find you’re too close to another performer, be flexible. Both groups could play more quietly. Or you can take turns playing sets, or join forces in a jam session. Or, if you’re unamplified, you could move down the block.

• Follow the guidelines on your permit, and on the schedule. If your permit is for the north-east corner of a street, don’t perform on the south-west corner. If your permit allows you to perform until 8pm, don’t perform until 9pm. (Exception: if you show up at your location, and construction work is blocking the space, you may find another location down the street. The police will understand.)

• Please clean up after your performance: pick up any litter or fliers that the audience may have left. Remove all duct tape you used for your cords.

• Remember – this is your concert. Musicians are responsible for arranging for electricity (if necessary) with the location, setting up equipment, and troubleshooting problems. Come prepared to work out issues on your own.
ALL ABOUT PERMITS

One of your responsibilities as neighborhood organizer is to sort out the complicated permitting laws that apply to MMNY concerts, and make sure that musicians and venues have the permits they need. We will go over this in detail later, but here are the most common situations:

1. **If the performance is unamplified** (i.e. not using electricity) **and on the sidewalk**, you will not need a permit at all.

2. **If the performance is unamplified and in a New York City park**, with an audience of over 25 people, you will need a parks permit to show that we’ve reserved the space.

3. **If the performance is amplified and on the sidewalk**, you will need a sound permit, and nothing else.

4. **If the performance is amplified and in a park**, you will need both a sound permit and a parks permit.

5. **If the performance is in a community garden**, whether amplified or not, the permits required (if any) will be supplied by the gardener who maintains the space. Please address all questions to him or her.

6. **If the performance is on a closed-off street**, the permits (including a sound permit) will be supplied by the nonprofit or community group that filed the application for a street closure.
“MAKE MUSIC” AROUND THE WORLD

Around the world, June 21st has become a day of exuberant music-making.

The first “Fête de la Musique” was held in France in 1982, and ever since has been celebrated annually on streets and sidewalks across the country. Its success each year has been remarkable. In the year 2000, 97% of the French population was aware of the event, 800,000 performed in it themselves, and 12 million poured into the streets to enjoy the music.

Today, over 340 cities in 108 countries celebrate their own “Make Music” events on June 21st, the summer solstice; in just two years, MMNY has become the largest such event outside of Europe, with 560 performances in 2007 and more than 875 in 2008. Over 1,000 performances are anticipated for Make Music New York in 2009.

“Hundreds of outdoor performances — both amateur and professional — crisscrossing the five boroughs, putting on stage in one music-packed day the city’s rich mixture of cultures and tastes.”

Colin Moynihan and Ray Rivera
New York Times, 6/22/08

Photos, clockwise from top-left: “Make Music” concerts in Switzerland, Austria, Malaysia, and England

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