

STATE OF THE RUCKUS 2014

PEOPLE

Attending

- Michael Coyle
- Kathy McTavish
- David Evan Thomas
- Mike Olson
- Paul Cantrell
- Thomas Johanson — Social Marketing Director
- todd harper — Presenter follow-up; Roundtable program
- Floskey

Interested but couldn't make it

- Noah Keesecker
- Charlie McCarron
- Carei Thomas
- David Colwell
- Elizabeth Fuller
- Heather Barringer
- Katherine Bergman

AGENDA

- Talk about the organization; review & revise mission, vision, and principles
- Review of what we did in the organization's first year: what's working, what isn't
- What's next?

NEW ACTIVITIES

Notes from the discussion are below, but let's just cut to the punchline: we want to expand the New Ruckus's activities, and people stepped forward to help do that!

New activities with volunteers (yay!)

- **Thomas Johanson** will take on social media responsibilities for The New Ruckus. That includes posting Twitter & Facebook updates to promote Composer Nights, and other things yet to be determined. Thomas and Paul will meet on Oct 10 to come up with an initial social marketing plan for Composer Nights.
- **Michael Coyle** will record video at Composer Nights, and periodically edit together short films highlighting what The New Ruckus does, mixing music and conversation.

These videos will serve both as promotional material and as artistic documentation. He begins filming at the next Composer Night on Oct 14.

- **Todd Harper** will pursue a new program idea: practical roundtables in which a few people offer to present on / discuss / answer questions about a topic (e.g. fundraising, working with performers, publishing audio online). This might subsume the existing (currently languishing) Music Tech Meetups program.
- **Mike Olson** will attend MRAC's upcoming workshop on crowdfunding & report back with any ideas relevant to The New Ruckus.
- We are considering making the listening & discussion meetings **Mike** has hosted for many years an official New Ruckus / Intuitive partnership.
- **Paul Cantrell** will set up The New Ruckus to receive donations on Give to the Max day. He will also add a year-round donation link to the New Ruckus web site.

Activity ideas in need of loving volunteers (poor ideas! like pets at the shelter!)

- We would like to set up a Patreon account for people to make recurring donations for Composer Nights. **Volunteer need:** somebody has to figure out a set of Patreon rewards for donors that are manageable but still genuinely rewarding, and manage them when donations come in.
- We would like to gather feedback from the people who presented at each Composer Night, to learn what's working and what's not, and to gauge whether the events are satisfying The New Ruckus's mission. **Volunteer need:** Todd has already volunteered to work on this, but he could use help.
- We would like to mix in a few Composer Nights at other locations around the city, on the theory that people will be more likely to attend the first time if an event is near them — and will be more likely to make the trip to Lowertown having attended once! Alas, however, there's simply no other venue as well-suited as Studio Z. **Volunteer need:** somebody needs to investigate other location options, figure out how to deal with their limitations (e.g. outdoors, no piano, bad sound), and work with the venues.
- The New Ruckus site could invite guest blogging from composers to talk about their work, and what matters to them in music. **Volunteer need:** someone to recruit authors, follow up with them so they get the writing done, and edit their submissions for publication.
- We need money to support all these activities. **Volunteer need:** a fundraiser; someone in charge of asking for money!

NOTES FROM THE DISCUSSION

Review of mission & vision

- Meeting an unmet need for mutual support and community building
- Complementary to other organizations

- Ultimate goal is “to create a sense of purpose and satisfaction in our artistic lives;” support for creating music, getting it heard, engaging public, and making personal connections are *means* to this end
- Non-curated activities → New Ruckus is the organization that says “yes”
- Fighting impostor syndrome / burnout / purposelessness / “When I win X or do Y, *then* I’ll be a real composer.” New Ruckus activities say, “What you are doing *now* is already real, already valuable, already *it*, even as you strive to improve”

We should look at models of successful orgs: AACM, Patrick’s Cabaret

Composer Nights

- Going strong after transition from ACF
 - attendance up
 - richer discussion
 - now year-round
 - web site with bright colors
- Anecdotal concern about people who...
 - ...didn’t feel welcome / valued ← big concern because of New Ruckus mission!
 - ...don’t want to listen to uncurated risk-taking ← not a concern; there are other events for them
- Attendance
 - Went from Forum mailing list of thousands to New Ruckus list of only 110 (but attendance is same or better than Tues Salons)
 - People are afraid of and/or lazy about St. Paul; mixing in a Minneapolis site, or at least in a different part of St. Paul, would bring new people
 - ...but nothing’s as well-suited as Studio Z
 - Walker West?
 - Go with a more limited location (e.g. no piano) and book around the limitations?

Music Tech Meetups

- First event was poorly attended
- Fizzled after that; nobody has time to be in charge of it
- Might resume with focus on people giving short presentations on specific topics

Fundraising

- We got the MRAC grant; will apply again for next year
- Community fundraising
 - Composer Night sponsorship has not taken off, probably because we have no dedicated fundraiser & nobody’s asking
 - Need a donation link on web site
 - Will participate in Give to the Max
 - Patreon is intriguing but rewards pose a problem

New program ideas

- mutual marketing (“I need promotional text for this piece.” “Oh, I love your work! I can write that.”)
- practical roundtable

- “open mic talk bucket”
- guest blogging
- non-profit status? (not yet!)
- buy a building and put “The New Ruckus” on it in neon? (definitely not yet!)
- directory of performers willing to play new music
 - will directory help, or do performances come out of social connections?
 - some performers are just looking for repertoire
 - having a piece specifically written for them can be a selling point
 - getting money to hire performers for composers? No, because that puts us in the position of curating
- see “new activities” above for result of this discussion