

# Indy's Winning Formula

*Why National Sports, Arts and  
Cultural Associations Call It Home*



*Indianapolis is home to Bands of America and its Grand National Championships, as well as Drum Corps International and its DCI World Championships.*



*The cast of internationally acclaimed "Barrage," perform and teach students during the annual Music for All Summer Symposium – Orchestra Division.*

**M**att Carter, executive director, MusicCrossroads, contends that the Indianapolis region is well on its way to being just as internationally recognized for its musical and cultural assets as for its sports.

MusicCrossroads is an initiative focused on bringing not-for-profits involved in music and the arts to Indianapolis. The strategy, according to Carter, is clear, "We see attracting the arts as an economic development strategy, not just a cultural, arts or entertainment strategy." The way he sees it, top-flight arts and cultural amenities attract smart people, and smart people are good for business.

Today, Indianapolis is host to the American Pianists Association and its major national piano competitions; Heartland Truly Moving Pictures, an international film festival; The International Violin Competition of Indianapolis; Music for All and its Grand National Championships; Drum Corps International and its World Championships, and the Percussive Arts Society and its international convention. And the bet is, as with sports, this critical mass will draw more.

"Indianapolis has become the music capital," says Dan Acheson, CEO and executive director of Drum Corps International, which moved to Indianapolis in 2008 (bringing along its DCI World Championship, which draws live audiences of nearly 30,000).

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*The strategy that drew 13 sports governing bodies to Indianapolis, such as USA Diving, has also succeeded in attracting some of the world's leading music and cultural organizations.*

takes to make a vibrant city that will appeal to promising businesses and employees, no matter what their taste.

"No one does it better than Indianapolis," says Steve Penney, president of USA Gymnastics, the sole governing body for the sport of gymnastics in the United States. "Indianapolis is the standard by which others are judged as far as hosting events and doing a fantastic job of being a great place for sport.

"When you look at the Colts and consider that this town is bringing a Super Bowl event here, that's a huge testament to the reputation the city has. This city, more than any other, has gone out and said, 'We're going to establish ourselves by hosting major events.'

"Indianapolis has built an incredible reputation for hosting great events, hosting big events, and being a fantastic spot for gatherings of all sizes. That's hard to do, and it's hard to maintain over time, but they are the standard by which other communities measure themselves."

Indianapolis certainly hit a home run with the Indiana Sports Corp., and it looks like the region is striking the right note with MusicCrossroads too. •

## Winning

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"There's a lot of talent here," he says. "This community's support for the arts is significant.

"The MusicCrossroads initiative really stirred our interest and makes Indianapolis a place where we feel comfortable going out into the community and getting them excited about being a part of what we do."

The city's approach resonated with the Percussive Arts Society, as well. In 2005, it was looking for a home for its convention, offices and museum. According to Executive Director Michael Kenyon, "Indianapolis was able to put things together that other cities were not. You would go to one city and the Chamber of Commerce would be the lead, but they were disconnected with other agencies like the convention center or the visitors association. In another city the convention center would be taking the lead, but nobody else would be able to work with us on actually moving our headquarters. Indianapolis was much better prepared and much more in tune with understanding and listening to our needs and then being able to coordinate the various entities that would be able to make our move and relocation successful."

The Percussive Arts Society opened its museum, Rhythm! Discovery Center, in downtown Indianapolis in November 2009. "So far, being in Indy has been terrific," Kenyon says. "We're really excited about it. We think we have a really great offering for the city that's unique and special. We're looking forward to becoming an integral part of the Indianapolis community."

The strategy for luring major music

organizations to Indianapolis is patterned after the city's efforts to build a vibrant sports community. Thirty years ago, when Indiana created the nation's first sports commission, the Indiana Sports Corp. (ISC), the goal was to set the city apart as a sports capital. Today, 13 sports governing bodies call Indianapolis home. They include the NCAA and National Federation of State High School Associations, and Olympic governing organizations USA Track & Field, USA Gymnastics, USA Diving and US Synchronized Swimming, to name a few.

The city hosted the 2010 and will host the 2015 NCAA Men's Final Four, the 2011 and 2016 NCAA Women's Final Fours, the 2010-2012 Big Ten Men's and Women's Basketball Tournaments, and Super Bowl XLVI. The ISC estimates that over three decades national and international championships have generated more than \$3 billion in direct visitor spending in the region. Indianapolis has been the home to Olympic trials, national sports festivals and the Pan Am Games.

"Indianapolis is a sports town," confirms Debbie Hesse, president and CEO of USA Diving, the organization responsible for training, selecting and preparing teams that represent the United States at events such as the Olympic Games, World Championships and FINA World Diving Cup. "It's a comprehensive package. We can share resources and ideas with other national governing bodies, and we have amazing facilities that help support our athletes, from the grassroots supporters all the way up to our Olympic athletes. I don't think there's any other place in this country that would be able to do that."

Whether it's sports or the arts, Indianapolis has found an approach to attracting the organizations and talent it