

DIGITAL/MULTIMEDIA · NEWSROOM INSPIRATIONS

## COLUMBUS DISPATCH'S WINDOW ON THE WORLD IS ENGAGING FUN FOR EVERYONE



JOHN CROUCH · AUGUST 4, 2017

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The Columbus Dispatch's Window on the World concert series has so far been a big win for everyone involved.

The summer series, which the Dispatch began in 2016, is hosted in the lobby of its building every Friday at noon from June through September, and gives local artists a chance to showcase their talents, anyone passing by a chance to catch a free musical show on their lunch break and has proven to be a wonderful opportunity for the Dispatch to engage with the Columbus community.

"As we were preparing to move into our new home early in 2016, I was looking for ways to soften the button-down image of The Dispatch and let folks know that we are not a faceless institution, but human and approachable. I realized that we had significant foot traffic outside the storefront window in the Features Department," explained Executive Editor Alan Miller. "We settled on Fridays at noon when the farmers' market down the street was drawing even more foot traffic than usual past our building."

While foot traffic and a teaser in Friday Metro sections definitely bring in some audience, Miller also considers social media a major driver.

Since the concerts began, the Dispatch has streamed the shows via Facebook Live and seen a big uptick in follower engagement online. Filming the concerts for Facebook also allows the newsroom to embed the shows on Dispatch.com after, where the videos can be watched by anyone who might have missed the show in person or the live Facebook stream.

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Live at the Dispatch Window on World are The Rice Brothers, who will perform at the Dublin Irish Festival this weekend.

See more performances and download our podcast at [Dispatch.com/WindowontheWorld](http://Dispatch.com/WindowontheWorld).

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The Dispatch has also turned the audio recordings of the shows into what has become a popular, downloadable podcast. A partnership with a local music education program has led to a boost sound quality with the help of students running sound boards.

And while the lobby concerts only take place in the summer, Window on the World is actually a year-round engagement project. When the series goes on its winter hiatus, music reporter Julia Oller continues to interview and record performances by artists through a partnership with a local radio station, which the Dispatch then shares on its site.

His advice for newsrooms looking to start similar community engagement initiatives: "Don't wait until you have everything in order — equipment, staffing, etc. — to do something like this. If we had waited for the perfect moment, we never would have launched this. Also, if you're going to park something like this in the newsroom, give fair warning to the people who work in that area of the building. It can get a little loud at times, and I'm grateful that the Features staff was willing to embrace (or at least tolerate) a weekly lunchtime performance during the summer."

This summer's series runs through Sept. 8. For a complete schedule and links to past shows, visit [Dispatch.com](http://Dispatch.com).

*This post has been updated with more information about the series from Executive Editor Alan Miller.*

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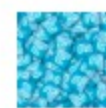
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