



## WHY GRAND RAPIDS?

For over 20 years now the Michigan Music Conference has held its annual conference at the facilities in and around the DeVos Place Convention Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Below are answers to some of the common questions that the board gets surrounding the decision to host the conference in Grand Rapids.

### WHO MAKES THE DECISION?

The decision on where to host the Michigan Music Conference is the responsibility of the Executive Board of the Michigan Music Conference. That board is made up of 2 representatives from each of the four sponsoring organizations, MMEA, MASTA, MSBOA, MSVMA. These 8 volunteer representatives from the organizations review bid proposals from any facilities willing to host the conference.

### WHAT LOCATIONS HAVE WE CONSIDERED FOR THE CONFERENCE?

While a few other locations have offered to host the conference, the truth is there are only two locations big enough for the needs of the Michigan Music Conference. Those two locations are Devos Convention Center and Huntington Place (formerly Cobo Center) in Detroit.

### HOW IS THE DECISION MADE?

Every three years the executive board puts out a request for bids to all convention centers in Michigan listing our needs for the conference. This includes rehearsal spaces for honors ensembles, performance spaces for school groups, exhibit hall space, hotel rooms for about 2000 participants, and rooms for our sessions. The board receives bids from interested locations, reviews those bids, and makes the decision. For the 6 bid proposals the Executive Board has reviewed so far, the decision is usually based on the overall cost of the conference.

The 5 bids by the City of Detroit convention bureau over the history of the MMC have been significantly higher than the bids by Grand Rapids. These bids are also just the cost of the conference and do not include hotel room price, equipment storage, food service, or other conveniences in Grand Rapids due to location and the existence of a performance hall. Additionally, there is the convenience in Grand Rapids of being housed in a facility that allows participants to stay indoors for the entirety of the conference.

### IS DEVOS HALL THE REASON WE ARE IN GRAND RAPIDS?

It is true that the convenience of DeVos Performance Hall has been a huge benefit to the conference in the years that it was available to us. As Broadway Grand Rapids grows its offerings, the availability of DeVos Hall is becoming quite limited. DeVos Place will no longer guarantee us the availability of DeVos Performance Hall for future conferences.

### SHOULD THE CONFERENCE BE SUPPORTING THE DEVOS FAMILY?

The DeVos family paid for the naming rights to the DeVos convention center and Performance Hall, but they have no financial benefit from the facility. Just as Huntington Bank has renamed Cobo Hall, the same could happen with the DeVos Hall. The leadership of the Michigan Music Conference is not in support of any political candidate, party, or platform as it would endanger our 501(c)3 status.

The DeVos family MAY financially benefit from hotel rooms used at the Amway Grand Hotel, JW Marriott, and the Marriott Courtyard. The truth is we do not know for certain what financial connection there is, but the three hotels are managed by the same reservation service for the conference. There is no connection between the DeVos family and the Holiday Inn Express that is also in our hotel offerings.

If you have any questions or concerns about the decisions made by the Executive Board of the Michigan Music Conference feel free to email the board with your concerns at [info@michiganmusicconference.org](mailto:info@michiganmusicconference.org). The conference is a service to its members by the four sponsoring organizations and strives to provide a high-quality music education conference at a reasonable price.