



CONCERTS FOR CHANGE

Benefit Concerts to Take Back the White House

Concerts for Change

A summary of the activities of ConcertsforChange.org,
ConcertsforKerry.org, and StopSinclair.org

December 2004



Moby, NYC



Pink Martini, Portland, OR



Savion Glover, NYC

Overview

Just before midnight on April 7, 2004, the band Bishop Allen took the stage at the Knitting Factory New York City to the cheers of 240 people. One hundred percent of every ticket sold was a direct contribution to John Kerry for President. The band volunteered its time, the Knitting Factory made money from bar sales and the audience came out to support John Kerry, enjoy great music, and meet like-minded fans.

The April 7 event was followed by 98 additional concerts nationwide, building on this model. Our efforts spread to 19 other cities, featured major artists such as Jack Black, Moby, Suzanne Vega, Savion Glover, and Saves the Day, and attracted 16,200 concertgoers. From April 7 to November 2, our effort had one purpose: to elect John Kerry.

By the time the Democratic National Convention took place in late July, Concerts for Kerry (www.ConcertsforKerry.org) had organized 40 concerts in 12 cities and raised \$207,043 directly to John Kerry for President. When Sen. Kerry accepted federal funding on July 29, we were obliged to change our fundraising object, but we continued and expanded our efforts to support John Kerry and other Democrats. Thus, in early August we relaunched as Concerts for Change (www.ConcertsforChange.org). We teamed up with a grassroots runners group called Run Against Bush and became partners in the Running for Change political action committee.

As Concerts for Change, we organized 59 additional concerts and sold t-shirts. We met our fundraising goal, making the maximum allowable PAC contributions to the DNC and 14 swing-state coordinated campaign committees. We also launched an online petition and advertising effort via our StopSinclair.org website, receiving more than 150,000 signatures. By November 2, 2004, our PAC raised \$735,117. Thus, in total, we raised \$942,160 to support John Kerry and other Democratic candidates for federal office in swing states.

By the Numbers

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Number of Concerts for Kerry | 40 |
| Number of Concerts for Change | 59 |
| Total Number of Concerts | 99 |
| Total Number of concertgoers | 16,200 |
| Members of Run Against Bush | 15,211 |
| Online signers of our StopSinclair.org petition | 152,405 |
| Total raised directly to John Kerry for President between April 7 and July 29 | \$207,043 |
| Total raised with the Running for Change PAC as Concerts for Change | \$735,117 |

Concerts for Kerry

[ConcertsforKerry.org](http://www.ConcertsforKerry.org) launched shortly before the first event on April 7, 2004. Between that time and July 29, 2004, Concerts for Kerry raised \$207,043 from more than 4,700 individual contributors, many of whom bought more than one ticket, bringing the total number of concertgoers to 9,050. According to our own surveys, the vast majority of these people had not previously contributed to John Kerry, and many had never before contributed to any political candidate. In every case, 100 percent of every ticket sale was a direct individual contribution to John Kerry for President.¹

¹ Of this total, we raised \$144,372 online from 2,460 contributors. The ticket-purchase page of ConcertsforKerry.org connected users to our [KerryCore/Volunteer Center](http://KerryCore/VolunteerCenter) fundraising page on JohnKerry.com

Most of the concerts were without costs. The performers played for free; the venues made money on the drinks. In the few instances that we rented a venue, paid for promotion, or had other expenses, we solicited in-kind contributions. The total of these in-kind contributions was roughly \$20,000; this amount supplements the \$207,043 that went directly to the Kerry campaign.

Concerts for Change

Fundraising directly to the Kerry campaign ended on July 29, 2004. Within a week we relaunched our efforts under the name Concerts for Change. We teamed up in a political action committee (PAC) with Run Against Bush, a grassroots group that organized runs around the country and raised money online to support Democrats.²

As Concerts for Change, we organized 59 more concerts and the total number of concertgoers rose to 16,200.



Burkina, NYC

Jack Black, LA

Ted Leo and the Pharmacists, Philadelphia

The Concerts: Diverse Talent Across the Country

By election day, we had organized concerts in 20 cities: Boston, Buffalo, Cleveland, Dayton, Englewood (NJ), Grafton (MA), Iowa City, Los Angeles, Madison, Montclair (NJ), Nashville, New Haven, New Orleans, New York, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Portland (OR), Raleigh, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C.

Our concerts attracted a tremendous array of talent. Among them: comedians **Jack Black**, **David Cross**, **Sarah Silverman**, **Stella**, **Fred Armisen**, **Patton Oswalt**, and **Kevin Nealon**; DJs and hip-hop artists **Moby**, **Mark Ronson**, **Mr. Complex**, **Miri Ben-Ari**, and **DJ Spooky**; jazz performers **Savion Glover**, **Joshua Redman**, **Charlie Hunter**, **Christian McBride**, **Dee Dee Bridgewater**, and **Brad Mehldau**; rockers **Saves the Day**, **OK Go**, **Ted Leo & the**

(<http://volunteer.johnkerry.com/member/268967>), which allowed us to confirm that users contributed the correct amount per ticket. See Tab 1 for a summary of this activity from JohnKerry.com.

The remaining \$62,671 was raised in cash and check from people at the venue the night of the event. Concertgoers who bought tickets at the door filled out individual contribution forms for John Kerry for President, and the forms and money were forwarded to local John Kerry offices.

² Run Against Bush was an extraordinary effort. By election day, the campaign had organized local runs in more than 120 cities and boasted 15,211 members, who each contributed at least \$25 for the Run Against Bush t-shirt. For more information, please visit: www.RunAgainstBush.org.

Pharmacists, The Capitol Years, and Pink Martini; vocalists **Suzanne Vega, John Wesley Harding, Marshall Crenshaw, Duncan Sheik, John Legend, Michelle Shocked, Joseph Arthur, Grant-Lee Phillips, and David Poe**; musical-theater stars **Michael Cerveris, Tonya Pinkins, and Cady Huffman**; actors **Uma Thurman, Paul Rudd, and Lili Taylor**; authors **Christopher Durang and Jonathan Ames**; and special guests **Alexandra Kerry, Sen. Bob Kerrey**, and John Kerry's high-school bandmates from **The Electras**. *See Tab 2 for a complete talent list.*

The shows took place in cafés, rock clubs, and concert halls. Some of the highlights were:

- **June 6**: a sold-out comedy show at the Knitting Factory in Los Angeles that featured Jack Black, Kevin Nealon, Fred Armisen, and others.
- **June 14**: an all-star jazz show in New York City with Savion Glover, Joshua Redman, Charlie Hunter, Dee Dee Bridgewater, Brad Mehldau, Christian McBride, Michael Brecker, Nicholas Payton, Jeff “Tain” Watts, Aaron Goldberg, and more.
- **July 13**: a sold-out show with an audience of 1,400 at the Crystal Ballroom in Portland, OR, featuring Pink Martini.
- **October 13**: a concert and debate-watching party at Whiskey Dix in Philadelphia with Saves the Day and local punk bands.
- **November 1**: an election eve show in New York City with D-Stroy, hip-hop violinist Miri Ben-Ari, Q-Unique, and Mr. Complex, hosted by Uma Thurman and former Sen. Bob Kerrey.



The Capitol Years, NYC

Sarah Silverman, LA

Alexandra Kerry, NYC

StopSinclair.org

In October we launched a new initiative to help support John Kerry, leveraging our e-mail lists and other resources in an effort to fight a biased political attack by a major media corporation. On October 9, 2004, *The Los Angeles Times* reported that Sinclair Broadcast Group was planning to force the 62 television stations it owns and operates to air large portions of the anti-John Kerry program *Stolen Honor*. Within 48 hours we had registered and launched www.StopSinclair.org. The main purpose of the site was to gather signatures to present to Sinclair, its advertisers, the Federal Election Commission, and the Federal Communications Commission. In ten days, we collected more than 150,000 online signers, and organized rallies at

Sinclair corporate headquarters in Hunt Valley, Maryland and in front of the White House. Our site also served as a clearinghouse to help the public identify Sinclair shareholders and advertisers and alert them to the company's extraordinary plan to try to tilt the election to George W. Bush.

A week after launching the site, we asked our petition signers to help pay for full-page newspaper ads and 30-second television ads in Ohio and Nevada cities where Sinclair had stations. In five days, we raised \$165,663 online. We immediately spent \$55,000 on full-page print advertisements that ran the day before the program aired in Dayton, Columbus, and Las Vegas. *See Tab 3 for the ad we ran in the Dayton Daily News.* Next, we worked with Democratic admaker Joe Slade White to transform a concept into a fully executed television ad and media plan in less than 24 hours. We spent an additional \$83,000 on 30-second TV ads that ran in the same Ohio and Nevada markets. Our rallies, petition, and advertisements were featured in more than 415 news stories and covered by major media including CNN, Fox, MSNBC, *The Washington Post*, *Time Magazine*, and *The Associated Press*.



StopSinclair.org rallies at the White House and Sinclair Corporate Headquarters in Maryland

Unable to withstand the firestorm of controversy, Sinclair Broadcast Group backed down and ran a far less biased program than originally planned. Our efforts and those of other groups played a critical role in the company's ultimate decision to change course.

Spending Money

From the outset of our partnership with Run Against Bush, the two campaigns agreed that the PAC would make expenditures in the way that could best help support John Kerry. We are confident that we succeeded in this. We decided to first focus on making the maximum PAC contributions to the DNC and to swing state coordinated campaign committees.³ After we had met these targets, we focused on contributions to Senate and House candidates in swing-state races – candidates who success could help John Kerry up the ticket. Additionally, we invested in targeted paid media buys, particularly through our Stop Sinclair campaign.

³ We were initially registered as a “single-candidate” PAC, a status that allowed us to give \$25,000 to the DNC and \$10,000 to swing state coordinated campaigns. In early October, we re-registered as the more common “multi-candidate” PAC, which increased the number of federal candidates we could contribute to.

Our expenditures included the following contributions:

| | |
|---|----------|
| Democratic National Committee | \$25,000 |
| Colorado Victory 2004 Coordinated Campaign | \$10,000 |
| Florida Victory 2004 Coordinated Campaign | \$10,000 |
| Iowa Victory 2004 Coordinated Campaign | \$10,000 |
| Maine Victory 2004 Coordinated Campaign | \$10,000 |
| Michigan Victory 2004 Coordinated Campaign | \$10,000 |
| Minnesota Victory 2004 Coordinated Campaign | \$10,000 |
| Nevada Victory 2004 Coordinated Campaign | \$10,000 |
| New Hampshire Victory 2004 Coordinated Campaign | \$10,000 |
| New Mexico Victory 2004 Coordinated Campaign | \$10,000 |
| Ohio Victory 2004 Coordinated Campaign | \$10,000 |
| Oregon Victory 2004 Coordinated Campaign | \$10,000 |
| Pennsylvania Victory 2004 Coordinated Campaign | \$10,000 |
| Washington Victory 2004 Coordinated Campaign | \$10,000 |
| Wisconsin Victory 2004 Coordinated Campaign | \$10,000 |
| North Carolina Victory 2004 Coordinated Campaign | \$5,000 |
| Arizona Victory 2004 Coordinated Campaign | \$2,500 |
| Missouri Victory 2004 Coordinated Campaign | \$1,000 |
| Ken Salazar for Senate (CO) | \$5,000 |
| Betty Castor for Senate (FL) | \$5,000 |
| Joe Hoeffel for Senate (PA) | \$1,000 |
| Jeff Seemann for Congress (OH) | \$1,000 |
| Paul Babbitt for Congress (AZ) | \$1,000 |
| Stan Matsunaka for Congress (CO) | \$1,000 |
| StopSinclair TV advertisements | \$83,000 |
| StopSinclair print advertisements | \$55,000 |
| Creole-language radio ads directed at Haitian-American community in Miami, FL, area | \$3,000 |
| Contribution to the PunkVoter PAC to fund 50,000 robocalls to 18- to 24-year-olds in swing states on Election Day | \$5,000 |

A Grassroots Community

As important as the fundraising numbers is the political excitement that the concerts helped nourish. Our concerts brought together more than 16,000 people to support John Kerry, many of whom had never before contributed to a candidate or been actively involved in a campaign. Most of the 700 performers who volunteered their time and talents had never played at a political fundraiser. People came together in a fun, positive environment where they could register to vote, sign up to volunteer, and form the kinds of bonds that are the grassroots glue for political organizing. Our concerts were an easy first step toward further political involvement. In addition, every person who bought a ticket to a Concert for Kerry, thus contributing directly to the Kerry campaign, automatically became a constituent of JohnKerry.com and received e-mails and updates from the campaign itself.

A large part of our success was the clarity of our idea and the simplicity of our website. Users saw a schedule of upcoming and past events, purchased advance tickets, and signed up to “Create a Concert” by downloading a guide to organize their own Concerts for Change. Weekly e-mails tailored according to geographic location announced upcoming events and activities.

Concerts for Change relied overwhelmingly on the volunteer efforts of hundreds of performers and organizers. A network of 110 local coordinators, well over 150 other volunteers active around the country, and more than 700 volunteer performers supported our four founding directors.

Get Out the Vote

In the final weeks before the election, while we continued to hold concerts, we began an effort to get our concertgoers and performers involved in get-out-the-vote activities. Through our website and e-mails we provided our constituents with detailed information on how to get involved and encouraged them to volunteer for the Kerry campaign and other groups that were helping to mobilize Democratic voters. We joined America Votes, a coalition of many of the largest membership-based Democratic groups in the country, helping to coordinate the PACs, 527s, and advocacy groups involved in the. Our members received telephone calls about volunteering and voting. We also organized two trips to swing states: A 5-day trip to Canton, OH, brought 75 people from New York and Washington, DC, to work in the canvassing operation of America Coming Together (ACT). On Election Day, 45 New Yorkers traveled to Allentown, PA, to volunteer with ACT.

Going Forward

We started Concerts for Kerry and Concerts for Change to help elect John Kerry, and when the polls closed the night of November 2, 2004, this work was over. The election was a tremendous loss for Democrats and for the country. We have yet to decide on our next course of action and how best to build upon our activities. The feedback from our members has been incredibly positive, and they have encouraged Concerts for Change to continue. We have substantial assets for any future endeavor to help Democrats: more than 170,000 e-mail addresses of concertgoers, StopSinclair.org petition signers, and others; extensive contacts in the entertainment industry; a website with advanced contact-management and event-management functions; and the experience gained from building up and organization from scratch and in six months raising hundreds of thousands of dollars to assist Democrats.

Nikki Columbus
Co-Founder

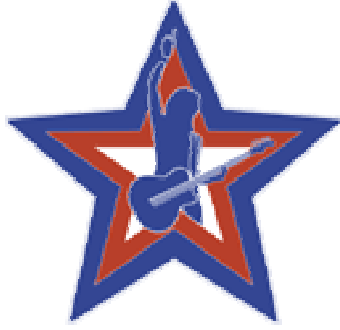
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We want to express our deep gratitude to all of our performers, coordinators, and other volunteers. Through Concerts for Change, they came together and made a difference.



For more information, please visit our website: www.ConcertsforChange.org

Get Informed

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[John Edwards](#)
[Elizabeth Edwards](#)
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[Rapid Response](#)
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Multimedia

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Resources

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Welcome back, Concerts for (sign out)

[action alerts](#)

[upcoming events near you](#)

There are no upcoming events in your area in the next week.

[your point totals](#)

You have earned **87,470** points
You are ranked **1st** overall

[your progress](#)

[recruit 10 new volunteers](#)





[contact 10 media sources](#)



[find 10 new online donors](#)




[make an online
contribution](#)

[host a house party
for Kerry](#)

[your online fundraising](#)

You have contributed **\$30**
You have raised **\$144,372**
You are ranked **4th** overall

[your calendar](#)

You are currently hosting **0** events
You are signed up for **0** events
[Sign-up to host an event](#)
[Find an event near you](#)

[volunteer directory](#)

Find volunteers who have chosen to make their name public. You can search by name or location.

name

miles from

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