

MUSOC

THE UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY MUSICAL THEATRE SOCIETY INCORPORATED

THE PROPOSAL GUIDE

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*From MUSOC With
Love: An Arts Week
Cabaret, 2013*

Proposing a musical for the Club Show Business 101

When we leave university, some of our greatest memories will have very little to do with the courses we've taken. The university experience offers much more than just a piece of paper at the end of it.

An integral part of the university experience at Canterbury is the experience that our extra-curricular clubs and societies have to offer.

Regardless of what you're into, these groups bring together people who would otherwise never have met, creating life long relationships, encouraging us to try new things, learn wider skills, and learn about ourselves, other people, and life outside of

the classroom.

At The University of Canterbury Musical Theatre Society Inc - MUSOC - we know that the performing arts experience can be what makes the university an amazing place for so many students.

Performing arts offer vibrancy and energy to the university and wider community, and a personal challenge to those who get involved in our projects, in a way that few other experiences can, and certainly in a way that the university curriculum cannot offer.

As one of the many performing arts groups on campus, MUSOC

currently represents over 250 members and the aim of our organisation is to provide opportunities for students to perform, gain new skills, confidence and enjoy themselves, as well as reaching out in to the wider community, including to high schools, to provide a wider performing arts



RENT, 2012



experience. MUSOC has been a part of the university since 1969 and has a history of being a stepping-stone into professional theatre.

Specifically, our activities with students include running large scale shows, workshops, orchestral and choral performance groups, smaller performances in the university and in the wider community, and social events

Once or twice a year, the MUSOC Exec will put out a call for proposals. A proposal is essentially the beginning of any show that you want to see MUSOC doing.

It acts as information to be given to the MUSOC Exec, who are in charge of picking from the proposals given to them as to whether to put one of them on, and which one.

This guide is essentially to give you a basis of what your proposal should include, and a basic guide to choosing a show that is appropriate for MUSOC to do.



You should familiarise yourself with the MUSOC Constitution, also available from www.musoc.org.nz



Step One Choosing a show

1) Does the show have a large enough cast to be suitable for a university amateur group?

2) Is the show technically very demanding? Will you be able to cast the show with the talent available? Can you achieve the look that the show requires (in sound, or lighting, or dancing, or acting) with the resources and performers available?

Remember that, by and large, more females than males audition for MUSOC shows – will this show support a large female cast and a small male cast?

3) Is the show appropriate to a primarily university/student based audience – i.e. will it have the ability to appeal to a wide variety of interests? (We're actually very open about this; our shows have ranged from *Hair* to *HMS Pinafore*)

4) Has the show been presented in Christchurch in the last 5 years? This is usually the very soonest after a show you want to have it on stage again. Fortunately it does not usually

Step Two

Organising your proposal

1) Show Information: Your proposed show's title, details, awards it may have won, character list, band size, company size, its plot, and possibly even a prop list and/or an idea of a set layout. You should also try to include the soundtrack or film adaptation so the Exec has an idea of what the musical sounds like. Make the Exec like the show.

2) Production Team: You must provide the names of two people who have agreed to take on the role of Director and Production Manager. These roles need to be filled to even begin work on your show. You are allowed to fill one of the roles yourself. You may also provide names of people who have agreed to take on the roles of Musical Director, Co-Director, Stage Manager, Technical Director, Props Manager, Set Dresser, etc. Some of these roles can be filled much closer to the performance date, and it is less vital to have them ready at the proposal stage.

3) Why: Here we need an explanation of why you feel the musical is really worthwhile for MUSOC to perform, why you feel strongly enough about it to want to propose it, and what your vision is for the show. Do you want to do Gilbert and Sullivan set in the future? Explain here how your ideas would look and work on the stage.

4) When and How: We'd like to know the approximate timeframe you are looking at for your show - auditions, rehearsals, and performance (dates for the performance will be

given to you from the executive). We'd also be really interested to hear if you have any special ideas for how to produce the show - auditions run as a workshop? Giant promotional flashmobs? Show that you've been thinking about things and have fresh ideas.

5) Budget: A budget for your show. This is usually the most complex part of a show, and can be the most problematic. You will need to know the value of performance rights, venue hire, lighting/sound hire, cost of props/set/costumes, and so on. If you do not know these values, nor how to find them, talk to someone who does or ask a member of the committee to find you someone who can help you. You will get better results if you have tried to work it out for yourself first. Your Production Manager will have a big role in the show's money, so consider consulting with them. Ensure they know their duties – e.g. being aware of all the money which is spent in the production of the show and being able to reconcile this post-show (with receipts).

Details can be found in s12 and s13 of the MUSOC Constitution.

The budget you present to the Exec will only be a draft, but you need to show that you have thought about the scale of your proposal, the costs involved, and how where you think you'll be able to find the funding to do this.

The Best Little Whorehouse in Texas, 2011





RENT, 2012

Step Three Presenting your proposal

When calling for proposals, the Exec will set a submissions deadline. After you deliver your proposal to the Secretary, the Exec will consider it. The Exec may then invite you to present your proposal in person.

If so, you should bring several copies of your proposal with you so the Exec can peruse them.

After your presentation (you'll have about ten minutes to which to sell your proposal to the Exec, explaining your proposal, the show itself, why you feel it will be worthwhile for MUSOC to do your show, and generally try to garner support for your proposal) the Exec will cross-examine your proposal. Questions may include critique and requests for clarification of certain points.

We may be harsh in our critique or criticism;

please understand that this is not personal, as we are considering the proposal in the context of the greater Club, and the realistic chance it has to be critically and commercially successful.

The Exec will hear all proposals and then take a vote in which they can vote for any show, or vest a vote of no-confidence in any show. They have total discretion in choosing a show, and the decision of the Exec is final.

The decision of the Exec will be broadcast to all proposers within 7 days of the proposals meeting. If your show isn't picked, don't take it personally – there are all sorts of things the committee has to consider, and in the end it may simply come down to very nuanced decisions. If your show is picked, congratulations! Your journey begins here.

Step Four

If your proposal is accepted

Musicals involve thousands of dollars, and MUSOC needs to know how it's all going to be spent so we don't suddenly end up in debt.

Once your show has been selected, the next step is to finalise your budget and production timeline. Now is the time to get your production team together and decide precisely what you are going to want for your set, your lighting, your sound, your costumes.

From here, designs need to be made up, so that you can ascertain what materials you will need, and how much of each. You will need to get detailed quotes for everything you intend to hire or purchase - and if you're planning on applying for charity funding, you'll also need competing quotes.

It is extremely valuable to involve your designers

(costume, set, makeup, sound, lighting, props) in these discussions, as they will want to have input on the budget they will have to work within. This is also the time to get each of your production team members to write up a timeline of what they have to have done, and when they have to have things done.

Your producer should then hold them to this timeline, to make sure everything runs smoothly.

You should have your final budget and timelines in to the Exec before you begin rehearsals or spend money. The Exec expect accurate numbers, and that you work within the budget you have been set.

If they are not satisfied with your budget, they have the power to pull the plug on the whole project. If they are satisfied, you have a musical to



A Broadway Revue, 2013

The Budget

Financial Breakdown

The Budget of the show should not be something that you have to worry about. However, to make it easier for the Treasurer to understand what monies your show will require, it is important that you are able to clearly identify how much you plan on spending. Please submit your financial breakdown with a combination of estimated figures and explanations why. If you do not know an answer that is fine. Email treasurer@musoc.org.nz and the Treasurer will be able to help you.

Expenses

Rights & Royalties	A
Theatre Hire	B
Sound	C
Lighting	D
Set	E
Props	F
Costumes	G
Makeup	H
Marketing Expenses	I

A. For many shows, performance rights will be quite large. It is highly recommended that you the company who owns the rights for your show to find out how much it will cost to perform the show for however many nights you would like to put the show on for, as well as how much rehearsal materials will cost to hire for the rehearsal period. On the other hand, for original shows this will be a very low cost.

B. At present, hire of the Jack Mann Theatre is free for clubs. Although other theatres can be quite expensive, they may suit your production better - think about whether another theatre is something you'd like to try and how many patrons it will seat.

C. We're talking about a musical, so the sound quality is mega-important. You will

Income

Charity Funding	M
Sponsorship	N
Advertising	O
Fundraising	P
Cast Levy	Q

probably want to use radio mics for all the leads, as well as micing some chorus members. Bands need to be miked as well. Additionally, you may well want to hire a PA, as many theatre house PAs are not suitably clean for Musical Theatre.

D. It's no good putting something on stage that people can't see! Good lighting can highlight your show, while bad lighting can be terribly distracting. Most theatres will have some lights, but you will probably want more to create certain effects. Lighting also includes smoke or haze machines. Again, there are companies in town you can go to for general quotes.

E. The more complex the set, the more expensive it will be. Think about both hire costs and production costs. Bring us an idea of how you would like your set to look like and what materials you would need for it.

G. When setting a budget for costumes, think about how many cast members are involved in your show, and if any of them have multiple costumes. Think about hiring, making, and buying costumes as possibilities. The fancier you want the costumes to be, the more money you'll have to spend on them. Don't forget: MUSOC has a container full of costume!

H. If there are special effects required, such as blood or zombie makeup, we need to be able to factor in this cost.

I. You need to spend money on promoting your show in order for people to come to it. University is reasonably easy, but if you want to engage with the wider community, you'll need to think about how you're going to do so.

Income

M. There are several charitable trusts, such as Pub Charities, Eureka Trust, or the Creative Communities Trust, who you can apply to for funding for projects like this. Applications for funding require a reasonable amount of time and effort to gather all the requisite documents, and they are often very particular about receiving everything properly. Also note that some trusts require that you have not received funding from another trust in order to be eligible, so do your homework beforehand!

N. Corporate sponsorship may include naming rights to the season (e.g. *The Press Season of ...*), complimentary tickets, free programme advertising, corporate logos on all promotional material, etc. This can be a lot of work, and may require a dedicated production team member, but it can bring in substantial funding from businesses who want to be seen supporting the arts.



The Threepenny Opera, 2011



Rehearsals for *RENT*, 2012

O. There is always space in the programme for ads. This is a smaller commitment than full-on sponsorship, more in the line of a straight commercial transaction.

P. If you can't get the money any other way, you'll need to fundraise for it. On the plus side, you will have a cast who will be able to help you.

For the above, please explain your plans and ideas, if you have any at all.

Q. How many cast members are you planning on having? This will have an effect on the income of the show.

Proposal Template

Show Breakdown

1. Show Name

Self-explanatory.

dates: when do you expect things to be done? What deadlines need to be met? How long will rehearsals take?

2. Synopsis

Include a synopsis that gives a decent idea of the plot of the musical. The Exec is usually very well-versed in musical theatre, but we don't know every show.

7. Draft Marketing Strategy

The Exec will likely have experience in marketing a show, but include a brief detailing your marketing ideas and strategies, and how they'll be accomplished.

3. Notable Awards

Include Tony Awards won (if any) and any Broadway/West End honors (highest grossing, longest run, etc.)

8. Set Design & Venue

Include a sketch of your set design (if you have ideas for one) and list the proposed performance venue.

4. Cast Breakdown & Description of Each Part

List the male and female leads, chorus roles, and a brief summary of each main part. (It is not necessary to do this for the chorus roles.) Also include an estimated band size and the instruments required.

9. Budget

Help the Treasurer get a clear idea of the monies that will need to be spent for this show.

5. Production Team List & Interested Personnel

List the Production Team roles required for the show, and who is interested in filling those positions. The Exec will look favorably on a proposal with a high number of Production personnel signed on.

10. Why?

Why should MUSOC produce this show? What makes it a good proposal? Will it appeal to a wide audience? Why do *you* want to do this show?

Include their relevant experience in musical theatre, and if they haven't been involved in the Club before, a complete performance CV and contact details would be appreciated.

11. Flaws

Can you think of any pitfalls or challenges that might arise from undertaking this production? How would they be countered?

6. Draft Production Timeline

Include a draft Production Timeline with listed

12. Vision

If you are proposing this show as the Director, what vision do you have for the show?

13. Special Requirements

List any unusual costumes, props, set, or staging requirements for the production.

Proposal Template

Show Breakdown

Cast

Role	Number	Description
Male Leads		
Female Leads		
Male Chorus		
Female Chorus		
Band		

Production Team

Role	Name	Experience
Producer		
Director		
Musical Director		
Choreographer		
Technical Director		
Marketing Manager		
Design		
Sponsorship		
Costumes		
Props		
Stage Manager		
<i>Assistant Director</i>		
<i>Assistant Musical Director</i>		
<i>Assistant Producer</i>		
<i>Assistant Technical Director</i>		



From nervous auditions, to stressful rehearsals, to anxious opening nights, to rapturous applause...do this well, and it will be one of the most rewarding things you ever do.

Thank You

Presenting a musical is a huge amount of work, and involves a lot of frustration, time, and energy. This is reflected in the proposal process - we know that there is a lot for you to prepare in order to present your proposal to the MUSOC Exec.

However, presenting a musical is also incredibly fun. Not only do you get to dress up in funny costumes and dance and sing act - you also end up making life-long friends in the process.

From your proposal, to nervous auditions, to stressful rehearsals, to anxious opening nights, to rapturous applause, to celebrations at the after party - do this well, and it will be one of the most rewarding things you ever do. Take the chance!

If there is ever a time where you need to ask questions, don't be afraid to contact the executive at secretary@musoc.org.nz.