

Show Selection Comm

A guide to running MTG show selection

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When Show Selection Isn't Happening

The Library The filing cabinets in the back of the office contain an archived collection of scripts, scores, and CDs of a variety of musicals. If people are interested in checking them out, keep tabs on who has what and make sure they get back where they belong when people are done with them. If we have access to new scripts, scores, or CDs, make copies of them for our library and maintain the index tracking what type of material we have for each show.

We now have a CopyTech account, which you should have signatory power on. So copy to your heart's content and the treasurer gets the bill.

Before Round One

Scheduling Set a date with the board and reserve a location (the MTG office will usually suffice, but just in case, it's good to have a larger space available). When scheduling, be sure to allow about four weeks between Round One and Guild Day (Round Two) to allow for perusal materials to arrive.

Publicize Spam the membership with date and location of Show Selection: Round One. Remind people that the best way to get MTG to do the show they want to do is put it up for consideration. Also mention this as way of weeding out the shows they *don't* want to do. Spam about two weeks before, one week before, and the Friday before (it's usually on Saturday or Sunday). You can ask the PubDir to spam for you, but it's just to mtg-members, so if you do it yourself, I'm sure no one will complain.

Recruit Put a sign up sheet on the door of the MTG office (be sure to mention this in the spam). List name, show, and if you are selecting more than one show (Spring & Summer or Fall & IAP) be sure to have a column for term.

Round One

Supplies Bring the sign up sheet from the office door (you will keep this as a running list) and about half a dozen show catalogs (Tams, MTI, etc.) from the office.

The Shows Do one term at a time. Announce the shows currently proposed for that term. Ask for further nominations from the attendees. If only a few are suggested, encourage folks to peruse the show catalogs for ideas. When suggestions seem to wind down, close nominations.

Discuss Go down the list and discuss each show. Whoever suggested the show should give a brief overview of what they know about it, why MTG should do it, the ups and downs of performing this show. Encourage people to ask questions. Things that are good to cover are cast size, number of major roles, gender breakdown, major dance or tech requirements, and how recently (if ever) has MTG performed it in the past.

Vote After all the shows for one term have been discussed, you must narrow it down to a reasonable number of shows to move on to Round Two (usually 4-5). Go down the line and have an open vote for each show. Hands work just fine; up for the show to move on, down if no. The top voted 4-5 shows move on to Round Two. Use your judgement based on the voting when deciding how many shows will move on. If there is a huge gap of votes between #4 and #5, just cut it down to four shows. If there are only 4-5 shows up to begin with, vote anyway. Cut anything that gets a seriously low number of votes. This is a good way to weed out crazy, out of nowhere suggestions.

Lather, Rinse, Repeat Repeat the process for each term you are deciding. Be sure to remind nominators that they are responsible for presenting or finding someone to present the show at Round Two. Each show should have a sponsor's name attached to it.

Between Rounds

Announce The Nominees When the finalists have been decided, spam the membership with the Round Two nominees for each term and the date and location of Guild Day/Round Two of show selection. Announce each show and who is sponsoring each show (so people can contact the sponsors of the shows they want to help with).

Call The Companies To save yourself some potential pain and agony, figure out who owns the rights to each show and call the company to see if it will be available during the proposed season. Sometimes the answer is that it is on a "restricted list," meaning they are granting licenses on a per-application basis. But at least this way you will find out if there is no chance in hell of us getting a show *before* it gets selected in Round II.

Perusal Material Check the MTG Show Library and the excel file and see which shows we have material for. Email all the sponsors, tell them what we have, and ask them if they want anything else. Demand a response right away, because some companies require checks sent to them first before they will ship anything. Getting a check from MIT, mailing it, and getting something sent back can take several weeks, so you need to know what they want immediately. If we have a script and piano score for the show, let them check it out long enough to make copies. For shows we don't have copies of, first check the Lewis Music Library, then contact the companies with rights to each show and order perusal material.

For MTI The website is www.mtishows.com. There is an online order form for shows, however, it may take them a week to even process their web orders. Better to call them (212-541-4684) and tell them what you want. We have an account with them under MIT Musical Theatre Guild (#0044254). They bill you the price it costs to ship the material (in 2003, this is 10\$ a script) and the bill goes to the treasurer. You should let her/him know how much the bill should be. Scripts/scores are shipped by UPS, usually; and MTI will send an email to the board with a tracking number when the material is shipped. That way, when your package ends up in CAC (which it always does) and they deny they have it (which happens sometimes) you can call up UPS and find out who signed for your box.

For Tams-Witmark The website is www.tams-witmark.com. These guys are annoying to deal with, and they won't ship directly to students. Talk to the treasurer to get information on how to get a shipment to us.

For Samuel French The website is samuel french.com. They want a 75\$ deposit check before they will ship anything. This first means printing out something from the website confirming the 75\$ charge for perusal material, filling out all the paperwork – ask the treasurer for help – and schlepping over to the student center to get the check. MIT takes several days to process checks, so do this quickly. Then send the check to Samuel French, and they should send the material to you via UPS and directly to the MTG office (except it will end up at CAC. See the MTI section).

For Dramatists Play Service The website is www.dramatists.com. They require a \$50 deposit check for perusal material. See how to get one under "Samuel French".

For Rodgers & Hammerstein The rights to Rodgers and Hammerstein shows as well as most Andrew Lloyd Webber shows are owned by the Rodgers and Hammerstein Music Library (<http://www.rnh.com/theatre/index>). Ask the treasurer for details about contacting them, and if you get anything useful, update this guide.

The delivery address for MTG is "MIT Musical Theatre Guild; 84 Massachusetts Avenue, W20-453; Cambridge, MA, 02139." Notify the sponsors when their show's material arrives.

Duplication If we ordered perusal material, it's because we didn't already have a copy of the material. Make a full Xerox of each set of material we order for our own library, so that the next time the show comes up for selection, we don't have to order material from the company. This can also be done after Round Two if sponsors are using the material, but try to do it before sending the material back.

Spam Again, you can get the PubDir to help with this or do it yourself. A week before and the Friday before Guild Day are good reminders. Inspire people to participate in deciding what show we do next!

Round Two

Supplies You'll need a lot of scrap paper for voting, both for show selection and office elections. Leftover show tickets serve quite well. There are boxes of them on the tables in the back of the office. It's a good idea to use a different show's tickets for each round of voting to keep them differentiated. You'll also want to bring extra writing implements.

Emcee Round Two is almost always on Guild Day. You run the show. If SSR2 is the first order of business, welcome the attendees and recount for them what shows are up for selection for each term. Have the secretary or a volunteer list the shows on the board (be sure the room you get has a chalk or dry erase board) and take casting notes next to the show. Introduce each sponsor for their show presentation.

Discussion People always want to know more than the sponsor tells, or to express their own thoughts on the show. Allow brief Q&A period after each presentation, but don't let it go too long. After all the shows for one term have been presented, open the floor to discussion for the term's nominees.

Regulate You don't have to be extremely strict, but presentations should be kept under or around ten minutes and questions afterwards kept under five minutes. The term discussion should go as long as it needs to, without being extreme. Have the secretary keep a queue of speakers if necessary. If it starts to drag out (15 minutes or so) cut off the queue, finish those on the list and end it.

Vote If there are more than three shows up for one term, it's usually a good idea to have two rounds of voting. First have people vote for their two favorites. They don't HAVE to vote for two, but they are allowed to. Tally the votes. Getting it down to two or three is the idea. Again use your judgement in eliminating shows. If there only two shows get most the votes while the other three shows get a couple each, just knock it down to two shows. Announce how many votes each show got (on the board is good) when eliminating.

Vote Again Have a second round of voting, instructing people to only vote for one show this time. If a show gets the majority (half plus one), then it wins. If you have 3 shows left and the vote is such that none get the majority, eliminate the lowest and have a third round of voting for the winner. Announce the vote totals when done tallying, and declare a winner. The runner-up is declared our "back-up show" for that term, should we, for some reason, be unable to do the winning show.

Lather, Rinse, Repeat If there is another term to decide shows for that day, repeat this process for those shows.

After Round Two

And The Winner Is... Once again, spam the membership announcing the shows selected for production and back-up for each term. Again, you can do this yourself or have the PubDir do it.

Collect Material If any of the sponsors are still in possession of perusal material or checked out MTG Library material, get it back (ideally you want to do this at Guild Day so you don't have to track them down later). If you have not already done so, make copies of the perusal material we ordered and add it to the MTG Show Library. Add the shows you copied to the show index in front of the A's in the first drawer.

Ship It Out Gather the perusal material from each company together in a single box (per company) and get it shipped back to them. UPS Ground works best. Do NOT use the postal service. Keep your receipts and give them to the Treasurer for reimbursement.

Pass On What You Have Learned If you learn or discover anything during the process that isn't in this guide that you wish had been or you think would be beneficial to the next SSComm, add it! Contact the MTG webmaster and/or the previous SSComm to get this guide updated.

Useful Websites http://www.nodanw.com/list_of_shows_index/titlepage.htm – A compilation of information, including plot synopses, cast breakdowns, etc. for many shows.