

Organizing/Producing a Benefit for the Actors' Fund Within Your Company

The following is just a quick reference for the in house producer willing to put together a benefit. It is certainly a learn-as-you-go experience but a truly worthwhile one. The trick of 'producing' this type of event is to bring the **entire** company together as co-producers. Your job is to delegate, designate and to keep everyone happy.

The fun begins. Your first meeting is crucial and takes some effort in itself. Check for timing, a space and advertise the meeting within the company. It's always a good idea to get some others on board even before your first meeting. Someone from the artistic side as well as management will make a good team to begin. Although you may have some ideas of your own, the meeting should allow for open discussion on what the benefit will entail. Of course getting the company excited is the main agenda. Having information on the Actors' Fund or even a representative on hand is a great idea for one of the first meetings. It never hurts to remind everyone the importance of the Fund and who it helps.

Now it's time to delegate. Obviously there will always be just a handful of people who will take on certain challenges, but they too can delegate within their department. Include everyone. (Don't be afraid to ask the bassoonist to put up posters in her neighbourhood.)

It is the company's goal to present the best show possible, fill the seats and raise awareness and funds for a worthwhile cause. Your objective as benefit producer is to keep the process fun and to please everyone (as hard as it may seem). Remember we are **all** donating our time and talents.

After ideas for the project have been narrowed down, start by designing a draft poster. It may sound premature but a poster will include all the facts you need to work towards. Besides...it's always fun. Make it a dream poster. Go big. It will certainly change as you go but it's good to have as a 'work backwards' plan. Books on how to produce benefits, one-nighters and other such events can be found at *TheatreBooks* or the library and are always helpful.

This particular poster sample and breakdown uses a musical show or cabaret type revue as an example. The same principles apply when presenting a straight play, a reading, workshop or any other benefit idea. The initial 'mock' poster can be a good kick-start to make your benefit a reality.



White Bush Nursery

INC Insurance Company

The Company of *The Lion Prince*

with special guest host Dini Pretty
present

The Secret Jungle

A Musical Concert



An Evening of Song, Laughter and Hope.
In support of The Actors' Fund of Canada.



Directed by Robert Paul Music Direction by Nora Winner
Stage Management by A. Jim Green

ONE NIGHT ONLY
Monday, April 28, 8pm **The Royal Whales Theatre**

Tickets and information

416-555-1212

(Tickets also available at White Bush Nursery or Third Cup Coffee)

The Printing Palace **Third Cup Coffee** **EdMirtonBooks** *McCosmetics*

POSTER BREAKDOWN

White Bush Nursery

INC Insurance Company

Sponsors are a key part to fundraisers. This is a big enough job for one or two company members to tackle. They would start by finding someone in the company who may have a connection with a company that might be interested in supporting the venture. See who may have a 'foot in the door' to a company's marketing or sponsor personal. A proposal package should be professionally prepared. *See Attached. Your company's sponsorship department should be able to help you with this as well.

The objective is to have all your cost covered by sponsorship so that all ticket sales go toward the benefit.

The Company of *The Lion Prince*

Include everyone at your first meeting and throughout the process. Front of House, Wardrobe, Cast, Custodial Staff, and so on. Try to find a representative from every sector to help in any way.

Permission and support from Equity, IATSE and the Musicians Union should be a priority as well as the support of the producers of the presenting company. Ask about Insurance policies as well. Company Management should lead to the correct contacts.

with special guest host Dini Pretty

Finding a local 'celebrity' or two outside of your company is never a bad idea. They could simply introduce the evening or perhaps play a small part in the performance. It will add extra publicity and maybe even sell a few more tickets.

presents

The Secret Jungle

Choosing a familiar 'crowd pleaser' is obviously a good choice. Often the cost for rights to present a show as a benefit or In Concert will be less but still need to be obtained. Be sure and apply for the rights right away. The web is a good source for this information. Remember everything is negotiable.

A revue/cabaret might be the company's preference. The title could then reflect the mood and theme of the benefit and perhaps even borrow from the company's own show. For example the company of Mamma Mia may choose to present 'A Dancing Queen Cabaret'. Whatever is eye catching to the public will serve you best, so play up your own show as well as the show you are presenting.



Is there an artist in the company? A graphic designer or a friend of a friend? Art work is needed for posters, programmes, ads, etc. Sometimes local artist will agree to feature their work in support of the cause. Be sure to look into copyright for existing show logos and artwork.

**Directed by Robert Paul Music Direction by Nora Winner
Stage Management by A. Jim Green**

Finding these folks is crucial so get them aboard right away. The stage manager should be the first and is crucial. (Don't stop at groveling). She/he will have the knowledge and skills to keep you afloat through the whole fun process and certainly deserves billing.

Don't forget your technical people as well. They will guide you to the sound, lighting and backstage elements of the show. Perhaps someone on wigs may want to learn about sound so they could head up that department. Designate and include everyone!

An Evening of Song, Laughter and Hope.

A brief description of the event to let the audience and the press know what they are in for. It can be more complex if need be. For example: An Evening of Broadway favourites and Canadian Pop standards featuring the cast and orchestra of *The Lion Prince*. The publicity department will be able to help with things like this. They will also help with your press package and where and when you should be sending it. Again...designate!

In support of The Actors' Fund of Canada.



The Actor's Fund will be more than happy to assist in any way and can help guide you to the correct sources. They will supply material for your sponsors, press kits, etc. and be with you every step of the way.

ONE NIGHT ONLY
Monday, April 28, 8pm

Choose a day compatible with everyone in the company (or at least try). Check into what other events are happening at that time to avoid competition. Is it Academy award night? Is Liza in town? Keep in mind summer is not the best time to attract locals and Sunday is overtime for some unions.

The Royal Whales Theatre

Secure your theatre. How much of it can be donated? What is the cost? Is it an IATSE house? Is it the right size for your production? Who runs the local night club? Would it be better there?

Tickets and information
416-555-1212

To be expected, service fees apply with most ticket outlets. Use the same as your company's show to avoid confusion.

(Tickets also available at White Bush Nursery or Third Cup Coffee)

For smaller events or for people who want to avoid the service charge, it is a good idea to have tickets available at different outlets. Sponsors should gladly agree to if applicable.

Smaller sponsors may be financially supportive or 'in kind' meaning they would donate a service or good from their company. For example; a printing company may do your posters, a clothing store may donate wardrobe or a newspaper may donate or discount ad space.

SOME DEPARTMENTS TO DESIGNATE

(Oh what the heck, you may have to cover one or two of them yourself)

Tickets (Box-Office, Ticket Outlets)
Front of House
Benefit Information (Contact with the Fund)
Sponsorship
Theatre Booking
Royalties
Creative Team (Writer, Director, Choreographer, etc.)
Cast coordinator/Wrangler
Stage Management Team
Research
Photo-copier (very important)
Technical team and crew
Artwork and graphics -Programmes and posters
Programme Ads
Publicity (from press releases to putting up posters)
Marketing (from senior residences to the theatre community)
Wardrobe
Wigs and Make-Up
Party (location, caterers)
Extra Fundraising (silent auctions, raffles)
Union\Agreements and Insurance
Celebrity Contacts

Good Luck! Have fun!

Break a Leg!

(And if you do... the Actors' Fund is there to help)