

BASEMENT ARTS PROPOSAL ADVICE

Proposing for Basement Arts can seem like a daunting task. Below are some thoughts and advice that will help you when preparing. Hopefully, these guideposts will lead you to a more successful proposal, and a better understanding of this organization's selection process as a whole!

- 1. What are you going to do with the space?** We know that the Newman Studio is a black-box, but we don't want every play we choose to be a static, contemporary set with a couch and a lamp. We want a varied, dynamic season. How will you transform or challenge the space? Even if you don't have ideas and you want to collaborate with a designer, at least mention that, as it will show you're aware that design is an important element of putting on a play.
- 2. Know the play you're proposing.** You should be able to talk about it intelligently and clearly, and should also know what draws you to it, why you want to direct it, and why you think it's right for Basement. There are some fabulous plays that won't work in Basement. Think about the organization/ space a little in conjunction with your vision for the play.
- 3. Having a team is helpful!** It's not that it is 100% necessary, but it's much easier for us to pick a play with a team than to pick a director and know we have to find

him/her one. People are always busy, so if someone comes in with a stage manager, designers, etc, that's a plus!

- 4. Recognize that resources are limited.** Each Basement show is typically allotted a \$150 stipend after we've paid for the rights. That's not a lot of money. Have an idea of how you will creatively and resourcefully present your piece considering the financial limitations. If your production necessitates a lot more in the way of finances, how will you get this money together? What grants have you looked into, or fundraising sites (ie. Kickstarter)? We will certainly ask you if this is the case! Some people choose to apply for grants before they are accepted for proposals which is great! Make sure if you choose to apply for a grant, that you direct the funds to your own personal account, rather through the Basement Arts account because that money is yours, and you can choose what you want to do with it.
- 5. Look into rights for your show.** If your show is not a student work, rights must be obtained. Look to see if the rights are easily obtainable/how much they cost. We want to make sure that we can obtain the rights to your production in a timely manner!
- 6. Anticipate problem spots.** If there is a component of the play that we are likely to find daunting (ex. someone vomits, violence/intimacy on stage, a very specific and difficult-to-obtain set piece, the language/subject matter seems difficult to grasp in a 3-week process, you are

committed to many other projects and are unsure how you can have time to direct, etc), come up with solutions and make them known! If you don't address these concerns, or if we bring up the concerns and you have no answer, you make it harder for us to pick you!

- 7. If you're proposing a musical, come in with a musical director, plans as to how you're going to handle the music, band, and sound design.** We LOVE musicals, but often can't pick them because we fear that the director will be in over their head.
- 8. If you know that what you're proposing is risky, think about whether there is anything else you'd be interested in proposing, and have that in your pocket as a Plan B.** (That only applies if you have a Plan B; some people are only interested in directing the play they propose, and we respect that.) Similarly, know if you're open to getting a late night slot, etc. Sometimes we can't accommodate you for the full season, or feel that your proposed work isn't quite ready for a full weekend, but we still want to give it a chance to be seen; know this isn't a slight, it's us trying to include as many creative works as possible.
- 8. Present yourself as best you can, whatever that means to you.** Look sharp, speak eloquently, and bring in what you need, whether that be a visual aid/hand-out, or just getting a good night's sleep and coming in with your passion. If it seems like you care, we will be rooting for you!

9. **We try to keep our season varied.** Sometimes, we have to choose between two similar proposals to keep things balanced, even if your proposal is just as strong
10. **We try to encourage student-written work (without having an entire season of student-written work).** Providing opportunity is one of the most fundamental principles of our mission statement, so that extends to student playwrights as well.
11. **We try to give opportunities to those who have proposed multiple times, especially if their second proposal shows that they have made an improvement.** So, if you've been rejected once and want to propose again, don't be afraid to ask a Basement Board member about how to make this interview more successful!