

Creative Script Writing

Harmony College - 2017

“Everyone can write, but not everyone is a writer.”

Why are you a writer?

My story – Don Rose at RVH show

Discussion: Types of scripts

What kind of script?

Must suit your client/chorus and please the Director.

Dais show

- simple EmCee
- Easiest
- Boring?
- Recommend a GOOD EMCEE!! He/she will be telling YOUR story!
 - He/she is the face and voice of their chorus for those two hours.

Double EmCee

- interplay
- some limited dialogue
- can/will the Director speak?
 - People love to hear from the Director.

Chorus Cameo script

- Promotes “buy in” from the chorus.
- People love to see *their* chorus member featured.
- Troubadour quartet
 - Think of the mice in the movie, “Babe.”

Theatrical Story

Kitsap regularly does this.

Seattle Seachordsmen did an excellent “Disney-themed” show like this!

- Requires actors
- More engaging and entertaining
- More complicated to produce
- Needs someone to take the reins. Be that someone!
 - “Why tell a story?”
 - People love to be told a story
 - Handout: “Let Me Tell You a Story” - Enclosure (1)

Whether writing for your own chorus or for another ...

Get to know your client – specifically, the Director.

Get to know your client’s chorus!

- Step-out quartets?

- Step-out actors?

- This can be dangerous. Most people think they are funny and think they can act.

Most people are wrong.

Use the music

Listen to it as you write. (Example: *Toast of Tampa* 2015 SAI finals package)

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HJkcEPCHbc4>

- Enclosure (2)

Look at the opening few words. Identify a theme or message for each song.

- “Toy Story Too!”

- Enclosure (3)

Theme? Pick a theme (one or two words)

Does the set list begin to form a story?

Do Your Homework!

Example: “A Wrinkle In Time” *Sound of the Rockies, 2017*

Timeline: Enclosure (4)

- It’s the story board for your show!

Timing Spreadsheet: Enclosure (5)

- Know your show length.

- What is a good length?

Tech cues, color-coding, illustrations.

Be clear. Be neat. Be precise.

Drill: Let’s Write!

- Folders full of tunes

- Create a story

Tips

1. Know your director.
 - Interview director.
 - What is his/her vision. He/she is there because he/she is the best in the room.
 - They are ultimately responsible for the finished product.
 - Are you free to suggest a set list?
 - What percentage of ballads vs. up tunes?
 - In an hour, two, maybe three, if known to audience.
 - examples: “Somewhere Over the Rainbow” “Can You Feel the Love Tonight”
2. Jokes. Barbershop is known for hokey humor. Is that a good thing?
 - Throw in a joke or two that only a few people will get. (ex. “Too tense”)
 - They will see it as a *smart* script and connect!
 - Don’t be afraid to push the boundaries.
 - The younger crowd will appreciate it. (ex. “R2D-Bag” “We’re looking for a ring.”)
 - That is a group we need to court.
 - Humor shines a mirror on society. People want to laugh.
 - The Director will tell you if you go too far.
 - When in doubt, ask.

Avoid topics over which people will go to war! Religion, race, politics, social justice issues. More?

- Seachordsmen example
- Norm McDonald on “Last Comic Standing”
 - Bible vs. Harry Potter joke “cheap humor”
 - Abortion joke “I think America will eliminate you from the competition tonight.”

“You risk alienating about half of your audience!”

3. Never lay pipe!
 - “The next song is ...” zzzzz
4. Trivia is interesting, but use sparingly.
 - Do you want your audience to be merely interested?
 - Same is true for edification!
 - What is a good percentage mix of trivia vs. entertaining?
5. Cameos from the chorus – always a winner.
 - Most of your audience knows someone in the chorus.
 - Make sure they are prepared. Your audience is paying money.
 - Bellevue example
6. Don’t make your EmCee tell people where the exits are or talk about door prizes!
 - He/she is part of the show. It diminishes their image to have them do verbal chores.
 - Chapter President (before curtain opens) or “VoG.”
 - Imagine going to a Broadway show and having one of the actors come out at the start of the show and tell the audience where the rest rooms are!