

STAGING YOUR SHOW

SECURING A VENUE

As a self-producer in the Fringe, **it is your responsibility to find your own venue.** We do not assign or find you a space. It is very important that you start thinking about this now. Securing a venue will most likely be the trickiest aspect of producing your show. The Information provided here will help you to avoid possible pitfalls when conducting the legwork associated with solidifying a venue. For help finding a venue, this year we recommend a new resource from the Philadelphia Theatre Alliance called Philly Space Finder. You can access an extremely comprehensive list of possible venues at their website: www.phillyspacefinder.org.

Many self-producers like to present art in non-traditional places. Audiences like this, too. Don't be afraid to seek out-of-the-ordinary and exceptional spaces and create something viable out of them for your audience to experience. If you are in a non-traditional space you will have different challenges (licenses, permits, etc.) but it may be worth the effort.

WHAT DO YOU NEED?

As you search for the perfect venue, your decision should be guided by a few general considerations. What do you need to do your show? In which neighborhood do you want to perform? How many seats do you want to (or need to) sell at each performance? What kind of technical needs do you have? What are your staging needs? Also find out what the venue can provide. Does it have seating, lighting, soundboards, etc.? If not, where will you get them, and how much will it add to your budget? Is it an old building? Can it handle a lot of extra electricity? Will the neighbors be able to hear you? Can you nail or stick things to the floor or walls? We recommend that you look at potential venues, especially non-traditional ones, on sunny days and rainy ones, just to make sure the roof doesn't leak, for example. Does it have electricity, bathrooms, and enough electrical outlets? Does it have air conditioning? Do you have adequate ladders to reach those windows? Think through your set up and strike needs thoroughly, as well as the production needs. It is important to consider every aspect of your production so as to avoid complications later on. We can not stress this enough.

Use your contacts, as well as your creativity. If you know local restaurant owners, for example, and they have a great space that would work for you, by all means give them a call. We provide a list of possible venues on the Fringe website. These are venues that have been used in the past, or where the owners have expressed an interest in being a Fringe venue. This is NOT the comprehensive list of all possible venues. These are merely suggestions. Let your imagination be your guide.

NEGOTIATING A CONTRACT

Some venues charge a flat rent, some a percentage of your ticket sales and some may charge both. Be clear up front about what your rental costs will be. If the venue wants a percentage of ticket sales, does this mean tickets sold on site or all tickets sold, including our Box Office and tickets you may sell on your own? Make sure that you **get everything in writing** with your venue owner. This is vital so that all parties are clear about what responsibilities each party has. If there are any issues to be dealt with during or after your performance, you have a written contract. Be clear about what your venue will be providing you, at what cost and when things will be delivered, rehearsal time, load-ins, and other artists who may be performing there and their needs. If you are performing in a non-traditional space, your venue owner may be inexperienced in writing agreements and it may fall on you to draft the arrangement.

DON'T GET DOUBLE BOOKED!

Ask the venue to go over their schedule to make sure there are no scheduling conflicts with other shows. Make sure your times are okay with the venue!

DON'T WAIT UNTIL THE LAST MINUTE

Don't wait until the week your venue information is due to start looking, or to start dealing. Start early to meet your deadline with us. **If you do not have your venue secured by June 10, we will have to print your show without listing a venue.** Not printing a venue will severely affect the success of your show!

SOME TECHNICAL ADVICE

If being in a non-traditional space is integral to your show, we would highly advise bringing in a tech collaborator early in the production's planning. If you don't know of any good tech people, let us know, as we may be able to connect you with someone.

Most likely, unless you're going into an existing theater space, you may need to rent chairs, lighting equipment and other items. The last section of the Manual is a **RESOURCE GUIDE** to help you locate some of those items. If you have trouble finding what you need, please let us know. In certain circumstances we might be able to help you with some rentals as we get discounts on much of the equipment we have to rent during the Festivals and may be able to extend them to you.

TIPS ON VENUE AGREEMENTS

Once you have located a suitable venue for your show, we strongly advise that your agreement with the owner/manager of the property be in writing and signed by you and the own/manager. Typical information in a venue agreement includes:

- names, postal addresses, email addresses, and phone numbers of the parties in the agreement.
- address of property
- term of the agreement (beginning and end dates of the lease)
- rental costs including any utility or maintenance fees
- date rent is due and contact information for whom the rent should be paid
- description of the area to be used (first floor except office, main stage including dressing rooms, etc)
- other services/equipment the owner/manager has agreed to provide (chairs, technical equipment, and storage space)

PLEASE NOTE: Each agreement is different and this is just a helpful checklist of terms that may be included in your agreement. Each situation is different and neither the above terms nor the following venue agreement are intended to serve as a comprehensive list or legal advice. They are simply guides to use when creating an agreement with the owner/manager.

SAMPLE VENUE AGREEMENT

Please Note: The following is a sample venue agreement that may be helpful for you to use as a guide as you negotiate your agreement with a venue owner/manager. Remember, each situation is different and this sample is not meant to be comprehensive or to provide legal advice. Please use it as a guide as you enter into your individual agreement with your venue owner/manager.

VENUE AGREEMENT

This Agreement for the lease of _____, Philadelphia, PA, is made this ____ day of _____, 200_, between [Artist name, address and telephone number] (hereafter "Lessee") and [owner name, address and telephone number] (hereafter "Lessor"), pursuant to the following terms and conditions:

Leased Property: Lessee shall lease from Lessor [Address and description of the premises to be leased].

Use of Premises: Lessee shall use the leased space for [list uses such as: rehearsal and performances] on the following dates as part of the *Philly Fringe*.

Term of Lease: The term of the lease shall be [beginning and end dates of lease].

Rental Fee: The fee for rental of the premises shall be [total rental fee] to be paid in installments of [amount of each installment] on the following dates [list dates] and shall be sent to the following address: [address provided by Lessor].

Security Deposit: The Lessee shall pay a security deposit of [amount of deposit] on [date security deposit is to be paid]. The security deposit shall be returned to the Lessee by the Lessor within five business days of the termination date of the lease.

Utilities: Lessor shall provide [list utilities Lessor will provide such as: air conditioning, storage space, restrooms]. Cost of said utilities shall be the responsibility of [state whether rent is inclusive of utilities or whether Lessee is responsible. If Lessee is responsible for utilities state how and when Lessor will bill Lessee for these costs].

Governing Law: This agreement shall be governed by the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Entire Contract: This agreement, including any riders, addenda, schedules and/or attachments represent the entire agreement and understanding between Lessor and Lessee.

Acceptance: The terms and conditions of this agreement are hereby accepted by the Lessor and Lessee or their representatives by their signatures below. The terms of this agreement are binding and supersede any oral or written representations. The persons signing this agreement on behalf of the Lessor and Lessee each has authority to bind their respective principals.

AGREED AND ACCEPTED

[Insert Lessor's Name]:

[Insert Lessee's Name]:

By: _____ Date _____ By: _____ Date _____

Print Name: _____ Print Name: _____

BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOR

As the Philly Fringe continues to grow, artists are moving into new territory and new neighborhoods as well as places where art is not normally performed.

Please remember what it means to be a good neighbor when you're performing in the Fringe. For example, if your performance requires music, pay attention to your show times, as you may have to keep your volume down, or keep doors closed to contain noise, particularly if you're in a residential neighborhood. Is there a lot of nightlife and traffic in the neighborhood, or is this a quiet area? This may impact your show. Remember, the Fringe has developed trust with many of our neighbors and the city over the years, and we'd like to keep that trust. Don't hang posters on private property without permission, for example, or ever use glue when hanging materials. You represent the Festival, and are the face of the Philly Fringe in your neighborhood, so be respectful.

You might want to walk around the neighborhood and introduce your-self to area residents and businesses. Invite them to your show. Also consider buying from local merchants whenever possible. Remember, the environment you are performing in is also your potential audience, so make new friends! Take every opportunity to build a local support system. A few moments of care could create life-long patrons.

If you're in a largely residential area, a pre-show announcement to your audience to please respect your neighbors might be helpful. Pay attention to litter in the area, particularly your own playbills and Fringe materials, so they're not cluttering up the streets. We want you to be welcome in the neighborhood, and we would like other artists to be welcome there in the years to come, too. Remember, you are an extension not only of the Philly Fringe and our work, but of other artists who may want to be a part of the Fringe in the future. Being a good neighbor takes a little work, but the results are well worth it

SELECTING DATES AND TIMES FOR YOUR PERFORMANCE

One of the many terrific things about participating in the Philly Fringe is that you have the freedom to schedule your show in a way that best suits you, your location, your artists and your audiences.

No two shows are alike so you need to think about the conditions surrounding your show. Ask yourself some questions before you decide how many shows you will perform.

Is this the first time that you are performing in this area?

Do you have a marketing budget?

Is this a finished work or is it a work-in-progress?

Are there a lot of people involved in the creation and/or performance of your show who can draw an audience?

While there is a large potential audience from which to draw in the Philadelphia region, there are also a lot of shows. Most artists don't schedule their performances for the whole run of the Fringe unless they are in an especially exciting or unusual space, have limited seating or have a strong following. We find it's best to mix up your schedule a little, doing some weekend and weekday shows, some at night and some matinees. In general, theater has a larger audience than dance. Music and spoken word artists tend to run just one or two nights. Fringe audience members like unusual spaces, so if your show has a fun hook like that, then you might give yourself a slightly longer run.

The venue you choose may determine some decisions about your show times. Work closely with your venue when selecting your show times so that there are no conflicts with the owner or other artists.

Most visual arts events run through the entire Fringe and sometimes through the very end of the month. We will put such extended times with your blurb in the Festival Guide. We also list all Fringe performances in the Guide in a timeline grid that attendees find helpful. If you have a performance or installation that runs beyond the Festivals' dates, your performance dates that extend beyond the Festival dates will not be listed in the grid, only at the bottom of your description.

PERMITS

If your show will be performed on public property or if your venue owner does not have the required city permits and approvals that allow for live performances open to the public, you may need to apply to the city for a permit to do your show.

TEMPORARY CERTIFICATE OF OCCUPANCY

If your venue is a vacant building or is a property not ordinarily open to the public, you may be required to apply to the city's Department of Licenses and Inspections (L& I) for a Temporary Certificate of Occupancy (Temp. C of O). The form you fill out is called a *Building Permit Application*. The purpose of this requirement is to ensure that the building is structurally sound and that systems and/or procedures are in place to protect the public's health and safety. Before a permit is issued you will be required to submit an application to L& I. You may also be required to submit stamped architectural drawings of the performance space. Once your application is reviewed, an L&I Inspector will schedule a site visit to inspect the property. In order to obtain a Temp. C of O, you may be required to make adjustments to the venue and/or institute certain safety procedures, such as installing emergency exit lights.

If you are required to apply for a Temp. C of O, we will be happy to give you further information on this requirement based on our experience. In summary, though, you will need to submit an application and supplemental documentation. Fees vary but are generally around \$250.

You may download an application from the city's website at www.phila.gov and scroll down to Licenses, Permits and Certificates on the left side of the homepage, then click Building Construction, then scroll down to Permits and Certificates A-Z. Click on Building Permits, then click Building Permit Application. The application must be hand-delivered to:

Department of Licenses and Inspections
1401 John F. Kennedy Blvd.
Concourse (Lower) Level
Philadelphia, PA 19102
Tel: 311 or 215-686-8686

OUTDOOR SHOWS ON PUBLIC PROPERTY

Some of the most interesting and popular Fringe shows have been staged outdoors. If you are planning to perform outdoors on a street or public thoroughfare, you will need to submit a *Special Events Permit Application* to the City's Managing Director's office. Go to the www.phila.gov and scroll down to Permits & Certificates on the left side of the homepage and click on Special Events Permits, then scroll down and click Special Events Application to download the form. The Managing Director's Office approves these applications and they may consult with the Streets Department and the local Police District to ensure that these departments have no objection before granting approval. There is an application fee of \$25.00. The form must be submitted at least 90 days before your first performance. Applications submitted less than 90 days before your first performance are subject to an additional charge of \$30

Applications should be submitted to:
Managing Director's Office

Municipal Services Building
Room 1430
Philadelphia, PA 19102
Tel: (215) 686-3488 Fax: (215) 686-3479

There are a number of city parks that were formerly under the authority of the Fairmount Park Commission that are now managed by the City's Parks and Recreation Commission. Permits for these parks have a different application process. To find out which parks are managed by the Parks and Recreation Commission go to www.fairmountpark.org and click on the link to "63 neighborhood parks", then click on Services/Permits, then click on Permit Application. This page gives you information on how and where to submit your application. Then scroll down the page and click on the "forms page" for an application.

OUR BEST TIPS

Research and inquire to find out if requirements such as the above apply to you and factor the fees into the cost of your show.

Plan ahead. Applying for and obtaining the required approvals often takes time. Make sure you allow enough lead time.

We have found that if you meet people in the various city departments half way they will meet you half way. Once they understand what you are trying to do and that you are reasonable and responsible, they usually want to help you succeed.

Make friends with neighbors around your venue. Let them know what you are doing, especially if you will be doing anything that could be seen as inconvenient or disruptive to them (i.e., the time of your show, music outdoors, and street closure).

It is also a good idea to talk with police in the district where your show will be held, particularly if you are in a non-traditional space or outdoors. Go to the local precinct and let the police officers know about your show so they will be aware of it beforehand. This may avoid interruptions or questions during your shows.

GENERAL LIABILITY INSURANCE

To protect you and the Fringe regarding any claims for injury or property damage sustained by an audience member or other "third party," we require that all participants in the Philly Fringe obtain general liability insurance covering themselves and the Fringe and to provide a Certificate of Insurance as proof of coverage. This insurance must name the Philadelphia Fringe Festival as "additional insured" on the policy. We require minimum coverage of \$1,000,000 per incident and \$2,000,000 in the aggregate. You may obtain insurance coverage for your show in one of several ways.

OUR BROKER IS:

Chris Garrity
Domenick & Associates
325 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Tel: (215) 629-5701 x200
Fax: (215) 629-5707

If you already have general liability insurance in the coverage amounts required, you may request your carrier to add the Festival as an additional insured. This is usually done for little or no additional cost to you. The insurance company will provide you with a Certificate of Insurance naming us as an additional insured. Just send us this Certificate, and keep a copy for yourself.

If you do not have general liability coverage you may obtain a special event policy in the required amounts covering you and the Festival through an agent or broker of your choice. Or, you may obtain this coverage through our broker, Domenick and Associates (contact info below). They have been providing coverage for many Fringe self-producers for several years. You will have to pay using a credit card or a money order, as Domenick and Associates no longer accepts checks. If you wish to pay using a money order, you will need to send Domenick and Associates the Insurance form provided on the Artists Resources page for download, along with your money order.

It may also be possible for you to obtain coverage through the owner of your venue. If your venue owner/operator has the required coverage he/she may be willing to add you and the Fringe as "additional insureds" on their policy. This is a fairly standard request to insurance companies and the fee for adding insureds to the policy for a limited period of time should not be costly.

Again, the limits of coverage required by Philly Fringe are: \$1,000,000 per incident and \$2,000,000 in the aggregate.

ACTORS EQUITY ISSUES

Actors' Equity Association (AEA) is the labor union representing over 45,000 American actors and stage managers working in the professional theatre. The folks at AEA have established a number of ways to allow Equity actors to participate in the Philly Fringe.

For Producers: Producers who are interested in using AEA members in the "Theater" section of Philly Fringe Festival must be signed to an appropriate (SPT, Guest Artist, Special Appearance, etc.) AEA contract.

For AEA actors, there is an AEA Philly Fringe code crafted for the "Theatre" section of the Philly Fringe portion of the Festival that can be utilized only by AEA members for AEA member-produced productions.

All Actors Equity concerns should be directed to the AEA business representative at (212) 869-8530, the Philadelphia AEA Liaison Committee at phlliaisoncommittee@yahoo.com or you may call the Philadelphia AEA Hotline at 1 (877) AEA-1913, x832 for more contact information.