

## Typical Annual Budget for a Stage Production

Many community theater groups are either '501(c)(3) non-profit' organizations or 'not-for-profit' organizations. The old adage 'that theater is performed in order to perpetuate The Arts' is why people take the stage. Community Theater is an easy and satisfying way to do so.

Community Theater is not usually competitive and provides a rewarding vehicle where someone can be on stage before your friends and neighbors. The added satisfaction is if a Community Theater project makes enough money to support the next project, all in trying to keep The Arts going. This, however, is not usually the case. Yet Community Theater survives because of the interest of the actors and the community to keep the entertainment value viable.

'Non-profit' organizations have an advantage over 'not-for-profit' organizations as they can apply for cultural grants, business sponsorships, and private donations; then, reciprocate with a tax-deduction receipt. To many supporters of The Arts, this is as important as making the donation to the cause.

For large philanthropic foundations, it is a fiduciary requirement to 'gift' a certain percentage of their annual profits to qualified organizations of their choice. These gifts are usually in the form of grants to the recipient organizations.

'Not-for-profit' organizations have funds available to them also, but the effort to acquire them is more difficult. There are foundations who set aside funding for these organizations, again in the form of a grant. Individuals who donate do so for interest in the project, because they know the organization and its work, or see benefit in the success of the project. They usually donate because they don't need or care about the tax benefit.



### **A LOOK at the BUDGET**

Some states, Oregon being one, have Cultural Coalitions which provide grants to both 'non-profit' and 'not-for-profit' organizations, so check with your state's Arts Commission procedures.

**Budget Advice:** Here are some things to consider when thinking about putting together a budget for a play or production as a community theater group.

Rarely do theatrical shows make a profit to be carried over to the next show. *New Artists Productions* relies heavily on our local business sponsors, a few private donors, and out-of-pocket expenditures paid by the co-founders of *New Artists Productions*. We are fortunate to have several parents who do not request reimbursement for their expenses and also participate with show tasks and assignments.

Every once in a while we do make a profit - *'Disney's The Lion King Jr.'* and *'Disney and Cameron Mackintosh's Mary Poppins Jr.'* were the only 2 musicals where that occurred.

\*\* A suggestion: If your group has a talented member who can write plays or adapt plays, then utilize the talents you have and save some money. We produce some plays that are written either by Dan or one of our parents wherein the royalty expense is not a factor; this saved a great deal of money for our program.\*\*



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A typical annual budget for our non-profit youth theater program is: \$24,500. A typical show budget for our organization is: \$8,950. This is for a Disney Junior production giving six performances in the same venue before a contracted limited size audience.

Our local theater seats an audience size of 246, but we rarely fill the house more than 50%. Play royalties are calculated based on the average ticket price, seating capacity of the venue, and the anticipated audience size, a ‘guesstimate’ of the show producer.

### Production Income:

- Ticket Sales
- Donations
  - Businesses
  - Private Donors
  - Grants Received
- Snack Bar Sales

### Facility Rental - Expense:

- Venue Space
- Equipment usage (lighting and sound)
- Janitorial cleanup
- Piano tuning (if needed)

### Services Arranged by the Producer of the Play:

- Technicians (Sound and Lighting)
- Stage crew
- Set-up/tear-down
- Theater manager fee
- Snack Bar amenities/supplies
- Tickets for the Show – Designed and Printed
  - Ticket locations around town – coordination with businesses to sell tickets for mention on the posters and advertisements

### Advertising expenses:

- Radio
- Television
- Newspaper Ads
- Posters – design layout, printing
- Fliers/Handouts – design layout, printing (If you live in a tourist area, hotels and motels are great locations to put ‘coming events’ handouts. The registration desk usually has an area set aside for ‘things to do while in the area’ for travelers. Other locations are the Chamber of Commerce, restaurants, and/or coffee houses.)
- PSAs – Public Service Announcements – by edict these are free so try to create a relationship with the editor or section chief of the newspaper and the publicity person at the radio stations.



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- Usually, if you write the copy, they will present it to the public – print copy or radio announcement.
- Promotional Items – T-shirts and souvenirs – some groups use these items to help advertise the upcoming shows.
- Playbills – programs given to patrons at the shows – construction and printing
- Cast Party – cake, punch, show souvenirs for the cast and crew (we give out show T-Shirts as a thank you for the cast's hard work)

### Show expenses:

- Royalties to perform the play
- Script rental or purchase
- Performance rights (royalties) to perform the play
- Rehearsal Time and Performance Time
- Costumes – made or rented
- Sets and Scenery
- Property used in the shows (props)
- Make-up items: \* Can be found at many local stores/drug stores or additional locations on the Internet. \* There are many ideas in books and on video about the application of theater makeup. It would be a good idea to research this if no one connected with the production has experience
  - Ben Nye – [www.bennye.com](http://www.bennye.com)
  - Cinema Secrets – [www.cinemasecrets.com](http://www.cinemasecrets.com)
  - Theatrehouse – [www.theatrehouse.com](http://www.theatrehouse.com)
  - Amazon - [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)
  - WalMart - [www.walmart.com](http://www.walmart.com)
  - Local Stores –
    - Drug Stores
    - Beauty Shops
    - Dollar Tree
    - Dollar General
    - Department Stores (Malls)