

WHAT YOU WILL WANT TO KNOW

ANSWERS TO COMMONLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What about housing?

Providing housing for the two MCT Tour Actor/Directors is your responsibility as the Presenting Organization. Housing must be provided a total of seven (7) nights, Sunday to Sunday, regardless of schedule variations set by the Presenting Organization (i.e. Tuesday start, Friday shows). Housing shall be private (one person per room), clean, comfortable, and safe accommodations, for the two Tour Actor/Directors, either in a hotel/motel or private home(s). Married teams will require only one room with one appropriately sized bed. Obtaining complimentary rooms for the two Tour Actor/Directors is often a possibility if you ask a local motel or hotel well in advance. This enables you to keep your expenses low, and helps us keep our fees well below the level of most theatre residency programs.

You may also choose to house the team in a private home(s). For the Tour Actor/Directors, the host families often provide wonderful memories and may launch new friendships. This is a wonderful opportunity for cultural exchange and a “home away from home” experience for the team. The option of a homestay allows you to keep your costs down, but please take care to screen the hosts and accommodate any allergies your tour team may have. This is not only to ensure that the minimum requirements of clean, safe, and comfortable are being met, but to also ensure the health of the tour team. Providing a sofa bed in an open family room or asking the Tour Actor/Directors to share a room (unless married) is NOT acceptable. In addition, please confirm that the lodging is equipped with a telephone land-line or adequate cell phone coverage. This is imperative to ensure the comfort and safety of the team. Please understand that the Tour Actor/Directors, like anyone else, need their privacy. If you are planning to arrange housing for the team at two separate homes, please keep in mind that the team has only one vehicle. If you have any questions about this, please contact our office before arranging housing for the team.

Tour Actor/Directors are trained professionals who wish to do their best while in your community. Their comfort and health are important to the success of your residency week.

How do we arrange for an accompanist?

Providing an accompanist is a contractual obligation of the Presenting Organization and critical to the success of the residency week. While we still prefer piano accompaniment, we now provide guitar chords within the music scores. Please note that just like the pianist, the guitarist must be able to read music. The accompanist is needed beginning the second session on Wednesday through the end of the residency week, including performances. In the unfortunate situation that an accompanist is not secured by the dress rehearsal and the cast is required to do the show a cappella, a \$300 fee will be assessed. It is necessary for the Tour Actor/Directors to work with the same accompanist at rehearsals and performances. The music is not difficult, but specific cues will be set. Local music teachers may serve as a good resource when looking for an accompanist. Choosing someone who can read music and is comfortable with the task is very important. For this reason, students are not always the best choice. The accompanist should arrive before or after the audition session to meet the Tour Actor/Directors and pick up the score. A time will be scheduled for the Tour Actor/Directors and accompanist to briefly run through the music before their first rehearsal with the cast.

Where do we find the complimentary music score?

A Music Score is available for advance preparation in the Presenter Materials, which are available online at least 90 days prior to the residency week. Please ask your accompanist to meet with the Tour Actor/Directors before or after auditions on the first day of your residency to talk through the schedule and specific cues.

What needs will the Tour Actor/Directors have?

Once they have access to the facility and the students have shown up for the audition, the Tour Actor/Directors are fairly self-sufficient. The best thing you can do from then on is simply BE AVAILABLE. If this is not possible, designate one contact person who will check in with them daily and lock the spaces after rehearsals. Unexpected situations often arise. For example, rooms may be locked or a ladder may be required. The team is not authorized to acquire keys to any facility used during the week.

When will the Tour Actor/Directors arrive?

Usually the two MCT Tour Actor/Directors will arrive the night before your residency begins. If they have an exceptionally long drive from their previous residency site and if their schedule in your community allows, they may arrive in the morning before the audition. When the Tour Actor/Directors call on the Tuesday two weeks preceding your residency, establish a time and place for your first meeting with them. You will also want to cover all the important details listed on the Presenter Checklist during the advance phone conversation. During your first meeting, allow an hour to walk through the audition, rehearsal, and performance spaces.

AUDITION

How many students will be cast?

Approximately 50-60 students will be cast in the show. There is no guarantee that everyone who auditions will be cast.

Where should the audition take place?

The ideal audition location is a large open room such as a gym or cafeteria. All those who audition will be up and moving where the MCT Tour Actor/Directors can see them, normally in a single line, circle or "U" shape. An auditorium can be used, but often does not provide enough open space.

What ages should audition?

All MCT Tour shows are designed for students entering 1st grade through 12th grade. This is the optimum age range for our productions. There are roles especially suited for all ages, skill levels and experience levels. At a minimum, we must have students entering 1st grade through 5th grade. If you restrict the age level further, it will result in extensive adapting of the script and will decrease the cast size.

Should the students prepare anything for the audition?

No advance preparation is necessary, but a SMILE ☺ never hurts at an audition. They should be ready to come and have a good time! Please remember that everyone must stay the entire two hours of the audition.

What time should the audition begin?

Remember that the normal schedule is two 2-hour sessions per day. The audition will be scheduled as the first session of the first day. Set a realistic time for the students to get to the audition location. Everyone is required to be present for the entire 2-hour audition. Due to time constraints, anyone missing the initial audition will not be considered in the casting of the show.

Who are the Assistant Directors?

During the audition, one to four Assistant Directors (ADs) ages ten and older, are selected to help teach and direct the show early in the week and take on technical responsibilities at performance time. Their logistical help and creative ideas are a vital part of our process and the experience of the ADs can be just as valuable as that of any cast member. They are normally older students, and they must take part in the audition session. It is a common misconception that junior high and high school students can only be involved in an AD capacity. Please note that there are roles in the show designed for older students as well.

REHEARSALS

Where do rehearsals take place?

Throughout the entire residency week, two rehearsal spaces are required. The first space must be a large room, preferably the performance space. The second space should be at least the size of a large, uncluttered classroom, where twenty students can move about freely. The same two spaces should be used the entire week. We recommend that you reserve these two spaces early to avoid conflicts with other events.

What is the best rehearsal schedule?

As the Presenting Organization, you set the rehearsal schedule within our guidelines. Two 2-hour rehearsal sessions should be scheduled each day, Monday through Thursday, with a 15-minute snack break scheduled between the sessions for those who will be staying for both sessions. On Monday, the first 2-hour session will be the audition and the second 2-hour session will be the first rehearsal. The entire time allotted for rehearsals should be 4 hours and 15-minutes. We recommend a rehearsal schedule of 3:00PM to 7:15PM during the **school year**. Specifically, the first session would run from 3:00PM to 5:00PM, followed by a 15-minute snack break until 5:15PM. The second session would run from 5:15PM to 7:15PM. During the **summer** we recommend a rehearsal schedule of 10:00AM to 2:15PM. Specifically, the first session would run from 10:00AM to 12:00PM, followed by a 15-minute snack break until 12:15PM. The second session would run from 12:15PM to 2:15PM. On Friday, the dress rehearsal will take place the first three hours, followed by a 15-minute break, after which the older cast members will stay for an additional 1-hour rehearsal session. We encourage you to follow the same schedule every day throughout the week.

Not all of the students are required at every rehearsal. The MCT Tour Actor/Directors will have a complete schedule to distribute after the audition. This schedule will need to be duplicated on the audition day. Approximately 60 copies of the letter are required.

Please Note: In the case of a Tuesday start or a Friday show, extra rehearsal time may be added to the rehearsal sessions - specific times may vary.

Can parents and teachers watch rehearsals?

All our rehearsals are open to parents and teachers. Be aware, however, that it may be fun for the students to surprise their parents at the end of the week by showing what they have accomplished! Please understand that we cannot allow guests to disrupt the rehearsals. Productive rehearsals depend on the focused work of the cast members involved.

PERFORMANCES

Where should the performances take place?

The performance space can be a stage, auditorium, cafeteria or gym floor – any space large enough to accommodate the set and 50-60 cast members – keeping in mind additional room for the audience. The actual “playing area” (the area in front of the set) must be at least 28’W 16’D 10’H and does not include the additional backstage space required for 50-60 cast members.

Note: For size, sound and safety reasons, the use of portable stages and/or platforms is strongly discouraged.

When should the performance space be available?

It is important that the Tour Actor/Directors have an opportunity to assemble the set prior to performance day and preferable to have at least one full day of rehearsal in the actual performance space. If possible, we recommend the performance space be available for set assembly and rehearsals beginning on Thursday through performance day (earlier if you are having Friday shows).

When should the performances take place?

The suggested performance times are a 3:00PM matinee and a 5:30PM evening performance on the Saturday of the week. However, the schedule can be adapted to fit the needs of each community. Common variations are two Saturday matinees, or a Friday evening show followed by a Saturday matinee. **The earliest a Friday performance can be scheduled is 12:00PM.** A “Tuesday Start” is also a common variation. When the week begins on Tuesday, it is necessary to have the shows on Saturday to give the students ample time to polish their performances. Choosing to have only one performance does not change the fee, nor can a performance be traded for extra workshops.

How much should we charge for tickets?

You may set your ticket prices at whatever level you wish. The ticket price should depend on your community and what other kinds of events your audience attends. We strongly encourage you to evaluate your costs before setting the price. Do not underestimate the value of this project for your community or think that you need to “give it away.” Remember that your students have worked hard and are very proud of their show. In Missoula, we charge \$10 for adults, \$7 for seniors and \$5 for children. We encourage you to seek all possible funding sources to support your residency: banks, law firms, grocery stores, the local mall, fast-food restaurants, and businesses that cater to students and families. A Rotary, Lions or Kiwanis club may be willing to be a partner with you in this project. It can prove to be an excellent way to involve the business community in your children’s lives. If you choose to offer the performances free of charge, consider collecting donations for a local charity or non-profit group, such as a food bank.

WORKSHOPS

What are they?

Three theatrically based enrichment workshops are included with your residency week. Each workshop is a 45 minute, age-appropriate, educational, interactive exploration of the performing arts through hands-on activities, coached by our professional Tour Actor/Directors. We provide a selection of workshops that are specifically designed for school-age students to adults and will be conducted for the participants that you choose.

How do we schedule them?

The workshops are scheduled at your discretion within our guidelines. Please determine your workshop schedule prior to the residency week, and share your schedule with the team, who will be making an advance phone call to the “Team Contact” the Tuesday two weeks prior to your residency week. The Tour Actor/Directors will be planning other production-oriented activities around this schedule. The workshop schedule must be finalized and provided to the team by the end of the first day of the residency following rehearsals. If the schedule is not provided verbally or in writing by this deadline, workshops shall not be conducted during the week.

POST-RESIDENCY

How do we book for next year?

The MCT Tour Project is divided into three parts: The Summer Tour (June-August), The Fall Tour (September- December) and The Winter/Spring Tour (January-May). We begin the booking process for each tour approximately a year in advance. All Presenters who are currently on our mailing list will receive a booking form- Request for Residency Form- via email in July for the following Summer and November for the following School Year. Routing the Tour is a very complex process. Requests are filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Waiting lists are common for many areas of the country. The prompt return of your Request for Residency Form and your flexibility in scheduling are greatly appreciated!