
DRAMASOC

THE UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY DRAMA SOCIETY INCORPORATED

EST. 1921

PROPOSAL GUIDE

1ST MAJOR SHOW 2019

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Moonfleece, 2018

CONTACT

If you have a quick question, hit us up at m.me/DramaSoc.

If you have a question specifically about tech or production design, both in actual design or in budgeting; email our Tech Advisor, Tim, at tech@dramasoc.org.nz.

If you have any general questions, requests for advice, or a draft you want a little feedback up on; email our Secretary, Sam, at proposals@dramasoc.org.nz.

To submit your proposal, email it to Sam, again at proposals@dramasoc.org.nz, before midnight on the 8th of December.



The Importance of Being Earnest, 2018

INTRODUCTION

For nearly 100 years, DramaSoc has prided itself on bringing quality and diverse theatre to the University of Canterbury and the wider Christchurch community. Performing arts is an integral part of society and putting on a full-scale show is a fantastic way to contribute to that.

Once or twice a year, DramaSoc will put out a call for show proposals. A proposal is where any show starts – it gives you an opportunity to suggest a show you're passionate about, and acts as a tool for the Committee to get a comprehensive idea of your vision. This enables them to make an informed decision about what DramaSoc's next show will be.

This guide is here to give you an idea of what you should include when proposing a show, and a basic guide to proposing a show specifically for DramaSoc.

For the specific rules that the Committee is governed by when undergoing the proposals process, check out Article 10 of the Constitution. The Constitution can be found at dramasoc.org.nz/constitution.

Things to Consider

- Does it have a large enough cast for a university group? (8+ is ideal)
- Is it feasible to cast with the typical DramaSoc audition pool? Remember that most DramaSoc auditionees are university students.
- Is it technically complicated? Consider whether you'll be able to put it on with the resources and talent available.
- Has it been put on in Christchurch or the surrounding areas in the last 5 years? This can make it difficult to get rights, so it's important to double check.
- Are the themes and characters interesting enough and appropriate for a primarily university-based demographic? Shows are performed at university, and DramaSoc is a university club so this is very relevant. It must appeal to a wide range of interests as we want as many people through the doors as possible.
- Consider how your proposal will complement the recent productions by DramaSoc. Have we just done a comedy? Try a tragedy. Have we just done Shakespeare? Consider something modern. Have we just done a small-cast show? Maybe it's best to find something with a large cast. The DramaSoc Committee are happy to answer questions about what we have done recently and may be able to help figure out whether your proposal is suitable.

Presenting your Proposal

After proposals close, the DramaSoc Committee will ask you to come in for a short interview – just a chat about your proposal. It will last 15 - 30 minutes and is a chance for you to ask any questions or expand on your ideas, and for the Committee to raise concerns or ask you to elaborate on areas they may be confused or concerned about. Once the Committee has met with each group behind the proposals received, they will take a vote – or a vote of no confidence – on the plays to make their final decision. Any critique is not personal, as the Committee must consider whether the show is appropriate in the context of DramaSoc and if it's likely to do well. The decision made by the Committee is final.



Moonfleece, 2018

PROPOSAL TEMPLATE

This is an outline of the most important things to include in your proposal. If something doesn't make sense, or you'd like advice on a certain area feel free to contact the Committee and ask for help.

Required

The following sections are required to some degree on all proposals.

Show Name

The name and playwright of the play you're wanting to put on.

Why?

Why do you think this is a good show for DramaSoc? Tell us why you think it's appropriate, what you think it'll bring to DramaSoc. We know you love this show, make us love it too!

Rights Availability

Whether or not rights are required for the show. If they are required, include who the current rights-holder for amateur performances in New Zealand is. If rights are not required, state why (e.g. the play is in the public domain, or it's by a member of the proposal team).

Synopsis

A basic outline of the plot of the play. One or two paragraphs. Don't worry about internet plagiarism here, the Committee just wants to know what the play is about and vaguely what its themes are.

Characters

A list of characters in the show. Include the number of leads, and how many male/female characters there are.

Director's Vision

Tell us about it! A paragraph or more about the vision for the show; what you want to focus on/accomplish. What genre is it, what year will it be set in? It's your show and we want to know what makes you excited about it. Don't worry if your vision of the show isn't super original when compared to other productions of the show from around the world, we're a university theatre society, we're not here to shift paradigms. Having said that, if it does shift paradigms and you're excited about it, great! Make us excited too!

Production Team

A list of people you have signed to your potential production team. Roles that must be filled, with consent of the person, are:

- ✓ Director(s)
- ✓ Producer(s)
- ✓ Technical director
- ✓ Stage Manager

But don't stop there, you can fill more positions on the team. Other roles that we recommend you fill straightaway are:

- ✓ Marketing Manager
- ✓ Set Designer
- ✓ Costume Designer
- ✓ Technical Assistant

Even if you don't have people signed on for these roles, it can even be helpful if you just write down who you might be interested in approaching.

Remember that a massive amount of work goes in to making a show, so if you think you need an extra person anywhere, don't hesitate. Don't stress if you don't have everyone just yet – we just need to know that you've had a think about it.

Keep in mind that this is just the proposal stage, so people can be on multiple proposals, even with other societies, just make sure you acknowledge that in your proposal.

If you are unsure what any of these roles entail, contact us, and if you're struggling to find people, try our DramaSoc Community Facebook page!

Budget

Your budget is quite important, but don't get too caught in the specific details. DramaSoc will adjust budgets for any show; what we need you to do is think about costs that will be specific to your show. Do you want to wow the audience with a particularly amazing and intricate set? Consider where else in your production you might be able to cut costs to afford this extra expenditure. We want to know roughly how you would like to allocate your budget, not necessarily the exact amounts. See the budget template section for more info.

Tech

A basic idea of what you hope to do around tech: this covers lighting, sound (if necessary), and drapes (extra curtains that can be hired).

Marketing

We already have experience marketing DramaSoc events, so we're not looking for a full strategy, but we want to know what you think and hear your ideas. This can be anything that will drum-up sales, from a vague idea of poster design all the way to stunts in lectures, get creative!

Special Requirements

This section is very much up to your discretion but tell us about any unusual set/tech/costume pieces that may be needed for your show. This means things that could be hard to source, that aren't usually in university shows, or are individually expensive. If you're wanting a \$500 rhinoceros statue for the show, tell us why.

Extra

These are extra sections, or additions to the existing sections, that help us see inside your brain a bit better. Don't worry if you don't have the time, or experience, to do these, they won't be huge weight on the decision-making process, it just helps to have a bit more clarity at times.

Rights Availability

Get in touch with the rights-holder (if it's not an online instant PDF kinda situation) and confirm that amateur rights are likely to be available to DramaSoc. Make sure to clarify that you're not actually acquiring rights, if you don't and your proposal is rejected, that's your problem.

Characters

Expand on that list you wrote earlier; tell us about each character, anything you think is important.

Production Design (replaces Tech)

Expand the Tech section out into a production design. Don't get too carried away, just leave a few bullet points for the following areas of production design:

- Lighting
- Sound (if required)
- Set
- Props
- Costume

Venue

We assume that all productions will be put on in DW1, but if you have ideas for other venues, let us know. We don't recommend this as alternate venues can incur hire and additional tech costs and can make it harder to get students to the show*. Because we don't have experience putting on shows off-campus we'll need a full run-down of additional costs, how you hope to deal with the student marketing challenge, and why you think this is the best option for your show.

*These difficulties largely don't apply to other on-campus venues, but there are other challenges. Get in touch with the Committee for more details.

Production Timeline

An outline of when you want to get things done; production and rehearsal wise. DramaSoc does already have a rough timeline and room bookings in place, check out the provided Production Timeline for details.

Flaws

Much like the very similar job-interview question, this one takes a bit of courage. Identify any issues with your proposal, or any difficulties you think may occur as you produce the show; and explain how you'd either rectify or address them.



Hamlet, 2015

BUDGET TEMPLATE

The budget is one of the most important parts of your proposal. DramaSoc does have financial reserves, but we still aim to make a small profit on every production.

DramaSoc tends to produce similar revenues for all of our major shows, so our overall budget numbers are unlikely to change significantly. Your job as the proposal team is to show us that you have considered all of the expenses and how you would like to distribute your budget. Give us accurate figures wherever you are able, but don't get too caught up on the details.

The biggest consideration is the cost of rights/royalties. We strongly recommend you contact the rights-holders for your production to (a) ensure that amateur rights are available and would be issued to DramaSoc, and (b) enquire as to the rough amounts they would charge.

If you are unsure where to start, try taking a total expenditure budget of \$4000 and break it down into its sub-sections using the template below. Don't worry too much about income, expenditure is the main area we're focussed on here.

If you have personal connections that would enable you to spend less on your production, let us know! It is always valuable to make new connections.

Required

Expenditure

- A.** For many shows, performance rights will be one of the biggest expenses. You'll need to contact the company that owns the rights for your show to find out how much it'll cost. You'll need to include rehearsal materials (i.e. script download & photocopy rights). When you're looking into this, remember that DramaSoc traditionally performs 8 shows over 2 weeks. For an original show, however, this cost will be much lower.

- B.** Good lighting can highlight your show, while bad lighting can be a distraction. Consider what effects you'd like to accomplish, and this will help when considering this. Lighting includes smoke or haze machines. There are companies in Christchurch that you can go to for general quotes; but a medium size show will generally expect to need \$200 - \$600 for lights and associated tech.
- C.** The more complex the set, the more expensive. Think about both hire costs if applicable, and production costs. Recent productions had sets of \$700 to \$1300 (the former using assets from the latter).
- D.** The more authentic you want your props to look, the more expensive. Consider items that can be borrowed or hired to reduce spending.
- E.** When setting your costume budget, think about the size of the cast and amount of characters. Think about hiring & borrowing costumes. Petticoat Lane in Christchurch has a great range.
- F.** Stage makeup is different from regular makeup. If there are special effects required, this will be more expensive.
- G.** Marketing is very important as it's what gets people through the doors. Engaging around university is straightforward, but we want to promote to the wider Christchurch community as well. Consider things like poster printing and Facebook advertisements.
- H.** It is often a good idea to keep several hundred dollars in reserve for unforeseen expenses. The Committee will approve a certain amount of overspending before approval is needed for more purchases, so this number will need to be discussed with them directly.
- I.** Calculate the total from all the above.

Rights/Royalty	A
Lighting	B
Set	C
Props	D
Costume	E
Makeup	F
Marketing	G
Reserve	H
Total	I

Income

- A.** Ticket sales are the main source of income for the show. However, we have a bunch of historical financial reports we can use to calculate an average ticket income, so we don't expect you to come up with a number. More helpful is an indication of how many tickets you expect to sell (of any type) and whether you expect the show to sell better to students or to the elderly or to the general public.
- B.** The levy is the total amount of money you will collect from members of the production. Use the same number of cast

Ticket Sales	A
Levy	B

and crew you used for Member Expenses in the expenditure section so that it lines up for us. Past productions have had the levy equal to the Member Expenses, but you're welcome to subsidise the levy if you wish. We will not, however, accept a budget that intends to profit off of members of the production. In addition to the total income from the levy, please also include a breakdown of how you got that figure (i.e. cost per person and how many people).

Extra

Expenditure

A. At present, hire of the Jack Mann is free for clubs. Other theatres can be quite expensive, but if you think it'll suit your show better feel free to consider and include that cost. Also note that different venues will incur different tech costs, so be sure to include that in the tech sections.

B. Most shows don't require extensive sound gear, but think about what you'd like to accomplish; if you need a voiceover, sound effects, or a live musician for example.

C. It's helpful for us if you put a bracket on your expenditure. Your expected cost should be the most likely option, with some things going wrong, your lower limit should be if everything goes really well and some expected discounts come through, and your upper limit could take into account things going wrong, or more expensive routes to the same goal.

Venue Hire	A
Sound	B
Total	C

Income

A. If you want, you can work up your own forecast ticket sales from these numbers:

B. Sponsorship may include naming rights of the season, complimentary tickets, free programme advertising, or company logo on all promotional materials, for example. This can be a lot of work and will require a dedicated production team member, but it can be very valuable. Contact the Committee before approaching sponsors as we need to ensure that the sponsorship package is even across all sponsors, and it must be agreed upon by the Committee.

Budget Template

1st Major Show 2019

- C.** We don't actively endorse fundraising, as we haven't done it recently and we've managed fine without it. However, if you want to do fundraising don't let us stop you! Tell us about it and how much you expect to make. This one will require a little research, particularly if it involves selling food, as there are rules and laws around this both on campus and off.
- D.** You're welcome to calculate how much money you expect to make from Front of House sales such as food, drinks, and programmes.
- E.** If you calculated all these numbers, chuck it into a total number for us!

Ticket Sales	A
Sponsorship	B
Fundraising	C
Front of House	D
Total	E



The Importance of Being Earnest, 2018

BUDGET EXAMPLE

Intimidating numbers ahead!

If you're not doing super detailed numbers for your proposed budget, don't worry about all this detail. This is mainly for those who wish to do a more detailed budget. However, it may be worth to take a peak to see how numbers can change through discussions with the Committee, and through the natural course of producing a show.

Expenditure

Item	<i>Moonfleece</i>			<i>Earnest</i>	
	Proposed	Agreed	Final	Proposed	Final
Rights/Scripts	\$1000	\$1103	\$894	\$20	\$397 ¹
Admin ²	\$200	\$0	\$296 ³	\$0	
Sound	\$500	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Lighting	\$1000	\$500	\$414	\$190	\$1202 ⁴
Set	\$650	\$700	\$512	\$1270	
Props	\$200		\$0 ⁵	\$250	\$97
Costumes	\$200	\$400	\$0	\$400	\$760
Makeup	\$100		\$0	\$100	
Marketing	\$750	\$500	\$229	\$500	\$476
FOH	-	-	\$295	\$400	\$105
Member Expense	-	\$100	\$173	\$672	- ⁶
Contingency	\$0	\$200	\$39	\$100	\$84
Total	\$4600	\$3503	\$2852	\$3902	\$3121+

¹ This number, in addition to being made up of script and admin printing, also includes poster printing for marketing, but we don't have the numbers to split it up.

² Admin used to be a category where you would include the likes of printing and mailing etc. But with technology the only remaining costs are script printing which can be bundled in with Rights.

³ This seems to be payments that couldn't be split by category and includes script acquisition and set dressing costs.

⁴ These are bundled due to drape being hired with the lighting equipment.

⁵ The expenditure on props for Moonfleece was \$0 due to a very generous donation from our Props Designer.

⁶ The books on Earnest aren't quite closed so we don't have a final cost for this.

Income & Profit

Unfortunately, we're having issues with Eventbrite, and can't provide a breakdown of the income figures at the moment. You are welcome, however, to contact us with requests for specific numbers which we can try and find for you. We can tell you the following about the profit figures as they currently stand:

	<i>Moonfleece</i>		<i>Earnest</i>	
	Proposed	Final	Proposed	Final ⁷
Expenditure	-\$4600	-\$2852	-\$3902	-\$3121
Income	- ⁸	\$4153	\$5042	\$4399
Total	-	\$1301	\$2140	\$1278

Firstly, don't worry if your proposal doesn't forecast profits like that, DramaSoc has not insignificant financial assets, and our focus is shifting away from making significant profits on our shows. **If all the income stuff is stressing you out, just put \$4250 (A Ticket price-increase adjusted average of the last 3 shows) as total income and move on to more important parts of the proposal.**



And Then There Were None, 2017

⁷ The books on Earnest aren't quite closed, so this figure isn't quite final.

⁸ The Moonfleece proposal did not include a forecast for income.

NOTES

General

There is a lot that goes into selecting a proposal, so telling you what makes a proposal good is not so simple as you might like. However, there are a few things to think about to help you make a good impression and improve your chances to get picked:

- **Production Team.** Often the people on your production team can make or break a proposal. If your production team is unknown to the Committee, tell us more about their relevant experience and why they want to work on this project. If members of the team are inexperienced but still wanting to give it a go, do you have connections with more experienced people that might be able to give you some pointers if you're stuck? Do you have a highly skilled director that would like to take on an assistant director? Let us know!
- **Budget.** We understand that budgeting can be a nightmare, especially if you haven't worked with DramaSoc before. Make sure to proofread your budget and include everything you think you may need AND a reserve. Some proposals have been rejected due to the proposal team not accounting for large amounts of expenditure such as period costuming, set design and building, or just because there clearly hasn't been much thought put into the budget.
- **Casting.** Remember that we are a University club in Christchurch. Productions that require actors to be of significantly older or younger age, or of a particular racial or cultural demographic may be difficult to cast in our audition pools. Similarly, shows that require exclusively (or almost exclusively) men or women will also likely not be suitable. Finally, shows with small casts are less likely to be considered unless recent DramaSoc productions have had larger casts.

Profit

The Committee is unlikely to accept your show if your budget shows that they'll be losing a lot of money. On the other hand, you want to put as much money as you reasonably can into making the show a success. Aim for a small profit and cut spending in other areas if you need to.

Additionally, if you're seeking funding or sponsorship, it's not a good look if you're already expecting a large profit on the show – they'll wonder why you need their money.

Committee Plans

NOTE: Not following this section will not significantly impact the way the Committee interprets and votes on your proposal.

Every year the Committee puts together a plan for the coming year. This year the plan includes a more detailed plan for our second major show. While we can't yet formally announce what those plans are, we can say that we're currently keeping that slot open for an older play, possibly a Shakespeare. For that reason, we would prefer to see proposals for more modern shows. This also works with the note about contrast, as our last show was quite old, and we haven't done anything from the last decade in a long time. Having said that, plans change, so we won't count it against you if you propose an older show.

We would also be interested in seeing proposals for double-billed productions, as that's something that hasn't been done with DramaSoc in a while, and it's something we'd like to explore. But again, don't worry if yours isn't a double bill, we're much more interested in what you have to offer.



Moonfleece, 2018

THANK YOU

Presenting a show is a lot of time, effort, and energy – and we know it can be frustrating! We realise there's a lot of work to be put in to present your show to the DramaSoc Committee, and we're really excited about it.



The Canterbury Tales, 2017