



6 Sources for Original Theatrical Content

eBook



Introduction

Let's face it - funding for the performing arts is all too often an uphill battle. For cash-strapped schools, theatres, and independent troupes, stretching the budget is a frequent headache.

Putting on more productions is just one way to increase your company's profile, sell more tickets, and create more self-funding opportunities through the production.

Here are six sources to consider for producing original theatrical content.

#1

Partner with local writing programs

Writing programs present a perfect opportunity to source original short plays and vignettes for educators and community theatre leaders.

Whether you're working with a school or university creative writing program or contacting a local writing center, building program partnerships can create opportunities for you both.

By showcasing originally written works, you can give your students experience as directors and producers and give them a chance to bring their creative vision to life.

For community programs, you can reach new audiences and build lasting partnerships for cross-promotions and development opportunities. Everyone wins when building new partnerships.



#2

Request Submissions from the Public

People are always looking for the opportunity to show off their own work and several theatres have found success soliciting submissions from the public.

Whether you need the kernel of an idea for further development or a fully developed script, creating a contest or public project can bring many new content opportunities to you.

Be prepared though - too many submissions may become overwhelming, and some submitters may not accept rejection (or adaptation) easily.

#3

Oversee Independent Studies

Theatre educators at the high school and college level may be able to source more new content through independent studies.

For students driven to create and render their vision on stage, these programs can be enormously rewarding, and can even signal the start of their career.

Whether you're overseeing script development or stage production, don't underestimate the value of engaging your students' creativity and helping them bring it to life on stage.



#4

Adapt Other Works

Working with authors of novels, short stories, and essays can be a wonderful way to bring new stories to the stage.

Richard Falcon of Teatro Nagual has worked with writer Dave Rivas to develop short vignettes for outdoor performances in multiple settings.

By working with an already established narrative, you can create a collaborative experience with the source's author and help them see their work in a new way.

#5

Re-imagine the Public Domain

For those theatre leaders who want to leave their mark, consider re-imagining the staging of a play in the public domain.

Make sure that you have a full understanding of copyright law implications for US domestic and international plays and the copyright for any translations - yelling "fair use" is not sufficient to avoid copyright infringement issues.

That being said, the right interpretation of a classic play can bring new meaning and experience to the stage and be a wonderful experience for audiences, casts, and producers alike.



#6

Contact Independent Playwrights

While independent or unpublished playwrights may cost more than other options, if you can afford it, the right script can be invaluable to the success of your show.

Directories like the New Play Exchange can be a powerful tool for finding new talent. Should you find a play you enjoy, the system makes it easy to contact the playwright directly to discuss prices for licensing their work.

While this has a higher cost associated than the other sources mentioned, the breadth and depth of diverse stories available on the platform make it worth your consideration.



“Your platform was a lifesaver. We had an amazing amount of ticket sales in a very short time.”

Hallee Altman • Theatre Director

Developing theatrical content is only one part of creating the perfect patron experience

If you want to achieve your artistic goals, be sure you have the right tools and resources you need to succeed.

On The Stage offers an all-one-one technology platform that makes the business of theatre easier. By partnering with On The Stage, performing arts organizations can:

- **Drive revenue** with ticket sales, merchandise, and fundraising
- **Save time and money** with box office and production tools
- **Create a professional experience** with show sites, a walk-up app, ticket scanning, show programs, and more.

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