

On July 13th, 2021, the meeting began at 6:30pm and ended at 8:35pm with 27 people attending in the Musikfest Cafe.

ArtsQuest Staff present: Ryan Hill, Addyson Young, Anthony DeSanctis, Halie Smith, Jon Lunger, and Ben Youngerman.

Halie Smith and Aliya Brown held a competition to see who could keep better notes: These are those notes.

### **Upcoming Town Halls:**

July 26th (How to Pitch a Show) & August TBA (Marketing/Show Promotion)

Topics of discussion at said meeting will be:

FAQ's - Formstack/Google form questions

Aliya's promo cards - Very important

Having a list of what comedians need to have done for submissions

Talking about graphics - How to make them/standard size for graphics.

### **ArtsQuest as a Business and Financial Information:**

At the beginning at the pandemic all AQ staff took a pay cut and some departments had to cut positions. They are now in a position as a company where they ended the pay cuts and are in the process of hiring more part-time staff.

They are investing in a modified Musikfest this year which will be held from August 6th-15th.

Pending grants will offer more financial security/benefit, however the organization is prepared to continue as is without the grants if denied. April **LastName** is in charge of grants. She is new to AQ and she is wonderful. Grants can potentially help expand what we are able to do with comedy- like how they were utilized for the last Improv Festival.

Comedy loses the organization ~\$25,000. This number is found based on ticket sales alone, and

not food and drink sales. Food and drink sales, probably accommodate the loss, but are hard to calculate into the comedy total- as there is no guaranteed way to track that money's connection to events. Food and Drink is run by a for-profit company and they keep a percentage of the sale. AQ cannot approve of any over extension of staffing and is trying to operate within the hours the building is scheduled to be open.

Cinema gets theatre priority because they make more money, and the contracts with film distributors are specific, strict, and if they are not followed there are potential future consequences. (ex. Getting denied future films, getting screening films taken away, etc.)

Film distributor contracts and competing sounds (music on other stages) are the main reason comedy shows are often held at 10:30pm. This will be avoided when possible, however if a Thurs, Fri, Sat, comedy schedule is to return (as planned for 2022) this will be unavoidable. The Thurs, Fri, Sat comedy schedule is not set in stone - we can revamp this schedule and move things around, making comedy more accessible. We're not happy with the 10:30 time slot either. We're not back to our regular calendar yet, so we're aiming to do one show a week, maybe two, starting after musikfest.

There are plans to build a black box theatre at the Banana Factory when that building undergoes a remodel- but due to the corona virus there is no date for this project's completion. **The Banana Factory's hours have expanded to be open on weekends again. They will return to longer hours in September.** Their hours are also available online if there's any confusion. This opens up opportunities for classes and improv practice rooms.

Attendees of the meeting were encouraged to find and create opportunities at other available venues if the dates/times they want to do shows are not available with ArtsQuest. Diversity will only benefit the comedy community.

### **Show Information (Submissions and Auditions):**

There is currently no set comedy schedule- but it is a goal to have at least one comedy show a week. After Musikfest, Thursday comedy will be returning with an improv jam (that will develop into Four Finger Discount) and Free Jokes the stand-up open mic.

These free Thursday shows in combination with comedy classes returning will hopefully encourage new people to join in and participate in the scene, which was a concern many attendees wanted addressed. However, the organization is always looking to hear ideas on how to promote diversity within the community.

Changing the schedule of Thurs, Fri, Sat, was discussed and AQ is open to changing this- we will be made aware of this change if/when it happens.

Improv Comedy Power Hour will be holding auditions in October with plans of beginning shows in January. It was asked by an attendee for the philosophy around approving teams for ICPH be reviewed and to become more competitive and it was noted that ICPH has always been open to people with an outside improv education as long as it is equivalent experience.

The Improv Festival will be returning Jan. 28th and 29th. Submissions for the festival will be in September. Ryan disclosed that he prioritises groups that are diverse both ethnically and in improv category. An example used by him was that he will not be prioritizing groups composed of white men performing duo-prov over more diverse groups. Condolences to white male duo-prov groups. If anyone has an issue with how improv groups are selected for the festival, Ryan has advocated that you take that concern up with him as it is his final decision.

After Musikfest, show submission forms will be opened to anyone looking to pitch a show. ArtsQuest is interested in any and all original shows that they have the means to produce. This includes one off shows as well as recurring shows. It was suggested by an attendee that recurring shows run on a seasonal and rotating schedule. Ryan said he would entertain this idea. Ryan and co. actually really loved this idea and are thinking about implementing it in some way!

Tech heavy shows are hard to accomplish in the warmer months and are more available during

the colder months. Essentially, from March-October the organization is very busy and does not have as much tech availability as November-February.

The average attendance for comedy shows is ~46 people.

It was asked how touring comedians are selected. Ryan disclosed that they book comedians by their availability as opposed to trying to fill dates with available comedians. This is done by communicating with and building reports with various agents. This sparked conversation of Ryan's ability to expose local talent to those agents. Ryan explained that it isn't easy to get agents to leave the accessibility and quantity of NYC and LA (even then, they send their assistants instead); that he often gets shallow sweet talk with no concrete plans for anyone to look at our local talent.

Comedy Class Curriculum was discussed, and it was determined that instructors are expected to follow the curriculum set by AQ and are allowed to personalize instruction in conjunction with said curriculum.

Performer contracts are always negotiable and performers are encouraged to advocate for what they want. ArtsQuest may not be able to fulfill your needs, and that's okay. But they'll do their best within their means to work with you if you want to perform there.

### **Marketing/Promotion:**

Marketing will be discussed in length at the August Town Hall Meeting (Date TBA).

A very smart and beautiful attendee suggested that marketing provide meeting attendees with a card that answers any FAQ as well as provides dimensions for graphics promotions. The same attendee also mentioned the use of checklists when trying to market your show! These things will all be brought up again in the marketing specific town hall. Jon and Ben from marketing responded enthusiastically to this idea and are so excited to make the cards. There was also

mention of updating a complete packet guiding people through the promotional process involved in producing a show.

The more variety in what is given to marketing, the more they can do to promote your show. Think of it as trying to explain your show to someone who's never seen it - thorough but not giving too much away.

ArtsQuest will print fliers for you if need be. You can scatter them in the streets if you want, idk. (Please don't litter tho)

Addy and Ryan are always willing to meet with anyone who has concerns with promoting and producing their show.

**Community:**

<3 We all love Chip! Shout out to Chip's mom for encouraging him to volunteer with ArtsQuest. We couldn't ask for a better friend in the comedy community. <3

It was emphasized that if anyone needs help accomplishing any task needed to put on a show, they can lean on community members to help fulfil what they need. There is a community on Facebook where they can ask questions and receive help.

It was advocated that we all attend each other's shows and volunteer wherever necessary to see them succeed.

For recruiting new people, there was mention of reaching out to college students and other communities of young folk in Bethlehem- but there was no plan made to do so. This is a task that can be done outside of the organization if anyone desires to take on.

The discussion of how to diversify the scene is always welcome- and as a community we intend to prioritize this.