

MITF Festival Manual March 3, 2017

Read this manual carefully before filling out the application. It covers the nuts and bolts of producing in the MITF. See [Appendix C](#) for a complete list of specific benefits to participating in the MITF. NOTE: The MITF is now a 3-season festival, with performances in spring, summer, and fall. This manual covers all 3 seasons. Please pay special attention to our new Profit Sharing Policy (PSP) and conditions.

Festival Schedule

MITF: Summer (2017) Shorts (including Short Play Lab) and Full-lengths and Musicals up to 120 min.

Submission deadlines:

May 15, 2017 for Short Subjects and Full-lengths.

June 1, 2017 for Variety Acts.

June 20, 2017 for the Short Play Lab.

Walkthru: date TBD. Venue: Workshop Theatre Main Stage and Jewel Box Theaters

MITF: Summer opens July 15

MITF: Summer closes Aug 6

MITF: Fall (2017) Shorts (including Short Play Lab) and Full-lengths and Musicals up to 90 min.

Walkthru: date TBD. Venue: TBD

MITF: Fall opens TBD

MITF: Fall closes TBD

Script Selection Criteria

We welcome any kind of stage play, musical or otherwise, new or classical, mainstream or specifically focused on an ethnic or cultural niche, even new interpretations of classical plays. We also encourage productions of all racial and sexual stripes, in all genres.

The chief restrictions on submissions are the length of a show and how well it can be done with minimal scenery in a festival setting. Otherwise, three things make up a successful entry in the MITF: **a good play, a competent producer, and a marketing plan**. It takes all three to field a successful Festival entry.

A good play Ultimately the idea of a “good play” boils down to taste. But we do look for traditional dramaturgical values: strong characters, crisp dialog, savvy construction, a satisfying ending. (We are also not afraid of edgier, more avant-garde work, if it promises to be well done.)

A well-written play is not the same as a well-made play. It's also not the same as a well-typed play, though messy scripts tend to come from inexperienced or lazy playwrights. (Ask the Dramatists Guild for their script-format guidelines. You don't have to follow them exactly, but they're a professional standard.) At a minimum, scripts should exhibit the following characteristics:

- Formatted for the stage
- Typed
- Complete (no outlines)

NOTE: We require you to submit all scripts electronically, but they still need to be formatted for the stage, typed, and complete.

A competent producer We are also concerned about whether the production company will be compatible with our production practice. Playwright-producers abound Off-Off-Broadway, the source of most of our participants. But theatre is a collaborative art form, and plays should be put on by teams. These teams are led by producers, who may or may not be authors of the plays they produce.

A producer doesn't have to be the person putting up the money. Commercial producers often don't put their own money into a show: they spend Other People's Money (OPM). But every production needs someone whose principal job is running the production itself. The application asks for that person's name and a thumbnail sketch of his or her history. If you don't have a producer, you can advertise for one on Playbill.com or similar Web sites. Or call Theater Resources Unlimited (TRU) for suggestions. TRU is a wonderful resource for new producers. Their Web site is www.truonline.org. Their monthly panels alone are worth a yearlong membership, and they do much more to help new producers over the bumpy spots in the road to success.

While playwrights often put up the money for their own shows, they sometimes hire a producer to manage it. Our contract is usually with the producer. ***The Festival reserves the right to cancel a production's place in the Festival if the producer becomes unattached to (ie fired by) the show.***

A marketing plan A large amount of the audience for the MITF is your friends and relatives, but also subscribers and people from individual companies' mailing lists. The MITF does its own marketing and PR, through extensive press releases (this is to get free listings, features, and reviews), as well as advertising in print or other media, like Facebook ads and Google Adwords. But you know who your audience is better than anyone and only you can bring in your own captive audience. So how you intend to get those people into the theatre is a subject of great interest to us. The most successful shows and the ones who realize a profit from our Profit Sharing Policy are those shows that have marketed their plays to their audience. Scroll down to see [Appendix A: Marketing 101 - A Crash Course](#) for more information on marketing.

Festival Costs and Profit Sharing Policy (PSP)

Our Profit Sharing Policy has proven to be very popular with past participants and it is most important that you understand it. We have instated this policy because we wanted to establish an equitable way for playwrights to earn back a percentage of their net box office.

Barring Variety Shows and SPL's (Short Play Lab), where there is no option to buy into the Profit Sharing Policy, all shows must contribute to the Profit Sharing Policy. Most types of shows are given the option of the PSP percentage they pay, from the minimum of 25% for 30-45 min plays, 30% for 46-60 min plays, and 35% for 61-120 min plays, to the maximum optional PSP allowed to all Short Subjects and Full-lengths, which is capped at 90%. (NOTE: The maximum running time for plays in MITF: Fall and MITF: Spring is 90 min. MITF: Summer allows shows up to 120 min).

PSP MINIMUMS:

- 25% for 30-45 min plays.
- 30% for 46-60 min plays.
- 35% for 61-120 min plays.

The following category of shows have a required minimum of 60% PSP:

- *All solo/improve/sketch shows (except MITF/Variety acts).*
- *International shows.*
- *Shows from outside the tri-state area.*
- *Shows from producers who had poor returns at the box office in their most recent innings at MITF.*

(Note: The Festival receives at least 10% of the net box office on all shows. This means shows have the option to buy into any Profit Sharing percentage above their required minimum, up to the 90% maximum PSP allowed).

Profit Sharing Policy (PSP)

- **Pay \$2.50 per seat per performance and receive 25% of the production's net box office.**
(Only available for 30-45 min plays).
- **Pay \$3 per seat per performance and receive 30% of the production's net box office.**
(The minimum PSP for 46-60 min plays).
- **Pay \$3.50 per seat per performance and receive 35% of the production's net box office.**
(The minimum PSP for 61-121 min plays).
- **Pay \$4 per seat per performance and receive 40% of the production's net box office.**
- **Pay \$5 per seat per performance and receive 50% of the production's net box office.**
- **Pay \$6 per seat per performance and receive 60% of the production's net box office.**
(The minimum PSP for Solo shows, international shows, producers who had poor box office returns in their most recent innings at MITF, and shows from outside the tri-state area).
- **Pay \$7 per seat per performance and receive 70% of the production's net box office.**
- **Pay \$8 per seat per performance and receive 80% of the production's net box office.**
- **Pay \$9 per seat per performance and receive 90% of the production's net box office.**

Thus, to receive a portion of the production's net box office, there is a multi-tiered system with a **minimum** of either 25%, 30%, 35%, or 60% Profit Sharing Policy (PSP), depending on what category your show falls into, as explained above. All shows have the option to pick a PSP percentage above their minimum, up to 90% PSP. This applies to Short Subjects as well as Full-lengths. It does not apply to MITF/Variety acts, which have their own incentive structure, or to the Short Play Lab. The Profit Sharing Policy is on a sliding scale dependent on what percentage of the net box office you want – participants choose in advance how much of their net box office they would like to receive. For example, if you choose 9 dollars per seat, the maximum PSP allowed, you receive 90% of the production's net box office.

The number of seats depends on the [MITF venue](#) you choose. For MITF: Summer 2017, the venue is the WorkShop Theater's Main Stage (65 seats) and Jewel Box Theaters (45 seats). For example, the minimum 25% PSP for 30-45 min plays for MITF: Summer 2017 is \$337.50. (3 performances x \$2.50 per seat x 45 seats).

If your play is accepted by MITF, and you accept our invitation, MITF will immediately email you a contract. Your signed contract and all Profit Sharing payments must be received within 10 days of the date MITF emails you the contract. PSP investments are non-refundable should a play drop out of the Festival.

Scroll down to Appendix B to see a [financial breakdown](#) of costs that may be associated with your production outside of Festival requirements.

A master box-office report will be e-mailed to Producer within three (3) weeks after the Festival closes. If Producer does not approve box-office report within six (6) months of the Festival closing, then Producer forfeits all monies due from Presenter. The Presenter shall pay Producer **PSP Percent** of GBOR (Gross Box Office Receipts), if appropriate, within four (4) weeks after Producer's approval of the master box office report, minus any fines assessed during the Festival.

The Festival makes no requirement for participation in future royalties from any works performed under its auspices. Our only restriction on future productions is to receive a program credit.

Special considerations

Different kinds of shows require special considerations, in particular the following:

- AEA Showcases
- Non-union shows
- International shows
- Short Subjects
- Staged readings
- MITF/Variety
- The Short Play Lab

AEA Showcases

Under the showcase code, Actors' Equity Association (AEA) permits union members to perform provided the producer agrees to certain restrictions. We will do nothing to violate these restrictions, but individual producers must make their own arrangements with AEA to produce under the showcase code, including filing all the appropriate paperwork on time.

AEA showcases are required to purchase volunteer accident insurance, which covers AEA members' risk of accident during auditions, rehearsals, and performances. ***The Festival no longer buys a blanket volunteer-accident policy.***

Participants should note that we don't have a side letter with Actors' Equity, so there is no requirement to pay actors stipends over and above whatever minimum is specified in the Showcase Code.

NOTE: Because we no longer have a participation fee, we are no longer able to support the general comps policy that we once had. The Equity comp policy is outlined below under "Comp policy." Non-equity shows must pay for any comps beyond those included in the standard comps (producer, writer, director). The payment is due before the curtain rises on the performance in question.

NOTE: We now allow short subjects (30 – 60 min.) to sign the showcase code. We still don't allow showcases in the Short Play Lab.

Non-union shows

Non-union shows are just like any other productions, with the exception that the Festival doesn't have to be careful about following the terms of the Showcase Code. ***The only comps allowed are for the producer, writer, and director. All shows must pay for any comps beyond those included in the standard. The payment is due before the curtain rises on the performance in question.***

International shows -- The "I" in MITF

We aggressively pursue international productions! International applicants include not only groups with international artists but also groups wishing to submit plays written by an international author or a play dealing with international themes.

It's tough to come to a strange place and put on a show. Thus, we strongly recommend that you enlist a local company that is willing to co-produce your show (including marketing). Even so, out-of-towners can make it here -- and, after all, if you can make it here, you can make it anywhere.

MITF is very accommodating when it comes to Festival scheduling for international plays. However, we **cannot** help you with the logistics in bringing your show to New York City (housing, visas, financing, etc.). Whatever help we can provide, which is principally answering general inquiries about the Festival and scheduling concerns, won't make up for not having a local production manager. **All participants, like locals, are responsible for all aspects of production and publicity for their shows, as well as travel expenses and accommodations.** (We also try to accommodate shows from outside the tri-state area but within the United States.)

International applicants are encouraged to request early acceptance, for the following advantages:

- **Scheduling preferences.** You have the advantage of choosing your schedule and number of shows. If you are flying in from out of town or from another country and it's not in your production budget to stay in New York City a whole month or do a full 6 shows, and you wish to do only 3 shows on only one weekend, then just note your preference on your application and we will do our best to accommodate you.
- **More time to prepare.** You'll have more time to research, plan, promote, raise money, find grants, and get sponsors.
- **More time to utilize our help—where we can.**

Short Subjects

The Short Subjects are our one-act division, performed under the following restrictions:

- 30 – 60-minutes long
- No application fee
- No participation fee on acceptance
- Share of the net box office based on our Profit Sharing Policy (see options and requirements under “Festival Costs”)
- Non-union or Equity shows

Unlike in most previous years, when they were performed in our smallest theatre, the Short Subjects are performed in any available theatre, with an eye to choosing a venue most appropriate to the material.

Staged Readings

For MITF: Summer, the Festival opens our largest theatre for staged readings. For MITF: Fall, Spring, and Summer, staged readings require a \$250 rental fee. Audience admission is free. The only qualifying criterion is that the presenters cooperate with Festival policies and procedures. This is an opportunity for playwrights and others to hear new work for the first time with an eye toward eventual production...maybe even back at MITF!

These readings take place on weekday afternoons, but we promote them through our regular publicity channels, including the Festabill (in MITF: Summer). Production values must be minimal: we expect participants to start and end on time and make appropriate use of the space.

We have had sponsored staged readings and special cultural events in the past. Whether we have these again will depend on the level of sponsorship that appears before the events are planned.

MITF/Variety

MITF/Variety includes burlesque, improv, standup, and sketch comedy in addition to cabaret. They will take place during regular Festival hours. There are no participation fees. The Festival will provide an electronic keyboard, but shows must provide their own board operator. All shows will receive a 45-min.

tech rehearsal as well as a single 45-min. performance. There will be 10 min. for setup and 5 min. for strike. Shows will generally appear in our 45-seat black box. We will reserve popular weekend slots and offer them to shows that do well in advance sales. All tickets will be \$20. The Festival will take the first \$200 from each performance and split the rest with the show, 50/50.

The Short Play Lab

The Short Play Lab (SPL) is an ongoing “mini-festival” sponsored by John Chatterton Presents/MITF. It takes place monthly during the season. It comprises 2 programs of about 10 short plays (not to exceed 10 minutes) each. Each program runs about 2 hours. Each program receives 2 performances. A show can be in 1 program but not both. Tickets are \$20. Shows do not receive a portion of the door, but the most popular show in each program, determined by a show of hands, receives a cash prize (currently \$75). The Lab will be scheduled for the opening weekend in each Festival.

Scheduling

If selected, your show is scheduled into one theatre for a predetermined number of performances over 3 weeks. Performances generally start no earlier than 4:00 pm and no later than 10:30 pm on weekdays and run from 11 am to 11 pm on weekends. Some producers have specifically asked for matinee performances, usually to attract industry or other specialized audiences, such as for children’s theatre. (Staged readings are in the early afternoon on weekdays.)

We try to assign everyone equally fair schedules. We use your preferences, as listed on your application form, as a basis. (NOTE: Monday evenings are generally good slots, as many shows elsewhere are dark on Mondays.) The only ground for appeal is to point out obvious errors, like 2 slots on the same day (unless you asked for them) or no weekend slots.

Box Office

The MITF handles all aspects of selling tickets. We sell tickets by phone and on the Web. Once the Festival has opened, patrons can buy tickets at the MITF box office during Festival hours, sold by MITF staff. Every performance has a detailed box-office report, made available to you after the Festival closes. ***Shows are not entitled to sell tickets directly.***

Comp policy (ID’s Required When Picking Up Comps. NO ID, NO Comps, NO Exceptions)

The Festival comp policy is as follows:

- We allow virtually unlimited press comps. Press should make reservations through our press agent. Press receive up to 2 comps. All other comps must be arranged through the box office.
- We no longer allow industry comps. Producers wanting to seat industry at no charge must buy tickets themselves. We do, however, allow comps for writers, directors, and producers of Festival shows. (Such comps are non-transferable, and if a show’s writer/producer/director are 1 person, the show gets only 1 comp.) If a show has more than 1 writer, producer, or director (for example, for a group of plays or a musical), the show is entitled to 1 comp each for the writers, directors, or producers. If a show is entitled to more than 3 comps, it must make that clear to the MITF box office in advance so we can reserve enough seats. Festival participants (writers, producers, designers, actors – anyone mentioned in the program as a contributor to the show) may obtain comps for all Festival shows, space permitting (bring your program and picture ID). ***NOTE: being mentioned in the program as a Festival participant does not entitle purely passive participants – like your mom, dad, boyfriend, or even investors – to a comp.***
- Equity showcases are allowed 2 comps for each Equity member of the show’s company, for the entire run of the show. Members of SDC, Dramatist’s Guild, ATPAM, CSA are allowed one comp. A member of the Broadway League is allowed 2 comps. Equity members in good standing are on standby. If an Equity showcase wishes to comp someone not covered above, the show must buy that individual ticket. Industry comps specific to showcases (SDC etc.) will be seated in the order in which they present themselves to the box office. ***If you buy a block of tickets to be***

distributed to individuals at the door in lieu of comps, you must send the box office an E-mail 24 hours in advance listing the names of the individuals to whom those tickets will be given. Your representative must also be on hand to make sure things go smoothly with these "comps."

- ***NOTE: Members of SDC, Dramatist's Guild, etc. may not be reserved on the master comp list. Do not put these industry people on your list of comp requests, either to our press agent or the box office. They must show up at the box office and present BOTH their ID AND proof of current industry affiliation in one of the approved categories. If the box office rejects their request, they must buy a ticket to get a seat.***
- Producers who wish to comp individuals who aren't described above must buy tickets (you can save money using your discount code). (Because of our Profit Sharing Policy, and the percentage amount you choose, producers may get some -- or most -- of this money back in their share of the door.)
- ***The Festival reserves the right to six comps per show per Festival, for Festival staff and judges.***

Performance Conditions

Smooth operation depends on the interaction of the box office (see above), tech director, house manager, and company manager, as follows.

Production Manager

Sometimes we have a production manager, who is in charge of overall production issues, including scheduling of staff, dealing with vendors, supervising deliveries, time sheets, etc. Sometimes these duties are assumed by other staff, in lieu of having a production manager. Whatever our setup, we will keep you informed of the chain of command.

Tech Director

The tech director (second in command to the production manager) is in charge of day-to-day operations. S/he has the following duties:

- Supervise technical rehearsals. Such supervision will include answering questions about the sound and light equipment, monitoring a cue-to-cue rehearsal, and timing a nonstop run-through. ***NOTE: The tech director is not there to teach your board op how to run the equipment. MITF Staff are available for hire as sound board operators for all individual shows.***
- Troubleshoot problems with the equipment during rehearsal and performance ("Why doesn't the sound come out?").
- Time the beginning and end of performances to ensure that the Festival stays on schedule. Shows that run late may be fined.
- Supervise shows' use of the dressing room(s) and storage.

The tech director has the authority to delay or stop performances and write up shows for fines.

House Manager

The Festival will assign a house manager for each venue, who will do the following:

- Collect ticket stubs.
- Pass out programs.
- Act as liaison between MITF and company/production.
- Make the pre-show speech.

- Manage late seating.
- Monitor front of house for noise.
- Manage intermissions.
- Inform the company manager if the Festival needs to hold the start of your performance.
- Supervise your staff in clearing the house of programs, refuse, etc. after every performance.

Everyone who wishes to see the show from the audience *must* be ticketed. No one will be granted entry for the show without a ticket, including any producer, publicist, talent agent, press person, director, playwright, stagehand, company manager, etc. There are no exceptions. **NOTE: Sometimes, especially for smaller festivals, our box-office and technical staff perform the duties of the house manager.**

Company Manager

Each show must provide a company manager to perform the following tasks:

- Insert your programs into our Festabills and give them to our venue staff in a timely fashion. (You need a program because the Festabill doesn't list your cast, and without your program judges for the Awards will be unable to nominate people by name.)
- Handle press packets.
- Act as liaison with the MITF.
- Monitor front of house for noise.
- Clear the house of programs, etc. before and after every performance.

Your company manager should have authority to make any decisions concerning your show in the absence of the production's producer. We strongly recommend the company manager be a member of the producing team.

Late Seating

Up to 20 percent of each venue will be held for late seating of patrons. The designated seats will be marked by "reserved" signs and will be closest to the entry door, so as to limit the disruption to your show. Show personnel may *not* sit in those designated seats; they are strictly for late seating. **There is no standing in any venue, pursuant to NYC fire code.**

Filming and Taping

Any *authorized* person who will be filming or taping your production *must* have a ticket, including any seat the camera may occupy. Such recording must be done from the back of the theatre, so as not to disturb other patrons. You must notify the Festival's production manager of any intended recording 24 hours in advance.

Publicity

The MITF publicizes the Festival and coordinates all press relations, including interviews and critics' attendance. We publish brochures and other marketing materials as well as several E-blasts. We also have an aggressive Internet marketing presence. Last, our press agent is prepared to send a photographer to one of your last rehearsals to take production stills for our Web site and Twitter feed. However, we expect each production to do its own publicity, in addition to the above, as it is strongly advantageous for you to do this. **You know your potential audience better than anyone!**

You will be asked to submit publicity photos and PR materials so we can send complete press packages to print and broadcast media. You must publicize your own show through mailers, handbills, posters, or ads. The more you promote your show, the larger your potential audience.

Technical Elements

Production values must be kept at a minimum to accommodate all Festival productions. The Festival caps the maximum cast size at 12 people so no show is too big for its venue.

Storage

To keep as much of the stage space usable as possible we need to restrict scenery elements and storage. In general, all stored items must be taken with you every night. However, the Festival provides stock pieces, as follows (the quantities are subject to change):

- 4 large black cubes, each roughly 18 in. square, painted in a semi-gloss black
- 4 small black cubes, each roughly 12 in. square, painted in a semi-gloss black
- 1 black folding card table
- 4 black folding chairs

Festival-supplied stock pieces may *not* be exchanged or borrowed from another venue. All set pieces assigned to a venue must remain in that venue at all times, and must be returned to their proper storage place after every use, **subject to fines**.

External storage areas, **if available**, will be clearly marked with each renter's show name. Plastic bags, crates, or cardboard boxes are prohibited for safety reasons. Everything must be labeled clearly or it will not be allowed -- **the Festival is not responsible for lost, broken or stolen items**.

Updated scenery specifications are sent via e-mail to Festival producers at least one month before the festival opens.

All participants are *required* to remove all their props, scenic elements, costumes, etc. from the storage area immediately after their final performance and arrange for disposal of any items no longer wanted. The Festival is not responsible for the removal and disposal of any participant production, **subject to fines**.

NOTE: There is a strong possibility that we will not have an external storage space this year.

Rehearsal space

Participants are responsible to secure rehearsal space. **The Festival no longer offers free, discounted, or subsidized rehearsal space.**

Lighting

Our resident lighting designer designs a general rep. plot for all participants to use. There are warm and cool washes, back light, side light and areas. Our LD also includes various specials for everyone to use, but does not design for individual shows. **It is absolutely forbidden to refocus or change color on any lighting instrument during the Festival, or to reconfigure elements on the light board, subject to fines.**

A tech director is on hand in case of technical difficulties. **Our tech director no longer runs lights and sound for short subjects. Each show, whether short of Full-length, must assign an individual to run its lights and sound.** The tech director does a dimmer check at the beginning of each day.

Sound

Each venue has a full sound system. There is at least one CD player, and additional inputs are available to add equipment (you must provide your own cables). For space and safety reasons, you must leave the booth in the same condition you found it – taking any additional equipment with you after each show. There are no mics available, nor are they needed in any of our venues. Your sound op needs to have

technical knowledge of the playback equipment and mixing boards that are available to them. The venue manager does an audio check at the beginning of each day.

At no time should a show's audio effects be excessively loud so as to interfere with another venue's performance.

It is absolutely forbidden to reconfigure elements on the pre-amps, amps or monitor mix board, subject to fines.

Lighting/Sound EFX (Strobes/Gunshots)*

Please note guns as props and gunshots are only permitted in Full-length plays.

ADA regulations require all shows to post and include in a pre-show announcement or publish in their program the use of *any* strobe light visual effect or gunshot sound effect.

Musical Instruments

The Festival does *not* provide participants with any keyboard, piano, drum kit or other musical instrument. We will provide a keyboard for musicals and variety acts.

Costumes

There is no costume storage in any venue. You must transport costumes to and from the theatre every night, if possible to your portion of the external storage space. If you have a period show with large costumes, you must make arrangements to store the pieces outside the theatre. We recommend wheeled suitcases for easy transportation.

MITF Venues

Tours of MITF venues are made available after your show has been confirmed. It is not possible to walk in without an appointment. We will publish a list of venues and capacities as we make rental commitments to them.

Changeovers/Time Slots

For MITF: Spring, Summer, and Fall all plays, excluding musicals, should not be under 30 minutes nor over 90 minutes. No musical should be under 30 minutes or over 120 minutes, including intermission, if any.

It is not unusual in a festival setting to do an abbreviated version of your work in order to fit within the time limitations. The MITF promises its audiences medium-length shows: long enough to feel satisfied and short enough for the average festival-goer's attention span.

ALL VENUES: There are 30 minutes between shows, which allows each production 15 min. to load-in and 15 min. to load-out between performances. If your show runs over its allotted time, you throw off the schedule for the whole day. In a festival setting this can be disastrous. You will be fined for each time you run over, the amount to be determined based on the amount of time the production runs over. If it happens more than once we reserve the right to cancel your remaining performances.

Your load-in and load-out schedule must include the audience getting into the theatre as well:

- 10 minutes to set up theatre (unless you set up with audience coming in)
- 5 minutes to get audience in

- GO on time
- 15 minutes to get audience out and strike (usually simultaneous)

If you have a show that has an 8:30 GO and comes down at 10:00 pm, your schedule would be like this:

- 8:15pm -- move into theatre and dressing room
- 8:25pm -- open house
- 8:30pm -- start show
- 10:00pm -- show ends; begin strike
- 10:15pm -- out of theatre and dressing room

NOTE: MITF: Summer will not have a greenroom. We will update this circumstance for future Festivals.

Tech Schedule

Full-Lengths will receive a tech time slot that runs 2.5 times your running time (for example, if your show is 90 minutes, you have 3 hours and 45 minutes). During this time you should get the blocking set, run all tech elements, and determine your "load in and load out" plan of attack to execute a smooth curtain. Plays in the Short Subjects division during MITF: Summer, Fall, or Spring, receive a tech rehearsal approximately 2 times the running time of the show.

It is possible to buy extra tech time when it is available, at favorable rates. **All rentals are payable in advance by check or cash, to be paid to our general manager, production manager, or bookkeeper.**

Fines

The MITF staff does its best to ensure that all festival participants cooperate. Sometimes the carrot must be replaced by the stick, in the form of fines.

These fines reflect simple rules meant to reinforce the Festival philosophy of cooperation, which stems from the collaborative nature of the medium. There are fines for the following infractions:

- Running over your allotted time (\$50 – we may cancel the run after the 2nd fine)
- Interfering with other productions' costumes or props (\$50)
- Leaving the house, stage, dressing room, or greenroom in a state such that Festival staff have to clean up after you (\$50)
- Interfering with the Festival lighting plot (\$100)
- Approaching the box office within half an hour of any Festival performance (\$50)
- Interfering with the smooth operation of the Festival, staff, venues, etc. (\$100)

The Festival assesses fines out of the producer's share of the gross. If a show hasn't accrued enough ticket sales to cover a fine, the producer must pay before a further performance. Payments must be made to the Festival general manager, production manager or bookkeeper.

Application Process

Please read through this manual in its entirety and carefully before applying. **There is no application fee.**

If you are accepted into the Festival, you will be asked several questions pertaining to information in the manual. Based on your answers, which are to make sure your play conforms to our guidelines (hence the importance for you to read the manual before applying), we will e-mail successful candidates an invitation to join MITF: Summer soon after receiving your play, or variety act. (Submission deadline is April 15, 2017)

for Short Subjects and Full-lengths; May 2, 2017 for Variety Acts; June 20, 2017 for the Short Play Lab). The official schedule will not be released to the production until contracts are signed and all fees are paid.

There are 4 ways to apply to the Festival:

- Full-lengths (plays and musicals) and Short Subjects (plays and musicals) application
- SPL (Short Play Lab) application
- Staged Reading application
- Variety Acts application

It is important to choose the appropriate application for your project, or we'll have to get back to you and ask for additional materials.

Full-lengths and Short Subjects is appropriate for shows as follows:

- NOT part of MITF/Variety or the Short Play Lab

Full-lengths If you have a full-length play, (61-90 min) or musical (61-120min) and you have read this Manual and your play complies with the rules of MITF email: john.chatterton@gmail.com In the subject heading write the type of show. Please write a short cover letter telling us the essentials of your play. (Length, number of characters, etc).

Short Subjects have a special place in the MITF and receive preference. Short Subjects must run from 30 – 60 min. and require minimal production effort. If you have read this Manual and your Short Subject complies with the rules of MITF all you have to do to apply as a Short Subject is email the script to us at: john.chatterton@gmail.com In the Subject line of your email write: Short Subject MITF Application. Please write a short cover letter telling us the essentials of your play. (Length, number of characters, etc).

Staged Readings have long been an integral part of the MITF. The application process is again minimal. Simply send your script to john.chatterton@gmail.com with the subject heading: Staged Reading MITF

The Commercial Division will not be a part of MITF this year.

Variety Acts and Short Play Lab: *Cabaret performers and aspirants to the Short Play Lab should contact us by E-mail for guidelines at john.chatterton@gmail.com*

Appendices

The following is additional information that may be handy, especially to newer producers:

Appendix A: Marketing 101 - A Crash Course

There are many aspects of marketing. For the purposes of the Festival, marketing isn't press and publicity -- it consists of all the ways you can go out and sell tickets. But whoever is concentrating on marketing must work closely with whoever is handling your press and publicity, as these are also ways of communicating with your audience. The purpose of a marketing plan is to connect you to your audience. Only when you know your audience can you attempt to bring them into the theatre. And saying that your audience is merely "people who like good theatre" isn't enough. They have to like the kind of theatre represented or promised by your play. NYC is full of "good" shows – why and how does yours stand apart?

These two people (marketing and press agents), if you are lucky enough to have two, should at least agree on who that audience is! For example, if you have a gay play, you will want to reach out to as many gay groups (through the community center in Greenwich Village, for example) as you can; you will also want to reach out to all the gay publications, both in print and on the Web, and any gay or receptive radio and TV shows. You can tell these media people your story and make special offers, like coded discounts. None of this good work will happen if your press and marketing people don't agree that you have a "gay"

play. Everyone involved in your show, including your actors and crew, should agree who your audience is so they can all help you sell it!

So your marketing plan should therefore start with the script. If you haven't figured out what your play is about, you'll never figure out who its audience is, and your marketing efforts will never get moving. The more specific your audience, the easier it is to sell.

Once you know what your play is about and have figured out who might want to see it, you can start brainstorming ways to connect to that audience. A play in two MITFs, for instance, *ON THE COUCH WITH NORA ARMANI*, dealt with the life of an Armenian-Egyptian woman. It was logical to go after people in the Middle Eastern community, both individually and as groups. The play did very well at the box office, as its marketing person reached out to merchants and others with strong Middle Eastern roots.

The next step, then, is to write a brief teaser -- one sentence only -- about your play. "An inside account of life and lunacy in a Broadway box office" tells you all you need to know about the play to garner interest, if that's the kind of play you like. (The title, *DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING CLOSER?*, in this example, helps too.) You now have an idea about whom to approach to come see the play -- anyone actively involved in the theatre, for one (this play sold tickets to groups of box-office workers, for example, and developed huge buzz in the theatre community at large). The Festival will use your teaser in MITF marketing materials.

Next you need a more descriptive blurb, longer than your teaser but easily digested. Forty words is a good number. This blurb will also go in MITF marketing materials. If you can sum up your play in the teaser and blurb, you are well on the way to meeting your other marketing goals. Do not simply re-word your teaser - that defeats the purpose!

MITF will assign every production a discount code. Anyone who knows the code can get a discount ticket. There's no point in publicizing this code to just anyone -- we might as well just charge less. There's a lot of point in publicizing the code to particular groups, who are thereby energized to come see your show because they are special. If these groups are really your target audience, they'll tell their friends and acquaintances and build buzz for you.

You can also create tie-ins with businesses. Let's say you have an ethnic play. It's logical to talk to restaurants of the same ethnicity about co-promotion. This co-promotion can involve something as simple as trading an insert or ad in your program for the display of your postcards at their office; or you could ask the restaurant to provide wine or food for a reception after your show, and then tell your audience that anyone coming to the show on a particular night gets an invitation to the reception before or afterwards.

Appendix B: Financial Breakdown

The Festival pays the following expenses:

- A **lighting designer** to design a general rep. plot, with a possibility of specials for each show. Our plot is sufficiently detailed for you to plan your lighting cues without going into the theatre.
- A **production manager** to organize all technical elements of the festival, handle scheduling, deal with any logistical problems that may occur, and to answer e-mails **within 24 hours**
- **Tech director**
- **House manager**
- **Box-office staff**
- A **Press Rep** to write press releases for the Festival and manage their publication, in print, on the Web, and by e-mail. The number of shows participating in the Festival prevents the press rep from writing each show's release from scratch.
- **Marketing consultations:** We sit down with the producer/marketing staffs of the full-length shows and analyze their marketing challenges and opportunities in a one-hour meeting, with E-mail followup.

- A **Festival brochure** listing play descriptions and schedules.
- For MITF: Summer, our largest Festival, a handsome **shell program** – the “Festabill” -- with detailed listings for each show, into which each show must insert its own program. Cheap ads in the Festabill are available to participants – they’re a good way to market to other patrons.
- **Insurance.** We have general liability insurance, at no extra charge. ***We provide volunteer accident insurance for full-length shows, also at no extra charge.***
- A **Festival Web Site**, with summaries, schedules, and more.
- Best of all ***our new Profit Sharing Policy***, a major step forward

We do not charge hidden fees for fireproofing, use of a dressing room, etc. We do not ask or expect shows to tip tech directors, who are paid by us. We do not have a “side letter” with Actors’ Equity (or any other union or guild) that requires you to pay more than the minimum stipends specified in the Showcase Code. Producing theatre in New York is not for the faint of heart, but we tell you about all costs up front.

The participants pay all other expenses associated with their productions, including the following:

- Profit Sharing Policy (varies)* ***Your opportunity to get a piece of the pie!***
- License to perform the show, if published and subject to copyright
- All salaries, materials, and other costs of producing the show
- Fees and personal expenses, as the producer deems appropriate, for cast and staff
- Transportation costs to and from the Festival
- External storage costs if needed
- Rehearsal costs
- Costs of their own marketing efforts

*The Profit Sharing Policy is a way for you to receive box-office revenue, based on the number of seats and performances. Simply put, it is \$2.50 (up to \$9.00) X the number of seats at the venue X the number of performances.

Each group must provide:

- A **finished production**, completely off-book. (This does not apply to staged readings.)
- A **contact person** to attend all scheduled meetings. This will be your **ONLY** contact the festival uses for all correspondence. No substitutions allowed and other correspondences will be ignored. We strongly urge the producer to be this contact.
- A **lighting/sound technician**, or board operator (this can be your stage manager)
- A **stage manager** (this person can double as your board operator)
- A **program** for your production (it can be as simple as a sheet of paper with bios and show information) to stuff into our **Festabill**. If you are producing an Equity showcase, your program must comply with all requirements of the Showcase Code. ***If you don’t have a program, judges for the MITF Awards will be unable to vote for your show in ANY category.***
- A **publicity person**. If someone doesn’t concentrate on promoting your show, the promotion won’t get done. Trust us. We know.
- A **company manager**. This must be a member from the producing team who is present at all performances and remains in the lobby at least 15 min. after the show goes up. They must make executive decisions based on front of house matters.

What each group may provide:

- A separate flier/postcard for your production. The flier/postcard must include the MITF logo and “Midtown International Theatre Festival Presents.”
- An advertisement in any publication. The ad must include the MITF logo and “Midtown International Theatre Festival Presents.”
- Its own musical instruments. Musicals in the small spaces must provide their own source of music. There is no storage for any instruments in the venues, and amplification will be regulated by MITF staff. (The MITF provides a keyboard, mic, and amp for musical shows).

Appendix C: Complete List of Benefits

The Midtown International Theatre Festival (MITF) is a special place for productions to workshop and showcase their scripts in a friendly environment and in front of a supportive audience – smack dab in the middle of one of the two great theatre districts in the world. Click here to see [testimonials](#) from previous participants.

The MITF saves you money:

- We don’t have a side letter with AEA, so you may pay your Equity actors just transportation for each day of rehearsal or performance, not an honorarium of \$300-\$500.
- MITF makes no requirement for participation in future royalties from any works performed under its auspices.
- All participants in the Festival may be comped into any show in the Festival, on a standby basis. This is an excellent way to support your fellow MITF artists, to network and to cross-promote.
- FREE wine and cheese at our annual MITF Symposium, held in December before the Festival.

Producing theatre in New York City is expensive, but we do what we can to keep costs down for you.

The MITF has earned its reputation “tomorrow’s producers today” because of the resources we give to individual productions. It is where newbies rub shoulders with seasoned pros.

- No hidden fees. Due to our Profit Sharing Policy, however, there is an opportunity for you to earn revenue from your net box office.
- To our knowledge, the MITF has a higher ratio of paid staff to participants than any other festival in New York City. Your box office is run by paid staff, not by volunteers.
- All participants are encouraged to see other Festival shows for free, which promotes a community of shared resources.
- We are not too big to provide the personal touch. The MITF hosts an annual awards ceremony that gives participants a forum to share their experience and congratulate each others’ success.
- Our marketing director spends at least an hour in person with each show’s producer, fine-tuning the show’s marketing strategy, as well as in e-mail follow-ups.
- MITF theatres are clean, safe, and actor-friendly – AEA approved!
- All box-office monies due to participants are paid within four weeks of confirmation of the production box-office wrap and producer’s share.

In keeping with our high ratio of staff to participants, we manage the Festival in a way designed to minimize unpleasant surprises:

- We have detail-oriented management and a paid, year-round staff that gives special attention to individual shows.
- We can be easily contacted by e-mail; **our goal is to respond within 24 hours.**
- All communications are sent out in a timely fashion...starting months before the Festival opens.

- We prepare the performance and rehearsal schedules as soon after getting commitments from the participants as possible. You will receive all the information you need without having to ask for it.

All these benefits make the MITF an attractive choice for an Off-Off-Broadway production, whether Equity or non-. They are also relevant to potential commercial productions seeking to move Off-Broadway.

Appendix D: General Considerations

We've touched on the need for consideration by participants toward others in the Festival. The theatre is full of divas, who think their work is more important than anyone else's.

What is a diva? A diva is someone who thinks his or her talent demands obeisance. It shines like the sun, outdoing the pale, wintry gleams cast off by its fellows.

We don't appreciate divas, nor do we tolerate disruption. Anyone who is unable to control his or her divahood (and let's face it, we can all be divas, given the chance!), should find another outlet for it.

While Off-Off-Broadway has its share of divas, it also has a population of hardworking professionals. Equity showcases, after all (which form the core of Off-Off-Broadway), are merely professionals working for no pay.

What is professionalism? Professionalism is speed, as anyone will attest who has watched an ice-skating display that combined amateurs and professionals. Professionalism is consistency: in all fields, the amateur is sometimes brilliant, but the professional is always good (or at least consistent). Above all, professionalism is never having to say you're sorry.

If you have any questions about the foregoing, please e-mail us at john.chatterton@gmail.com We will try to get back to you **within 24 hours**.

And here's a bonus: if you don't get a response within 24 hours, feel free to call John Chatterton, our executive producer, on his cell phone at 646/207-2926. How many festivals let you do that?