1972

UA37/39 Guidelines for Audition & Tour Application

David Livingston

United Service Organizations

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/fac_staff_papers

Part of the Music Performance Commons

Recommended Citation


http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/fac_staff_papers/59

This Other is brought to you for free and open access by TopSCHOLAR®. It has been accepted for inclusion in Faculty/Staff Personal Papers by an authorized administrator of TopSCHOLAR®. For more information, please contact topscholar@wku.edu.
SOMETHING ABOUT "USO SHOWS"

USO SHOWS exist for the purpose of narrating live entertainment & a touch of home to young servicemen and women overseas. USO, with its country, itself, and a long tradition of service and concern carried overseas since 1941 by show companies & USO entertainers and celebrities. Just as important as the onstage performance is the interaction between group members and enlisted personnel, which is encouraged both before and after each show. The opportunity to talk, ask questions about what's happening in the states, and just relate, is as important to the young military member as the performance.

Drawing from the wealth of talent that is available in the United States, USO carefully selects the "very best" entertainment units to offer the Department of Defense (DoD) for its primary audience - young, single enlisted men stationed at remote installations around the world. College musical variety productions have been a valuable source of entertainment units for USO SHOWS since 1962. The USO Campus Music Committee (CMC) has grown organically, finding, training, scoping and auditioning these productions. Competition is heavy, with professional units and college productions vying for the limited number of touring opportunities available each year.

Only ten college productions, including both musical variety and theatrical units, are scheduled in any twelve-month period. Universities interested in touring with a theatrical production (musical or comedy), or with a musical variety unit of entertainment units for service of entertainment units for the young military member as the applying for the limited number of touring opportunities

TOURING CIRCUITS & LENGTHS

Tours average 4 to 6 weeks in length and cover the following commands: Pacific - 6 weeks, Alaska - 4 weeks, Europe - 6 weeks, Caribbean - 6 weeks, Mediterranean - 6 weeks. Based on commercial travel costs and the cost and availability of instructors, college units are scheduled in the Pacific to the Atlantic and to the Mediterranean. USO / CMC USO SHOWS have traveled overseas since 1941 by USO / ATA Overseas. Unit to contain a preponderance of young women. Tours are scheduled in any twelve-week period. A copy of the important to the young military member as the applying for the limited number of touring opportunities

PROGRAM

USO / CMC units are required to perform a 75-minute, self-contained variety show. All production expenses and show equipment must be provided by the university. In preparing a production for review, it should be kept in mind that the objective is not to change the cultural levels of the audience, but rather to provide live entertainment that will appeal to the contemporary yet diversified tastes of enlisted personnel, 18 to 24 years old. Generally, the show should be musical in nature, containing a variety of color, visual appeal, humor, and yet be in keeping with the policies and guidelines of the unit to which the show is being submitted. Restrictions on show content include:

1. An acknowledged deity will not be referred to in a musical number which would be considered profane.
2. Profanity, vulgarity or connotations of sexual depravity.
3. Military, racial, religious or national groups will not be defamed, and individual deformities will not be stressed.
4. Hypnosis or any type of act which results in participants temporarily losing control of any part of their body or mind will not be used.
5. Onstage performance and off-stage behavior are expected to adhere to the high standards long associated with USO SHOWS.

PRODUCTION SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions are given to assist in preparing a "professional" show which will be received enthusiastically by a young, military audience.

1. Selection of Material - Variety is the key, with emphasis being placed on the "audience". Military and overseas audiences are definitely aware of the latest hit tunes, but not necessarily of music from such sources as jazz, rock, or latin. Hearing these familiar tunes performed by American entertainers signifies home, or "the world," to most young enlisted personnel. In selecting show material, a mixture of these current hit songs should be included and arranged within the performer's capability. Many times, students themselves are the best source for providing appropriate "filler" numbers which will vary from the latest record charts.

Good variety may also be included from musicals, operettas, musical comedy sketchs, nostalgia medleys (i.e., 50's, 50's, etc.), novelty features, all-dancer numbers, special guest appearances. Carefully planned intros are also important. All commercial material should be well-rehearsed and audience-tested to insure success in performance.

2. Show Format - "Nothing holds audience interest better than the variety of a show." This statement includes "good pacing," which is the careful placement of various types of numbers within the performance. It includes humorous ways of introducing groups of performers, which will both planned, and planned, and contrast. To achieve this variety, numbers should be placed in the following ways:

a) musical style (Rock, Country, Disco, etc.)
b) tempo
c) humorous content
d) featured performers (solo, duets, full cast, female, male, etc.)
e) non-musical features

Opening and closing numbers should be especially selected in order to achieve the desired style, all numbers except medleys should run no more than three minutes each. Numbers should be varied, kept to an average of perhaps within a medley. Good pacing also includes consideration of the audience when introducing a new number, and making sure that the next introduction or song has no "dead air." 

Costuming - Bright, colorful, coordinated costuming will be a must, using polyester or other "easy-care" fabrics. Appropriate costume changes within a show may add to the interest of the show, while making the audience aware of their numbers. Appropriately designed costumes are available at retail stores. A "filler" number to allow for a costume change.

Choreography/Stage - Many groups may not be familiar with more complex choreography, however, if used, they have proven very effective. Comfortable, functional movement is expected, without becoming repetitious or tiresome. Staging can be varied by changing the placement of performers, or by grouping background singers in different ways during solos. The placement of the performers should be flexible and capable of performing in extremely limited space.

3. Audience Involvement - Making the audience feel "part of the" fun and excitement of the show is extremely important. This can be done in several ways:

a) Clap along sequences - Although overworked "filler" numbers are quite suitable for providing some "up" tunes, once or twice within a show, it is desirable to build an atmosphere for a specified number of bars. One performer should "cue" the audience verbally or visually as to when to begin and end the clap along sequence.
b) Female vocalists in audience - On the second or third verse of an appropriate song, the featured female performers could "step off stage" to sing "in" the audience, helping the performers build the atmosphere of preparing a production for review, it should be kept in mind that the objective is not to change the cultural levels of the audience, but rather to provide live entertainment that will appeal to the contemporary yet diversified tastes of enlisted personnel, 18 to 24 years old. Generally, the show should be musical in nature, containing a variety of color, visual appeal, humor, and yet be in keeping with the policies and guidelines of the unit to which the show is being submitted. Restrictions on show content include:

1. An acknowledged deity will not be referred to in a musical number which would be considered profane.
2. Profanity, vulgarity or connotations of sexual depravity.
3. Military, racial, religious or national groups will not be defamed, and individual deformities will not be stressed.
4. Hypnosis or any type of act which results in participants temporarily losing control of any part of their body or mind will not be used.
5. Onstage performance and off-stage behavior are expected to adhere to the high standards long associated with USO SHOWS.

PRODUCTION SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions are given to assist in preparing a "professional" show which will be received enthusiastically by a young, military audience.

1. Selection of Material - Variety is the key, with emphasis being placed on the "audience". Military and overseas audiences are definitely aware of the latest hit tunes, but not necessarily of music from such sources as jazz, rock, or latin. Hearing these familiar tunes performed by American entertainers signifies home, or "the world," to most young enlisted personnel. In selecting show material, a mixture of these current hit songs should be included and arranged within the performer's capability. Many times, students themselves are the best source for providing appropriate "filler" numbers which will vary from the latest record charts.

Good variety may also be included from musicals, operettas, musical comedy sketchs, nostalgia medleys (i.e., 50's, 50's, etc.), novelty features, all-dancer numbers, special guest appearances. Carefully planned intros are also important. All commercial material should be well-rehearsed and audience-tested to insure success in performance.

2. Show Format - "Nothing holds audience interest better than the variety of a show." This statement includes "good pacing," which is the careful placement of various types of numbers within the performance. It includes humorous ways of introducing groups of performers, which will both planned, and planned, and contrast. To achieve this variety, numbers should be placed in the following ways:

a) musical style (Rock, Country, Disco, etc.)
b) tempo
c) humorous content
d) featured performers (solo, duets, full cast, female, male, etc.)
e) non-musical features

Opening and closing numbers should be especially selected in order to achieve the desired style, all numbers except medleys should run no more than three minutes each. Numbers should be varied, kept to an average of perhaps within a medley. Good pacing also includes consideration of the audience when introducing a new number, and making sure that the next introduction or song has no "dead air." 

Costuming - Bright, colorful, coordinated costuming will be a must, using polyester or other "easy-care" fabrics. Appropriate costume changes within a show may add to the interest of the show, while making the audience aware of their numbers. Appropriately designed costumes are available at retail stores. A "filler" number to allow for a costume change.

Choreography/Stage - Many groups may not be familiar with more complex choreography, however, if used, they have proven very effective. Comfortable, functional movement is expected, without becoming repetitious or tiresome. Staging can be varied by changing the placement of performers, or by grouping background singers in different ways during solos. The placement of the performers should be flexible and capable of performing in extremely limited space.

3. Audience Involvement - Making the audience feel "part of the" fun and excitement of the show is extremely important. This can be done in several ways:

a) Clap along sequences - Although overworked "filler" numbers are quite suitable for providing some "up" tunes, once or twice within a show, it is desirable to build an atmosphere for a specified number of bars. One performer should "cue" the audience verbally or visually as to when to begin and end the clap along sequence.
b) Female vocalists in audience - On the second or third verse of an appropriate song, the featured female performers could "step off stage" to sing "in" the audience, helping the performers build the atmosphere of
NOTIFICATION OF SELECTION
Based on the written critique and recommendations submitted by the USO-CMC representative(s), USO SHOWS in New York will notify the director by letter approximately three weeks following the audition as to whether or not the production is selected for tour. A copy of the written critique will also be sent to the director. If selected, an official invitation to tour will be sent to the President of the University by the Chairman of the USO Campus Music Committee.

It should be noted that although a production may be excellent, USO can select only those considered most appropriate from the universities competing at the time for the limited number of tours.

Once selected, public announcement is immediately authorized and should reflect USO and DoD sponsorship. The unit manager will receive processing material with instructions for each unit member which must be completed immediately upon receipt. These include "so-far" passport applications where needed, security clearance forms, authorizations for required films, shots, life insurance and emergency data forms, and additional detail of your tour information.

University productions selected for tour are encouraged to schedule as many performances as possible for local audiences and community groups during the months prior to departure. This will assist in keeping the production fresh and give USO additional visibility in the community.

DoD BRIEFING
Approximately four weeks prior to departure, a representative from the Department of Defense will visit the campus to present a detailed briefing (approximately two hours) on what to expect on tour and what is expected of each unit member. At this time an additional performance for the DoD representative may be scheduled if desired.

RETURN REPORT
A full report of the tour including a general overview and evaluation must be submitted to USO SHOWS within three weeks after return. Specific recommendations for improvement of the production and information which would be helpful to future USO SHOWS should also be included. Details regarding this report will be sent upon selection for tour.

USO/CMC OVERSEAS TOUR APPLICATION OUTLINE
The following information is to be submitted to USO SHOWS in New York in application for an overseas tour at least two months prior to desired audition date.

UNIVERSITY:
Name and full address of University

PRESIDENT:
Name, address and phone of university president

DEPARTMENT:
Department where the production operates, name of department head, office address and phone

SHOW DIRECTOR:
Name, title, office address and phone, home address and phone

UNIT MANAGER:
(title if other than director)

UNIT TITLE:
Name of group (avoid using Chorus, Glee Club, Singers, Choir, etc.)

SHOW DESCRIPTION (75 min.):
Brief outline of proposed format with song titles, medleys, and types of comedy, sketches or features to be presented.

SIZE OF GROUP:
(to not exceed 8 including manager) Total: No. of males females

SUPPOR TED MATERIAL:
List the items submitted with this application which may include copies of programs, photos, commendations and reviews of shows presented within the past two years (limit to 8 pieces)

PREVIOUS USO TOURS:
List dates and circuits previously toured by your university, if any.

AVAILABILITY FOR TOUR:
Indicate desired departure date and latest possible return date. MIL: Competition is heavy for spring and summer months.

ALTERNATE DATES:
Indicate alternate dates of availability.

TARGET AUDITION DATE:
Specify a week during which the show may be auditioned at least 4 months prior to desired departure.

UNIVERSITY CONTACT:
Name, mailing address, office and home phone of contact for further information and confirmation of audition date.

Send the above information to:
NATIONAL DIRECTOR
USO SHOWS
237 East 52nd Street
New York, N.Y. 10022

USO will send a copy of the application to the Chairman of the USO Campus Music Committee.