

Daniel Prillaman

Let me first express my thanks and gratitude to Michael Rasbury and the Drama Department Faculty for allowing me this opportunity and to the Colbert family for their immensely generous support of the arts.

The theatre company I used for this show, currently known as *The Basement Brigade*, consists of local colleagues and myself. In existence since 2010, its' primary purpose has always been to entertain. In every way possible. To do that, we used our combined backgrounds in the fields of acting, technical direction, writing and editing to give to the public the best and most eclectic collection of entertainment we could create. Initially, we rented a local theatre space, procured props, as well as advertisements in local papers and weeklies. The profit from the show was divided amongst the company and the rest was placed in the books for future projects.

The first step in creating your own company and body of work lies in the ability to run your own staff with efficiency. That means not only being the one in charge, but also managing the budget appropriately, thus making sure that shows and projects will turn a profit. It means keeping the entire production on schedule, and ensuring that it will meet all necessary deadlines. It means hiring and managing staff and seeing that their work output matches project goals. It requires excellent communication skills with your coworkers, with other professionals and with the public as a whole.

The well-rounded studies and specific role intensives of my UVA theatrical education has given me a great edge in expanding my horizons beyond the focus of acting (which is, admittedly, my area of greatest concentration). I have been able to apply every aspect of my knowledge as an actor, but also my skills as a writer, a designer and a director. The learning experiences on this show provided me with experience in the one area I had yet to learn about and personally encounter, producing.

Without producing capabilities, all the skills you have obtained in the other fields will be for naught. Success only comes from the ability to combine knowledge from all of these studies and use it in tandem. I realize that "producing" goes on in the background of every show, but I never fully realized how important and vital the job is until I had to do it myself. Producing this show and the opportunity to take on this part of the production firsthand was the most enriching experience.

I mention this brush with producing because I feel strongly that I could have done a better job. I did not fail by any means. However, some decisions were made without respect to the impact that they would or would not have in the long run. For example, buying props vs. making or borrowing props from personal connections. I would have changed my approach to advertising as well, and would have tackled publicizing in a faster, more expedient way, such as weighing the cost of an ad based on the number of people who would see it as well as attend. Nevertheless, there were far more things I would have kept exactly the same: 80% of script, the use and inclusion of musicians and live musical numbers, improv games, etc. The use of video trailer sketches as advertisements, in particular, was something I am very proud of. It also enabled me to stretch my "film legs."

The bottom line. It was an artistic success that could have been handled better financially. Having gone through this process now, I know exactly what to tweak and fix in potential future projects to make them artistically and financially successful.

Many thanks, once again, to all, and I leave you with a couple of tidbits/extras from the show/process.

Eventually, some clips from our recording might make their way onto our Web Channel, so keep an eye open for those.

One of the trailer video links:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UngozydZFF8>