

1. APPLICANT ORGANIZATIONAL BACKGROUND

Include organizational mission statement and purpose, organizational qualifications, history of accomplishments, governance, area and population served, role or volunteers.

Mission Statement

Tell Tale Theatre immerses its audience in thrilling horror stories just waiting to be explored. Experience the wondering, fearing, doubting, and dreaming evoked by retelling the lore of our past, present, and future. Tell Tale wants to bring hair-raising literary works to life in avant-garde ways that ignite the true imagination of its audience members.

Using the eclectic city of Portland as our backdrop and the historic Heathman Hotel as our stage, this theatre will push artists to dive deeper in character development and foster the creative community in the area.

Purpose

The goal of Tell Tale Theatre is to give writers and actors a different genre to explore their creative ability, as well as take the audience on a new journey that cannot be achieved through book or film. The foundation of this theatre was inspired by Edgar Allan Poe's literary tales, and we want to continue telling our audience his story and understanding more of his words through every rehearsal and performance.

Organization Qualifications

Tell Tale Theatre was established to pay homage to the accredited gothic writer Edgar Allan Poe. On January 19, 2009, Tell Tale Theatre, opened its doors exactly 200 years after his birth. Artistic Director, Sara Mahini, witnessed a lack of representation for the horror genre, and sought after Portland, Oregon to build the theatre company. Portland is known for its eclectic historical style, and true appreciation for Gothic culture, shown through its restaurants, artwork, and movie festivals. Our theatre added a new entertainment element to the city, while still respecting the people living in it. Tell Tale Theatre partners with the Heathman Hotel to present all of their main stage shows, as they had a respect for literature and venue that would give our company a change to grow. We also find new and quirky places around Portland to give the audience a new experience for the immersive shows. Given this partnership, Tell Tale Theatre has the opportunity to present a little slice of Portland art to both members of the community and visitors of the Hotel.

History of Accomplishments

Tell Tale Theatre achieved huge success through its continuous pursuit to achieve immersive theatre. Our theatre wanted to expand the partnership with the Heathman Hotel beyond rental space, and turned one of the floors in the hotel into the stage. Audience members would walk around from room to room and experience the story with the actors. This has allowed Tell Tale Theatre gain national recognition for presenting works with similar style and respect to New York and Chicago's theatre scene. This experimental work has now gained a permanent position in our season. Our theatre has also gained a cult following of Edgar Allan Poe writers, literary critics, and actors, who have the opportunity to explore his work in a new light. Middle Schools in the Portland area, who read his tales in English class, also have to

opportunity to come and see his famous works come to life every year. Our newest addition to the season has been our kid friendly programs. We have seen an increase in parents bringing in their children to the theatre, which we hope will allow them respect the value of artistic theatre specifically in the gothic genre.

Governance

Tell Tale Theatre consists of 7 full time staff, each having a crucial role in the theatre company and keeping the mission of the theatre alive. The Artistic Director, Sara Mahini, continues to work with local artists and national artists interested in the gothic genre to bring in unexpected stories for the Portland community. We have 10 part-time staff who have dedicated time in creating the alternate worlds our stories are told in.

Area and Population Served

Tell Tale Theatre's programming will serve the city of Portland.

Role of Volunteers

Our theatre has been fortunate to get support for the Portland community through volunteers. Our 20 volunteers assist in administrative tasks as well as performance responsibilities, such as ushering. We have been able to grow with the care of our volunteers.

2. NEEDS STATEMENT

Identify the needs your organization will address. Acknowledge similar existing projects or organizations, if any, and explain how your organization or proposal differs, and what effort will be made to work cooperatively.

Needs your organization will address.

Tell Tale Theatre has been able to grow as a company and create work that is darker, psychological, and more immersive for our audience. This season, Tell Tale Theatre wants to present work that is beyond the Heathman Hotel and take people to new hidden gems in the Portland area and see new part of their own city. This will additionally allow out-of-town guests to view all the aspects of Portland. The goal is to have audiences reflect on their own reality. The theatre will be able to establish deeper roots and connections with the community. The second goal is to discover other artforms that can enhance the experience while still respecting the genre. People express themselves through multiple platforms of art, which include performing, painting, and music. Tell Tale Theatre wants to include more variety of art so more people feel welcome in the space to express themselves. The last goal is to expand our side initiatives to appeal to a larger audience, specifically the younger generation and people getting interested in the genre.

Acknowledge similar existing projects or organizations, if any, and explain how your organization or proposal differs, and what effort will be made to work cooperatively.

A similar project to our theatre is the annual Portland Horror Film Festival that takes place in the Hollywood Theatre. They bring independent shorts and feature length horror films to audiences who value watching movies. Our goals are similar as both companies strive to bring the best horror stories to the community. Tell Tale Theatre differs as our stories are told with a live aspect to each of them. Real actors are on the stage showing their story to the audience. This

adds more believability to the show. Our company also runs year-round, as this Festival occurs only two days a year.

Another organization that has similar projects are other Portland Theatres in the area, such as Portland Center Stage, who are starting to include darker stories in their season. Tell Tale Theatre strives to present the best horror stories in the city, and we appreciate other revenues also expanding to this genre. Since our only topic is darker stories, we will always look for new ways to immerse our audiences and work with new or historic writers to bring these stories to lights.

3. PROPOSAL

A. How will your proposal address identified needs?

B. Projected goals, objectives, timeline, anticipated impact.

C. Number and types of people who will benefit from your proposal.

D. How will you monitor your work and how will you measure success or effectiveness?

E. What are your other potential and actual sources of support for this proposal?

Where do you expect to find future support?

A. How will your proposal address identified needs?

- Produce experimental productions that are outside the main stage shows. We will explore new settings in the Portland community where stories can be told. This will allow us to engage with new audiences or have our current ones see a new part of the city.
- Implement new forms of art beyond the traditional story telling for audience to experience new ways of reading literature.
- Broaden our presentations to allow at least 1 family-friendly horror show. This will be for the younger generation, who are too young for the main stage shows, or anyone who wants to relish in the darker stories without fully involving themselves in the larger productions.

B. Projected goals, objectives, timeline, anticipated impact.

Tell Tale Theatre will present annual productions of Edgar Allan Poe's historical literature with the goal to immerse the audience into his world. However, we want to grow our interactive theatre season by actually bringing the shows to the audiences' communities. Portland has underground tunnels, called the Shanghai Tunnels, that was originally built for transporting goods, which later turned into jail cells for slavery. Tours of these tunnels have been offered since the 1970s. This season includes a play called *Underground* that is about passengers stuck on a train underground. Our theatre has gotten the approval from the city to stage the production in the tunnels. We really want the community to feel as if they are in the same situation as the character on stage. Horror stories can exist if the audience can tune out their reality and truly enter a new one without any distractions. This project's goal is to invite members of the community to see a new side of Portland.

Our other goals are to include other mediums of art with horror and continue the expansion of our kids-friendly theatre. According to the 2010 Oregon census, 63.7% of households are family households. Our side initiatives were created to attract the young family demographic to experience the dramas while being cost friendly and easing in audience members who are either too young or want to explore this specific genre. Additionally, it allows parents or

single parents to do activities and spend time together. Our goal is to appeal to the family demographic and give them shows that they can also take their kids too, as well as allow these kids to value this artform when they are younger. The long-term goal is for the kids to continue coming back through the years and into their own adulthood. The campfire readings challenge actors to tell literary works through just their words, and give the audience the opportunity to imagine a world in their minds. We want to include music and physical artwork and expand on the myriad of way to make horror visual. This season we have included a screening of *The Nightmare Before Christmas* in Concert with the Oregon Symphony playing the underscore. This will appeal to audiences who prefer movies as well as listening to orchestras.

Timeline:

4 Mainstage Productions:

- These shows will include a mix of new and retold works
- The shows run 5 performances per week from Wed-Sat
- **Show 1:** Oct **Show 2:** Nov/Dec **Show 3:** Feb

Side Initiatives:

- Campfire Readings held in the summer
- Movie screening and concert during the holiday season

Immersive Theatre:

- Edgar Allan Poe production held every September on the 13th Floor of the Heathman Hotel
- Production presented in a new location in the Portland in the spring

Impact:

The horror genre fan base continues to grow. Tell Tale Theatre anticipates to increase tourism to the Portland city through discounted tickets with the Heathman Hotel. Portland has built a small community of gothic-themed spaces, so the city is now a premiere location for any person interested in all forms of the darker genre, which include bars, dessert shops, films, and live theatre. We hope presenting works in new spaces in the Portland area will also allow people to travel to new areas in the city and bring in new revenue to the area. The entertainment district in Portland will continue to grow as these spaces continue to work together. The cultural activity generated from Tell Tale Theatre is estimated to produce over \$1 million in impact or the area resulting in 50+ jobs.

We also hope to continue working with middle schools in the area who teach Edgar Allan Poe's stories through field trips with discounted tickets. Our goal is to have students get excited about the history of gothic literature by seeing his words brought to life and reinforce student education in liberal arts. As Tell Tale Theatre implements new forms of art, we plan on inviting more artists in the area and outside the state to add new layers and ideas.

C. Number and types of people who will benefit from your proposal.

What is the estimated number of proposal events?

10

What is the estimated number of opportunities for public participation?

26

How many total individuals will benefit?

28,000

How many Adults will be engaged?

18,000

How many school based youth will benefit?

1000

How many non-school based youths will benefit?

250

How many older adults will benefit?

3000

How many artists will be directly involved?

38

Additional Impact/Participation numbers information (optional)

The Heathman Hotel has a convertible venue that seats 250.

What city will be served by your programming?

Portland

What city will the project/program actually take place?

Portland

D. How will you monitor your work and how will you measure success or effectiveness?

We will continue to monitor our work through examining the Operating Budget and see if we are earning a return on our investing that is sufficient with the work and effort put into creating the programs and special projects. We will also take into account audience review and opinions. We want to reflect the community and what they would like to see while still surprising them.

Success will be measured through monitoring our impact in the community. One example is seeing a rise in youths coming to the theatre either through school trips or family discounts; another example is a steady increase through our membership programs. Our goal is to present works that are timeless, and continue to re-examine our programs based on our mission and audiences that are willing to watch.

Based on the capacity of our main theatre, a successful run is averaging a house capacity of 70%. We also give surveys through email to patrons who attend to get their feedback and have our theatre grow with the generations.

E. What are your other potential and actual sources of support for this proposal?

Where do you expect to find future support?

The most significant long-term impact is with the Heathman Hotel. The Heathman Hotel offers one of their venues rent-free for the Tell Tale Theatre to operate. Tell Tale Theatre will continue to respect the historic community as well as increase the cultural activity in the area. The support has projected the company for significant growth. Additional, we have marketing partnerships in place with Travel Portland, Sigh Co. Graphics and Portland Monthly. The Tell Tale also receives sponsorships from Powell's City of Books, Portland's Center for the Arts, The Lovecraft Bar, and VooDoo Doughnuts. These corporations have a significant voice and impact to the Portland community, and helps further establish the eclectic city. Their support allows Tell Tale Theatre to also reflect the city.

4. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION/ATTACHMENTS

Please address here anything else about your organization or project you think is relevant to this proposal.

Tell Tale Theatre's marketing plan continues to change to improve outreach efforts. Outside of our market partnerships, Facebook is used with daily promoted posts, and eBlasts are sent out to our patrons. Further marketing research is currently underway, and new marketing methods can be implemented in the upcoming months.

Tell Tale Theatre offers a Flexible Membership Pass to give audiences the options to view only some of the programs while still getting a discount. The Pass is for 5 shows, which include the 3 main stage shows, the option to choose 1 of the 2-interactive show, and the option to choose 1 of the 2 side initiatives. Once the Flexible Membership Pass was put into place we saw an increase of 20% in our audience sizes. This pass has not hindered from our traditional 7-Show Membership, but has broadened the opportunity to allow more people in the area to watch shows that do not have as large of a time commitment, are more interested in specific shows offered, or are on a budget but still want to be a part of the entertainment culture in Portland.