

THE PRODUCER'S PERSPECTIVE

A BROADWAY PRODUCER'S OPINION ON EVERYTHING BROADWAY AND BEYOND

PRO

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WELCOME

Well, that's all she wrote, Pros!

Another Broadway season is in the books. By the time you get this newsletter, we will have passed the Tony Award eligibility cut off of April 28th (the final date that

shows must open by in order to be eligible for this season's Tonys). So that's it. No more new shows this season.

In fact, by the time you get this newsletter, the nominations for the Tonys will be out!

And now, all those shows that got nominated will start battling it out for votes (insider secret - take a look at the *NY Times* Arts section this month and you'll see lots of ads - but the shows placing those ads aren't after ticket buyers - they are after votes since so many Tony Voters read that section).

Fun times ahead!

Lots of fun times here on Pro as well. Over the past month we've added a Writer's Toolkit page to Pro, hooked up a few members with some free legal advice, given away tickets to Broadway shows, and of course, added last month's very popular "How to Use Social Media to Sell Tickets" webinar to the archives.

A big thank you for all your emails and positive feedback on the site. I'm proud to announce that our membership grows and grows each month, and I'm super excited about some of the things we have planned (including a Director database and some "mastermind" opportunities).

Enjoy this month's newsletter and I'll see you on the site!

P.S. This month's webinar is for all of you with an idea for a show that's based on something . . . a book, movie, film, music catalog, newspaper article (which make great sources for ideas, by the way), etc. . . . or anything you need the rights to. The webinar, "How Do I Get The Rights To . . ." will take place on Wednesday, May 11th at 7 PM, and will be in the archives the very next day.

UPCOMING EVENTS

5/11 @ 7 PM: Monthly Webinar: How Do I Get The Rights To . . .

5/18 @ 7 PM: Literary Agent Workshop with Max Grossman

5/24 @ 7 PM: ProducersPerspectivePro Networking Event

As a member of Pro, you're automatically registered for the Monthly Webinar! To sign up for other seminars or events, visit www.theproducerperspectivepro.com.

LAST MONTH AT THE BROADWAY BOX OFFICE: APRIL SHOWERS

Although the Broadway season doesn't technically end until the Tony Awards in June, I always think of the season coming to an end at the Tony cut off date (which this year was April 28th). The other reason I think of it as the end of the season is April is the last good month of the season at the box office.

April has another public school vacation, which brings vacationing tourists, and it also has a massive number of shows in previews or just opening, as they all squeeze in before the Tony deadline.

That, plus the warmer weather gives our box office a boost.

Here is how the numbers looked for this April, with a comparison to last April.



Here are this year's April Broadway grosses and attendance as compared to the year before.*

This April's Broadway Gross: \$111,121,900
Last year's April Broadway Gross: \$112,630,346
Increase/Decrease: -1.3%

This April's Broadway Attendance: 1,120,325
Last year's April Broadway Attendance: 1,149,795
Increase/Decrease: -2.6%

*You can get the weekly grosses by subscribing to my blog or by getting the The Producer's Perspective app! Download it today in the iPhone or Android store!

MARKETING FOR PROS: MARRYING YOUR MARKETING WITH YOUR MESSAGE

Anyone can get attention for their show. It's easy. You could dress a guy up in a gorilla suit and have him do cartwheels down 7th Avenue handing out flyers for your shows . . . and people would be interested. They'd take pictures and video and maybe, just maybe, they'd take a few flyers.

But you're smarter than that.

You think before you market . . . and when you do that, you magnify your impact ten times at least.

I've become known a bit as a marketing "stunt guy" for a number of my initiatives over the years. Some examples:

- For *Altar Boyz*, we challenged the Backstreet Boys to a boy band battle in Times Square and I hired 100 college girls to chase my guys in a limo as they drove down the street.
- I let virgins get in free for my show *My First Time*, and had an expert in handwriting analysis and body language at the box office to tell if people were lying or not.
- And of course, one of my biggest marketing initiatives was my crowdfunding of *Godspell* (yep, that's right . . . it wasn't about raising money, it was about raising a marketing army).

All of these initiatives got me terrific amounts of press (Jay Leno even did a joke about the virgins promotion in his monologue). But more importantly, they all sold tickets.

Some of these ideas may seem like fun gorilla costume-like stunts, but they are far from it. They were all born from the same question that I ask before I do anything related to marketing, and I urge you to ask the same question.



That question is simple . . . "What is your show about?"

If it's about a struggling underdog boy band that is more talented than the biggest boy band around, then you challenge said boy band to a battle.

If it's about demystifying first sexual experiences so that we don't put so much pressure on ourselves, then you let virgins get in free.

If it's about "a community of people coming together" (Stephen Schwartz's exact words when I asked him this question) then you assemble the largest community of investors and producers ever.

See how that works?

The key to getting the press to pay attention, to getting something to go viral, is to make sure you marry your marketing initiatives with your artistic message.

No gorilla suit required.

WRITING FOR PROS: DOING A READING? REMEMBER "THE THREE Ts"

Readings are like good friends. You can never have too many.

Every time I've done a reading for any one of my shows, especially the ones I've written, the show has always gotten

better as a result. Why? It's pretty simple. Plays and musicals were not meant to sit idle on a page. They were meant to be heard, out loud, spoken and/or sung by people.

And you can only do so much editing and re-writing, just staring at a screen. There comes a point when you just have to hear your show.



If you've been working on a show for a while, and you haven't had a reading yet, make sure you schedule one . . . now. (Seriously, put this newsletter down, pick a date, and boom . . . you're having a reading.) And if you haven't finished your script yet? Well, having that reading date will serve as the best deadline you can imagine.

Don't think that every reading you have has to be fully rehearsed, or in a big studio with 100 people in attendance. Oh no. I'm a big fan of what I call "The Pizza Reading," which means you invite some friends/family to your apartment, order pizza, and read your show. Even that is enough. Because not only will you learn something about your show, but at the end of the reading someone is bound to ask you, "What's next?" And then, you being you . . . will have to answer that question. And all of a sudden your show is chugging along at a faster development pace than before.

If you are doing a reading in your living room or at Ripley Grier studios in New York City, make sure you use my "Three Ts" to help you get more takeaways.

1. Time It

Make sure you not only time the whole show, but time each act, and each scene. Having a sense of the running time of the piece as well as the flow from one scene to another may help you as you navigate rewrites (I once thought a scene took 4 minutes, but because of the drama involved, it took 9!).

2. Tape It

Do a very simple audio recording of the show on your phone or some other non-obtrusive recording device. For smaller readings, definitely do NOT video the reading. People get self-conscious and the performances aren't as natural (side note - this is why podcasting is such a big deal and video-casting is not).

3. Talk About It

This final T is the most important. Make sure you leave time for pizza (and maybe some wine) at the end of the reading for people to talk about it. **IMPORTANT:** This T is NOT for you. Your job is to listen to everyone's feedback. Take notes (although you should still be taping this too). Listen specifically for any notes that you hear three times. If you hear the same note from three different people, that's something that goes to the top of your To-Do list for your rewrite.

These "Three Ts" can guarantee that you have the necessary

information to help guide your next rewrite to a better place.

So, have you scheduled your next reading yet?

UPDATES FROM PROS

Here is what your fellow Pros are up to:

- Caryn Robbins had her show, *Admissions: The Musical*, accepted into the Premier Premieres Festival at MCL Chicago!
- Terry Holzman's show, *Sticky Fingers*, will be in the Hollywood Fringe in June and tickets go on sale this month!
- *Normativity*, with book, music and lyrics by Jaime Jarrett, will be making its New York premiere at NYMF this summer!

Got a project update?

Let me know at ken@theproducersperspective.com.

THIS MONTH ON THE PODCAST

Since I started the Producer's Perspective Podcast last year, the guest list has been a veritable who's who of Broadway insiders. As a member of Pro, you're the first to know who I have coming up:

- Leigh Silverman - Broadway Director and Vice President of SDC
- John Doyle - Tony Award-Winning Director
- Phil Birsh - President of Playbill
- Lonny Price - Actor, Writer and Director
- André Bishop - Artistic Director of Lincoln Center Theatre

Make sure to check out my blog each Monday to hear the podcast!

PRO QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"The future of our theater is in the names of people I do not know."

- Michael David (Tony Award-Winning Producer, *Jersey Boys*, *Matilda*, etc.)

RAISING MONEY FOR PROS: AN EXERCISE TO HELP WITH YOUR PITCH

When a consulting client tells me they are having trouble raising money, I usually put them on the spot right there in the middle of the consult and say, "Ok, pitch me."

"Huh," they usually respond, as their eyes glaze over with fear.

"Ask me for money. Do it. Right now. Go."

"You're serious?"

"Are you serious about your project?"

"Yes."

"Then ask."

And they give it their all. But they usually fumble for words, trip over their tongue, and most barely get out the most important question of them all, "Would you like to invest?"

Asking people for money is hard. Even for people like me that do it all the time. And if you ever find someone that says they love to raise money, well, take that person home, lock them up or marry them and don't let them go.

Many people don't even know what they should say in a pitch. How should you talk about the show? Tell the story? Say who's in it? Talk about profit?

To help formulate your pitch, I recommend doing this simple exercise.

Create a David Letterman-style Top 10 list entitled . . . "10 Reasons Why People Should Invest In My Show."



Those 10 Reasons can be anything that you think would help convince an investor to do this show, like . . .

- Low operating expenses
- Will be popular in high schools
- Based on a classic novel, poem, etc.
- It stars Hugh Jackman
- Etc.

And when you start getting to reason #8 or #9, it's going to get harder. But don't quit. Get to 10.

Because if you do, you'll never fumble for anything when you're asking for money. And, more importantly, if your investor tries to refute one of your reasons as to why your show is a good opportunity, well, you've got 9 more.

OVERHEARD IN SHUBERT ALLEY

Here are the rumors people are whispering about these days . . .

- We hear that when you go see Josh Groban in *Natasha, Pierre & the Great Comet of 1812* at the Imperial Theatre in the fall, you won't recognize the inside of the theater.
- We hear that *The Notebook* star Rachel McAdams is looking for the right Broadway vehicle.
- We hear that the opening of *Frozen* on Broadway will smartly coincide with the release of *Frozen 2* the movie. Could *Frozen 2* be the first successful Broadway musical sequel?



Got a rumor?

Send 'em to me at ken@theproducersperspective.com.

ON THE BLOG

Just in case you missed it, here were the top read articles on the blog this month:

- What Broadway theaters will look like in 20 years.
- UPDATE: Do Tony Nominators & Voters Forget The Fall?
- Why you should NOT market your show like Disney markets theirs.

Make sure you don't miss a single blog. Subscribe today or download the iPhone or Android app.

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