

Application for the post of Coordinator, Thespian Club.

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Questions

1. What is your vision for the Thespian Club?

One of the first things I heard when I first did a play with the Thespian Club was that it was 'elitist'. Although the club does deal and engage mostly with the english speaking community of insti, that should not be a reason for it to not engage with the vernacular crowd, as acting and dramatics are not bound by any language and most regional languages have a plethora of good scripts and actors. So my vision is to bring the two together, till there is a point where we have as many English productions as we do have Vernacular productions. This will also work in the club's favor as it will now have a larger audience and base to cater to. The club must engage more with the sabhas and samitis to this effect, to mobilize and promote vernacular productions and stimulate talent.

Also thespian club has a certain family feel to it, one that is reinforced by the long practise sessions that go into each play. This is something that is very conducive for the growth of a new inexperienced actor, something that first years, especially, look forward to. This has to be our trademark, and retained, at any cost, be it professionalism or whatever.

Further, instead of limiting itself to theater based Dramatics and generic events, the club can engage with a wider variety of events that fall within the purview of Drama. For instance, the Street play competition etc. introduced in Saarang is a step in the right direction. This has to be preserved and extended.

2. What were the positives and drawbacks of this vertical last year? Suggest solutions for the drawbacks. Discuss both Saarang and LitSoc.

1. Dramatics

Positives

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The event saw many quality plays. 2. The trailer round was scrapped; instead by starting on Day 0, every team had the opportunity to put up the full-length play. 3. By starting installation of lights three and a half hours before we needed them, the lights were ready in time and we could allow for 25-minute tech rehearsals. 4. We saw increased participation from the previous year – 13 teams. 5. We were able to incorporate a non-competitive mime performance by Stella Maris, which had been a problem the previous year. 	
Drawbacks	Solutions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There was miscommunication and one of the judges was picked up late. 2. One team backed out last minute, one didn't show up. 3. There was a scheduling problem; one team showed up late, and another misunderstood their time slot. Therefore the entire schedule was delayed by an hour and a half. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Depending on the number of judges, one vol each must be allocated to a judge and 2 cords to coordinate between them, so that all judges are picked up and accomodation arranged in time. 2. Collect contact numbers of two members per team, and one, if solo and send SMS-s before the event regarding slotting, in regular intervals (using apps like BulkSMS) , even a reminder call can be made.

2. Monoacting

Positives	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Monoacting saw good participation, of about 30-40 participants. 2. The performances were of good quality. 3. The venue selected had a good stage for the event. 	
Drawbacks	Solutions

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The venue was very nearly not opened on time. It was opened just before the judge came. 2. There was a problem in bringing the judge into campus. 3. Most of our participation was from Christ University. 4. There was no sound system. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All arrangements have to be made half an hour in advance, the vols and cords must be informed that the event is starting 30 mins ahead of schedule. 2. The Security team must be given the vehicle number and name of the Judge, as soon as he/she is picked up so that the vehicle gets security clearance as and when it arrives. 3. Milans must cover cities other than Bangalore and bring together more colleges. 4. All such arrangements have to be made in advance.
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3. Vernacular Monoacting:

Positives	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This was the first time this event was conducted, catering to a much wider group of people, and the local crowd (Hindi/Tamil). 2. The event saw good participation, of 30 participants. 3. The performances were of very good quality. 	
Drawbacks	Solutions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The judge selected did not have a very good grasp of Hindi. 2. Mostly Christ participation. 3. See (4) of monoacting. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Get two Judges, both fluent in hindi and Tamil, or one with a better understanding of Tamil and another with a better grasp over Hindi. 2. Milans are the way to go.

4. Dial-a-Director

Positives

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Showed good participation for a new event. 2. Was aimed at the demographic which hadn't done serious dramatics before; did reach said demographic to some extent. The winner was someone who only had experience with short films, and there were participants who only just learned what a director was. 3. The event went off pretty seamlessly; started mostly on time and ran smoothly after that. 	
Drawbacks	Solutions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The team is given 48 hours of preparation time. This year, we sent out emails to all the team leaders a little erratically. Additionally some teams got multiple due to registering multiple times. We also gave some on-spot registrations topics by word of mouth only. 2. The model is not conducive to brilliant performances. 3. See (4) of monoacting. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emails have to be bulk sent to all team leaders and it has to be done together. On spot registrations for this event have to be closed day before the event. So that no teams have undue advantage. 2. This event is about engaging with a crowd that is relatively new to theater, and hence it is slightly unrealistic to expect "brilliant performances". 3. All arrangements have to be made as though the event is to start 30 minutes in advance, inform vols and cords accordingly.

5. Street Play

Positives	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. High quality of performances. 2. Better participation than the previous year – 7 versus 5 teams of the previous year. 3. The new venue – in front of the library – worked out very well. There was a very good crowd to watch the event, since it was just off the central road of Saarang. 	
Drawbacks	Solutions

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The participation is still not good enough for a Saarang event. 2. Many participants are opposed to the idea of a theme. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Publicise the event in local Tamil nadu and Chennai colleges, most of whom are enthusisatic about street plays. 2. A theme, personally, is not conducive to free thinking and creativity, and might reduce participation. As it is a budding event, don't limit it by a theme, as of yet.
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Litsoc Drawbacks.

1. Litsoc Monoacting

Positives	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The event saw good performance of about 20 people-30 people, with almost all hostels putting up performances, many putting up two. 	
Drawbacks	Solutions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There was only one judge. 2. The venue was a HSB classroom with a very small stage, no sound system, which was cluttered. Additionally volumes had to be kept low to ensure that a nearby class was not disturbed 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More judges have to arranged for, otherwise, profs who have had a dramatics background and are eager to judge can be roped in, in the worst case scenario. 2. If it has such a good participation, then it can be held in front of Himalaya. It will also give publicity to thesp and prompt more on spot registrations.

2. Litsoc Dial-a-Director

Positives

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This was a new event, and showed a decent grasp of the event and decent participation for a first time event. 2. We were able to implement the usage of specific props from the thespian inventory in the performances. 	
Drawbacks	Solutions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The event started late, because one of the judges came an hour late; the other one was distinctly irritated by the time the event started. The first performing team also delayed the event. 2. The performances were not deemed to be of good quality. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Judges have to be reminded and picked up in time, well ahead of the event. They must arrive at the venue before the event starts and can be treated to coffee or snacks in the meantime. 2. Again, the event is targeted at novices, and hence, expectations have to be kept low.

3. Loose Characters – Krupa Verghese

Positives	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The event showed decent participation of about 20-30 people, mostly freshies. 	
Drawbacks	Solutions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The event was not as engaging as could be hoped for. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hosting dramatics workshops is better in a venue like the stage in SAC, behind the baddy courts, like the choreo club, because the participants can be engaged with better.

4. Act-Outs

Positives

1. There was a decent turn-out for the event.	
Drawbacks	Solutions
1. The scripts were not all immersive enough to keep the group hooked or give them enough of a feel.	1. Scripts can be adapted from action filled or comedy short plays, or even sequences from popular films and soap operas.

5. Director's Workshop

Positives	
1. 20 people showed up for the workshop.	
Drawbacks	Solutions
1. Since it was an interactive session, it was more of a discussion than a workshop. It was not well structured.	1) Workshops have to be structured and planned in advance, further, having it in a venue that is more conducive to interaction, like the himalaya lawns, or SAC would be better.

6. Acting Workshop

Positives
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Publicity for the event in the form of posters in time. 2. There was a very good turnout. 3. It was conducted with a clear framework, addressing clear points about tonality and volumes.

Drawbacks	Solutions
1. The publicity still only happened on the last day.	1. Publicity via social media must be amped up using multiple platforms like insta, whatsapp stories etc. Also posters must be put up at least a week in advance. Planning has to be done that way.

7. MMM's play

Positives	
1. Inclusivity of vernacular theatre groups. 2. The performance was good.	
Drawbacks	Solutions
1. Only one samithi put up a play. 2. There were no wings for their play.	1. More intensive publicity, also creating a competition of sorts to engage and ensure more participation by the samitis.

8. Stagecoach

Positives	
1. The performance was very good. 2. There was a very good audience.	
Drawbacks	Solutions

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The publicity for Stagecoach was done late. 2. Owing to miscommunication, difficulty in booking venue, small details were overlooked; there was no photographer arranged for the event. 3. There was difficulty in getting TAs; owing to the huge expenditures required, getting reimbursements was not convenient. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stagecoach being one of the club's most important events, must be published intensively, not just by posters and over social media but also, by word of mouth. Releasing a small trailer of sorts would be a new trend. 2. Planning must be done in advance, as is for other events. 3. All expenditure has to be accounted for and bills retained, and expenditure has to be kept at a possible minimum.
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9. Witness for the Prosecution

Positives	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The play was very good. 2. The cast consisted of many freshers and was the first long play many of them had put up. 3. The publicity and posters went up two-three days in advance. 	
Drawbacks	Solutions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There was less audience than there could have been, had it not been so close to the end semesters. 	Plays that are expected to draw more crowds have to be scheduled in such a way that they don't end up so close to events like the ends sems.

10. Litsoc Drams

Positives	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The plays put up were of very good quality. 	
Drawbacks	Solutions

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Only five hostels put up plays. LitSoc Dramatics got pushed to the end of the semester; hence it was seen as too much effort to put in, for the hostel points. 2. The judge cancelled last minute; another judge was arranged for, last minute, however. 	<p>LitSoc Drams should not be postponed so much and done according to schedule. Proper planning should ensure this.</p> <p>It is an eventuality that cannot be helped.</p>
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11. CTI

Positives	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The performance was excellent. 2. Tickets for the play sold well; there was a good audience. 	
Drawbacks	Solutions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As it was a production by an outside theatre group, working with the members of the group did not go smoothly, for the members of the cast and the director. 	<p>The degree of autonomy of the directors must be spoken and agreed upon prior to starting work on the play. This should avoid further confusion.</p>

3. Explain all the events that you think should be held next year, for Saarang. Suggest at least one new event.

All the events that were held this year, with the modifications suggested may be held next year, namely:

Dramatics -IT is the flagship event of the vertical. Dramatics is a team event that involves three rounds. In the first round, teams must send in scripts, based on which teams qualify for round two, in which they are required to put up a 7 minute trailer. In the final round 50-60 minute plays were put up by participating contingents and were judged by a 3member panel, on the basis of quality, content, action, engaging nature, backstage management and so on.

Monoacting - A solo performer was to take up a monologue or a short monoacting based skit and act it out. Each participant is given a chance to perform a piece of his/her choice in the first round, while the second round has them spontaneously acting out situations and incorporating the props given to them. There was a very good turnout for this event.

Vernacular Monoacting- The same pattern as followed in Monoacting although, the participants are allowed to take up a Vernacular skit.

Dial a Director- A 10 minute long sketch has to be put up by a team of a director and a maximum of 2 actors. The topic for your sketch will be allotted at random, 48 hours before the event, via email. A list of props will also be provided, along with the topic. Points will be given based on usage of these props (will be provided by us) in the drama, and on the number of props used. The script can be original or adapted. No points are given for originality of the script.

Street Play - English, Hindi, Tamil Street plays adhering to the theme of Water Conservation were to be staged in front of the Central Library. The maximum duration was for 15 minutes. Acoustic and percussion instruments are permitted, and the teams can be anywhere between 6 to 20 contestants big.

For Saarang, I would like to suggest :

The Mad Hat.

This event will test the spontaneity of the participants. Teams of three will be given a scenario, and characters, and a set of 3 props, one each for each team-member. The props, the scenario and the characters would have no obvious connection. For instance, a caterpillar, a cat and Batman watching a match in the Eden Gardens with shades, harp, and a broomstick. The contestants will have to weave all of this into a storyline and present it on the spot, with only a discussion time of 2 minutes.

Performance Poetry

This may not technically sound like a dramatics event, but is rightfully so, having not been part of either oratory or music. The participant can even bring theatrical elements into the performance, if she feels so. This will widen the base thespian deals with and include more people into Thespian events, and that way, Saarang.

4. Suggest a few viable sponsorship avenues (both kind and cash) for this vertical.

Mostly either theatre-related groups, or a few corporate sponsors extend sponsorship deals for this vertical. As of now, Saarang's biggest Thespian sponsor is Crea Shakti, based in Chennai who offer kind deals and monetary prizes.

Last year, Crea Shakti planned to sponsor 50,000 rupees, and facilitated a tie-up with Hindu Lit-fest 'Lit-for-Life' for Online Script-Writing. The NGO Teach for India (Sarang's associate

NGO sponsors) collaborated for judges for the Street Plays. Additionally, kind deals with theatre groups such as Stray Factory, Evam are made; collaborations with other groups like Theatre Nisha, Madras Players etc for judges are also done.

Last year, sponsorship by some smaller corporate brands (such as fasttrack) who do not make deals with the Sponsorship Team (deals less than 1 lakh are not usually accepted) was considered, and is viable. An understanding can be made with the Sponsorship and PR team to the effect that companies that are willing to sponsor, but not big amounts can be redirected and/or advised to sponsor Events based verticals like Thespian.

Further, the smaller sponsors of school cultural in Chennai - Reverberations of PSBB, and Maithri of Chettinad Vidyashram, can be considered. An example is Arun Excello (real estate), a Reverbs sponsor.

Acting schools have a rather good presence in Chennai - Theaterlab, Mindscreen, Mirage etc, being some. Collaborations are possible with them, for instance the wining actor of Monoacting or so on could be given workshops or cash prizes by these organizations, and in return they can advertise their schools - a very lucrative deliverable. This can significantly improve sponsorship.

A yet unexplored means for sponsorship is by utilizing the Alumni Network. It is possible to get in touch with graduates of IITM who have shown interest in theatre, who are a part of theatre groups, or do stand-up comedy. This is more effective than trying to get a corporate sponsor, since these people have genuine interest in theater and 'feels' which can be utilised. Also, even if they/their firm does not have money to put up, they can give us contacts, which is once again more effective a method to gain sponsors.

In addition to this, we could collaborate with lit-fests, similar to the attempt made with Hindu Lit-fest this year, such as Thespo. It is, however, also important that the deals do not override the vertical's primary objective, which is the enjoyment and fulfillment of the students vis a vis theater and dramatics.

5. Discuss your plans to publicize Thespian events for Saarang.

Publicity is central to the success of the various ventures of the vertical. And the more the participation and turnout, the better it is for the club. The following approaches can be taken to publicise events.

(a) Online and Media Presence.

- (i) It is vital to publicising and promoting events. A poster series can be planned and run on the fb page to create a hype about the events than sticking to a single poster. Further, Whatsapp, Instagram and Facebook stories can be used for the same purpose.
- (ii) Collaborating with bloggers and sites that list events can be done, and even columns in newspaper supplements like Metroplus of Hindu list drama events across the city. The events in Saarang can also be listed there.

- (iii) The vertical must have an active presence in the Saarang websites, with it's write up being made more engaging and both write ups and FAQs being uploaded well in advance.
- (b) Networking
 - (i) Thespian club must engage with and maintain friendly relations with drama clubs and societies of other colleges that regularly attend our events
 - (ii) A mutual publicity of each other's events can be ensured and done this way.
 - (iii) Whenever we participate in the fests of other colleges, we must make it a point to see to it that they, as well as other participating colleges are aware of Saarang, atleast by word of mouth.
- (c) Inviting Colleges
 - (i) A database of participants must be maintained and it should be seen to it that they participate.
 - (ii) The mails sent to colleges must contain, in addition to posters, a brief description of the events.
 - (iii) In addition to impersonal formal invites, calling up contacts in fellow drama societies in other colleges should also be done to see to it that will put up a fight and turn up.

6. Talk about the events (both club and LitSoc) that you would like to hold as a coordinator. Suggest at least one new event for each.

As a coordinator, I would hold which ever event is entrusted to me, with full responsibility, although, I personally have a liking for Dramatics, Dial a director and Street play from Saarang, and LitSoc Dial a Director, Stagecoach and LitSoc dramatics from Litsoc, because of the scale of these events and the challenges they pose.

For Litsoc:

LitSoc Mad Hat.

An adaptation of the same event suggested for Saarang, where teams of three will be given a scenario, and characters, and a set of 3 props, one each for each team-member. The props, the scenario and the characters would have no obvious connection. For instance, a caterpillar, a cat and Batman watching a match in the Eden Gardens with shades, harpic, and a broomstick. The contestants will have to weave all of this into a storyline and present it on the spot, with only a discussion time of 2 minutes.

Picturize

An event where a particular scene from a drama is given to each contestant and the contestant has to sketch the set. This is engaging, more from a participation point of view because students who have a background in art can participate. This will also help the club identify people who might later be interested in production work.

For the Club

A Contemporary Dance Workshop

Modern theater is increasingly using Contemporary dance as a medium to express drama. And hence it is important to equip our actors and directors with this skill. Also since it is lucrative, it will draw a much bigger participation.

7. Use this question to mention any points or initiatives that do not fall under the purview of any of the previous questions.

8. What makes you think that you are suitable for this position? Give credentials and References.

I am very passionate about the job and more so about theater. I have always felt that the club is one large family, and have relations within it that run very deep. And I am sure I will go beyond the call of duty to deliver what the club expects of me. This is why I feel I am the right person for this job. I have also done the following things:

- a) Acted in the CTI production, Silence! The Court is in Session, in the titular character of Sukhatme.
References: Sunaina Bose (8875033330) Rohita Naraharishetty (9500051705)
- b) Directed 'Sure Thing' for Quarter Ticket with Ramya.
References: Ramya (9791019233)
- c) Acted in Witness for the Prosecution as a solicitor, John Mayhew.
References: Urmika (9677764609)

Some other teams I worked in include

- a) Sponsorship Coordinator, Department Conference 2017
References: Ammu Nair (9444796365)
- b) I have written an article for the Times of India Saarang newsletter.
- c) I have designed multiple posters for my department, designed the Boondh T shirt and made a video trailer for the freshie night.