

## 6 Why us?

Theatre science combines the interests and expertise of Ashley Williamson (theatre studies) and William Denton (library science).

Ashley Williamson defends her PhD in theatre studies at the University of Toronto in August. At the Club she has been involved in many stage performances, including directing the Spring Revue (*Vamp Till Ready*) in 2015. She ran Ad Lib for several years.

William Denton has a master's in information studies from the University of Toronto and currently works as scholarly analytics librarian at York University. His online art projects include GHG.EARTH and *Listening to Art*. At the Club, aside from being Librarian, he has done lighting and sound work for a number of stage productions and written for the Revue for years.

Together, Williamson and Denton have produced several Ad Libs, including two Dada Nights, "The Dentonian L", "Readings and More" (of which Rosemary Aubert said: "Friday night was one of the best times I ever had at the Club") and most recently "L'Atelier des Refusés."

Williamson and Denton have a proven track record and brand recognition.

## 7 Next steps

Ad Lib is booked for alpha tests on 18 October and 15 November 2019. We will be preparing for those over the summer and early fall.

Promotion of the beta test and production night would begin in September in the *LAMPSletter*. We would be actively involved in recruiting people to come to all the performances.

After the production, we will write up what we have done and talk about it in our academic worlds (theatre studies and information science).

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WILLIAMSON & DENTON INVESTIGATE

# THEATRE SCIENCE

Limitation. Algorithm.  
Method. Process. Score.

Proposal to Stage Committee · 03 July 2019



<https://github.com/wdenton/theatrescience>

## 1 What to expect today

We will be making a ten-minute presentation to the Stage Committee. We will be wearing a boiler suit (AW) and a lab coat (WD).

We are going to ask the Stage Committee for two Club Nights so that we can perform a theatre experiment.

## 2 Why we are here

Stage productions at the Club are limited by some constraints. Everyone on the Stage Committee will know these.

- Lack of rehearsal time.
- Not everyone attends all rehearsals.
- It's hard to learn lines.
- It's hard to remember blocking.
- Few people can design and build sets.
- The lighting grid is fairly basic.

There are some things we're very good at, like *costumes*. We can use them as much as possible, including raiding the wardrobes.

But constraints can be helpful to creativity. What if instead of trying to work around them, we *built a performance on them*?

- Have very few rehearsals, if any.
- Design flexibility into casting and roles.
- Let everyone see their dialogue as needed.
- Show the blocking, even by drawing lines on the floor.
- Keep the stage simple. Use the Great Hall itself.
- Make the most possible of the lighting grid as is.

*Use the limitations.* Create algorithms, methods and processes for a performance, and put them into a score.<sup>1</sup>

Limitation. Algorithm. Method. Process. Score.

We have formed a hypothesis and we wish to perform experiments and analyze the results, which we will then write up and disseminate. *Theatre science*.

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<sup>1</sup>Plays have scripts. Performances have scores.

## 3 What we request

We ask for two nights when we can run a Theatre Science performance. Ideally these would be Club Nights close together, but one Club night and another special dinner would also work. (We know how activities are planned.)

We also request a budget of \$100 for printing and small supplies like spike tape and index cards.

## 4 What to expect at the show

Both the stage and the Great Hall will be used as performance space. Tables will be arranged specially; we imagine seating would be limited to about 60 people (with more on the second night). There will be dialogue and directions projected or posted on the walls and lines marked on the floor. Sound design will be a key part of the show. Everyone at dinner will feel they are inside a performance.

Scores will be at each place setting. They will be *complete scores for the entire show*. Everyone can read what is going to happen and then follow along. There are no secrets—but there is *chance* and *serendipity*.

**Beta test (night 1):** The first night will pre-arranged and cast with experienced theatre people, like you. We will collect data, analyze the results, and adjust the performance. The performance will be welcoming, engaging, friendly and participatory. It will be designed so that after seeing what it's like people will *want* to try it out.

**Production release (night 2):** The second night will be performed by non-theatre people—people you never see on stage, but who will see the first performance and think, “I can do that!”

## 5 What is the show about?

We have not written it yet, but its theme will be something related to information, for example information management, digital literacies, privacy, the roles of libraries in society today, etc.