

JET CITY IMPROV

Show Manual

Description –

Jet City Improv is a short-form, non-competitive improv show that draws on acting techniques, classic theater and long form improvisational theater. The show features a high level of story-telling including complex characters and complete and compelling story arcs. Also highlighted are improv games that focus on characters, emotions and relationships. The scenes and improv games average five to seven minutes in length.

The show line-up of scenes is pre-set by the MC utilizing the Directors guidelines. This eliminates wasted time between scenes and allows more performance time.

Jet City Improv is presented in a high energy theatrical package of about ninety minutes in length, consisting of two halves bisected by a five minute intermission.

Philosophy –

Storytelling and JCI – A love of story is innate in all humans. A lasting impression is made on an audience member by good story and a great story will create a cathartic response – an emotional connection to the characters and a nearly unforgettable memory of the tale they just witnessed.

All theater is rooted in the narrative framework of storytelling that humans recognize and are compelled by; beginning, middle, and end.

To this end, the Jet City Improv team endeavors to create great stories with complete arcs and interesting, memorable characters.

Characters and JCI – Stories ring hollow without vibrant, memorable characters within them. Memorable characters are physically realized, emotionally centered, have a driving want or need (objective) that compels them through the story and strong relationships with the other characters on stage. A great character should allow the audience to identify with them, make bold and interesting choices, fight for what they want, are altered by what is said and done to them and recognize their role in the story arc.

In the JCI format costume pieces; hats, glasses and wigs are accessories to your character –

Theater or Drama and JCI – “**Theater** (from French "*théâtre*", from Greek "*theatron*", *θέατρον*, meaning "place of seeing") is the branch of the performing arts defined as simply as what "occurs when one or more persons, isolated in time and/or space, present themselves to another or others."

Drama (literally translated as *action*, from a verbal root meaning "To do") is the branch of theatre in which speech, either from written text (plays), or improvised, is paramount. The companion word *drama* is also Greek, *dran* meaning *to do*.” (Wikipedia)

Beyond the literal definition of Theater or Drama is our audiences’ sense that they are seeing a professional theatrical production with well-trained actors that can be heard clearly, seen easily, look sharp and are having fun working together to create a story that has a defined shape and flow with characters that engage the audience.

Performers and their roles –

MC – The MC is the confident, energetic, likeable and fun liaison between the audience and the performers. The MC duties include warming up the audience at the top of the show, introducing and explaining each game or scene and soliciting the suggestion for scenes and games. The MC is the show leader and makes on-the-spot decisions about the show such as scene line-up changes, audience control, show timing and takes the lead on calling the end of scenes. The MC is also a performer.

Improvisers (aka Players) – The improvisers are the actors playing out the scenes. They quickly set up (and break down) the stage as directed by the Stage Manager, perform the show as directed, assist the MC by giving focus, and project contagious enthusiasm, fun and energy. The Players are familiar with all JCI scenes and games and throw themselves into every stage endeavor with abandon.

Sound Effects – SFX opens the show with a high-energy introduction of the Musician and MC, provides banter when directed, and creates scenic sound-scapes to enhance the environment of each scene or routine. SFX announces the mid-show break, opens the second half of the show and announces the performers as they exit in the closing moments of the night. SFX has an active, vital role in the Jet City Improv show. Sound effects that are created are treated as offers by the rest of the team on stage and SFX stands ready as an active player to build on any offers made on stage. The SFX Player is instrumental in calling the end of scenes.

Musician – The JCI Musician is tasked with providing accompaniment to improvised songs performed by the players, background scoring for scenes and occasionally for improv games. The Musician will take the stage when introduced by the SFX improviser, just before the MC is introduced. They may be re-introduced by the MC during the pre-show audience warm-up. *Opening music for the show (Jet City Courageous Cat Theme), closing music (Propeller Head) and music between scenes will be provided by the Sound Booth Technician in the form of high energy recorded drop-ins.*
(This is a change from previous years.)

Stage Manager (aka Technician) – The SM adds the technical improviser element to Jet City Improv from the control booth and also serves as Stage Manager in the realm of actor wrangling, time keeping, insuring the JCI show starts on time, intermission does not go over time and the show does not go long. The SM works with the House Manager on opening the house, show curtain and intermission timing. As a Technical Improviser the SM should be attentive to the scene and players on stage to quickly and creatively alter the lights to create or change mood or facilitate scene changes. The SM may also receive instructions from the MC during the show on altering game rules or game creation. Wearing headphones, searching for music online or guests in the booth can all distract from the SM focusing on the scene and should be severely limited. Texting, checking email, reading or other activities that are not show related should not occur in the booth during the performance. Opening music for the show (Jet City Courageous Cat Theme), closing music (Propeller Head; Spybreak traditionally) and music between scenes will be provided by the Sound Booth Technician in the form of high energy recorded drop-ins.

JCI Show Shape

– (including templates for show use)

The Jet City Improv show is divided into two halves by a five minute intermission. Each half is forty-two and a half minutes in length, allowing for seven minutes per scene, including the suggestion solicitation by the MC.

It is understood that due to the nature of improvisation theater that some scenes will be longer, some shorter. The time between scenes is filled with high-energy music from the Technician with “drop-in” music.

First Half is one MC Audience Warm-Up block followed by five improv blocks of seven minutes each.

Second Half is six improv blocks of seven minutes.

With a five minute Intermission, this is ninety minutes total.

A **Home Show with Music** is comprised of one third *or more* improv scenes, one third *or less* improv routines or “games” and one third musical improv.

A **Home Show without Music** (unplugged) is two thirds scenes *or more* and one third *or less* improv routines or “games”.

The show will open and close with high energy narrative based scenes involving the entire cast.

The show should have variations of pacing to help create tension and give the audience “breathing time”.

Timeline –

The Components –

The Introduction – five to seven minute audience warm up by MC and SFX

First Half of the JCI Show:

Intermission – five minutes or greater, as called by the Stage Manager.

Second Half of the JCI Show:

Curtain Call – “Superhero pose” tableau at center stage as SFX calls out performers including

Musician. As they are called the performer exits the stage to the rear of the theater.

Receiving Line – Greet exiting guests, hand out info for other shows.

Stage Maintenance – Stage Tidy for next show or neat, complete clean-up of stage.

Notes – Led by the Director(s), or in their absence, the MC.

Home Show with Music – Template

- 1) Story or Narrative based scene or game involving entire team
- 2) Scene
- 3) Musical scene or game
- 4) Open
- 5) Open

- 6) Musical scene or game

Five Minute Intermission

- 7) Scene
- 8) Musical scene or game
- 9) Open
- 10) Scene or Game
- 11) Musical scene or game
- 12) High Energy scene

Slot number 1 - Show opener — (Story or Narrative based scene or game involving entire team and multiple suggestions from the audience)

Examples – Death by Story, Growing and Shrinking, Parallel Universe, Sing for Supper

Slot 12 – Show closer – (High Energy Scene)

Examples – Rock Opera, Forward/backward, Film Fest, Benefit Song.

When filling “Open” slots take care not to pair up similar (in look, category or feel) scenes or games – for example Sing For Your Supper followed by Death by Story, two music scenes back to back or two verbal restrictions back to back.

Audience Volunteers - Endeavor to get audience members on stage each show.

Audience VIP’s that should find themselves on stage include; birthdays, retirees, bachelorettes, bachelors, military personal deploying or returning from deployment, etc.

Home Show without Music (Unplugged) – Template

- 1) Story or Narrative based scene or game involving entire team
- 2) Scene
- 3) Scene or game
- 4) Open
- 5) Open
- 6) Scene or game

Five Minute Intermission

- 7) Scene
- 8) Scene or game
- 9) Open
- 10) Scene or Game
- 11) Scene or game
- 12) High Energy scene

Zones of Authority –

Technical Director/Stage Manager – responsible for stage operations (including set up and strike), show flow and timing (holding start time or intermission), technical aspects of the show, show line up due to technical restraints and performer herding.

Director – (if in attendance) responsible for show line-up, performer herding, post-show notes.

MC, Performers, SFX and Musician – see “Roles” as described above.