



# the company

*The Unknown Theater Company is dedicated to those unique people who have a wild, unstoppable desire to redefine theater as a necessary part of the community, and to continually challenge themselves to step into Unknown territory as theater artists. Unknown Theater will be a dependable and nurturing home for those artists who are not afraid to work incredibly hard together to achieve these unabashedly idealistic goals.*

*If hard-work and commitment, artistic discipline, a strong and inclusive ensemble, and a perpetual exploration of the things that we take for granted, are some of the things that excite you most and give you the most satisfaction in the theatrical process, you have come to the right place.*

*Join our Administrators, Managers, Directors, Actors, Stage Managers, Lighting and Costume Designers, Scenic Painters, Carpenters, Electricians, Prop Masters, Dressers, Dialect Coaches, Choreographers, Stage Combateers, Musicians, Computer Programmers, Graphic Designers...*

## Joining the Company

The Unknown Theater Company is open to anyone in the community who communicates excitement and motivation regarding our mission statement, methods, and policies, and who displays an enthusiastic drive to further the company's endeavors.

Specific opportunities within the company will be determined by audition/portfolio review and participation in Saturday Morning Ensemblage Workshops, readings, and other related events.

Company member status will be granted and maintained at the discretion of the Artistic Director/ General Manager.

Regular evaluations of our recruitment procedures will be implemented to ensure an open policy of company membership.

### Typical Joining Procedure

- 1) Express an interest in writing or in person
- 2) Audition and/or interview with the Artistic Director.
- 3) Come to one or more Saturday Morning Ensemblages, (see below), and participate in our Play Readings or Scene Studies
- 4) After conferring with the company, the Artistic Director will have a final interview with you to discuss your experience, and determine if Unknown Theater is right for you, and visa-versa.

## Benefits of Membership

### The Main Event

Writers, directors, actors, designers, stage managers and technical specialists will participate in choosing, developing and creating our Main Events. Rediscover theater with us.

### The 5th Wall

You will also participate in inventing, developing and creating our 5th Wall Events. Almost anything goes inside the 5th Wall. Come up with a unique idea for a performance piece, or write a short-script and present the idea to the 5th Wall and Artistic Directors. You may just find yourself with a budget and a team ready to make your idea a reality. Your imagination could be brought to life in one of the most dynamic, high-profile and unusual performance arenas around.

*Ask for a copy of our Creation Plan for all of The 5th Wall details.*

### Saturday Morning Ensemblages

Weekly physical training in Dance, Gymnastics, Combat, and other unique movement skills by professionals in the community will make you feel more in control of your body and its expressive capabilities, than you thought possible.

Training in percussion skills from our resident percussionists will also allow you to surprise yourself.

Theater History discussions led by our Literary Manager, Arthur Horowitz, Ph.D., will place your work in context, and make you an informed participant in the development process.

Scene Study and Play Readings will allow us to choose and develop future Main Events, and to exercise our craft on a regular basis.

*See the end of this Company Plan for all of the details regarding Saturday Morning Ensemblages.*

### Unknown Artist Project

Be instrumental in the creation and execution the Unknown Artist Project. Help us reinvent outreach:

Work side by side with an eager high-school student in our future Summer Training Program as a personal mentor.

Guide an intern through his or her first theatrical experience out of college in our future Internship Program.

Go out in the world and provide the youth of the community with a sense of team-work, self-esteem, and accomplishment that theater can uniquely provide. Help us to get teachers, parents and students working together in our future Outreach Program.

*Ask for a copy of our Creation Plan for more information.*

### The Fridge

Our partner corporation, The Fridge Cafe and Bar LLC, will provide company members with fun, social, and profitable employment opportunities. Work at the coolest new club in bohemian LA, and hang with your friends as you pay rent.

*Ask for a copy of our Creation Plan for more information.*

## Responsibilities of Membership

### Artistic Discipline

Members must be religiously prompt and professionally prepared for all meetings, workshops, rehearsals, and performances. Financial or family crisis, injury, and severe illness are the only exceptions.

### Creative Participation

1) Enthusiastic participation in 3 out of 4 Saturday Morning Ensemblages. (Occasionally, when Special Skills Training is active for a given production, or a Guest Artist has been commissioned, more workshops may become mandatory).

2) Attendance at all Main Event company opening nights, and special workshops and events.

### Commitment to Professionalism

We have designed a powerful plan to organize our company's efforts -- creating an organization of unrivaled professionalism and unlimited satisfaction.

You are enthusiastically encouraged to take a department team position. Our desire is to have *everyone* involved in the Department Teams.

Specific responsibilities as a department team member will be defined by each Department Head and the General Manager. Weekly responsibility should not exceed 3 hours a week.

*Please ask for a copy of our Creation Plan, which describes all of our departments and the details of their associated team positions. After choosing a position that appeals to you, you will be given an orientation by the appropriate Department Head.*

Those members opting not to join a Department Team will have to pay dues. As normal Team Member Time Commitment is 3 hours per week, monthly dues will be calculated by the following equation: (Minimum Wage)\*(3 hours)\*(4 weeks). Given the current Minimum Wage of \$6.75, monthly dues are presently \$81 per month.

### Communication

Company members must check email daily, and respond to both email and phone messages immediately.

#### Regular Conferences and Meetings

In order to keep in touch with the needs and accomplishments of the company, each company member will be required to schedule a conference with the Artistic Director after their first 3 months of membership and every three months thereafter. These conferences will facilitate the following goals:

1) Getting regular feedback from the member about their experience at Unknown Theater, allowing them to express concerns and suggestions.

2) To evaluate the participation of the company member in their department position and in the company generally.

While Saturday Morning Ensemblages will provide a regular opportunity for the Company to discuss important issues as a group, Company Meetings may also be scheduled occasionally in order for the entire group to discuss and/or celebrate specific issues or our general progress.

### Summary of Major Attendance Responsibilities:

- 1) 3 Saturday Workshops a month
- 2) A few hours a week for your Department Position (or dues)
- 3) A Regular Conference every 3 months

You may find it difficult to differentiate between "Benefits" and "Responsibilities".

## Casting Policy

Casting will be done almost exclusively from the company. The process of selecting plays will involve a comprehensive exploration of the potential texts over time. This process will allow us to discover plays that are both in line with our artistic mission, and "good fits" for our company of actors.

After the workshop process, call-backs/auditions will be held to find the perfect cast matches.

In cases where a few roles are not perfectly cast-able from within the company, general auditions may be called, and guest artists brought in.

Because our policy of joining the company is a fluid one, the distinction between a company member and a non-company member at the time of casting may not always be easily definable.

The pursuit of our mission statement, and an adherence to truth in our craft, must remain paramount at all times. Therefore, to assure integrity, casting will of course remain blind to seniority in the company, personal relations, membership in the board, contributions to the non-profit, etc.

## Payment / Salaries

As a public charity organization, our first priority must of course always be the theater as a whole. Individual financial needs have to, by law and philosophy, be considered secondary. However, the growth of the organization, to better serve its charitable purposes, is a factor of the work and time contributed by its members.

To achieve our goals, and to support those who work hard for the theater, paying salaries to actors, and key members of the organization, will be of the utmost priority.

### Actors

Unknown Theater will initially operate under the Actor's Equity

99-Seat waiver plan.

We are negotiating with Actor's Equity Association in Los Angeles and New York. They are very pleased to hear our enthusiastic desire to support Los Angeles actors and the theater scene in LA, generally. As a result, they are working with us to find a contract that might be modified to allow us to begin paying actors real salaries in not-too-distant-future. The contract that will most likely be examined is the Hollywood Area Theater Contract. This contract currently specifies a weekly minimum \$270.

### **Administration & Technical Staff**

Everyone who becomes a member of Unknown Theater will be offered the option of working in the administration or on the staff as a Department Team member. Those members who show the greatest dedication, commit the most effort, and stay with us the longest, will be considered first for salaries, as they become financially feasible.

*Please ask to see a copy of our Creative Management Plan for a complete outline of our salary schedule, or our complete Creation Plan for other future or immediate wage opportunities such as, 5th Wall Regular Rotating Staff, teaching classes, stage managing, or leading our future Unknown Artists Summer Training or Outreach Programs.*

## **Leaving the Company**

### **Voluntarily**

A member may, of course, leave the company at any time for any reason. Fair warning of one month will be appreciated if a member has specific weekly responsibilities to an Unknown Theater Department so as to facilitate finding a replacement.

If one is leaving as a result of dissatisfaction with the company, an explanation of the circumstances leading to the member's departure will also be appreciated in order to help us better evaluate our policies, procedures and attitudes.

### **Involuntarily**

A member may be asked to leave the company at any time as a result of not complying with the responsibilities listed above, or for any relevant, extenuating circumstances.

**Any dues paid longer than 30 days prior to dismissal are not refundable.**

### **Leaves of Absence**

A member may take a leave of absence from the company for a maximum of 6 months with no explanation necessary. Fair warning of one month will be appreciated if a member has specific weekly responsibilities to an Unknown Theater Department so as to facilitate finding a replacement.

Leaves of absence exceeding 6 months, a leave of absence taken with no notice and for no given reason, or repetitive leaves of absence, may call membership and readmission into question.

## **Saturday Morning Ensemblages**

We are called Unknown Theater because we believe that we should constantly reinvent our art and challenge ourselves to move beyond what we already know. Our Saturday Morning Ensemblages will be one of the most rewarding aspects of being an Unknown Theater Company Member.

These workshops are designed to accomplish the following goals:

- 1) To build a strong and supportive ensemble
- 2) To provide an opportunity for us to keep "our instruments" in shape.
- 3) To explore and choose future projects.
- 3) To comprehensively develop work slated for future production:
  - i. To discover good matches of plays to our company of actors
  - ii. To help us answer the all important question "Why do we need to tell this story"
- 4) Individually, to discover new techniques to express ourselves, and collectively, to find new ways of telling a story in the theater.

You will find that a lot of the work is physical. Feel free to cancel your gym membership. However, rest assured, no matter what your present abilities are, you will find the workshops fun, rewarding, and an opportunity for growth. There will be no tests or evaluations, it will simply be a place for us to grow together, explore together, and play together.

### **Overview Of Possible Saturday Schedule**

Saturday Morning Ensemblage: 10am-2:00pm (2:30) (3:00) every Saturday

10:00-10:30	Dance/Movement Warm-up
10:30-11:30	Dance, Gymnastics, Combat, or Special Skills Training
11:30-12:30	Percussion
12:30-1:00	Company Lunch
1:00-2:00	Theater History/Text Analysis or Scene Study/Play Reading (2:30-3:00)

Advanced classes might take place on the traditional Equity dark day of Monday from 6-9, or on another weekday (except during tech weeks), depending on rehearsal schedules of the Main Event.

### **Dance And Movement**

GOAL: To provide an opportunity for company members to stay in touch with their bodies, develop greater fluency of physical expression, and expand our creative and expressive possibilities, generally.

**CAPTAIN:** Our family of professional dance partners, including TRIP Dance Theatre, and Loretta Livingston and Dancers.

We will start each the Ensemblage with this class, providing a morning stretch and an excellent warm-up. Emphasis will be on limbering, coordination, and relaxation techniques, such as Feldenkrais, Alexander, Yoga, Tai Chi, etc.

On days when there is no special skills training scheduled, this warm up will lead directly into Company dance training. Together we will 'move' toward more advanced movement techniques over time.

Advanced classes will be offered during the week, dependent upon our Dance Partners' availability.

### **Gymnastics, Combat & Special Skills**

**GOAL:** Wild ideas sometimes call for wild moves. Gymnastics, Combat and Special Skills classes will expand the movement training into the realm of amazing feats.

**CAPTAINS:** Company Members, Artistic Partners, Visiting Artists

On weeks when we do not focus on a specific form of dance training, Gymnastics, Combat, or Special Skills Training will follow our dance-partner-led movement warm-up.

We will start small in the company training, and progress to more advanced skills over time.

When special techniques, such as mime, clowning, commedia, etc., will be required for a given Main Event or 5th Wall experiment, the focus of the movement section of the Saturday program will shift dramatically to the training in the needed skill.

Visiting Artists will be pursued for training in such special skills, when an upcoming production or experiment requires their services.

As part of our Unknown LA Project, Artistic Partners or visitors from our neighbor Los Angeles performing arts organizations will join us to share their ideas and techniques, and to further our goal of creating a collaborative theater community in our city.

As with dance, advanced members will eventually be offered advanced classes during the week, providing the company with more exciting options for our work.

### **Percussion**

**GOAL:** To provide a strong ensemble connection, heightened awareness of rhythm onstage, and a company of competent percussionists who will offer thrilling possibilities both for Main Events and The 5th Wall.

**CAPTAINS:** Chris Covics & Christopher Capiello

The entire company will train in percussion as part of our weekly Saturday Morning Ensemblages. This class will follow our movement warm-up and training.

An emphasis will be put on 4 to 8 part, funk-infused, tribal rhythms. Together we will progress toward more advanced percussion techniques. Additional rehearsals may be necessary periodically for The 5th Wall and special performances.

### **Theater History / Textual Exploration**

**GOAL:** To provide a historical/sociopolitical/artistic context for our creative endeavors and the theater itself.

**CAPTAIN:** Arthur Horowitz, Ph.D.

During the first 2 months of building the space, there will be weekly lecture/discussions on the history of American Theater from its beginnings to the present day. We will learn what's been done, what hasn't, what trials the American Theater has overcome, what trends have come, gone, are still here, and are just beginning, etc. The final classes will focus on the last 50 years of theater in Los Angeles.

After the space is built, and we have selected our first production, monthly classes will provide a historical background for our first Main Event. This process will allow for well-informed, company assisted development of our first piece.

Appropriate schedules and topics will be determined for each future Main Event. Theater History classes will be a time for for actors, designers, artistic partners, and directors to brainstorm together and to explore exciting possibilities.

### **Scene Study & Play Readings**

**GOAL:** To provide a healthy, professional and productive atmosphere for company members to experiment with their craft and each other as actors.

The play readings will be used to explore texts being considered for production. These texts will include classic, contemporary, and new works acquired through the Unknown Play Project.

The Scene Study classes will be a dynamic way to explore plays before casting and rehearsals begin.

**CAPTAIN:** Chris Covics and future directors/writers

Play readings will commence immediately upon assembling the company, and scene study after the Main Event has been chosen.

Future classes will take place on a revolving schedule to be determined by the Main Event schedule.

*Please see the Main Event Plan for a complete outline of the Saturday Morning Ensemblage / Main Event schedule.*