

Atlanta Radio Theatre Company Coffee House Project
Concept (for discussion)

June 12, 2018

1. Members are interested in reviving the coffee house presentations of ARTC works. The current idea is a little different from the ones we did years ago at Eddie's Attic. Currently some members of the organization are looking into finding venues for this venture. The number of venues identified will very likely alter some of the following ideas.
2. The Concept:
 - ARTC will locate 4 to 6 venues for performances. We will then narrow these down to 2 venues.
 - We will rotate among the venues. For example, if we have 4, A, B, C, and D, we would rotate by quarters:
 - i. January-March: Venue A
 - ii. April-June: Venue B
 - iii. July-September: Venue C
 - iv. October-December: Venue D
 - Each time we change venues, we will have a new set of scripts (though we may recycle a few as needed)
 - Our initial goal will be to maximize our audience. By trying out various venues, we hope to identify the one or two that are most friendly and offer us the largest audiences.
 - Our long-term goal is to increase ARTCs presence in the Atlanta arts community and build relationships with new audiences.
3. The Shows:
 - Since we would be appearing before a more varied audience, we would also want to vary our scripts. Traditionally, our strongest points have been horror (especially Lovecraft), science fiction, and fantasy (and within these broad genres, the approaches have varied from humor to drama to melodrama).
 - **HOWEVER**, in the coffee house series, we want to appeal to a broader audience, so our writers should think in more traditional genre terms: comedy, drama, adventure, and so on. Not to say we can't have the occasional SF, mystery, or horror piece, though.
 - We would like to develop series—not serials (because we probably would not have continuity of audiences and would not want to spend too much script time on “our story so far”). Instead, we'd like a TV sitcom approach: self-contained scripts with continuing characters.

- It has been suggested that we should weight the shows toward comedy (though not to the exclusion of other genres).
- The Schedule: We would look to perform once per month, one or two presentations each time. That is, we might perform only on, say, a Friday or Saturday night; or we might perform on Friday night and then repeat the SAME program on Saturday, the next night.
- Each program—each set of scripts—would be new. For a one-year run we would need a total of twelve programs; however, we MIGHT repeat some scripts in different venues. Generally, though, we'd want the majority of scripts in each program to be new.

4. The Format:

- Each coffee house show should run approximately 90 minutes, with one or two intermissions of 10 minutes, for a total run time of 100-120 minutes. I'll assume 120 minutes, two ten-minute intermissions.
- The show complement would include a host who will introduce the segments; actors, of course, to perform the shows; minimal Foley, with one or two Foley artists; a floor manager and a tech manager/sound board operator; and recorded sound and music as needed, but not elaborate.
- In addition to our scripts, we would have one musical guest (solo performer or group) per performance. The musicians would have a couple of sets that would run about 15 minutes each, for a total of 30 minutes.
- For the remaining 70 minutes, we would need scripts. Something like this seems to me the most likely approach:
 - i. 3 short pieces, from five to ten minutes each (like METAs). We would lead off with one of these.
 - ii. 2 longer pieces, from 20 to no more than 30 minutes each. One would be the feature of the first half of the performance; the other would be the feature of the second half.

5. Time Breakdown:

This is JUST AN EXAMPLE of the way a typical show might run.

- ACT 1 (35 minutes)
 - i. Short comedy piece (satirical commercials, bits like META): 5 minutes
 - ii. Musical performance: 10 minutes
 - iii. Feature 1 (adventure script) 20 minutes.

INTERMISSION, 10 minutes

- ACT 2 (30 minutes)
 - i. Feature 2 (comedy), 30 minutes

INTERMISSION, 10 minutes

- ACT 3 (30 minutes)
 - i. Short comedy bit (5 minutes)
 - ii. Musical interlude: 5 minutes
 - iii. Featurette (possibly a lampoon or a mood piece), 10 minutes
 - iv. Musical set: 10 minutes

6. Script Needs:

As we gain experience, we will undoubtedly want to adjust our presentations and our scripts. We may find that some monologues would have a place. Maybe a special, longer script might be broken into two parts, with the first part during Act II and the second in Act III. There are all sorts of possible variants.

However, that said, we will need pretty quickly now—

- At least 12 longer scripts (from 20-30 minutes) of varying genres.
- At least 20 shorter scripts (from 1 to 20 minutes).
- Prospective musical guests.

This is all up for discussion.

Brad Strickland

Head Writer, ARTC