

# Community Theatre: A Love Story

by C.S. Griffel -

<http://greatstorybook.com/community-theatre-a-love-story/>

This entry is part 2 of 9 in the series [Theatre](#)

## [Theatre](#)

- [Community Theatre: A Manifesto](#)
- [Community Theatre: A Love Story](#)
- [What's Your Vision? Directing Children's Theatre](#)
- [So You Want to Start a Theatre Group: 4 Things to Keep in Mind](#)
- [Story Adaptation: getting your book to the stage](#)
- [Costuming #1: A Quick & Dirty Guide to Costuming](#)
- [Costuming #2: Literal, Conceptual or Literal-Conceptual?](#)
- [Costuming #3: Performing Magic on a Shoestring Budget](#)
- [Work with a Storybook Performer: Inge Van Mensel](#)

Mark Twain wrote, "To succeed in life, you need two things: ignorance and confidence." I have both in surprisingly large amounts. But in truth, had I known what I was getting myself into at the beginning, I'm not sure I would have done the thing at all.

Three years ago, my family and I moved across the ocean to an Asian country, whose language, literature and culture were complete enigmas to us. Among my family was my daughter, a then senior in high school. As you may imagine, my daughter was slightly less than thrilled with the move. Though she had been home schooled for the better part of her life, she was then an active part of a theater community in Colorado, where we lived before the move overseas. So, basically, the whole thing started because in my parental angst at having seriously destroyed my daughter's happiness, I decided, along with a friend, to start a community theater, quite literally from nothing, so that my daughter could have a theater in which to participate. I decided I could do this with essentially no prior experience in theater. That makes perfect sense, right?

My friend and I decided that I, because of my skill set and personality, I should be the director of the theater's first ever production. Never one to go small, I decided that our first show would be a full length musical. This was a particularly brilliant idea since I have no background in music either.

In order to form a community for said daughter and in order to, in fact, perform a musical, one needs,

well, people. An ad for auditions was placed in the local “things-to-do” mini magazine and we were off to the races. As audition day approached, a deep sense of terror clawed its way into my heart. What if no one shows up?

But, they did show up, and that was even more frightening. There I was like Frank Abagnale, Jr. playing the part of an experienced director, having actors switch roles and reading them for different parts and sing and move and interact with one another, all with a swagger and the utmost confidence. Little did they know that I was probably more freaked out than they were. I went home following that audition and wept for more than half an hour. See, I knew those people wanted me to like them, that their hopes were pinned on me to assign them the role they were hoping to get. I knew that I would post the cast list and that people would be disappointed, angry and critical and the thought that it was ME who was going to disappoint them was strangely terrifying.

Additionally terrifying was the possibility that this entire project would be a massive flop. I had talked people into investing money into it. If it failed, I knew I would have to return, hat in hand and admit that I had no idea what I had been doing and that I was very sorry for wasting their time and money. One thing I hate: admitting that I don't know what I'm doing.

However, I seem to have been blessed with one truly useful talent, convincing actually talented people that I do know what I'm doing and talking them into joining me in my grandiose schemes. Not to mention seeing talent inside of others and putting them in the right place so that the talent can have a chance to shine, which, in the end, is the single most important part of directing.

So, with a cast, a choreographer, a musical and a technical director, we produced that musical. My technical director and I had the audacity to enter that show in an Army wide theatre competition for which our cast and crew won 2nd place for both lead male and female in a musical, 3rd for best supporting male and female role, 2nd for best choreography and a number of other awards, including 3rd place for best director of a musical.

This was not because of my own personal talent. Theatre, more than perhaps any other form of art, with the exception of film, is collaborative. And more than any other, it is magical. It begins with nothing more than an author or two and a script and often music and lyrics, just words on a page, really, and ends with a (hopefully) rapt audience transported into the world presented on the stage. While in large, professional theaters some special effects can be relied upon to create that magic, in the world of community theatre, it is more often the sheer creative talent of the production crew which produces this ethereal experience. It is, in fact, transcendental, and it is addicting.

**This entry is part of the series**

[Theatre](#)

**Be sure to check out the other posts:**

[<< Community Theatre: A Manifesto](#) [What's Your Vision? Directing Children's Theatre](#) [>>](#)