

Guide for
Venues,
Dramatists,
& Organizers

DRAMATISTS GUILD

A Note on the selection and presentation of dramatic works at DG Footlights™

DG Footlights™ is a Dramatists Guild program that operates on a space-grant model, where the Guild provides the space and time for a randomly selected dramatist to have their work read in front of an audience.

Since the Guild is an organization of, by and for writers, among its foundational principles are its advocacy for free expression and opposition to censorship. Therefore, neither the Guild nor any of its representatives are empowered to assess the creative content that may be presented at a DG Footlights™ reading, including the subjective determination of whether or not a work may be perceived as harmful or will otherwise have a negative impact on its potential audience.

In light of this, moderators of DG Footlights™ events should communicate to potential attendees that the works presented are randomly selected and do not necessarily reflect the views or values of the Dramatists Guild, its staff, volunteer representatives, or membership. It should be made clear, both prior to the program and at the event itself, that participation in the DG Footlights™ program is in no way, shape, or form an endorsement by the Dramatists Guild.

To provide potential attendees with additional information when they are deciding whether to register for an event, and to put the public on notice, DG Footlights™ organizers may collect and disseminate any relevant content warnings related to the selected works, alongside play synopses and event details. These content warnings should, however, be descriptive, not conclusory assessments, of the content of the work.

If a DG Footlights™ organizer is concerned about a selected work's content such that they feel that it will impact their own ability to facilitate their role as the event moderator, they should ask an Ambassador or a trusted volunteer in their community to perform that function instead, and/or contact Jordan Stovall, Regional Programs Manager, jstovall@dramatistsguild.com, to arrange for a suitable substitution.

Venues

What is DG FootlightsTM?

DG FootlightsTM is a gratis program created and moderated by the **DRAMATISTS GUILD**. It connects dramatists with a complimentary space in which to hold a reading of new work in development. This Guild initiative supports works-in-progress, allowing dramatists to showcase a draft of a new piece of theatre to a public audience and to receive feedback, if requested. DG FootlightsTM operates on a space-grant model: a representative from the Guild will make an arrangement for a venue to donate space during allocated dates and times, and will ensure that the space is available for dramatists to showcase a self-produced reading to the public. Works are selected on a first come, first served basis, or by lottery. Attendance is always free and open to the public.

Why participate?

DG FootlightsTM is designed to be an easy, exciting, and low-admin way for organizations to engage with their theatrical community, and to support the development of new work without the investment of a production.

What is required of the venue?

The only thing required of the venue would be the donation of space at an agreed upon date and time. This space could be a café, a library, a rehearsal room, or a main or secondary theatre space, provided that the respective space can accommodate the presentation and a small audience. Once a date and time have been agreed upon, the venue should adhere to this commitment.

Venues

What is not required of the venue?

Participants in the **DRAMATISTS GUILD** program are solely responsible for providing their own cast and creative team, and for finding their own rehearsal space. The venue is not required to provide any of the above, although if they choose to offer additional resources, they are welcome to do so. DG Footlights™ selections, marketing, and announcements will be handled through the main Guild offices, though venues are welcome to promote these readings as well, with the permission of those participating.

Should this be considered a potential production opportunity?

No venues should feel in no way obligated to shepherd these readings into any further stage of development beyond this program.

Can work be curated to reflect an organization's mission?

We encourage venues and organizations to highlight DG Footlights™ as an opportunity to openly engage with a wide variety of theatre-makers and voices in their community. The focus of the program is to objectively provide a platform for the development of new work. Works are chosen on either a first come, first served basis, or lottery basis to ensure that all who are interested in participating are given an equal opportunity to do so.

Contact

You can contact questions@dramatistsguild.com or the regional organizer of your DG Footlights™ program.

Dramatists

Why participate?

The DG Footlights™ program is specifically designed to assist dramatists with a work in progress. There is often a wide gulf between the experience of reading the dialogue on a page and hearing it out loud; this program exists in order to bridge that gap. By providing a complimentary space in which dramatists can present a reading of their work, DG Footlights™ encourages the development of new work, while also offering writers an opportunity to engage with new theatrical communities.

How will work be selected?

We believe that all DG members should have an equal opportunity to participate in this program. As such, all participants will be chosen randomly on a first come, first served basis or by lottery.

What will be required of me, if I'm chosen?

Participants are expected to find their own readers, creative team, and rehearsal space/schedule (if necessary) for their works. Organizers and venues may offer additional resources, but please bear in mind that this is not required of them.

What would a presentation look like?

Presentations can vary, from a table read to a staged reading. We do encourage participants to keep theatrical elements to a minimum, since the focus should be on hearing the work aloud for the purposes of further development.

Dramatists

Am I required to have a talkback or Q&A session?

The objective of the DG Footlights™ program is to aid writers in the development of their work. If you feel a talkback or Q&A session might be helpful to your process, then by all means!

How will people find out about my reading?

It is your sole responsibility to promote your reading and to build an audience for your work. However, The Dramatists Guild will help to promote your reading, by sending out regional invitations through Eventbrite, and by posting the event on the National Calendar on the Dramatists Guild website. In addition, your reading will be included in the Regional Digest, which is sent to the entire national membership on a weekly basis. If you would prefer that we don't make your reading public, or if you'd like to be more specific about who to invite, we're more than willing to work with you one-on-one.

Should this be considered a potential production opportunity?

No.

The DG Footlights™ operates separately from other production, development, or submission opportunities that might be offered by any theatre, organization, or venue. Participating dramatists should not expect the hosting venue to continue development on the piece beyond the reading.

Dramatists

What if I need help finding readers, a creative team, or rehearsal space?

- For directors, check the online membership directory of the Stage Directors and Choreographers: www.sdcweb.org.
- For readers, explore out local universities, theatres, or posting casting calls on social media or websites such as playbill.com or backstage.com.
- For rehearsal space, Explore one of the following: Fractured Atlas SpaceFinder: www.fracturedatlas.org/site/spacefinder Rehearsal Space Finder: www.rehearsalspacefinder.com.
- Investigate local rehearsal studios in your area.
- A private residence may suffice.
- If all else fails, we recommend that you get in contact with the organizer of DG Footlights™ in your region. They may be able to provide you with additional resources.

In a wider sense, DG Footlights™ is also meant to be an opportunity for dramatists to feel empowered as self-driven creatives in control of mounting and exhibiting their own work.

Contact

You can contact questions@dramatistsguild.com or the regional organizer of your DG Footlights™ program.

Organizers

Why should I become an organizer?

Becoming an organizer is an excellent way to engage with your wider theatrical community, and to establish relationships with theatre professionals in your area. You will become the point person for participants and organizations, communicating with dramatists, venues, and other parties involved in order to ensure a smooth reading.

What is required of an organizer?

Organizers are expected to secure venues, post calls for submissions, select scripts in a random fashion (e.g., lottery or first come/first serve), and schedule a date for the reading. Beyond that, organizers are responsible for keeping in touch with all parties involved - the venue, the dramatist, and the Guild - in order to ensure that everyone is up to date. Templates for submission calls and reading listings are available upon request.

How do I express interest or ask additional questions?

You can contact info@dramatistsguild.com and/or the DG Regional Rep closest to your area by visiting www.dramatistsguild.com/about-the-guild/regional-reps.