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Soul Food: Understanding and Implementing an Effective Creative Arts Ministry at the Collegiate Level

Kristen Jones

Southeastern University - Lakeland

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SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY

SOUL FOOD: UNDERSTANDING AND IMPLEMENTING AN EFFECTIVE CREATIVE
ARTS MINISTRY AT THE COLLEGIATE LEVEL

AN HONOR'S THESIS
SUBMITTED
TO GORDON MILLER, ED. D.

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BY

KRISTEN JONES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to discuss the varying roles of the creative arts in society and the church. It provides a review of literature examining how the arts are being implemented in entertainment, therapy, education, and ministry today, along with a handbook on how to run Soul Food, a college creative arts ministry club. Through a discussion on the intrinsic value of the arts and their ability to provide people with new and deeper ways to encounter God, this thesis provides a basis for the significance of integrating the arts, and empowering artists in the church. The Soul Food Handbook exists as a model on how to effectively build and run a functioning creative arts ministry.

Key Words: *Creative, Arts, Ministry, Society, Culture, Church*

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INTRODUCTION

Throughout history the creative arts have been recognized as a voice of culture. They are a unique expression of the human reality, a way of connecting people emotionally and experientially. Through the arts people are able to enter into the struggles, pains, joys, thoughts of a person or people group they would not have been able to otherwise. They connect humanity, reminding people they are not alone in what they feel. Whether an entertaining, cathartic, or moving experience, the arts have the ability to connect with people in various ways. The arts are as deep as they are wide; therefore, they affect various aspects of society. Culture is so intertwined with the creative arts that it is near impossible to separate oneself from daily encounters with music, visual arts, film, dance, or theater, making them a notable influence in entertainment, education, and therapy.

More importantly, I believe the arts operate as a valuable doorway for people to encounter and connect with God. Coupled with truth, the creative arts are infused with the power to break down barriers, pass through human rationale, and penetrate hearts and souls in a way that opens people up to God. A beautiful gift to humanity from a creative God, the arts allow humankind to experience God in a new perspective and understand more of who He is. Hundreds of years ago the church was a place that cultivated artistic experiences, valuing beauty, creativity, and the powerful transformation that takes place when the arts work in step with the power of the Holy Spirit. Unfortunately, over time the arts began to lose prominence in the church, falling into a more pragmatic role, diminished to the sole use of “ministry tools.” While the arts are noticeably valuable for their usefulness in being able to further a message or emphasize a point, it is crucial to recognize the powerful ministry that can take place through art

alone. The arts have seen resurgence in countless churches, and many are beginning to form their own arts ministries, while also empowering artists in the congregation to use their gifts.

As an artist growing up in a church that often integrated the arts, whether through a dance, drama, or special song, I learned to appreciate the value of what a creative element could bring to a message. However, I never fully learned to appreciate the inherent ministry of the creative arts themselves. As an artist called into ministry, this misunderstanding of the value of the arts created a struggle inside me. Do I pursue ministry and forsake my desire to grow in my talents? Or, do I pursue the arts and settle with the hopes of performing a dance in church occasionally while battling the “secular world” in the attempts to keep my art sacred? It was not until my involvement in Soul Food, a college creative arts ministry club, in which I learned to reconcile the arts and ministry and appreciate the arts for their own ability to minister to others.

Soul Food is a group of college students committed to the exploration of the arts and its implicit and explicit ability to communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Each year Soul Food’s primary focus is to write, rehearse, and perform a show exploring various themes through a faith-based lens. This requires a strong team of student writers, performers, directors, and technicians. While the show is mainly composed of numerous short acting scenes, other artistic elements are usually incorporated such as dance, poetry, music, and film. I have had the incredible privilege of being a part of this club for all four of my years at Southeastern University—the first two as an actress, and the last two as a director.

Soul Food originally began in a class at Southeastern called “Artist in the Church” taught by professor Matthew Huett. The class was designed to discuss the valuable role artists have in ministry, while also equipping ministers and artists alike to integrate the arts into a church setting.

Soul Food then moved from “Artist in the Church” class and became its own student run organization sponsored by the Communication department. Soul Food receives new leadership around every two years as the student directors graduate thus causing it to change over time. Each director brings his/her own influence to the team that may change the structure of the club; however, Soul Food’s main objective has remained the same: to write, and perform a show. Since my time on the team, Soul Food has transitioned out of the Communication department and under the support and guidance of the College of Religion and Christian Ministries (CCMR). It has also been registered as an official university club under the Department of Student Experience. Soul Food continues to brainstorm and write during the fall semester, and perform a show in the spring semester, but has grown from solely a theater performance to incorporate everything from acting, dancing, singing, film and spoken word. The structure has also expanded as Soul Food now incorporates individual writing, performance, and tech teams.

Being a part of Soul Food the past four years has created a significant impact upon my life. It is through this ministry I have begun to understand the intersection of the arts and faith. It showed me that the arts are able to carry a message of their own, and that when coupled with truth they are powerful enough to stand alone in ministry and touch the lives of others. Soul Food gave me the confidence to know that I can make a difference as an artist. I do not have to settle for solely an entertainer for the sake of being a performing artist; I can create art that has depth, art that speaks, art that is enriched with theology and truth of the Gospel, art that draws people to Christ. Soul Food helped me recognize my value as an artist and empowered me to walk confidently.

Being a part of Soul Food also provided me with a strong community of artists. This community not only challenged me to be a better artist, but also a stronger follower of Christ.

They allowed me to be myself and provided me with the support to know I am not alone in my occasional thoughts and feelings of inadequacy or insecurity. This community gave me the ability to find freedom in my own unique creative expression. Being a part of this community also gave me a desire to see artists welcomed in the church rather than discounted in the congregation. To see similar communities created in the church for artists to be strengthened, pastored, and encouraged.

Most importantly, Soul Food has impacted me with its ability to minister to its audience members. It has been a privilege to pray for my friends and family members that have come to see shows and have been touched. We often receive testimonies from audience members who felt they related to a specific character or scene, and how God spoke to them through the theme of the show.

Soul Food is an example of a functioning arts ministry. Ultimately, the arts carry a valuable role in society and ministry and can prove to be a transformative experience that changes the lives of those experiencing it. While this paper explores the significance of the arts in society, and their current integration in the church, concludes with a handbook on how to run Soul Food, serving as an example for any churches or para-churches looking to recreate a similar ministry.

THE ARTS AND SOCIETY

The arts are so inextricably intertwined with culture that it is difficult to imagine life without their influence. However, in spite of this constant connection, it is not always easy to distinguish the value and clear beneficial influence the arts provide. Makoto Fujimura makes the case that the “soul” of culture is most cared for when implanted with reminders of beauty—concepts or creations that appeal to people on multiple levels, rationally and emotionally. Though not necessary to daily survival, beauty satisfies at a level beyond humanity’s shallow needs, and allows people to flourish. The culture that is well cared for then becomes a place in which people thrive.¹ The arts, a tangible aspect of beauty, are able to implicitly and explicitly penetrate the human heart and promote a healthy culture. In order to better understand this intrinsic power of the arts it is helpful to look at the various aspects of society in which they are impacting.

The most obvious and general integration of the arts in our culture is perhaps the entertainment world. In this sense, entertainment is being used to include any and all art that is not being used to further another purpose such as therapy or education. Films, albums, painting or photography exhibits, theater performances, etc., are all art forms that fit under the broad spectrum of entertainment as they provide a point of interest and leisure for audiences. Although the entertainment realm is prone to cater to consumerism and a more pragmatic view of the arts, it doesn’t diminish the intrinsic value of the many art pieces that are created with the goal of moving and speaking to audiences. Many people are drawn to such artistic experiences for deeper connections beyond the general entertainment factor.

¹ Makoto Fujimura, *Culture Care* (New York, NY: Fujimura Institute, 2014), 7.

Pinchas Noy's article further emphasizes this point by describing art as the most powerful tool for communicating emotion. Artists work to express the depth of their own innermost thoughts, fears, and joys, providing an opportunity for others to relate in their experiences. An aesthetic experience is achieved for the audience through the recipient's active engagement with the artwork. The creative artist and the audience work together in allowing the artwork to speak and evoke emotion.² According to Derek Attridge, this response one has to the art is considered an event on its own. Though different from daily events that evoke emotions, this response is an event that can be experienced over and over again. Engaging in the arts brings a pleasure that the author claims is produced through art's power to captivate an audience through its form, language, symbols, etc., and its ability to portray a culture's familiarity with a new perspective.³ Recipient's can revisit art and engage in its power all over again in order to process each emotion more deeply than the first time

The theater world is a great example of this as it is well known and appreciated for its ability to present timeless stories in a unique way that capture the emotional attention of audiences. Ben Walmsley's research shows that the number one motivating factor behind audience attendance to the theater is the emotional impact of the performance. The desire for an emotional experience overruled the desire to learn, escape, or socialize when visiting the theater.⁴ In their article, Sabine Boerner and Johanna Jobst agree with this opinion, finding that the emotional response of theatre attendees has the highest impact on a theatre's evaluation.

² Pinchas Noy, and Dorit Noy-Sharav, "Art and Emotions Art and Emotions." *International Journal Of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies* 10, no. 2 (2013): 104-105.

³ Derek Attridge, "Once More With Feeling: Art, Affect and Performance." *Textual Practice* 25, no. 2 (2011): 329-343.

⁴ Ben Walmsley, "Why People Go to the Theatre: A Qualitative Study of Audience Motivation." *Journal of Customer Behavior* 10, no. 4 (2011): 335-351.

Attendees will focus on the show's emotional impact over its complexity and thought provoking impulses in determining their overall opinion of a show.⁵

The arts provide a mirror to reality, sharing the stories and emotions of others. Artists are able to use this emotional connection as a way of challenging audiences and evoking them to change. Theater companies like the Workman Theater Project apply this ability by using their performing arts platform to speak out about mental illness. Their unique company involves artists who have personally struggled with anxiety, depression, bi-polar disorder, etc. The creation of their musical production *Joy* allows artists to engage audiences in discussion about the topic of depression.⁶ Documentaries like Kirsti Mutz's *People Like Us* shine a light on the lives of those with intellectual disabilities and aim at eliciting an empathetic response that will lead to change in the negative treatment of individuals with disabilities.⁷ It is in examples like this that art moves from purely entertainment to revealing the heart of a movement. Fujimura eloquently sums this up by writing, "Any cause we believe in needs a song that everyone can sing, a song to march to or rally around, a song that will draw people in so they can learn to care. Artists are the ones to provide the music."⁸

The arts have also proved to be an influential aspect of therapy, providing counselors with additional approaches to helping clients deal with various emotional needs in a non-threatening way. Art therapy is a growing form of treatment as there are numerous art forms allowing therapists and counselors a variety of intervention possibilities. Poetry therapy aims to

⁵ Sabine Boerner, and Johanna Jobst, "Enjoying Theater: The Role of Visitor's Response to the Performance." *Psychology of Aesthetics, Creativity, and the Arts* 7, no. 4: (2013): 391-408.

⁶ Kirsty Johnston, "Performing Depression: The Workman Theatre Project and the Making of Joy. A Musical. About Depression." *Text & Performance Quarterly* 28, no. ½ (2008): 206-224.

⁷ Kirsti Mutz, *People Like Us*, Documentary, directed by Kirsti Mutz (2016; Lakeland: Cheverly Films), Film.

⁸ Fujimura, *Culture Care*, 49.

help clients create a meaningful metaphor for themselves, and bring about emotional stability.⁹ Visual arts psychotherapy allows clients to depict various moods and feelings in visual form, often providing awareness to personal issues that are not spoken.¹⁰ Dance movement psychotherapy focuses on body movement and exploring a great sense of safety and freedom in a space. In a study, Tin Hung Ho concluded that dance therapy helped reduce distress and enhance self-esteem in survivors of childhood sexual abuse.¹¹ Scott Hitchcock and Carol Ross' study on the use of creative arts in trauma and addiction therapy found artistic exercises to be a cathartic release for patients, enabling them to understand the depth of their emotions and verbalize their thoughts more clearly.¹² Grace Brillantes-Evangelista's article examined the effect of arts therapy in adolescents with depression and PTSD and concluded the arts empowered the youth to engage in their own recovery.¹³ Both articles suggest the arts can act as a form of emotional language that allows therapy patients to process their deepest feelings. The arts give participants an outlet to reflect on and confront any fears, memories, or circumstances.

Finally, in addition to entertainment and therapy, the arts are also seen to have a powerful impact on the education system. Benefits of adolescent arts involvement have been observed to include drug resistance, better stress management, a higher level of satisfaction and excitement, understanding of appropriate physical contact, and the ability to overcome exclusivity through

⁹ R. Byrt, and S. McArdle, Fiction, poetry, and mental health: Expressive and therapeutic uses of literature. *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing*, 8 (2001), pp. 517–524

¹⁰ Marian Liebmann, *Art Therapy for Groups* (New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2004).

¹¹ Rainbow Tin Hung Ho, "A place and space to survive: A dance/movement therapy program for childhood sexual abuse survivors." *Arts In Psychotherapy* 46 (2015): 9-16.

¹² Scott, E. Hitchcock, and Carol J. Ross, "Integrating the Creative Arts into Trauma and Addiction Treatment: Eight Essential Processes." *Journal Of Chemical Dependency Treatment* 8, no. 2 (2006): 207-226.

¹³ Grace Brillantes-Evangelista, "An Evaluation of Visual Arts and Poetry as Therapeutic Interventions with Abused Adolescents." *The Arts In Psychotherapy* 40, no. 1 (2013): 71-84.

community involvement.¹⁴ Teachers in a charter school for at-risk students have found that implementation of the creative arts in the classroom increases attendance, and keeps students engaged while also building self-esteem in teenagers. Specific creative arts projects are used to engage students in expressing their beliefs and redefining their values. Ultimately, these effects not only benefit the lives of the student but the community they are a part of as the arts curriculum aids in growing these students into stronger members of society.¹⁵

It is clear the arts have a strongly influential role in society. Understanding the arts' ability to enrich, engage, heal, and motivate in various circumstances increases its value and credibility. As the arts begin to find a home once again in the church, there is no excuse for this value to be undermined. Jeremy Begbie offers that when artists allow their art to be guided by movements of the Holy Spirit it has the capacity to reorder lives. Begbie concludes that allowing art to speak theologically does not solely rely on the divine transcendence of Holy Spirit, but relies on living a daily covenanted life open to the Spirit.¹⁶ By acknowledging the intrinsic power of the arts, the church can empower and equip artists to minister to others with their work.

¹⁴ Norma Daykin, et al., "The Impact in Participation in Performing Arts on Adolescent Health and Behaviour." *Journal of Health Psychology* 13, no. 2 (March 2008): 251-264.

¹⁵ Randal W. Boldt, and Catherine Brooks, "Creative Arts: Strengthening Academics and Building Community with Students At-Risk." *Reclaiming Children & Youth* 14, no. 4 (2006): 223-227.

¹⁶ Jeremy S. Begbie, "The Holy Spirit at Work in the Arts: Learning from George Herbert." *Interpretation* 66, no. 1 (01, 2012): 41-54,4.

THE ARTS IN THE CHURCH

While the intrinsic nature of the arts does not change based on the context in which they are presented, the amount of influence the arts are given is often determined by its context. The arts maintain a heavy presence in society, but have not always held the same presence or influence in the church. However, many churches today are starting to recognize this divide and are beginning to reclaim the arts, providing a space for artists to use their gifts in ministry when this was not always the case.

The view a person holds of the arts will determine the way they interact with the arts, and the value that person places on them. Over the years, the church has viewed the arts as ministry tool, endorsing them as simply instruments for the Christian message. By doing so, it diminished the intrinsic value of the arts. Creating a divide between the sacred and the secular, the church has abstained from promoting the arts and their growth in the Christian community with the idea that the arts cater to secular themes and ideals. However, Christian art is viewed as that which is created with overtly religious and spiritual images and themes, therefore, deeming it as sacred and giving it a place in the church.

Rory Noland warns churches against using the arts to propagate a Christian subculture as a portion of Christians have chosen to isolate themselves from the rest of society in an attempt to escape from worldly influences. This has sparked a Christian subculture that considers “Christian art,” pieces solely portraying religious themes or elements, to be more edifying to society than other artwork.¹⁷ In doing so, this approach justifies art must have a certain message to be considered good art, with no concern for its quality or ability to impact those who interact with it. This approach constricts the power and ability of the arts and artists in their gift to speak and

¹⁷ Rory Noland, *Thriving as an Artist in the Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004) 214.

provide audiences with an opportunity to encounter God through the artwork. Daniel Siedell further emphasizes this point in his book, *God in the Gallery*, by explaining that Evangelical art focuses more on the clarity of the message being sent than the dynamics of the form in which it is delivered.¹⁸ Instead of letting the art speak for itself through both its form and content and provide a transcendent experience, Christian art focuses on the communication of messages stripping the audience of an opportunity of “contemplation of and communion with the Divine.” Siedell concludes by saying, “in the Christian artists’ zeal to express a Christian message, Christian art—in the bitterest of ironies—can further contribute to denying Christ’s presence in the world.”¹⁹ While a harsh critique, Siedell poses a truth that gives need for a new perspective on the arts in the Christian sphere.

Francis Schaeffer’s *Art and the Bible*, deals with the question, “What is the place of art in the Christian life?” He deals with Christians on the subject of the lordship of Christ vying that Christ is Lord over the whole of a man’s life, including the arts. By excluding the arts and culture for being “non-religious” Christians are living with a limited perspective of God’s ability to move through the arts.²⁰ Schaeffer builds a biblical case for the arts, pointing out the many forms they take on throughout scripture. From practical art, representational art, abstract and imaginative art, to functional and non- functional art, and religious and non-religious art, each plays a valuable role whether or not it carried its own religious message. Schaeffer writes, “The factor that makes art Christian is not that it necessarily deals with religious subject matter.”²¹ It is the acknowledgment that God wants His people to use the artistic gifts he has given them that

¹⁸ Daniel Siedell, *God in the Gallery* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008) 161.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 164.

²⁰ Francis Schaeffer, *Art and the Bible* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2006) 13-15.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 31.

defines Christian art. Art is valuable to God, and can function in many different ways. When the church acknowledges this it will find the freedom to implement the arts in various ways.

Understanding the responsibility man has to God in acknowledging Him is crucial in understanding the intersection between the arts and faith. When people begin to understand that the presence of God is not limited to the Church, or art pieces that send an explicitly Christian message, they are able to acknowledge God throughout their daily lives. The divide between the sacred and the secular grows smaller when people begin to treat their everyday activities as ways to encounter God. Nicholas Wolterstorff holds the view of the artist as a responsible servant, and his art must serve as a responsible action in which God is acknowledged. He writes,

The artist is not to pick up his responsibilities when he lays aside his art—he is to exercise his responsibilities in the very production of his art. And we who make use of his art are not to leave responsibility behind when we enter art; in our very use of it we are to exercise our responsibilities.²²

When the church is able to acknowledge the presence of God beyond those concepts solely deemed as sacred and religious, it will be free to value the arts for what they are rather than what they can do. The church will not limit the arts to a ministry tool, but rather acknowledge God's ability to move through any art form, and allow the arts to provide their own ministry experience. While the church fulfills its responsibility by interacting with the art, as mentioned by Wolterstorff, it must also remind the artists in the congregation of their responsibility to acknowledge God in their production of art.

²² Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Art in Action* (Grand Rapids, MI: Erdmans Publishing Co., 1980), 78.

THE ARTS IN MINISTRY

As the arts begin to find a place in the church, it is important to look at churches and ministries that are actively engaging the arts in a manner that acknowledges their intrinsic value. In his book, *The Art of Curating Worship*, Mark Pierson describes his experience as the pastor of Cityside Baptist Church in Auckland, New Zealand. It is through Pierson's leadership that Cityside became a forerunner among churches in creative-worship projects. Pierson wanted the worship of his community to build a genuine Christian faith and spiritual depth while also providing connection with the reality and emotions of people's stories. He believed the best way to do this was by capturing the "formative power of art and its processes." Pierson writes, "I believe art is capable of far more than communicating a message: it is capable of conveying the voice of God and harboring an encounter with God." With this understanding of the implications of art engagement on spiritual formation and ministry, Pierson argues for a need to understand worship as an art form. Coining the term, "worship curator" Pierson approached the crafting of worship services at Cityside in the same manner an artist would approach crafting a new art piece.²³ Through their engagement with the arts Cityside curates worship spaces for people to connect with the presence of God.

In a different capacity, the Assemblies of God and Church of God denominations encourage engagement with the arts throughout their youth programs. The Assemblies of God Fine Arts Festivals allows for students twelve to seventeen years of age to compete in various art divisions, through mediums such as dance, musical theater, photography, human video, poetry, and music. The Fine Arts Festival is purposed as a discipleship tool that encourages students to

²³ Mark Pierson, *The Art of Curating Worship*, (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010), 5-13.

discover, develop, and deploy their ministry gifts.²⁴ Similarly, the Church of God hosts Teen Talent competitions, allowing youth to compete in various categories such as, drama, music, creative writing, and multi-media. The Teen Talent program purposes to motivate young people to discover, develop and dedicate their talent in ministry.²⁵ The existence of these programs signify church communities that value the gift of the arts and have a desire to see them implemented in ministry by empowering young artists to harness their gifts.

Finally, Willow Creek Community Church in Chicago is one of the most prominent church communities in the development of art ministries with a few of the staff even writing books on their experience that adds to the limited literature on art ministry. Willow has a multi-staff programming team complete with a vocal director, drama director, music director, and creative consultants, proving Willow's high placement of value on the power of the arts.²⁶ A significant aspect of implementing the arts in any church community is empowering the artists in that congregation to use their gifts in ministry. In its desire to create weekly Sunday worship experiences that provide transcendent moments for the congregation, and deepen their understanding and experiences of the truth of God, Willow Creek turned to the artists in the congregation. Nancy Beach, the Director of Programming at Willow, is in charge of building the artist community in the congregation and allowing them to unleash the power of the arts in ministry.²⁷ Her book, *An Hour on Sunday* explores the value an arts ministry has in the programming of a Sunday service. Beach also describes the values she finds the most significant

²⁴ AG General Council, *Fine Arts Festival Rule Book*, (Springfield, MO: The Assemblies of God General Council, 2015), 4-12.

²⁵ "Teen Talent," Church of God Youth and Discipleship, accessed March 26, 2016, <http://www.cogyouth.org/youth/teen-talent>

²⁶ Scott Dyer, *The Source for Effective Church Service Planning* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2003), 12-13.

²⁷ Nancy Beach, *An Hour on Sunday*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2004), 34.

in working with artists in an arts ministry such as having intentionality behind what is created, building a loving community among the artists, developing excellence and creativity, and soul care.²⁸ In his book, *The Heart of the Artist*, Rory Noland, provides insight in what it means to be an artist. As the Music Director at Willow, Noland works with artists daily and has a strong understanding of the insecurities, motivations, conflicts, and joys of being a creative individual. Noland strives to encourage artists to fulfill their calling in ministry, while also challenging them to become more of the artist God wants them to be.²⁹

Ultimately, it is clear that in order to develop a fully functioning arts ministry the church must understand the intrinsic value of the arts, trusting them to provide deeper moments of communion and engagement with the presence of God, while also training, equipping, and empowering artists in the congregation to freely use their gifts in ministry.

²⁸ Beach, *An Hour on Sunday*, 55-125.

²⁹ Rory Noland, *The Heart of the Artist*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999) 10.

METHODOLOGY

There is currently a gap in literature on the valuable role the arts can play in effective ministry. My methodology is primarily comprised of a literature review and source analysis that uses scholarly, peer-reviewed articles and studies exploring the role the arts play in society and ministry. My online sources are taken from scholarly databases such as EBSCO, ProQuest, and JSTOR. Using these articles, along with several books from credible authors, I have endeavored to make connections between the studies provided in order to fill the gap in literature and provide a credible basis for the value of creating and implementing art ministries.

In researching the role and influence of arts in society, the information found was provided by credible authors, professors, and professionals in their specific area of expertise. In the fields of counseling and therapy, Scott Hitchcock is an award-winning licensed psychotherapist, and Dorit Noy-Sharav is a clinical psychologist who has published many of her own books. Ben Walmsley has written two books on the topics of Art and Entertainment and is currently the Senior Lecturer in Arts & Entertainment Management at Leeds Metropolitan University. Norma Daykin received the Royal Society of Public Health's arts and health research award for prominent contributions to music and health research.

Authors Makoto Fujimura, Mark Pierson, and Nancy Beach are all leaders in current art ministries or movements. Fujimura, an experienced painter, is currently the director for center of theology, worship, and the arts at Fuller Theological Seminary in California and pioneer of the Fujimura Institute, promoting various art events and lectures. Mark Pierson and Nancy Beach are both active in ministry and have successfully been involved in churches and worship events in which they have worked alongside artists to curate and produce transformative moments in worship.

The Soul Food handbook is based on a basic level of theater knowledge due to my undergraduate minor in theater and four years of personal involvement with Soul Food. Studying theater allowed me to take classes such as Advanced Acting, Directing for Theater, and Stage Production and Design. These classes taught me how to create and perform my own scenes, audition and direct other actors, and produce shows with various technical elements. My personal involvement with Soul Food has allowed me to write from firsthand experience what it takes to create a strong creative arts ministry.

I was a part of the performance team for two years, which provided me with the knowledge of what is needed to build a strong community for the performers, along with the understanding of how to structure a club in a manner that is most beneficial for college students at Southeastern. It also gave me the chance to learn under previous directors. I became a director my final two years on Soul Food, which provided me with insight on the different processes it takes to build a show such as auditions, casting, writing scripts, planning rehearsals, marketing, and production. Directing has given me a deeper understanding of how to work with and best care for artists.

Finally, my overall experience in Soul Food has given me the opportunity to document its impact on lives of those a part of the team, and the lives of those who have seen the show. This impact has been shared through personal testimonies of both audience and team members.

Soul Food Handbook

Southeastern University

Chapter 1: The Basics

A. What is Soul Food?

1. Mission

Soul Food is a team of college students committed to the exploration of the arts and its explicit and implicit ability to communicate the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

2. Vision

To invite the Southeastern and Lakeland community into a creative experience that allows them to connect with the Gospel in a unique way.

3. Strategy

- Creating, rehearsing, and producing a Spring Show that discusses various biblical truths under one theme.
- Performing for different churches and organizations in the Lakeland area.
- Holding events for Southeastern students and staff to discuss and experience the interplay between the arts and faith.

B. Yearly Structure

The Soul Food season follows the fall and spring school semesters, due to its being a college club.

1. Fall

The Fall Semester of Soul Food is dedicated to building a team and brainstorming and creating for the spring show. This includes everything from auditions and team bonding, to writing and small outside performances.

a. Acting Auditions

Held within the first few weeks of school, the director holds auditions to fill the needed positions on the team.

b. Team Bonding

Actors spend time together growing relationally and spiritually as preparation for the ministry they will be doing together.

c. Writing Meetings

Held throughout the entire semester, in these meetings writers are recruited, trained and empowered to write the spring show.

d. Outside Performances

Actors and writers work together to write short, stand-alone sketches to perform at various, non Soul Food related, events throughout the Fall Semester.

2. Spring

The spring semester of Soul Food is dedicated to finalizing, and performing the spring show. This includes everything from casting and rehearsing, to adding technical elements and ministering through the show.

a. Casting

Once the show is written the Director casts the actors and hands out their scripts.

b. Rehearsing

Starting in the beginning of February, rehearsals will run through April. Every scene in the show will be blocked and memorized independently, until the show can be rehearsed as a whole.

c. Tech

The tech crew is recruited finalize all technical factors such as, performance location, set, lighting, sound, props, and costumes.

d. Ministry

While the ministry of the team and show is the most prominent focus throughout the entire year of Soul Food, it is culminated in the Spring Show as the team ministers through their craft, and allows the audience a time to respond after the show.

C. Team Structure**1. Club Chartering**

Soul Food is registered as an on-campus club; therefore, every fall semester the club has to re-charter through SGA (Student Government Association) in order to be properly recognized. This provides the club with school support, free marketing, advertising help, optional funding, and an opportunity to participate in club rush. Being recognized as an official club through DSE also gives club President's the opportunity to attend leadership-training sessions with the University's leadership team.

Process of Chartering:

- a. Log onto myseu.seu.edu
- b. Click on "Student Experience" under the Student Development tab
- c. Choose the SGA tab on the far right
- d. Scroll down to Clubs and Organizations
- e. Fill out the club chartering form

2. College of Christian Ministries and Religion

In addition to being an official club of the University, Soul Food is also under the guidance and support of the College of Christian Ministries and Religion. Soul Food's staff sponsor is a professor in this college, and much of the performance content is guided and cleared through this sponsor. Soul Food's budget line is also managed through the CCMR.

3. Directors

Soul Food is made up of many different teams that come together to create the spring show. These teams are made up of actors, writers, videographers, technical producers, artists, designers, etc. Each of these teams has their own student leader that works under the vision of the club's director.

The roles are outlined below:**a. Director**

An upperclassmen student who has been on Soul Food for at least two years fills this role. The Director is in charge of casting the overall vision for the show and recruiting the other team leaders. While the Director works specifically with the other Directors, he/she is also in charge of shepherding the actors and running the rehearsal process.

b. Intern/Assistant Director

Each Director should have an Intern, or Assistant Director, who has been on Soul Food for at least one year. The Assistant Director's role is to learn under the director in preparation for leading Soul Food the next year. This student will have the opportunity to perform in the spring show as a part of the acting team, and also help the Lead Director in auditions, casting, and running rehearsals.

c. Stage Manager

The Stage Manager is essentially an administrative assistant for the Director, while also a manager for the production crew. He/she will be present at each rehearsal and keep all production notes such as, sound and light cues, blocking, and prop and set pieces that are needed. The Stage Manager will help communicate with the Director and production crew. He/she will also be the one calling cues during the performance.

d. Writing Director

This student will oversee every writing meeting and manage the team of writers as they create the spring show. He/she may also be on the acting team.

e. Film Director

This role requires a film student who has had experience in creating and directing short films and is able to lead his/her own film crew. He/she will be in charge of building his/her own team, and filming all of Soul Food's needed videos.

d. Marketing/PR Director

This student is in charge of designing Soul Food's marketing and connecting with the right departments to market each event. He/she will recruit a team, run events like club rush, and conduct early ticket sales.

e. Technical Director

The Technical Director works along side the Stage Manager on the technical production of the show. He/she is in charge of organizing the tech crew and delegating their responsibilities.

Chapter 2: Building a Team

A. Preparation for a new year:

1. Choosing a theme:

At the end of every spring show, the cast comes together one last time for a cast party and show evaluation. This time is spent discussing the positives and negatives of the spring show, as well as the writing and rehearsal process during the year. It is also during this time that the current team brainstorms themes for the upcoming Soul Food year. This time is run by the director(s) that will be overseeing next year's show.

Points for choosing a theme:

- What is a common idea from the team?
- Is it relevant for a college age group?
- What is the specific message you want to share with the audience?
- Are there many applications to explore in the theme?
- Have you prayed about it?

2. Recruiting a team:

a. Returners:

Actors who were a part of the previous Soul Food year are immediately invited back to return for the next year as long as they are still undergraduate students. However, some may choose not to return so it is important to contact them over the summer asking them about their recommitment. Once the school year starts plan a meeting with all of those who will be returning.

b. Returner meeting:

Welcome back all who are returning and reveal the theme for the next Soul Food year. Discuss any preparations that need to be made in terms of recruiting; i.e., marketing for auditions, club rush, and audition night.

c. Steps to Recruiting:

- Create a graphic with audition information. (See Marketing)
- Hand out audition flyers at club rush.
- Spread the word about auditions to friends and new students.
- Have a student wide email sent out.
- Communicate with the Ministry and Communication departments to have auditions advertised at their department meetings.
- Sign up for a booth at Club Rush.

3. Club Rush:

This is the largest recruiting event of the semester where students all over campus are introduced to the numerous clubs around campus. At the booth students will be hear about the purpose of Soul Food and sign up if they are interested in auditioning for the acting team or helping in another area.

Running the booth:

- Have current Soul Food members sign up for a half hour time slot between set-up and tear down (10am-1pm) in order to run the booth.
- Invite students who are interested to come to the informational meeting/audition with a small flier.
- Provide a sign up sheet for students to fill out their name, number, email, and area of interest on Soul Food.
- Be creative with the rest of the booth. Feel free to provide candy, and display pictures and videos of previous years.

Follow up the event with an email reminder to all those who have signed up about the informational meeting and acting auditions.

4. Informational Meeting

A 30-minute informational meeting will precede the evening of auditions. The purpose of this meeting is to give all who are interested a better understanding of what the club entails.

Preferred Location: Johnson Chapel

Below are aspects of the meeting:

- The director(s) share the mission, values, structure, and commitment level of Soul Food. This is often accompanied by a slide show.
- Have current team members introduce themselves and share a short testimonial about their involvement in Soul Food.
- Show a short video clip from previous Soul Food shows.
- Time for questions.
- Sign ups for those who want to be a part of the writing, film, marketing and tech teams.

B. Auditions:

Immediately following the informational meeting, those who would like to audition will stay and participate in a series of cold readings from the scripts of previous shows. It is important that auditions run as efficiently as possible, so this should start with the larger group sketches and narrow down the auditioners throughout the evening. As the pool is narrowed down, begin handing out the scripts for the smaller scenes. Prepare a series of interview questions to ask the final group of auditioners.

In the past, auditions have usually taken place in one evening; however, the current director may choose to do two nights of auditions, reserving the second night exclusively for call-backs. This second option may allow for a less-rushed, more intimate audition process. By splitting the auditions between two nights, the director can take his/her time interviewing those that have been called back the second night.

1. Preparing for auditions:

- a. Secure current team members' participation in the evening.
- b. Print information sheets.
- c. Bring white boards and dry erase markers. (Or use white board in the room, if available)

- d. Print scripts:
 - 3-4 large group scenes.
 - 3-4 small group scenes.
 - 5-6 duet scenes.

*Make sure to print enough scripts as per roles in each scene. Label each script with a different name of the character in the scene.

*It is preferable to print doubles of the same script so that different groups can practice the same scene at the same time.

- e. Prepare interview questions.

2. Steps to Follow in Auditions:

- a. Each student must fill out an information sheet and take their picture with their name written on a white board.
- b. Starting with the large group scenes, break students into groups and assign roles.
- c. Assign a current team member to over see each group and give each group 5 minutes to run through the scene outside the audition room.
- d. Bring the groups back to watch the performances.
- e. Continue through the rest of the night by giving actors different scripts and roles to read. Be sure to cast actors in varying styles of roles
- f. After two or three rounds of large group scenes, narrow down the audition pool by asking students you want to see more of to stay.
- g. Begin handing out the scripts for duet scenes and small group scenes at the same time, and cycle through the rest of the cold reads by having students run through scenes outside the audition room while other performances occur.
- h. Depending on the size of the group auditioning, the director may have to narrow down the pool again after a few rounds of small group scenes.
- i. After each of the last auditioners have read 4-5 times in varying roles, end the evening with a few interview questions.
- j. Take time to assure the auditioners of how well they did, thank them for their time, pray for them, and give them a timeline of when they should hear back about making the team.

3. What to look for:

We don't look solely for the best acting skills. We look for people with a heart and passion for the ministry of Soul Food, a teachable spirit, as well as talent.

Key Questions to Consider in Auditions:

- a. Do they have previous acting experience?
- b. Are they versatile? Can they act in both comedy and drama?
- c. Are they personable? Do they get along with the current team and those around them?
- d. Do they have other performance abilities (singing, dancing, videography, playing an instrument?)
- e. Are they passionate about Soul Food?
- f. Where are they in their faith walk?
- g. What are their other conflicts?

4. Audition debrief:

Immediately following the auditions/interviews the director will gather the current Soul Food team members to debrief about the auditions. This is an important time in which the director/assistant director will be able to hear the rest of the team's opinions. Begin by reminding the team of the number of males and females that need to be cast. The director can facilitate the conversation by asking the team to name a few of the actors that stood out and allow this to be a time of open-conversation. Be sure to note the names of those who are commonly mentioned.

Pictures and informational sheets can help the team connect the names and faces of each actor that auditioned, while also providing extra information that may be helpful in narrowing down the cast, such as other performance arts skills and/or commitments and conflicts.

5. The Final Decision:

Once the new team members have been selected, those who auditioned are notified of their acceptance or rejection via email. The director may choose to do this in any way; however, it is important that every individual who auditioned is notified of their status on the team. Emails are sent out no later than two days after auditions.

Acceptance emails congratulate the student on their placement on the team and provide the opportunity for the student to accept or deny their position. This email also includes a short reiteration of the expectations of being a part of Soul Food along with the time, date and place of the first meeting.

Rejection emails include a thank you to all who came out and an apology for not being able to accept more students. It is concluded with other ways in which to get involved with Soul Food.

C. Community Building:

The acting team has three focuses during the Fall Semester: Team Building, Spiritual Formation, and Performances.

1. Team Building:

In Soul Food, we strive to build a safe and trusting community amongst our actors so that they feel comfortable acting with one another. This allows the actors freedom to explore their characters and take risks in a secure environment. The more comfortable the actors are with each other and the director the more free they will feel in their acting.

During the Fall Semester the acting team meets every other week for an hour and half in an effort to begin developing this sense of community. The content of these meetings vary from "get to know you" games and/or outings, to times of prayer and reflection. The goal of these meetings is to provide a space where the team will feel comfortable sharing about themselves and developing friendships. In addition to these meetings, the team will be encouraged to have lunch or dinner together throughout the week. The director may schedule individual lunches or dinners to get to know team members more personally.

2. Spiritual Formation:

Soul Food is first and foremost a ministry. The cast and crew invite God to minister to them first, in order that they may effectively pour out to others. This is done by creating space for God to

speak to the team both individually and communally. It is important that this time is used to refocus the hearts and minds of the team on what God is doing and wants to say through the show. This time is spent practicing, but is not limited to, the disciplines of Prayer, Reflection, and Sharing.

a. Prayer:

Time is spent in prayer either communally or individually depending on the meeting.

Points of focus for prayer:

- Personal needs of team members
- Personal implications of the show theme for team members
- The development of the show from writing, rehearsals, and tech
- For the heart's of audience members

b. Reflection:

Time is spent in silence or listening to worship music and reflecting on what God is speaking. Team members are encouraged to spend their reflection time in whatever way they best connect with God; i.e., Journaling, Prayer and Listening, Scripture meditation. Occasionally, the director can provide specific ideas and/or questions that coincide with the theme to guide the team in their reflection.

c. Sharing:

This time may look different during various meetings. Often the team will come together as whole, separate by gender, or break up into groups of 3 and 4 to discuss with one another. A team member may be encouraged to share a short devotional with the team, or the director may provide a specific topic to discuss. At other times the team may be given the freedom to share anything they are learning, or struggling with. Prayer requests are often taken during this time.

3. Performance

Team members who are able to participate in small performances throughout the semester will be able to experience the rehearsal process earlier than others. This gives these actors a head start when it comes to rehearsals in the spring. They will have the opportunity to get to know their leader's directing style and what it will be like to act with other teammates. If the performance is off campus, the actors will also have the opportunity to travel together. All of these experiences allow the actors to create memories together that unite them as a team.

D. Writing:

In addition to an acting team, Soul Food has a separate writing team that will write the entire show throughout the fall semester. There are no formal auditions to be accepted onto this team. All students who signed up to be a part of the writing team during Soul Food's initial informational meeting will be invited to join. Students on the acting team may choose to also participate on the writing team if they choose.

1. The Team

While anyone interested may join the writing team, it is valuable for the Director to choose a Writing Director, along with a core team of 2-3 writing leaders to oversee this area. Students

who have been a part of the Soul Food writing/acting team in previous years and/or have previous experience in script writing best fill these positions.

The Roles:

a. Director: Casts the overall vision of the show to the writing team, and helps provide script structure. The Director has the right to veto script ideas that he/she feels are not appropriate for the show. Present for various meetings.

b. Writing Director: Present weekly. The Writing Director is in charge of leading every meeting, recasting the show vision, delegating script responsibilities, setting writing deadlines, and reading and editing scripts. May also write his/her own script(s) if he/she chooses.

c. Writing Leaders: Present weekly. The Writing Leaders have the responsibility of guiding the newer writers on the team. They will be placed in charge of specific scripts, and, depending on the size of the overall writing team, will be given a group of writers to work with. May also read and help edit other scripts.

d. Writers: Present as often as they can be. The writers will be assigned to work with Writing Leaders to brainstorm script ideas, scenarios and dialogue.

2. The Process:

The writing team will meet weekly for two hours. The writing process is separated into three parts: Brainstorming, Writing, and Editing.

a. Brainstorming:

Brainstorming should take place in two steps. First, the Director should meet with the core writing team to brainstorm and discuss the main facets of the show, along with its structure.

Some questions to consider are:

- How will the theme be discussed?
- What subthemes will the show include?
- Will there be a consistent story line through the sketches, or will the sketches be unrelated?
- Will there be dance, spoken word, or song included?
- How will the show open and close?
- What will the transitions between sketches look like?
- What will the overall show structure look like?

Once the show structure is set in place, step two will be to meet with the rest of the writing team to brainstorm specific pieces to include in the show. To begin, the Director will reveal the show theme and cast vision for the spring show. The Writing Director can then explain what the overall writing process will look like. Once the team has a clear vision for the show, they will be able to brainstorm specific script idea, and performance pieces that will fit the show. After exhausting all of the team's ideas, the end of the meeting is spent talking through every idea and keeping the one's that work best for the show and scratching the ideas that don't fit.

Keys to Brainstorming:

- Make it FUN
 - Providing items such as, play doh, coloring pages, slinkys, and light snacks can get the team's creative juices flowing.
 - Turn it into a game by setting a timer and seeing how many ideas team members can write down in a few minutes.
- Make it SAFE
 - No idea is a stupid idea. Anything goes in brainstorming, because someone's idea might just provide the foundation for another's idea.
 - Allow everyone to have a voice.
- Keep it ORGANIZED
 - Structure provides freedom.
 - Provide specific categories to guides the team's brainstorming.
 - Utilize a classroom with white boards to write down ideas, so everyone can see them.
- Don't forget to PRAY
 - Invite God into your creative process, asking Him to give the team fresh ideas.
 - Be open to the Holy Spirit's guidance, remembering that what God has to say through this show is most important.

b. Writing:

After brainstorming, the core writing team will solidify the final script ideas they want to pursue, reveal them to the rest of the team, and the writing will begin. Writing leaders will be given specific scripts to work on and the rest of the team members may volunteer to work on a specific script with that leader.

Deadlines during this season are as follows:

Rough Draft 1: Three weeks after the first meeting

Rough Draft 2: Five weeks after the first meeting

Final Draft: Seven weeks after the first meeting

Finished Product: The week before Fall finals

c. Editing:

The Writing Director is in charge of editing Drafts 1 and 2. After the final drafts are submitted, they will be sent to four or five trusted outside sources for constructive feedback. It is helpful to send the scripts to a wide variety of readers including both students and professors who are familiar with what Soul Food is and does. Allot 1-2 weeks for the guests to read and critique the scripts. When they are returned with feedback, they can be given to the writers to finish the final edits before finals week of the Fall semester. The final meeting can be spent reading through the entire show as team.

E. Community Relations

Outside of the spring production, Soul Food maintains a constant presence on Southeastern's campus and the Lakeland community through Campus Canvas events, and outside performances.

Community relations are valuable to Soul Food as they not only promote the Company, but also provide an opportunity for others to participate in the heart of what Soul Food stands for: the collision of Arts and Faith.

1. Campus Canvas:

Campus Canvas is an area of Soul Food that arose out of a desire to promote the collision of Art and Faith on Southeastern's campus. It strays from the performance aspect of Soul Food's shows and creates a space for all students on campus to join in discussion on the value of art and faith. Campus Canvas is an intimate event that happens once a month. Each event will be focused around a different theme including various activities such as worship on a canvas, small group discussion, a Q&A panel, community canvas, and reflection journals.

2. Outside Performances

Soul Food is often requested to perform for various student events on Southeastern's campus or for churches in the community. These performances usually require a specifically themed script, a small group of actors, and limited rehearsal time.

Soul Food requires that a request for their performance be made at least three weeks prior to the performance date to ensure enough time for a script to be written (if a relatable script cannot be found in the script archives), and for actors to rehearse.

Questions to ask:

- What is the date/time of the event?
- What is the event?
- Do they have a specific theme/idea they want the sketch to explore?
- Where will the performance take place? Inside or outside? Will there be a stage?
- How long will the performance be? How many sketches will be performed?
- Will the actors need to use microphones? If so, how many microphones are available? What kind microphones are they?
- Will there be a run-through?
- What time do the actors need to arrive before the event begins?

3. Marketing and Promotion:

With Soul Food's main focus being its spring production it is crucial that there be an attending audience, because without it, there is no show. Throughout the year Soul Food must do its best to market and promote itself and its events to the rest of Southeastern's campus, as well as the Lakeland community. This responsibility falls to the Public Relations/ Marketing Team Lead and team.

To market the team and its events, a graphic must be made for each event, flyers and posters must be printed, a promotional booth can be set up, and the social media must be updated.

a. Graphics:

Due to Soul Food's enrollment as a campus club, the Department of Student Experience Marketing Team, a student leadership team on campus, will create the graphics Soul Food needs. They will also format the graphic for various marketing purposes, i.e.,

posters, table toppers, instagram square, etc. An application for this graphic must be turned into the DSE Marketing office three weeks before the graphic is needed.

What to include:

- The official Soul Food logo
- Date, Time, and event location
- The college that supports SF (College of Christian Ministries and Religion)

Events that require a graphic:

- Auditions
- Campus Canvas
- The Spring Show

b. Flyers, Posters, Table Toppers:

Once the graphic is created, all flyers and posters must be approved by _____ before being handed out or posted on campus. If desired, the Table Toppers located in Tuscana and the Library may be reserved through Annalee Mutz in the DSE Marketing Office.

c. Promotional Booth:

Often set up down El Prado or outside of Tuscana the goal of having a promotional booth is to connect with students and staff on campus and hand out flyers.

In the Fall, Club Rush, as mentioned previously, serves as Soul Food's promotion for auditions and up coming events. In the Spring, an independent promotional booth must be set up the week of the production to invite students to the show.

Setting up the booth:

- Reserve a table
- Table cloth
- Computer with looping intro video.
- Flyers
- Rotation of team members to work the booth. Two people must be working the booth at all times.

d. Social Media:

Soul Food has a social media presence on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. The PR/ Marketing Director is in charge of updating each site with new information.

4. Community Connections:

Below are a few ways of marketing to the community:

- Put up posters and leave fliers in local coffee shops.
- Have team member promote the show to their church congregations.
- Invite local church youth groups
- Invite Teen Challenge

Chapter 3: Preparing a Show

A. The Script

1. Casting

After the show is completely written, the spring semester kicks off with a casting meeting, in which the Director(s) assign the actors their roles, finalizing the script.

Key points in casting:

- Begin with the characters and sketches in which the directors already have actors in mind to play.
- Be mindful of height, skin color, ethnicity, and extra talents. Do not cast someone in a singing role if they can't sing.
- Try and cast each actor in an equal amount of roles. There are no leads due to the show being compiled of mostly unrelated sketches.
- Don't be afraid to stretch actors by casting them in roles they don't usually play.
- Think through every transition, and do not cast actors in back to back sketches unless they have time to transition.

2. Printing:

Print the final version of the script (this includes a cover page and table of contents) using the department printer and printer code. This allows the student to print a large number of pages at one time, as each writer and actor will receive their own script. Make sure the printing is 2-sided and 3-hole punched.

3. Colorful Folders:

Soul Food tradition holds that each actor and writer will receive his or her own colorful duo-tang folder. Each folder is personally labeled and decorated with sharpie drawings by the Directors.

B. Planning Rehearsals

Recognizing that this is a college club, consisting of college students who may have night classes and evening jobs, Soul Food prides itself in being willing to work around student's schedules for rehearsals. Due to the sketches being unrelated and consisting of about 2-6 actors, each sketch is rehearsed independently in one hour increments.

1. Cast schedules

Have each actor send the Director his or her class and work schedules, along with any other weekly evening commitments they have. (Church, missions meetings, etc.) Compile each of these schedules into an excel spreadsheet.

2. Rehearsal Schedules

Once each actor has sent his/her personal schedule, the Director is able to schedule weekly rehearsals for each sketch.

- a. This schedule must include the date, time, and location of each rehearsal, along with who is directing and the actors expected to attend.

- b. Rehearsals take place Monday-Friday between 6-10pm. It is helpful to schedule rehearsals a month at a time to give team members enough notice, and to be sure that each sketch will have equal amounts of rehearsal time.
- c. Each sketch is rehearsed 4 or 5 times individually before the show run-throughs begin. Actors are only required to attend the rehearsals for the sketches they are cast in.
- d. Two weeks before the production, the entire acting team is required to attend every rehearsal, as that is when show run-throughs begin. All other conflicts (work, meetings, etc.) are not excused.
- e. Do not forget to include any team filming days, and meetings.

General Rehearsal Timetable:

- **Late January, Early February:** Rehearsals begin with 1-2 sketches rehearsed a day.
- **Spring Break:** All lines memorized.
- **March:** 3-4 rehearsals a day. Film Weekend.
- **April—2 weeks before performance:** Act 1 and 2 run-throughs. Smoothing out transitions between sketches.
- **1 week before performance:** Run-through the show with technical aspects in the performance space. This includes props, lighting, and sound.
- **Production week:** Dress Rehearsals, and Performances.

4. Rehearsal Locations

Soul Food rehearsals take place in various classrooms over campus, with the most suitable and desired location being Johnson Chapel due to its small stage. However, with the limited availability of this room, other ideal locations include modulars or classrooms in which the desks and chairs can easily be moved to create acting space. It is also important to secure a location that is secluded enough so as not to disrupt an ongoing meeting or class.

In order to secure a room on campus for rehearsals, it must be reserved on Astra, SEU's room reservation system. Astra allows its users to see all the available rooms on campus for any specific time, and choose their most desired location. Once the room reservation is approved, this ensures that no other meetings or events will take place in this room during the scheduled times.

Room Reservations:

- a. Log in to MySeu.seu.edu
- b. Click on the campus tab and scroll down to reservations
- c. In Astra, click on the events tab, and select Event Request
- d. Select the Classroom Request Form and fill in the corresponding information
- e. Create a meeting for each individual rehearsal and click assign rooms to see the room availability.
- f. Select a room for each meeting and submit the request
- g. An email approval will be sent in 24 hours of the request

5. Performance Locations:

Before rehearsals begin it is important to have a performance location secured in order to block each scene with the appropriate amount of space in mind.

Factors that help determine a performance space:

- A stage, or space for a stage to be set up
- Audience seating
- Lighting and sound tech booth
- Backstage area for actors and stage crew
- Availability for desired show dates

In the past, Soul Food has performed its spring show in SEU's Bolin Studio. This space is ideal due to the intimate setting and on campus location. However, due to the limited availability of the Studio it is beneficial to reserve the studio alongside choosing the dates for the show. This is done in the spring of the previous year.

Choosing a date:

- Do the best not to compete with other events occurring the same weekend.
- Make sure there are no events taking place in the studio (Raw TV, Unplanned Improv.) during the week of the show as this is result in having to tear down the stage and put it up again.
- Allow for at least two full months of rehearsal.
- Allow for time in the rest of the semester to debrief the show, and let students prepare for finals.

Studio Reservations:

- Log into myseu.seu.edu
- Click on the services tab and scroll down to media services
- Fill out the studio reservation form in the bottom right corner under "Forms" section.
- Follow up with Studio Manager via email or in person.

6. Film Day

Traditionally, Soul Food starts each show off with a short film introducing each actor in the cast. The Director and Film Lead will work together to create a concept that best fits the year's theme. This includes choosing a location, writing the script, and creating shot list. In creating the rehearsal schedules for the semester it is important to schedule this date up to a month in advance as every team member will need to be present for the filming.

Steps for filming:

- a. Scout the location: Visualize the film in the space.
- b. Create shot list: Breakdown of each scene that will be filmed, along with the angles needed and the actors involved.
- c. Break down the script: A description of what the actors will be doing, along with the props that will be needed.
- d. Reserve film equipment: Fill out an equipment request form located outside the Bolin Studio office.

- e. Organize the film crew: The Film Lead can decide how many people the film will require. Some common roles are: Camera Operator, Boom Operator or Sound Technician, First AD, and an Editor.

7. Directing

Directing means guiding the actors on how to best portray their character on stage. This includes everything from the actors' stage movement and line delivery to the stage business and actor's props and costume. It is not the Director's job to tell the actor how he/she must play the character, but rather to guide the actor in their discovery of their character.

Soul Food's show is made up of individual sketches the Director has more flexibility in his/her approach to directing than one would have in directing one continual piece. The Director may choose to direct every sketch or split the responsibility with the assistant director and another acting member with directing experience. By sharing the rehearsal responsibility more sketches can be rehearsed in a shorter amount of time, and the Director will also have more freedom to work on other production obligations.

A Director's Outline:

a. **First Rehearsal:** Read-Through and Blocking

- A read through: Actors read through their lines in the scene aloud with one another.
- Blocking: the movement of actors on stage.

The first half of this rehearsal includes a read through and dialogue about the scene. The director will provide his/her vision for the scene and its set. Then he/she will guide the conversation as the actors discuss their characters. The rest of this rehearsal will be spent blocking the first half of the scene.

b. **Second Rehearsal:** Blocking Continued

This rehearsal will be spent walking through the blocking for the rest of the scene. Once all the blocking is finalized, the rest of the rehearsal will be spent running through the scene to ensure the blocking is memorized.

c. **Third Rehearsal:** Memorization and Business

- Business: the gestures and activities the actors perform on stage.

Actors must be memorized by their third rehearsal in order to be able to work on the stage business without holding a script in their hand. This is often the rehearsal in which props are introduced. The director will guide the actors on the details of their movement, and how to handle their props.

d. **Fourth Rehearsal:** Finalize Business and Run-Throughs

- Run-Throughs: Running the scene without interruptions.

During these rehearsals the Director will refrain from pausing the scene to give instruction. Once the actors have performed the scene, the director will give specific notes and observations on what can be improved, and the actors will run through the scene again incorporating the Director's notes.

e. Final Rehearsals: Show Run-Throughs and Theme Debrief

The final rehearsals before production week will focus on running larger sections of the show in one concentrated rehearsal. It is helpful to split these rehearsals up by Act, until comfortable to run through the entire show. This will allow the team to see sketches they have not seen yet, and get a feel for the order of the entire show. These rehearsals are also important for solidifying costumes, props and transitions.

- Theme Debrief: In place of one evening's rehearsal the Director will guide the team through a time of discussion on the year's theme. This time allows the team to reflect on what the theme has meant to them personally, and share what God has taught them through their time in Soul Food. Not only is this a valuable team building opportunity, but it also refocuses the team on the overall purpose of Soul Food: ministry. Allow the team to spend time in prayer for one another, and for the audience.
- Costumes: Soul Food does not have a costume department as every actor is in charge of providing their own outfit for each character they play. These costumes are discussed through previous rehearsals and finalized during the show run-throughs. The Director may assign a day during these rehearsals for actors to bring in their outfits so they can be approved.
- Props: The Prop Master/Mistress is in charge of creating a spreadsheet of each prop need for each scene. The cast is then required to sign off on which props they will be able to provide for the show. The remaining props will either be bought or borrowed. First Baptist Church at the Mall has kindly allowed Soul Food to borrow any props needed for the show, from their Children's Ministry.
- Transitions: As these rehearsals are the first time the show will be run in chronological order, the transitions will prove to be crucial. As a general theater rule, transitions should not last longer than 90 seconds. This means each set change must be choreographed and rehearsed. Instead of having a stage crew, Soul Food utilizes the actors to move their own set pieces on and off the stage. It is the stage manager's job to assign these roles to the actors.

7. Marketing the Show

Marketing for the spring show should take place within the two weeks before opening night. This is done through various steps.

a. Email the Student Body

- Send the show graphic and information in an email to studentinfo@seu.edu and intheloop@seu.edu for show information to be emailed to all students.

b. Chapel Update

- Email weeklyupdate@seu.edu the show information for an announcement to be made during Tuesday morning chapel.

c. Hand out Flyers

- Set up a table outside of Tuscana during lunch times to hand out flyers to students and professors. This is done the week of the show. Team members should sign up for different time slots to stand at the table. If a Square is being used to purchase tickets,

it would be beneficial to have this set up at the table for people to buy tickets as they pass buy.

8. Production Week

Also referred to as Tech Week, the four days before opening night are spent preparing and finalizing the technical aspects of the show. Depending on the location of the show, the cast may only be able to rehearse in the space the week of the show, making these the longest nights of rehearsal.

a. Preparing the Space:

- All props and set pieces are transported to the performance location.
- In Bolin Studio: The stage must be set up.
- In a church or theater: Clear the stage for the set to be placed.
- The location of each set piece is marked with spike tape so the actors will know how each sketch must be set up during transitions.

b. Programming Lights and Sound

- Move lights into correct position.
- Choose the desired lighting for each scene in the show.
- Compile a file of each song or sound used in the show.
- Program the light and sound cues in chronological order.

c. Microphones

- In Bolin Studio: No microphones needed.
- In a church or theater: Actors are each assigned a microphone number
- If there are fewer microphones than actors, create a chart to determine when each actor will be using a microphone, and whom they will share it with.

d. Cue-to-Cue

- Run through the entire show moving through all lighting and sound cues in chronological order.
- The actors will be asked to run through their scenes and pause for every lighting and sound cue, while the Directors make any last minute tech changes.

e. Dress Rehearsal

- The actors will run through the entire show in costume, using all their required props.
- It will be treated as a real show, with an introduction, intermission, and bow.
- It should run without interruption, while the Director takes notes to give the actors afterwards.

f. Invited Dress Rehearsal

- Invite the Soul Food advisor to see the final product of the show to provide feedback before the official performance.
- If desired, invite an audience for a discounted price.

g. Ministry Preparation

- Before each rehearsal, allow the team to have a guided prayer time focused on a different aspect of the show: actors, tech, the audience, etc.
- Do various relaxation exercises with the cast and crew to help them focus and lessen nerves.

Tech Week Outline:

Monday: Prepare the space and program lights and sound.

Tuesday: Organize microphones, and cue-to-cue.

Wednesday: Dress Rehearsal

Thursday: (Invited) Dress Rehearsal

Friday: Opening Night

Saturday/Sunday: Shows and Strike

*Depending on the location, it is recommended to have a mandatory workday in the performance space the Saturday before Production Week to get a head start on the technical aspects of the show. This time is often used to set up the stage and program lights as that can take the longest amount of time. It can also be used for extra show preparation such as printing programs, cutting flyers, making props, or painting set pieces.

Chapter 4: The Show

A. The Audience

The audience is an integral part of the show. Without an audience to perform for, the show has no purpose. Soul Food's goal is not to create a production for the guests, but rather an experience. Every interaction an audience member has from the moment they walk through the door to the moment they leave must be thoroughly thought through.

1. The Box Office

Soul Food is a ticketed show with general seating. Prices vary depending on the year, but on average range from \$3-5. Tickets can be purchased online through a link set up with the Square or at the Box office that is set up at the performance location.

2. The Program

Audience members will receive a program when walking into the performance space. This is the first tangible piece of the show audience members will receive. The program should include the show graphic, the names of directors, writers, and tech crew, and a list of special thanks. The inside pages of the program should include the breakdown of the show by Act, including the title of every sketch and when intermission will take place.

3. Comp Tickets/Reserved Seating

As a part of the benefit of performing in Soul Food, each member of the cast and crew receives two complimentary tickets to the show that they can give to family or friends. These tickets will be held at the box office for pick-up on before the show.

The Director can also choose to offer complimentary tickets to certain staff and students who helped and supported Soul Food throughout the year. It is also courteous to include the staff of the College of Christian Ministries and Religion as Soul Food is run out of that college.

As a continuing thank you, reserved seating can be provided for the staff members who chose to redeem their complimentary tickets. This must be communicated to the Box Office when these guests pick up their tickets, so that the ushers can direct the guests to the correct seating. If reserved seating will be used, the house manager must place the reserved signs on the corresponding seats before doors open.

4. Setting the Atmosphere

A major part of creating a memorable experience for the audience members is setting the atmosphere. This includes the lobby experience, as well as the décor in the performance space.

a. The Lobby

The Lobby is the main waiting space before the show and during intermission. Aside from waiting in line to purchase tickets, it's beneficial to provide audience members with activities to do while waiting that allow them to connect with the show before it event starts.

A few ideas include:

- Showcase fine art painted by students representing the show theme.
- A photo booth.
- Headshots and descriptions of the actors.

b. The Performance Space

Doors should open a half hour before the performance starts, allowing audience members enough time to choose their seats and get settled. The atmosphere in the room helps sets the tone for the show. The ushers and greeters, background music, room decorations and stage set-up all communicate an implicit message to the audience about the show.

B. The Cast and Crew

Every rehearsal, meeting, and tech workday will finally reach its culmination in the opening night performance. It is crucial that the cast and crew are prepared for their performances, as this is when the Director's role finally comes to an end.

1. Show Dates and Times

Show dates vary depending on the performance location; however, most Soul Food shows run for three days. These dates will already have been communicated to the actors during rehearsals, as it is crucial no person be late or missing.

General performance days and times:

Friday Night at 7:30pm

Saturday Matinee at 2:30pm

Saturday Night at 7:30pm

Sunday Matinee at 2:30pm

2. Call Time

The time an actor or crewmember is required to arrive at the performance location is referred to as call time. Crew Members are usually required to arrive before cast members to begin setting up the stage and audience. The cast is required to arrive no less than 2 hours before show time in order to do their hair, make-up, get their microphone, put on their costume, and check their props. Cast and crew will have to check in with the stage manager when they arrive.

Even though Soul Food shows require a limited amount of preparation in regards to hair, make-up, costumes, and set, the cast and crew are required to arrive early in order to pray together for the show and the audience.

3. Backstage

a. The Green Room

The Green Room is the space backstage where actors can wait and rest between scenes. This is where all the actors' costumes and personal items are stored during the performance. There should be little to no talking during the performance. This is also where the actors will go during intermission, as the audience cannot see them until after the show.

b. The Wings

The entrances and exits on either side of the stage are referred to as the wings. This is where the backstage stage manager will sit and watch the show. This is also where the actors will receive their props from the Prop Master/Mistress before they enter their scene. Actors who are not waiting to enter the stage in the current or next scene must not stand in the wings to watch the show, as they can be a hindrance to other actors who are entering and exiting. There can be no talking in the wings.

4. Onstage

The only people on stage during the performance should be the actors. Unless the script directs them so, actors should not have any communication with the audience during their scene.

C. The Ministry

To categorize the response time at the end of the show solely as “The Ministry” is to overlook the entire performance as a ministry in itself. However, much of Soul Food’s ministry is culminated in the time after the performance as the audience is called to respond to what they experienced through the show. This is done a few different ways.

1. Call and Response

After the bows, the Director takes the stage and shares a short testimony on behalf of the Soul Food team about how God moved during this year’s theme. He/she will then call the audience to respond to whatever God began moving in their hearts during the show.

2. Prayer:

The Director will pray over the audience and dismiss them to respond in whatever way they feel lead. Three to four actors will be stationed in a section of the room to pray with any audience members that choose to come to them. The doors should be opened in the case audience members choose to leave.

3. Response Activity:

This can take the form of many different activities. It should be something that requires the audience members to get out of their seats and have a personal response to the theme, such as a community canvas, or a community response board.

4. Take Aways:

As a way of allowing audience members to remember and reflect on their experience at the show, it is beneficial to brainstorm a small token for them to take home with them. This can be a small item, a picture, or a quote. Actors should be stationed at the doors handing these out to audience members as they leave.

5. Talkback

After a performance the Director can choose to schedule a talkback, which is an informal discussion between the cast and audience. This is another great response activity to do as it allows the audience to ask the Director or actors any questions they have about the show, and the impact that it had on the cast and crew.

D. Post Show

1. Strike

Once the show has completed its run, the clean up process is referred to as “strike.” During this time, the backstage and audience must be cleaned, and all actors must take the costume and prop items that belong to them. If the performance is off campus, the rest of the props and set pieces must be loaded and transported back to the University to be returned to their rightful locations and/or owners within the next week. If the performance takes place in Bolin Studio, the stage must be torn down and the room returned to its normal set up for classes during the week.

2. Cast Party

To celebrate the run of the show the cast and crew will have a party to celebrate. This can take place during the afternoon on Saturday between the matinee and evening shows, or after the strike on Sunday.

3. Team Debrief

In the weeks following the show, the team will have a meeting to debrief the past year on Soul Food. The upcoming Director will run this meeting.

Topics to discuss:

- Positives and negatives of the team experience.
- How can the scripts be improved?
- What aspects of the show worked and did not work?
- Testimonies from the performance
- Theme ideas for the new Soul Food season.

CONCLUSION

The influential ability of the arts is not subject to its context, but rather the manner in which they are used. In order to cultivate a growth of the arts in the church, church leaders and congregants must recognize the intrinsic value of the arts. Music, paintings, dramas, films, etc., do not have to be limited in use as tools to communicate an overtly religious message. Acknowledging this provides freedom to the artists and audiences of the artwork being created. Artists are empowered in their ability to be vessels in which God can speak and move through, while are given the opportunity to connect with pieces that challenge them to reflect, and engage God in new ways.

The Soul Food Handbook provides a tangible example of an effective arts ministry that values the arts as a means of connecting with God, and empowers artists to use their gifts in this manner. Soul Food's overall vision, structure, and process are applicable models and examples for other arts ministries. However, this handbook is limited in content as certain processes are specific to the context of Southeastern University. Furthermore, this thesis offers a broad review of literature on the arts and their influence in society and the church. Further research and study could analyze and discuss topics such as, how the history of the arts has shaped its current use in the church, and what ideas and processes being implemented in various arts ministries hinder or aide in their effectiveness.

Ultimately, these findings in this thesis help provide a framework for church leaders in their desire to engage the arts in ministry as ways of enriching the worship experience. It also provides validity to artists in the church as they strive to create art that curates transformational moments in the lives of Christian believers and non-believers alike.

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