

CLAY S. ROBESON

San Francisco, CA 94124
Clay@Robeson.co

(408) 480-3804
[linkedin.com/in/clayrobeson/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/clayrobeson/)

Writing Samples

Following are three writing samples. I have tried to choose pieces that covered the gamut of my experience over the last several years.

Sample 1: Program Narrative

During my time on the Board of Directors for Un-Scripted Theater Company, I was charged with putting together our annual submission for the SF Grants for the Arts program. This piece is taken from the last of those grant applications.

Sample 2: Slack Guide

As volunteer coordinator with City Grazing (a 501c3 non-profit goat sanctuary), I put together this piece as a technical introduction to Slack, a communication platform utilized for the persistent exchange of information among small teams.

Sample 3: Executive Letter

Recently, I was contracted to ghost-write a letter from the Executive Director of the Sue DiNapoli Ovarian Cancer Society for their monthly newsletter, explaining their recent Woman to Woman Program grant from the Ovarian Cancer Research Fund Alliance. They requested a three to four paragraph call-to-action that explained the nature of the grant and the need for volunteers.

Un-Scripted Theater Company: Program Narrative

Briefly describe the history of your organization or project and summarize your program activities/events for the past three years pointing out any particular successes and challenges encountered.

Un-Scripted Theater Company was founded in 2003 with the idea that improvisation can be used to create great theater. By treating improvisation as professionally as scripted theater treats scripts, Un-Scripted Theater Company has moved to the forefront of a unique type of theatrical improvisation which is sometimes regarded as impossible by the global improv community. This type of improvisation sometimes flies in the face of what the public at large understands the word "improv" to mean. As a result, Un-Scripted Theater Company has had to challenge the perception of improvisation as "throw-away comedy." This struggle is only compounded by the fact that many theater reviewers also suffer from the same misconception and won't review any show labeled "improvised."

Over the last three years we have produced 12 improvised shows, each show running for (on average) 18 performances, with some exceptions (for example, our ongoing weekly show DASH and our shorter-run Halloween shows), serving over 4500 audience members. Those productions include:

Year	Show	Description
2012	<i>Act One, Scene Two</i>	A reprise of our collaboration with local playwrights, who each wrote an opening scene of a new play for us. The cast read the script for the first time in front of a live audience, and improvised the rest of the play.
	<i>Un-Abridged: The Best of 10 Years of Un-Scripted</i>	A retrospective of 9 seasons of improvised theater, featuring over 20 improvisors coming together to perform a different show from our past seasons every night of the run.
	<i>History: The Musical</i>	A full-length, unscripted musical production set against the backdrop of the scope of Western history. Each performance was set in a different time period, stepping forward from the Neolithic Period through the 1960s, providing a unique look at the people and themes that have led us to our present moment in time.
2013	<i>The Lost Folio: Shakespeare's Musicals</i>	An improvised Shakespearean show, incorporating music much in the same way Shakespeare used it in his own shows.
	<i>Gold Rush: The Un-Scripted Barbary Coast Musical</i>	A musical look at the birth of San Francisco, and the colorful (and dangerous) lives led by its colorful (and dangerous) founders.
	<i>A Murder Most Un-Scripted</i>	An improvised tribute to "Whodunnit" mysteries in the style of Agatha Christie
	<i>Off Book, Off Broadway</i>	An improvised Off Broadway-style musical that focused on capturing the raw emotion of Broadway's most recent works.
2014	<i>DASH</i>	A new weekly late-night freeform improv comedy show, running year-round.
	<i>Foglandia</i>	A contemporary-style improvised musical set in modern-day San Francisco, examining the lives of different San Francisco subcultures.
	<i>A Murder Most Un-Scripted</i>	A reprise of last year's successful production.
	<i>With Special Guests</i>	A 4-month weekly series in which we invited a wide variety of new SF improv troupes to perform on our stage, and provided free access to our theater.
	<i>Sunday Revivals</i>	Revival performances of our most popular productions from throughout the years.
	<i>Beloved Strangers</i>	An improvised play about families, telling the story of a new family each evening.

Un-Scripted continues to be a regular participant in the San Francisco Improv Festival and the San Francisco Theater Festival. We were headline performers at the New York Musical Improv Festival in 2014 and 2012, and formed a partnership with Chicago Improv Productions (producers of the Chicago Improv Festival) to host the Golden Gate Regionals section of their College Improv Tournament.

Throughout our history, Un-Scripted Theater Company has had to rely on word of mouth and online audience reviews to grow our fan base. Our push to spread the word over the last few years resulted in Un-Scripted taking the coveted "Best Theater Company in San Francisco" award in the SF Bay Guardian in 2008.

Un-Scripted Theater Company has also spent significant time trying to bridge the gap between the improvisational and theatrical communities. In our groundbreaking production "Act One, Scene Two," we partnered with 23 playwrights (18 of whom were from the Bay Area) to create a different world premiere performance every night. Each night's show was created around a scripted first scene, written by one of the playwrights and read for the first time in front of a live audience, after which the cast would improvise the rest of the play. In 2013 we brought it back for a limited run as part of our Sunday Revivals series. This has been such a success that in our 2015 season, it will return as a monthly show, and we will seek to partner with more San Francisco playwrights as well as schools and other youth-oriented writing programs.

Note any moves, expansions, renovations or major improvements that are planned for the coming year.

Our goal to create more robust productions with higher production values and loftier artistic visions remains unchanged. Besides retrofitting our "Salon" space from the hair salon it once was into a flexible lobby/rehearsal space, we hope to make well needed physical repairs to the theater itself, increasing soundproofing and air conditioning as well as the functionality of the space. In terms of infrastructure, our future expansion plans include framing and expanding our Board and staffing structure as we articulate our work as a unique part of the arts community in San Francisco.

How do you promote your work to visitors/tourists? What marketing strategies have been the most successful and/or challenging?

Tourists historically have been a significant part of our audience base. Our houses are generally made up of 60% tourists and 40% San Francisco locals. A large portion of our non-Bay Area audiences come from ticket sales made through Theatre Bay Area's Half-Priced Ticket Booth. The vast majority of Tix Booth customers are tourists from another country, another state, a suburb, or even just Bay Area residents having a "tourist day" on the town. In the past year we have spent time investigating more wide-spread advertising and marketing strategies including concierge outreach, hotel flyers, and local publications, and we are now members of San Francisco Travel.

Describe the function/activity of your organization's board of directors or governing body. Summarize its frequency of meetings, role in organization's policy-making, fiscal accountability and fundraising, percent of contribution to budget, and number of paid staff on board.

Un-Scripted Theater Company is "governed" by our Board of Directors, who are also currently serving as our Artistic Staff. The 9 Board members generally meet twice a month and govern the artistic and administrative direction of the organization as a whole. The Artistic Staff donates their time to keep the organization running on a day-to-day basis, taking care of everything from season planning to running the house during shows. As signers of our current lease, the Artistic Staff is fiscally accountable for any budget overage not covered by financial reserves.

Of the current 9 Board Members, each one has waived any actor stipend for the 2012 through 2015 fiscal years.

Grants for the Arts' goals are to make the City more attractive to visitors, favorably promote San Francisco's reputation outside the City, and produce a positive economic impact on the local economy. Briefly describe how funds would further these goals.

Un-Scripted Theater Company was founded with the intent to entertain people. After establishing ourselves in Union Square, we realized what a fantastic opportunity we had to help entertain visitors and make their stay in San

San Francisco unique and enjoyable. As the summer tends to be our highest tourist drawing season, in summer 2013 we presented *Gold Rush! The Un-Scripted Barbary Coast Musical* to record houses, sharing some of San Francisco's more colorful past with our friends from out of town. Our 2014 summer show, *Foglandia*, was a contemporary musical set in San Francisco, and garnered a tremendous response from both audiences and from the press - we were featured in the *Chronicle* Pink section, and reviewed for *KQED Arts*. The current iteration of our 2015 season (still pending finalization) includes *SF Noir*, a modern day noir story set in San Francisco.

The uniqueness of our type of theatrical offerings has helped us find an ever-growing community of fans who remain loyal to the Un-Scripted "brand" of improv throughout the years. This community continues to expand all the time, and for many of these groups of fans, a night of Un-Scripted brings them into downtown San Francisco from the Peninsula or the North, South, or East Bay for dinner, a show and drinks afterwards. With the addition of our late night show in 2014, we have also provided a post-dinner destination in the Union Square neighborhood, and many of our audience members choose to stay out in the city after coming to one of our performances.

Improvors from around the world contact us in the hopes of catching an Un-Scripted show while they're in town. Our work outside of the Bay Area only helps highlight what a fertile creative environment we are immersed in, and with every traveling show, we leave behind at least a few people who say to us, "I'm coming to San Francisco. I want to do what you do."

We truly believe that we add a richness and vitality to the Union Square area, and San Francisco as a whole. Early on, we made the decision to keep our ticket and concession prices as low as possible to allow the greatest access to the most people. GFTA funds would allow us to continue to do this despite our significantly increased expenses, while also freeing up some of our donated funds in order to support more theater and improv festival outreach so that we may carry on helping to cement San Francisco's reputation as a dynamic artistic community.

If you have previously applied to GFTA, please discuss how your organization's programming and/or budget has changed and improved since your last application.

Our commitment to building the Improv community in 2014 led us to create *With Special Guests*, a program offering free prime-time weekend performance space to local, up-and-coming Improv groups. While it curtailed some of our rental income, we were able to host 40 different Improv groups from around the Bay Area, offering them a free Friday or Saturday night performance slot in downtown San Francisco. What we didn't expect was the flurry of follow up rentals from participants who were eager to host their OWN showcase nights. For 2015, we are turning over significant weekend performance slots between our own shows to allow those showcases to continue. We remain one of the top go-to venues in San Francisco for rehearsal, class and show rentals in the Improv community as our size perfectly accommodates not only San Francisco's nomadic Improv groups, but some of the independent theater companies as well.

One of our major "wins" for 2015 was receiving a \$5000 grant from The David and Lura Lovell Foundation, which we have used primarily to support marketing efforts such as joining San Francisco Travel, increasing marketing materials, and purchasing advertising space at the TBA Tix Booth.

City Grazing Slack Quick Start Guide

What is Slack?

Slack is the messaging and communication network of choice for everyone working with the goats at City Grazing. More immediate than email and more expressive than IM or SMS, Slack enables the “Nannies” to connect in a way that is:

- Persistent – Unlike other services, active conversations don’t disappear when you close a window. Discussions remain in the channel so others can benefit from the information as well. When a channel is no longer needed, it can be archived by our Admins.
- Precisely targeted – You control who can see and participate in group conversation with access and privacy settings for Open or Private Channels. Or, use Direct Messaging to keep a line open between team members without the overhead of email.
- Deeply searchable – All communications retained in a Channel or Message history can be quickly and easily searched by anyone with access to that Channel. Slack search tools help you pinpoint the right information when you need it.
- Extremely flexible – On Slack, you can share everything from images and emojis to urls and baby goat photos. The simple drag-and-drop controls let you upload files into a Channel for instant group feedback and collaboration.

To learn more, see <https://get.slack.help/hc/en-us/articles/115004071768-What-is-Slack->

Who is on Slack?

The “City Grazing Team” on Slack is for staff, volunteers and board members.

Where Do I Slack?

Downloading and installing the Slack application to your desktop gives you the fullest access to Slack features (particularly notifications), but you can also access Slack on the web and your mobile device. To learn more, see <http://bit.ly/SlackApps>

How Do I Slack?

It’s easy! To take the next step, visit <http://bit.ly/StartSlacking>

You can find other useful Slack commands at the [Slack Help Center](#).

Channels vs Direct Messages

While it is possible to have multiple person direct message conversations, keep in mind that direct messages do not have the full functionality of a channel. When in doubt, use threads in your channel instead of group direct messages.

Channel Purpose and Topic

Every channel has two descriptive fields to help users identify what is going on within it. The channel purpose should contain the “big picture” reason the channel exists. This will help people understand what the channel is for while they peruse the channel list. The channel topic can (and should) change regularly to reflect the current discussion. The channel topic can be changed by anyone in the channel, and always appears next to the channel name at the top of the channel.

Threads

Threads let you respond to a specific message in a channel while keeping future replies in a single, organized conversation that doesn't spam the whole timeline. This is preferable to moving a discussion off-line, or to direct message because the record of the discussion remains part of the searchable Slack history.

For more information on using threads, visit <http://bit.ly/slack-threads>

Useful Slack Commands

@mentions

The @ symbol followed by a Slack username will push a message to that user when you need to get their direct attention quickly. If they are not currently in the channel you are mentioning them in, you will be given the option to invite them.

@channel/@here

Both @channel and @here are used to get the attention of everyone in a channel. The difference between them is that @channel will notify everyone in the channel, **regardless of their current connection status**, while @here will notify everyone in the channel currently working or available. Please use @channel sparingly, as we don't want to be pinging everyone if we don't have to, especially late at night. @here is always the better option for nonemergencies.

/remind

You can have Slack send you a reminder by typing /remind me in [time] to [message] or /remind me to [message] at [time]. To specify a remind for a specific date, use MM/DD/YYYY or DD.MM.YYYY.

If you have more questions, or can think of helpful information to add to this document, ping @clay.

Director's Note on OCRFA's Woman to Woman Program

As Director of the Sue DiNapoli Ovarian Cancer Society, I am thrilled to share with you that we have been selected as one of the community-based organizations to receive a \$30,000 grant from Ovarian Cancer Research Fund Alliance's Woman to Woman Program.

While OCRFA's core mission is research on ovarian cancer, their Woman to Woman Program is focused on pairing patients suffering from any gynecologic cancer with trained and supervised survivor volunteers in order to provide support and mentoring as they navigate the hurdles associated with treatment and recovery. The grant we have received will enable us to create a program which offers women in southern Colorado who are battling gynecologic cancer the emotional assistance and personal connection that they might not otherwise have access to through their existing peer networks.

Getting through a battle with cancer is hard enough even with the support of friends and family, which makes the Woman to Woman Program vital to newly diagnosed women who don't that network. No woman should ever have to face cancer alone.

Obtaining the grant, however, isn't the end of the story. Now, it's time to start rallying survivors in order to train them to be the network that will fulfill the Woman to Woman Program's mission for our sisters in southern Colorado. If you would like more information on donating or volunteering, please reach out to me at 719-229-4114 or at BeOvaryAware.org. We have an amazing opportunity to make a difference in people's lives. Come be a part of that.

Susan DiNapoli Guyton
Executive Director
Sue DiNapoli Ovarian Cancer Society