



## Musical Director

### What is it?

Prepare and rehearse all the live music for a show. It might also involve the arranging of music. Depending on the nature of the show (e.g. a pantomime or revue), it could well involve finding the music (and musicians!) too. You will play a significant input in the audition process too although final decisions as regards casting will be up to the director. Not for the faint hearted!

### Where do you start?

As the show will almost certainly have been chosen already, you will be approached by the director and/or producer.

If it is an "off the shelf" show you should be given a score which will contain most of the info you need regarding the forces required (instrumental and vocal).

If it is more of a "home grown" show you will probably be given a list of potential musical numbers but thereafter it will be up to you. Final choices will be up to you and your negotiations with the director

### What do you need to know?

- That you are working with what you've got rather than what you would really like! You and your cast's / production team's strengths and weaknesses, e.g. vocal range, ability (or more likely lack of it) to read music.
- Anything with music in is likely to have a lot of performances and involve a lot of rehearsals. Principals, chorus, dancers etc. will, at times, need to rehearse separately so there is a really significant time factor.

### What skills would help?

- Ability to manage your time (MD-ing can be all-consuming if you let it)
- Teaching skills (+ loads of patience)
- Some technology skills (e.g. for making of rehearsal CDs)
- Lots of friends / contacts (both to delegate some of the tasks to and to volunteer to play in your band (if there is to be one).

(NB as a rule, band members do not get paid although reasonable expenses are generally allowed. Make sure you know what's what before you start.)

## **Behind the scenes' fact sheet**

Some MDs like to do everything themselves, others work as a team, job-sharing the load in terms of rehearsal / performance commitment, conducting / accompanying etc. Both approaches are equally acceptable.

### **What help will I get?**

Not a lot really, so all depends on how many friends you have. (NB it is worth noting that within the Arts Centre hierarchy, some directors are quite musical, others less so.)

Although the director will have the final say, make sure you know how much authority you are going to be allowed to have and stick to your guns!

### **Most challenging part?**

This is almost entirely dependent upon your perceived strengths and weaknesses. A job share for example may well be the best way forward (e.g. the MD need not necessarily be the rehearsal or indeed the show's accompanist).

The realisation that your cast etc is not necessarily made up of prodigiously talented performers.

### **Most enjoyable part?**

Helping people achieve beyond (often way beyond) their expectations. Working as a team and camaraderie.

### **Why do it?**

Good question!.... It's fun, it presents challenges and gives you a buzz. If you love music (as you really ought to if you are going to be an MD) it provides you with an outlet for your talents and the opportunity of letting other people share in your love of music.