

Arizona Musical Theatre Orchestra

Underscore FAQ (Updated 3/2/24)

What is *Underscore*?

Underscore events are classroom-style sing-throughs of the music and dialogue of full-length Broadway shows with piano, SATB chorus, and lead roles. The word *Underscore* refers not only to emphasis, but music in a performance that occurs under dialogue.

Who can participate?

Pianists, choral singers, actors, and musical enthusiasts can apply regardless of age or experience level. Due to the fast-paced nature of these events, we *suggest* the following:

- High school age and above (it is highly recommended for students to have strong music reading skills)
- Chorus: The ability to read music is strongly encouraged
- Pianists: The ability to read music is mandatory; rehearsals may be requested depending on a show's difficulty.

Do I need to apply in order to participate?

Yes. Every participant will need to apply for every show, regardless of experience. Application links are sent by email and take 5 minutes to complete. Applications will be open approximately 1-2 months prior to an Underscore event.

How much does it cost?

Applications are always free to submit! Once approved, the event costs \$20 to participate (need-based scholarships are available). The fee helps cover venue, snacks, staff, and materials, and helps ensure AZMTO's sustainability.

What is the typical schedule of an Underscore event?

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| 5:45-6:00 | Arrival |
| 6:00 | Welcome, Warm-Up, Spot Check |
| 6:45 | Break & Leads Sound Check |
| 7:00 | Act 1 Begins |
| | <i>There will be a 15-minute break at intermission</i> |
| | <i>The runtime of most shows is over 2 hours.</i> |
| After Show: | Group Photo |
| | ENCORE: an open singalong with 3 songs from the show |

How are productions selected?

Shows throughout the entire musical theatre canon are eligible for performance, and are selected by the Underscore team. Underscore shows may be comprised of scores with smaller orchestrations. AZMTO will try to balance traditional & modern selections.

NOTE: Shows may contain language or adult themes, and some shows may reference dated and non-“PC” cultural elements. These shows will be selected delicately. AZMTO will always try to abide by licensing rules while crafting authenticity in its storytelling.

Where are Underscore events held?

Central United Methodist Church
1875 N. Central Ave. (Central Ave. north of McDowell Rd. in Downtown Phoenix)
Phoenix, AZ 85004
Parking is available in the east lot of the church.

How & when do I get music?

Music is made available once participants have confirmed their place with payment to AZMTO. Underscore participants must have a device to read from – this can be a tablet, phone, or laptop. Music will be distributed digitally via a .4sc ForScore file link (ForScore is an iPad sheet music app that AZMTO recommends) or as a PDF via Digify.

What should participants do and bring prior to the event?

Participants should send a completed photo release form beforehand, and bring a bottle of water and a charged PDF reader with score access to the event.

What if a scheduling conflict comes up between the application and the event?

Participants may drop out if necessary, but the only refunds allowed are for a Covid illness that affects participation. A submission of the application and a payment to AZMTO means your participation is expected.

Can I observe an Underscore event without participating/volunteering?

No. These events are not for profit and exist purely for educational value. Since they are not licensed productions, AZMTO is not permitted to have any audience present. Therefore, everyone in the “room where it happens” must be an active participant. We don’t require any formal singing training; just try your best!

Do I have to be a member of AZMTO to apply?

No. There is no formal “membership” to AZMTO. This format helps AZMTO cast shows on a rotational basis with new and interested members of the community.

What are your casting considerations?

AZMTO looks for people who can be trusted to sing and play their roles as seamlessly as possible. Experience and musical skill level will be valued over age/“type” or physical “fit”. AZMTO intends to create a balance of well-known and newly-discovered talent in its casting.

Leads will be selected based on the merit of the application, vocal strength, innate musical ability, and previous knowledge of the show. Shows are open to all people and all communities including the BIPOC, LGBTQIA+ and IDD communities.

Sometimes, the best way to work up to a lead role is to do well with what you've been given. Future roles will increase in size and scope as AZMTO's relationships deepen with its casting pool, but will also be given rotationally to allow a wide number of deserving candidates to participate on our stage.

What if I don't get selected?

Underscore events are all-inclusive. If a participant is not selected for a lead role, they are welcome to sing along in the ensemble, which is eligible for Spotlight roles (step-out lines). All ensemble will sing through the most beloved material of each particular show after the final cutoff. When resting, participants get to witness the organic performance in the room and celebrate local talent.

Can I record my experience in an Underscore event?

You may take pictures at Underscore events, *but be careful!* unless permitted by AZMTO leadership, shared pictures online cannot have any visible licensed materials in them. This includes pictures of sheet music if titles of songs are visible in the background!

Social media and internet posts cannot even *hint* at the title of AZMTO's productions. A good rule of thumb: ***if someone can decipher the title of the show from your post, DON'T SHARE IT.***

The public sharing of any video could jeopardize Underscore entirely, and will be cause for expulsion from AZMTO events, groups, and activities.

Can I promote my role/participation online?

Participants can say they are participating in an AZMTO Underscore event, but *they may not say their role* as it will give away the title of the show.

Can a role I play in an Underscore event go on my resume?

No. Resume roles are reserved for productions intended for public performance.

Can I network with AZMTO friends after the event?

Yes! A private, invite-only Facebook group called **AZMTO Show & Tell** is available for participants from our Showcases. Here, you can connect with new friends, share photos, and network about future projects.

What leadership is present for Underscore?

The underscore team includes a Music Director, additional instrumentalists, and check-in hosts/announcers. *Presently, there are no formal conductors for Underscore events.*

Why does the Arizona Musical Theatre Orchestra use digital scores?

Digital scores are the best way to blend sustainability with the ease of communication. As technology advances, AZMTO believes that all musicians should embrace the power of technology to create simpler and more effective ways to collaborate. Underscore will operate primarily through this medium.

Will you be requiring Covid-19 Safety Protocols?

We believe that people who are feeling sick or unwell should stay home, regardless of their desire to participate. AZMTO encourages the use of Covid-19 rapid tests on the onset of appropriate symptoms, and will ask participants to test if they develop symptoms at an AZMTO event. Ultimately, everybody (participants & audience) is encouraged to take the precautions that are best for them, and utilize common sense on a regular basis (frequent hand-washing, covering their mouth to cough, and using masks *when appropriate*) to stop the spread of disease.

Do you need event volunteers?

Yes! AZMTO has a wide variety of needs and we're always looking for volunteers!
Please take less than 5 minutes and complete our volunteer survey. THANK YOU for supporting the arts!

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1oDq7Vkm7RB5i1wptbR_puLO8kdO830UBQKxXI10yYw4/edit

Questions?

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