



# Rodgers & Hammerstein's The King and I

## MARKETING BRAINSTORMING PROMPT

*The following are meant as guidelines for creating the marketing plan for your production of THE KING AND I, based on show themes. We encourage you to let this spark your own ideas, and for you to find ways to scale, adapt and mold them into what will work in your community and help to achieve your specific outreach, education and marketing goals.*

**SHOW SUMMARY:** East versus West makes for a dramatic, richly textured and ultimately uplifting tale of enormous fascination. It is 1862 in Siam when an English widow, Anna Leonowens, and her young son arrive at the Royal Palace in Bangkok, having been summoned by the King to serve as tutor to his many children and wives. The King is largely considered to be a barbarian by those in the West, and he seeks Anna's assistance in changing his image, if not his ways. With both keeping a firm grip on their respective traditions and values, Anna and the King grow to understand and, eventually, respect one another, in a truly unique love story. Along with the dazzling score, the incomparable Jerome Robbins ballet, 'The Small House of Uncle Thomas,' is one of the all-time marvels of the musical stage.

## “SHALL WE DANCE?”

*One of the best-known songs from THE KING AND I provides a great hook for creating events and classes at your theater to engage the local community.*

**Dance Party / Ball:** Host a KING AND I-themed dance either in the theater or in partnership with another local space to generate interest in your production.

- Have cast members perform to give patrons a “sneak peek” of the show. Consider performing “Shall We Dance” or another appropriate group dance number from your show as a centerpiece of the event’s entertainment.
- Have the show’s choreographer or a cast member teach the attendees a dance in the style of the show’s choreography. (Remember to keep it simple!)
- Invite local press for photo ops and encourage media coverage of the event and show. Post photos to social media feed to encourage sharing and drum up interest for similar future events.
- Serve Thai-themed snacks and drinks. (This could be an opportunity for a [partnership](#) with a local Thai restaurant or catering company.)

- Use this event as a fundraising opportunity. Sell tickets and first offer them to anyone who has donated in the past to keep it feeling exclusive.

**Event / Online / Fundraising / Community / Partnership / Press**

**Dance Classes:** Before the weeknight pre-show or on weekend matinee mornings, host a class at the theater. Have a cast member or guest artist teach dance set to songs from THE KING AND I. This will bring patrons into the theater at non-show times and create a social opportunity. Extend the event's impact with some of the following:

- Offer the class as an added value for the first select number of tickets sold, or as an upsell on your ticket price (\$50 for a ticket \$70 for a ticket and a dance class.) Open your concessions before and after the class for additional revenue opportunity.
- Film the classes and post them to YouTube, your website and social media pages to encourage sharing and reach new patrons through their friends.
- Invite patrons who have attended these classes and know a dance to come on stage at the end of each show, and perform the number with the cast following the curtain call. Use this on stage experience as part of your sales pitch for the dance classes.
- **When posting videos on YouTube don't forget to link to the song and include credits for the song and the composer and lyricist: Music by Richard Rodgers Lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II, licensed in agreement with Rodgers & Hammerstein, [www.rnh.com](http://www.rnh.com)**

**Event / Online / Fundraising / Kids / Community**

**"Shall We Dance" Dance-a-thon:** Engage the community in a fundraising drive either for your theater or a charity with a 24-hour dance-a-thon. Have the participants get pledges to sponsor them and be sure to find a venue with enough space to accommodate the size of the group that will be dancing. (A school gym or community centers are good options if your theater does not have the space.)

- Offer discounted entry on show tickets to anyone who participates in the drive.
- Provide beverages and light snacks to keep the dancers going for the full 24 hours.
- Give away prizes for the participants who raise the most money or dance the longest, i.e. tickets to a future show in the theatre, cast meet-and-greets, backstage tours or prize donations from a local business who has partnered with the show.
- Allow patrons to take a picture on set or with cast members. Encourage them to post these photos to their social media using a special hashtag created for the promotion. Consider requesting donations to the theater for the photo op to create an additional revenue stream.
- Film and photograph your patrons dancing the night away and share it on Facebook.

- Grab specific “dancers” throughout the night and ask them to film short videos for your Facebook page.
- Don’t forget to mark down who you film so that you can tag them when you post the videos and photos, letting them share it with their friends.

*Event / Online / Fundraising / Kids / Charitable / Press*

## “GETTING TO KNOW YOU”

*Build up your community of audience members and supporters, and extend your current roots in the local social, arts and educational scenes with a block party, inspired by the song “Getting To Know You.”*

**Block Party:** Throw a “Getting To Know You” Block Party to build community connections with your theater. Invite new neighbors and people who have never been in your theater to mix with frequent playgoers at a happy hour or afternoon festival.

- Offer a tour of the theater and brief intro to theater’s programs as part of the event.
- Consider doing a performance from your production of THE KING AND I and be sure to post photos to social media to generate buzz.
- Invite other local businesses to participate in your block party. This is a great opportunity for them to meet new customers in exchange for providing free food, beverages etc.
- Don’t forget to have some fun entertainment for the kids, like a sing-a-long with songs from the show such as “Shall We Dance” and “Whistle a Happy Tune.”

*Event / Online / Fundraising / Kids / Community / Partnership*

## PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships with local businesses and organizations are a great way to reach people who shop and socialize in your area, but have not been to your theater before. Set up the partnership and then discuss promotional exchanges of marketing collateral, in store signage, online links and program callouts between the business and your theater to maximize partnership opportunities. Consider the following types of partnerships:

**Partner with local Thai Restaurant:** For a buzz-building pre-run event and ongoing promotions throughout the run. Connect with the restaurant in any or all of the following ways:

- Host a KING AND I-themed donor dinner with a “sneak preview” of the show to help build word of mouth buzz. Integrate appearances and performances from cast members as space and resources allow. Ask each person in attendance to “like”



your Facebook page before the event. Take photos at the event and tag everyone in attendance to help spread the word to their friends.

- Work with the restaurant to set up a KING AND I-themed prix fixe dinner. Rename the food and drinks on the menu after characters and songs from the show. Both the Theater and the Restaurant should send out invites to their email lists and post on social media outlets. Ask the restaurant to share information about the upcoming event through flyers which can be given to all patrons for weeks leading up to the event.
- You could offer this as a package deal through Living Social, Groupon, Bloomspot, Savored or any other local discount site along with tickets to the show.
- Exchange value-added discounts with the restaurant: Have them offer a % discount on their meal when patrons show a ticket stub from your theater. Offer a discount on a ticket or concessions at the theater with a receipt from the restaurant. Promote the offers in collateral, on receipts on social media, etc.
- Invite the restaurant to do a pre-show tasting evening at the theater to give audience members an idea of their menu offerings. Open your concessions early to sell drinks and create additional revenue.

**Event / Online / Patrons / Fundraising / Community / Partnership**


**Partner with a Movie Theater or Community Center:** To do a screening of the film version of "The King and I."

- Host a discussion afterward to discuss the differences between the stage and film versions.
- Hand out collateral and/or a discount flier, and do a giveaway of tickets to the show at the event.
- Invite local media for photo and video ops.
- Have cast members appear and perform a number from the show to encourage ticket buying for the Theater's run.
- **Screenings of THE KING AND I can be licensed through Criterion Pictures. Please email: [brian@critterionpicusa.com](mailto:brian@critterionpicusa.com) with the details of your event. Restrictions may apply. Rights are needed for any broadcast of the film.**

**Event / Online / Kids / Community / Partnership**

**Use the show's setting in Thailand to create tie-ins and packaging with travel and tourism by partnering with a local Travel Agency:**

- Exchange email blasts & web banner/social media cross-promotions, as well as physical signage & collateral.
- Create and promote travel packages which include tickets to see the show.

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- Barter promotional exposure to contests/sweepstakes.
  - Secure elements for auctioning an “Exploring Asia” travel package for a donor event.

*Online* / *Patrons* / *Fundraising* / *Community* / *Partnership*

## TALKBACKS

*Talkbacks are a quick and uncomplicated way to offer added-value to your audience members, encourage further dialogue about the show, and bring in new patrons. Contact local schools, libraries, museums and historical societies to find experts for your Theater’s post-show talkbacks. (Be sure to keep post-show talkbacks relatively short, or schedule them as separate events outside of show times to be respectful of audience time commitments.)*

- **Thai History Expert:** Invite a historian or Thai Culture professor to place the show in a broader geographical and historical context. Pull out themes and moments from the show and talk about how they connect with real-life events and locales.
- **Slavery & THE KING & I:** Invite an expert to come and discuss the relationship of “Uncle Tom’s Cabin” to THE KING AND I, as well as the history of slavery in Asian and American cultures.
- **Book Club:** In advance of your show’s run, encourage people to read “[Anna and the King of Siam](#)” and host a special book club night at the show with a moderated discussion of the book and musical. Consider involving the local library, schools and existing book clubs to help spread the word and gather more participants. This can also be done as an online event where followers and fans are encouraged to respond to discussion questions via Facebook and Twitter.