

OTIS SALLID

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

thoughts • ideas • strategies for the future

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INTRODUCTION

The Madison Square Garden Company is a world leader in sports and entertainment experiences, setting a global standard for excellence and innovation. Its mission is to lift the human spirit by gathering communities around exceptional live experiences on the world's most significant stages. The Madison Square Garden Company hosts the Rockettes Dance Company in their iconic venue, Radio City Music Hall in New York City.

The Rockettes, the longest-running precision dance company in America, has a long and proud history and tradition of excellence. With more than 95 years of live performances, the Rockettes must now look towards the future and a future vision to broaden the scope of its artistic brand nationally and internationally.

The following are some thoughts and ideas that describe the long term and short term strategies for the future vision of the Rockettes dance company and organization. The intent is to broaden its vision, strengthen its precision dance repertoire, and expand its global footprint.

PROPOSED TASK

Working as a leader in production companies, both big and small, is undoubtedly a part of my "wheelhouse." As the CEO of an independent production company, Creative Otis Inc., hiring and managing numerous talent, choreographers, set designers, lighting designers, stage managers, and directors has given me the skills needed for this position. Scheduling, creating budgets, and marketing tools for Fortune 500 companies, nationally and internationally, has allowed me to foster relationships with institutions across the globe. Also, I have mentored many students and pre-professionals into colleges and conservatories across the country. Though extremely challenging, with more than thirty years in the entertainment business, I have been successful.

The Rockettes tasks are also challenging. The legacy of the Rockettes allows for the provenance of authenticity. However, this authenticity speaks to the world of the past. The world now is more diverse and more tolerant of different lifestyles, languages, gender roles, and other experiences. For the Rockettes to stay relevant in this ever-changing environment, it is essential to re-imagine and re-ignite its position in the business of dance and dance organizations.

These particular thoughts and ideas begin to outline strategies, solutions, and schedules for change.

I. LONG TERM GOALS

THE ROCKETTES - AMERICA'S DANCE COMPANY

It is my long term goal and vision to make the Rockettes truly America's dance company. A dance company that not only reflects the world in which we live but a world that represents most if not all of America. The Rockettes organization will be more reflective of the country's demographic make-up, thus allowing everyone to belong to the Rockettes and the Rockettes to belong to everyone. These goals are rooted in humanity, sharing, and creating a place to belong.

We will always honor the past while embracing the future in the present. Moving this institution to a more inclusive environment will enable the audience to see themselves on the stage and bring their families not only once but time and time again for generations.

My relationships in the entertainment business with dance companies, institutions, dancers, dance schools, studios, and conservatories around the world would allow me to bring the needed diversity to the Rockettes organization. I will also put the necessary systems in place to ensure the proper representation of diverse groups and communities around the world to interact with the Rockettes organization.

II. THE REPERTOIRE

The Rockettes choreographic repertoire is the life-blood of the dance company. It is central to its viability, relevance, and long term growth. It reflects the strength and importance of the organization and the artists that exist within its framework.

The Rockettes Repertoire is all things dance. It is inclusive, celebrates the past, present, and future, music forward, with a strong sense of excellence in production. In other words, we know how to present. The Rockettes repertoire will not only have an impact on the audience in which it serves but makes a significant impact on the world stage.

THINK GLOBALLY, WORK LOCALLY

The Rockettes repertoire will last for decades to come and will allow the Rockettes dance company touring opportunities nationally and internationally. It is my goal to attach a vibrant educational dance component to everything we produce in the repertoire enabling the Rockettes organization to broaden its reach and instruction to younger audiences.

The Rockettes Dance Company productions will be the best in the world at delivering traditional as well as cutting edge dance entertainment. We are always in the pursuit of excellence.

Tribute to American Choreographers (Untitled)

An exciting and fiery tribute to the great American choreographers of both film and stage. This illustrious body of dance works includes works by Bob Fosse (Steam Heat; Big Spender), Jerome Robbins (America), Michael Bennett (Chorus Line) Jack Cole (Happy Ending), Gower Champion (Hello Dolly), Agnes De Mille (Oklahoma, Carousel), Hermes Pan (Top Hat) and the list goes on. There are no boundaries to this iconic soon to be a classic presentation by the Rockettes dance company. We are celebrating the past while looking towards the future.

Contemporary Dance - (Untitled) - featuring World Class Choreographers

In 2005 I was given a Doris Duke grant through the Apollo Theater to travel the world to meet contemporary dance makers. I had the pleasure of meeting Crystal Pite, Akram Khan, Compagnie Kafiq, Neal Iremia, William Forsythe, and many more. Bringing these young world-class choreographers movement style, thinking, and choreography to Radio City Music Hall squarely positions the Rockettes on the road to its foreseeable future. It is work that is within the confines of its brand, which is precision dancing. (respecting the past while embracing the future, in the present).

I have included some examples of various choreographer's work. (see video).

Crystal Pite (The Seasons) • Keone and Marie • Companie Kafig (Boxe Boxe) • Dancers Are Athletes

The Process

The Process is a dance production number that tells the story of what it is like to be a Rockette. It takes the audience on a journey through the beginning of a dancer's day, to the rehearsal, to costume fittings, to more rehearsals, to hair and make-up, more rehearsals, and finally onto the stage in present time in the production itself. It takes the roof off of the building so that we, as an audience, can peer inside to see the long, arduous, and fun-filled journey of being a Rockette. This production number should be exciting, informative, and enlightening for young and old alike. It vests the audience in knowing that the Rockettes are real people just like them.

When fully realized, this should be an iconic production that involves the entire production team of Radio City. Lighting, costumes, sets, music, choreography, and of course, storytelling. The Process speaks to the heart, soul, and integrity of the organization. It is an everyman story of how work equals success. This particular dance work is significant because it allows us to tell our story and to define our legacy. It is educational informative and entertaining all at the same time.

Go Rockettes!

The New American Songbook

The New American Songbook is a production number that is a compilation of contemporary American pop music. It is a dance work that is designed around modern pop culture classics then and now. It is a well produced mash-up of the best of pop music dance and choreography.

THINK: Bruno Mars, Pink, Beyonce, Arianna Grande, Panic At The Disco, Rihanna, Dua Lipa, Jonas Brothers. Lil Nas X, Taylor Swift, Lizzo, Tamen Impala.

You Don't Know What Jazz Is

You Don't Know What Jazz Is is a total tap production number featuring the Rockettes.

Celebrity Production Events

The Celebrity Production Events are musical production events that center around famous musical artists, past and present. With guest stars, these productions feature the Rockettes with great dance and spectacular creative-production; the show should be television-friendly.

An example of the possible artists are:

Kelly Clarkson, Beyonce, Billy Joel, Gregory Hines, Sting, Michael Buble, Dolly Parton, Carrie Underwood.

III. EDUCATION

As stated, I have strong relationships with colleges, arts institutions, and conservatories around the world, including NYU Tisch, UCLA, Berklee College of Music, Frankfurt University, Boston Conservatory, Cal-Arts and many more. I have written curriculum applicable to state standards and have administered over 300 students and 14 faculty members in a Performing Arts Academy in Los Angeles. These curriculums embraced diversity while allowing access and equity to all students so that they might appreciate and welcome the many facets of the arts.

The Speakers Forum (Untitled)

The idea of a Speakers Forum comes out of my own experiences as a young boy of 6 years old with a program at Carnegie Hall called Young Peoples Concert. The host of that event was Leonard Bernstein. He, along with the New York Philharmonic orchestra, began to play Beethoven's Eroica. It was on that day that I learned the importance of the musical form "theme and variation." Theme and variation is the musical device that Beethoven used to create his musical masterpiece Eroica. And even now, it is a choreographic device that I use in many of my dance compositions. It was educational, informative, and life-changing.

Working in the arts capital of the world, New York City, and being in the center of the Broadway theaters, The Speakers Forum, set in a simple and straightforward interview format, seeks to provide information to artists, students, professionals, and the interested public about the entertainment industry. The Speakers Forum aims to inform by leading frank, intelligent conversations with highly knowledgeable and experienced leaders in the field. The show provides insight into the craft, skills, and pitfalls of leading a positive and successful career in arts and entertainment.

The benefits of a program are numerous. The ability to connect to the surrounding community, to teach, inform, and educate is essential to the viability of our organization. It strengthens our educational outreach. The city gets to know us, and we get to know them. These are relationships that last for more than a lifetime, and they continue for generations to come.

IV. ROCKETTES MEDIA

Further branding of The Rockettes is essential if the company and organization is to stay relevant. It will allow us to tell our story and define and strengthen our brand into the future. To this cause, I would strengthen their social media presence, enhance opportunities for television and film engagements, and more importantly, give the Rockettes a purpose. This purpose would be helping women and girls in the arts, especially as it applies to dance. This purpose is powerful, far-reaching, attainable, educational, charitable, and brandable.

The Commercial

Creating a commercial campaign that speaks of the Rockettes as every young girl in America can address the organization's inclusion and relevancy. Amongst young people, there has been a culture shift. This shift is in how they dress, how they look, the music that surrounds them, and their technology. These culture shifts and changing times should be reflected in how we see the Rockettes. Though they are individuals with personalities all of their own, they come together as a company to do one thing. And that is a precision dance. This video will not only be engaging but will manage audience expectations while delivering a new and exciting way to present the Rockettes. The mantra being, "Together we are one."

For example:

Every morning when the sun rises in America, there is a girl that wants to be a Rockette. Perhaps with her, there is every mother that wishes she had as well. But this is more than just apple pie. This same morning the camera dashes down a Chicago street. Another young woman, Gen Z, individual in her style, looks, and fashion, hurriedly makes her way to her destination. Riding her bike through the New Orleans streets, a young woman purposely races through cars and traffic. All across the country, they come. Young, individual, singularly their own, hopeful dreamers, they come.

The pace is quick, honest, and unapologetic. We see young women from all across the country, making their way somewhere that we do not know. From the open Eden Prairies of Minnesota to the Hollywood Hills of L.A., from the rural counties of Raleigh, West Virginia to the sprawling farmland of Wyoming, they come. It is a small dance studio on the side of a dusty road in Texarkana, Texas, to a motorcycle gal winding her way through the mid-west hills of Georgia. They come with a dream.

Up from the clang and clamor of the underground New York subway, they come. All of these women with a dream. As they stand outside of the theater waiting for the doors to open, we see the sign on the backstage door that reads "ROCKETTES AUDITIONS."

Though all of this might seem overly dramatic, and before you say, "I've seen this before." It is real for so many dancers who want to make it in the dance business. It is a dream come true. They have finally arrived. They have arrived at an audition for Americas Dance Company, the Rockettes.

The door opens, and one by one, they enter onto the stage. All young, all hopeful, all themselves, individuals. Magic! The audition begins. 5,6,7,8. Go! Rockettes!

V. THE ROCKETTES FOUNDATION

Research and studies have confirmed that one of the critical ideas for saving the planet is educating women and girls. The Rockettes foundation though not political can be an agent for social change. The organization must make social and cultural change a part of their new “common sense.” It is my intention for the Rockettes Foundation to have relationships with schools and conservatories around the world, to create access and opportunities in the arts for girls. I am a product of this kind of foundational thinking. I came from humble beginnings to become an international artist. The Rockettes Foundation, when fully realized, will make a significant difference in people’s lives and the community in which it serves.

THE SPHERE

As a storyteller, filmmaker, writer, and creative, The Sphere brings all of my abilities together into one concise platform. The Sphere will allow for dynamic and exciting new ways to make the world our neighbor. It encompasses a compelling new perspective on how we imagine, reimagine, and present. Though the medium is a large-scale platform for presenting ideas, the need to tell the “little story” becomes ever more critical. It is the “little story” that will create memories that last forever, touch our hearts, and give us the entertainment experience of a lifetime. It is the “little story” that will lead us to the big ideas.

An example: Please watch my new short film, “One Life.”

ABOUT OTIS SALLID

WHAT MAKES ME THE RIGHT PERSON FOR THE ARTISTIC DIRECTOR POSITION

It has always been my objective as a director, producer, and creative to build relationships and institutions focused around core values while proffering a vision that is greater than any one singular individual, thus serving the whole. These objectives are not only sustainable but speak of a world vision that unites us all regardless of race, creed, religious belief, and orientation.

I bring all of my skills as a producer, director, writer, creator, choreographer, filmmaker, graphic artist, educator, teacher, and practitioner of the arts to this position. I consider myself a visionary who knows and understands how to interface with all aspects of management and artist.

The Rockettes has a long and proud history and tradition of excellence in entertainment. Interviewing for the position of Artistic Director of the Rockettes is an honor. It is a passion and an assignment that I know well, understand, and fully comprehend. All that I have done in my career speaks to this position. Given my background, I know how to embrace this assignment and these particular responsibilities. How inspiring it is to be a part of such a distinguished organization and to help generate a sustainable future for such a treasured, iconic dance company.