



# UPS AND DOWNS THEATRE GROUP

## POSITION OF MUSICAL DIRECTOR FOR

### The Ups and Downs Theatre Group

APPLICATION to be in writing

Please include:

1. a full CV giving musical background, musical experience and teaching experience;
2. your reasons for applying for the position;
3. any works you might be interested in suggesting to the Committee for performance in the future;
3. names and addresses of two referees.

CLOSING DATE (TBC)

INTERVIEWS (TBC)

If you require any further information, please telephone

Audrey O'Neill - President on (07718240801)

Gaynor Milligan - Secretary on (07717732448)

Alternatively, you can email us at [upsanddownstheatre@googlemail.com](mailto:upsanddownstheatre@googlemail.com)

Founders - George Barclay Elaine Kirkwood Teresa McKinnon

Affiliated to NODA 

Scottish Charity Number SC042908



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## Job Description

**Job Title:** Musical Director

**Responsible for:**

All aspects of Musical Direction for the forthcoming production

**Reports to:**

President, Vice-President and the Board of Trustees.

**Rehearsals:**

Our rehearsals are at St Mary's, Avon Street Motherwell. We rehearse every Sunday (excluding school holidays) August to March from 2pm – 5pm. It is extremely important that the applicant is able to attend all of these rehearsals to ensure consistency for our cast.

**Key activities:**

- Work in equal partnership with all the appointed members of the production team to identify and agree themes and topics for the forthcoming production.
- Work in collaboration with members of the production team in the selection of music and provide advice and guidance as require.
- Provide advice and guidance to the President and Board of Trustees at regular intervals on all aspects of the musical development of the production.
- Ensure fairness and equity is applied in the selection of cast members for particular parts/roles.
- Provide musical direction to cast members in accordance with production requirements. This includes teaching songs.

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- Develop a learning aid to facilitate the teaching of songs as required eg: through the creation of a Compact Disc (CD) in accordance with agreed practices.
- Arrange all music for the forthcoming production including transposition where necessary and prepare musical arrangements for band members.
- Assess the suitability, and provide recommendations to the Board of Trustees, on the appointment of band members and rehearsal assistants.
- Collaborate with other members of the production team in the presentation of any requested concert parties.
- Liaise with venue management on all aspects of sound production.

## **Skills:**

Must be an excellent communicator and a committed team player with good organisational skills.

## **Knowledge and Experience:**

Knowledge and experience of musical theatre and/or musical theatre production and working with individuals in particular with special needs would be advantageous.

## **Most challenging part of the job:**

Recognising the skills and abilities strengths and weaknesses of all cast members  
The term 'cast member' is applied to all personnel intending to appear on stage as part of the production.

**NB: A full disclosure (PVG) is required for this position.**

*This job description may be subject to review at any time in agreement with main committee.*

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## REMUNERATION

Sunday Rehearsals: £25 per hour  
(2pm – 5pm)

Show Week Performance Fee: £385  
(Sat & Sun rehearsal included)

**\*\*Any taxes due are the responsibility of recipient.\*\***

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## Information Sheet

The Ups and Downs Theatre Group was formed in July 1995 to provide a fun, creative outlet for children with Down's syndrome and their siblings.

Down's syndrome is the most common form of learning disability in Britain today. It occurs at random in about one in seven hundred births and is caused by the presence of an extra chromosome in every cell of the body.

This extra chromosome is what links all people with Down's syndrome together, but it is all their other characteristics which tell them apart.

When school teachers George Barclay, Elaine Kirkwood and Teresa McKinnon decided to set up a small theatre group in 1995, they could never have dreamed the Ups & Downs would turn out to be the huge success story we have today. Being a music teacher, and having a background in drama, George was very aware that many of his young students with Down's syndrome shared a love of music, and felt sure he could tap into their potential through the medium of song, dance & drama. They initially contacted Down's Syndrome Scotland to find out just how many families would possibly be interested, and they were very surprised with the large response. Around 40 young people with Down's syndrome and their siblings signed up that first year, with parents, aunts, uncles, grannies & grandpa's watching proudly in the audience, as the curtain rose for the first time on their revue show. Ages range from 5 to young adults.

Over the past 21 years the club has continued to grow from strength to strength. We now have 67 cast members, all relishing their moment in the spotlight. Young people with Down's syndrome can be funny, frail, musical, mischievous, wilful and witty..... just like everyone else. They are individuals with their own strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes, hopes and dreams.

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We have been blessed with wonderful and dedicated production teams over the year, while sympathetic to the various needs of the cast, are not afraid to push them where require - resulting in slick, well rehearsed shows year on year. This was well illustrated a number of years ago when our then Production team decided to introduce drama in Act 2 for the first time. The cast as ever rose to the challenge, and not only learned the choreography, script, and lyrics, but astounded our audiences with their timing and the depth of feeling that they added to the production. The sheer quality of the performance had the audience literally captivated, and was a tremendous success, therefore this mixed revue/drama combination has been incorporated regularly ever since. With the clever scripts, colourful costumes, wonderful comic timing and well chosen songs, the cast delight in breaking down any pre conceptions their audiences may have and succeed in showing a hugely positive face of the disability.

Learning songs, dances and stage movements is obviously the main focus for the group and is no mean feat in itself, but it is not our only or even most important role. The Ups & Downs provide learning for disabled children with a whole range of positive experiences: following instructions, working together towards a common goal, overcoming fears and negative feelings, exploring new talents and perfecting new skills.

Since 1995, the group have taken their revue shows to Motherwell Civic Theatre then due to our rising audience figures had no choice but to move to a bigger venue, Hamilton Townhouse in 2009. Over the years we have increased the number of performance nights from 3 in 1996, 4 in 1997, 1998 and 1999 and in the millennium year we had to increase to 5 evenings. Seats are usually at a premium and you have to be early to be guaranteed one.

We are a parent led group with parents and friends helping with costumes, scenery, make up, props etc., and during show week everyone is involved front or backstage in some capacity or other.

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Over the years we have been able to continue growing the group due to the fundraising activities and support from many individuals, groups, businesses, schools, local authorities and the unstinting support of our patron, Edward Reid of Britain's Got Talent fame.

After much debate and consideration in 2012 the club took the immense decision to go it alone and broke away from the auspices of Down's Syndrome Scotland and became a Scottish charity in its own right. With the club continuing to go from strength to strength, the future is still looking very bright for The Ups & Downs Theatre Group.

Throughout the year's we have enjoyed many awards and appearances started in 2009 when we were thrilled to be awarded NODA'S (National Operatic & Dramatic Association) 'Presidents Cup' for our show 'Take 14' - which was voted the most outstanding experience of the presidential year throughout the UK!! We were even more delighted when we discovered that we were the first club to bring the cup to Scotland in its 82 year history. The recognition however didn't stop there. In 2011 we were honoured to receive the Utopia Costumes Youth Award which is presented annually to the youth group/society which has made an impact in the life of its local community. 2011 was also the year that the then President, Lorna Leggatt, was invited to a reception at Buckingham Palace celebrating young people in the performing arts. The event was hosted by Her Majesty the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh. Our President was one of 350 guests at the event, which included many star guests including Dame Helen Mirren, Kevin Spacey, Sheila Hancock, Michael McIntyre, Jools Holland, Duffy, Joe McElderry and Ellie Goulding. Many more wonderful opportunities have opened up for individual members of the club, including a selection of the cast recording a series of sketches for the BBC in the summer of 2011 for a documentary aimed at 'myth busting' Down's Syndrome.

More recently our good fortunes have continued when Peter Vardy made us their Charity Partner for 2015 and again in 2018. We have had the esteem honour of performing at their launch event at Perth in January. Following a

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nomination by an admirer of our group who worked for The Sunday Mail and a public vote which saw us poll more than the entire votes cast in previous years we were crowned The Great Scot Community Champions for 2015. A few lucky cast, parents and helpers represented the club at the glittering celebrity awards to accept the prestigious award. We met many famous faces who had all been so impressed by us including Paolo Nutini, Darius Danesh, Gordon Strachan and Dr Who script writer Steven Moffat. Following that success we were then approached and invited along to take part in the Kaye Adams Radio Scotland and be interviewed. Our new found celebrity status did not stop there much to our amazement we were invited to perform Christmas Carols on STV Glasgow's Riverside Show. In 2016 we were invited to perform at the East Kilbride Arts Festival and once again we were very well received. We were then invited to visit our local St Andrew's Hospice to delight the residents with a short montage of our songs and it was a joy to be able to give something back to our local community supporters. We also had the pleasure of being invited to perform an event as part of The Edinburgh Fringe Festival and this allowed us to perform to a whole new audience and once again our cast excelled and the standing ovation said it all.

Don't forget to follow us on Facebook and keep up to date with all our exciting news. Check out our website next time you log on to the internet at [www.upsanddownstheatre.org](http://www.upsanddownstheatre.org). Keep an eye out for details of our next production and come along and see us, you will not be disappointed.

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