

# Tête à Tête

## The Tête à Tête Marketing Handbook 2021

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Essential information is on a red background, while information that you may find useful is on a blue background.

## Must-read: Dates

First things first: if you don't already have one, make a production plan that says what you're going to do, when you're going to start doing it, and when it needs to be finished by.

**9th May: Deadline to send Tête à Tête marketing images, text, and so on.**

**30th May: Draft website available to proof.**

**6th June: Launch week (exact date TBC).**

Please keep your show under wraps until we launch the Festival if at all possible. If we all do it at once, it means that everyone can benefit from everyone else's marketing work.

## Must read: Key Points from the Handbook

- Tête à Tête will market the overall Festival, handle a national press campaign, and offer advice on how to market individual shows, but don't market individual shows.
- You can help Tête à Tête using your network online and offline to promote the Festival
- Good marketing has a clear message for a targeted audience, explaining why your show is unique and something people want to see
- Try to update your social media regularly - it may help to ask a friend to handle this
- Until tickets go on sale, it's better to focus on telling a *story* about your show to build a *community* of supporters and fellow artists. This is a good way to use social media.
- Think about how you can reach audiences with limited internet access, who may be isolated.

## Welcome

Welcome to the Tête à Tête Festival 2022!

First off, I'm very pleased by this year's lineup. There's an exciting range of projects, and I'm looking forward to working with all of you.

This guide gives practical advice on how to help Tête à Tête promote your work to as many people as possible, and how you might build your audience beyond what Tête à Tête can do for you.

If you prefer watching to reading, we've got some useful videos [at the #ForArtists section of our website](#) - but please make sure you read the key dates above and put them in your diary.

At Tête à Tête, we want to develop artists. This guide is to help you with the marketing side of your show - engaging audiences, and offering ideas to look at and think "I could do that!"

For now, I hope you'll enjoy reading this guide and watching the videos - I look forward to seeing all of your work. Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions or ideas, and I'll look forward to talking to all of you about your shows soon.

Welcome to Tête à Tête!

Leo Doulton

Marketing Director, Tête à Tête

## Must read: What will Tête à Tête do for you?

The whole Tête à Tête team are here for you as you bring your show into the world. Tête à Tête has been working with WildKat PR for years, and together we will:

- Send targeted mail shots to opera lovers via other opera companies and venues, including to previous Tête à Tête Festival attendees
- Run a PR campaign aimed at national and regional press and broadcasters - the Festival has previously appeared on ITV and BBC, and in *The Times*, *The Guardian*, *Time Out*, *The Telegraph*, and on other major platforms.
- Run an extensive online campaign for the Festival on Tête à Tête's social media channels and websites.

We'll also offer **direct support** to companies to help your marketing, including:

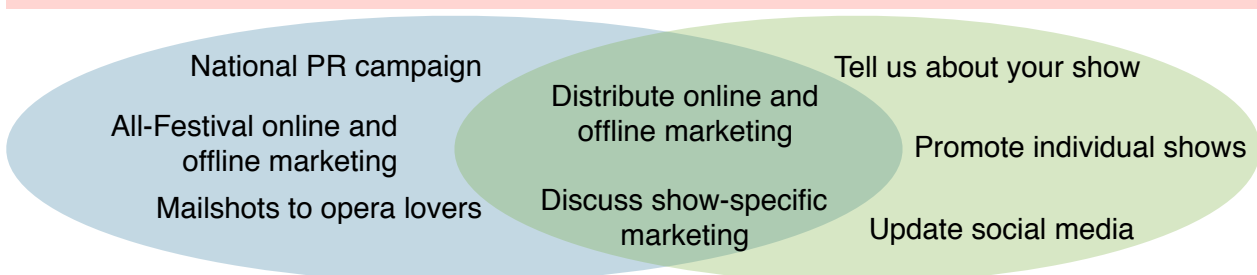
- Offering advice and feedback on your marketing campaign and assets.
- Sending out a weekly checklist of things to do in your marketing campaign
- Sharing your marketing content to Tête à Tête's wide audience on social media. Don't forget to tag us! We're @Tête à Tête on Facebook, @teteateteopera on Twitter, and @operateteatete on Instagram.
- We'll also keep an eye on your marketing campaign, and send you reminders if you seem to be slipping behind.

However, the Tête à Tête team's a small one (I do our digital marketing, WildKat does our press and PR, Anna and Bill do almost everything), and we simply don't have the resources to market every show individually. You will need to create and distribute marketing for your show yourself.

We will, of course, share your content on our social media channels, and offer as much help, advice, and support as you need. Some of you already have a lot of experience marketing your own work, and some of you are new to it. So ask for as much or as little help as you want to market your show - we'll be there either way.

### What Tête à Tête does

### What companies do



## Must read: What do we need?

1. The **name of your company**, and a **logo**. If your company doesn't yet have a name, now would be a good time to choose one.

**Tip:** Google your new name first - check nobody else is using the name, then register the Twitter and Facebook profiles

3. An **80-100 word description of your show for the website**. This should say what it's about, show how it's unique, and make your target audiences want to come.

**Tip:** The brochure's aimed at a general audience, so make it easy to understand - think Daily Mail, not Opera Magazine. Find your USP and use it (See below)

5. **Press release content** - this should include

- Three themes (i.e. what section of a newspaper could it fit in - science, technology, fashion...)
- Three USPs
- Overview of what happens in the show.

2. A **picture for the brochure** that's at least **1830 pixels by 1312 pixels**.

**Tip:** This should say in a single image what your production's about.

4. A **cast list**. You may email **biographies** for the main participants, but it's not compulsory or expected.

**Tip:** These should be short and sweet - at most 150 words each.

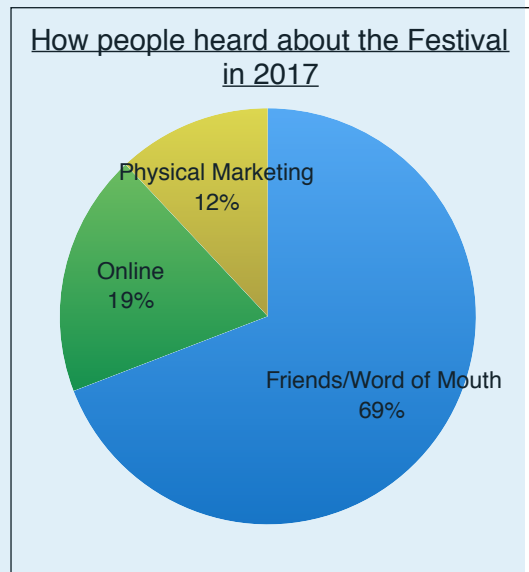
Deadline:

# ASAP, ideally by 9th May.

Once you've spoken to Leo, you'll be sent a form to upload all of your content in its finalised version. If you want advice about the best way to do them, there's some guidance below.

## What can you do?

We can't promote the Festival alone - we need your help. There are a few simple things that you can do to help out:



- **Tell people (both online and offline) about your show and the Festival.**
  - Stop reading this, prepare a 'save the date' to friends, funders, potential promoters, and other people you want to impress and thank, and then come back here.
  - Encourage your cast, creative, and technical teams to do the same.
- **Use your online presence to promote your show and the Festival.**
  - Share our digital marketing materials, and link to Tête à Tête's website, where people can find out everything about the Festival.
  - Keep your social media up-to-date with pictures and other content for your audience.
  - Use the #LoveOpera weekend as a chance to promote your show and the Festival to people all over the world.

## Marketing your show

Marketing your individual show is down to you. We will of course, offer support - and guarantee feedback and advice on any marketing materials sent to us before the deadline.

The key to selling a show is a **clear message** for a **targeted audience**.

**A clear message:** it should be very obvious to potential audience members why they should come - what is special about your show?

**A targeted audience:** your marketing should only reach people who are likely to come. This may include

- Friends, family, and other artists from your personal network
- Pre-existing fans of work made by you, your collaborators, and your company
- People with an interest in your material - enthusiasts for the topic or genre
- People connected to the work's theme - culturally, religiously, geographically etc.

On average, people need to hear about your show 4+ times, in different places, before deciding to buy tickets. Get the message out each week, and it will make a huge difference.

Over the past twelve years, we've found that it's not the big companies that fill houses - it's the ones who develop a relationship with their audience, and tell them why they should come.

If this seems like too much to do while producing your show, find a friend to be your marketing manager. That will ensure you stay on top of your deadlines, and get the audience you deserve.

### Finding a distinctive, clear message

You'll often hear this called a USP - a Unique Selling Point.

This is **not** just what your show is about. It's why your show is **unique**.

A good way to find this is to write down 3-5 things you think are unique about your show, and then go to the Tête à Tête website and look at what people have done in previous years. If lots of people have done it before, it's not a unique selling point.

Distinctive USPs include

- There is an animal in this show
- This is a playable videogame opera
- This is the first opera in its language (and so will appeal to speakers of that language)

Overused 'USPs' include

- This opera is musically innovative
- This opera is very moving
- This opera tells a previously untold story of X

Use your USP to define the tone of your marketing. If your show is gothic, comic, or Victorian, why not take that tone and use it to make your marketing stand out?

All of your marketing should have a clear answer to the question: why should you want to come? What will it give your audience?

It should also be easily **actionable** - what do you want them to do in response to that post? Buy a ticket? Like your page? Feel a sense of connection to your show? Whatever the action is, make sure you make it easy to take that action e.g. include a link to the booking system, your webpage, or a friendly picture of your team.

## Finding your audience

To do this, you need to know who your audience are. If your answer is 'London theatregoers', remember that they have a choice of a hundred shows to go to every night - it's unlikely they'll choose yours. Tête à Tête's all-festival marketing will reach a lot of these people anyway.

It's much better to find people outside traditional audiences. Look at your USP, and think about who it might appeal to other than new opera nerds. Find those people. Contact organisations they're a part of, get on their mailing lists, offer to promote their event on social media if they'll promote yours, turn up to those events and give out flyers...

Think about what your show has that will make them want to come, and tell them. If you have contacts in that non-traditional audience, use them to test out your marketing.

## Things you have to do

In order to promote your show as part of the overall Festival, we need you to send us

- The name of your company, and a logo.
- A picture for the brochure that's at least 1800 pixels by 1200 pixels.
- An 80-word description of your show for the brochure.
- A cast list, and biographies for the main participants.
- Press release content, including three themes, three USPs, and a short synopsis.

This section will explain how to do all of these things in a bit more detail.

## Press release

A good press release will be one-side of A4 and will include all the important information (who, what, when, where, why). A great press release will do all of this but also tell people what is unique about your opera, your company, and will clearly explain why journalists should interview you, critics should review you, and why audiences will love it.

If you want to invite industry people, you can focus your efforts by looking at the shows that inspired you. Who reviewed them? Who supported them? They might like your stuff too.

## Effective text

The way you write your marketing content will shape who becomes interested and decides to come to your show. If you write for other composers, you will get a small audience of other composers. Think Daily Mail, not Opera Magazine - a general audience should be able to understand it. That will help you build a relationship with them, and bring more people to your show.

It should also be show the tone of your piece. If your show is a comedy, your copy should be light and funny! If your show is more spiritual, you might want a more ritualistic tone. Look at some past shows on our website for examples, or other shows that have inspired you.

It's good to test your marketing content on a practice audience - show it to a friend/relative/stranger on the Tube who's outside the opera bubble, and see if they're excited by what you've said.

### Good practice:

A Schönberg-like opera about being working class when there's no work in town - based on true stories.

### Bad practice:

This neo-serialist exploration of contemporary post-industrial landscapes is a moving inquiry into the nexus of proletariat and place.

## **Effective visuals**

An effective image for your show should give your show's USP in one easy-to-understand image. A picture of your lead singer in costume may not make it clear why people should come.

If you can't get a graphic designer, there are some simple tips that will make your life easier.

- Free image-editing software, like GIMP or Pixlr, can be found online - they allow you to edit pictures without having to pay Photoshop prices.
- Think about the USP of your show, and use visual references to help illustrate that point. There are strong visual styles associated with most historical periods, ideologies, and story-genres.
- Look at what people selling similar shows have done - big companies have the budget to conduct experiments to find the most effective marketing, and there's nothing stopping you from using their results.

## **Traditional marketing**

Physical marketing can be an effective tool. WildKat PR will handle getting press releases for the overall Festival to national, specialist, and local newspapers and broadcasters - though if you want to invite a critic you know, then let Olivia know.

We appreciate any help distributing the Festival posters, flyers, and brochures to the right places.

What is the right place? Places with people who are interested in your USP, and the Festival's USP of challenging the boundaries of new opera. Choose your times carefully - when will there be a lot of people?

On the subject of choices, show me (Leo Doulton, Marketing Director) you've read this by sending me a picture of an operatic kitten (This is also useful for measuring which resources people use).

## **Offline contact**

The pandemic has been difficult for everyone, and one of our goals for the Festival is to make sure that we can reach people with limited access to the internet.

A lot of the advice in this handbook may be useful - who could you reach, why and how would they want to engage, and how will you communicate with them in a way that conveys the unique flavour and appeal of your show?

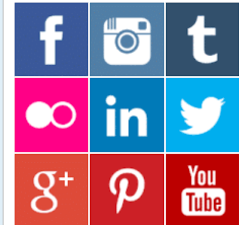
Example ideas might include postcards, telephone chains, and posting CDs - but come up with things that are unique to your show's unique features! Or just knock on your neighbour's door, and post old friends a letter.



## Effective social media

Most of the marketing for your own show will probably be done online. It's cheaper, easier, and possible to target to really specific groups. There are some things you can do to make your social media usage more effective.

**1. Choose the right platform for you** - don't spread yourself thinly across all the platforms. Use Twitter for brief announcements, TikTok/Instagram for visual content, and Facebook for a mix of text and visual announcements. Twitter users tend to be older, with lots of arty/professional people; Instagram and TikTok tend to be younger. Facebook has users across a broad spectrum of ages - if you can only choose one platform, it's probably the best to go for.



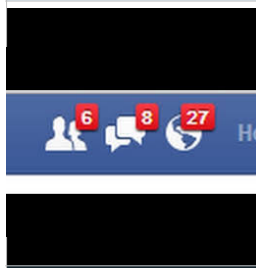
**2. Use your USP to find a distinctive tone for your marketing campaign** - If your show is gothic, comic, or Victorian, why not take that tone and use it in your marketing? Remember: people generally respond better to positive messages.

**3. Use tags effectively** - they're often a great way to reach outside your bubble to non-traditional audiences with your USP. Common opera hashtags include #LoveOpera and #NewOpera - and, of course, make sure that you tag us so we can share your content to our subscribers!

Facebook: @Tete a Tete Twitter: @Teteateteopera Insta: @OperaTeteATete

#LoveOpera

#HateOpera



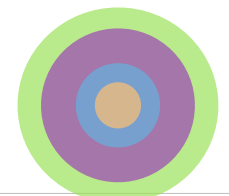
**4. Produce regular content.** Pages that update irregularly appear lower-down people's social media feeds, so you need to be posting on a regular schedule to stay visible. Although it's best if you can react directly to current trends, you probably won't have time during the Festival. You can use 'Publishing tools' on Facebook, and 'Tweetdeck' on Twitter to schedule updates in advance - an hour's work can give regular content for the rest of the week.

**5. Your audience needs a balanced diet.** Nobody wants to see a page which only says 'BUY OUR PRODUCT'. About a third of your posts should directly try to sell your show, with another third being content related to your show like cast profiles, articles (more on that below), and the last third being content you've shared from other people. Stay focused - audiences want to know that you'll give good content, not a mix of rubbish and goodness.



**6. Make friends.** Sharing content from other people is a great way to build relationships with other artists, companies, and potential audience members. You'll help your fellow artists, and they'll probably help you by sharing your content too. Build a relationship with regular supporters - reply to their comments and keep the conversation going.

**7. Target your adverts.** Even if you only have £5, you can use Facebook and Twitter's advertising tools to reach your target audience. You can target it to a particular set of demographics, interests, or to people who like a particular page. Find the pages where your target audience chat about their interests, and set a targeted ad for those people.



If you want an alternative take on how to use social media, you can find our guidance from last year [here](#). And, of course, all of this advice is useless unless you have exciting content to share!

## Content - what to make?

You have limited time and resources to make your marketing content. You should focus on making content that will attract your target audience. Look at how other people reach that audience for tips.

What attracts people?

- Content that gives a quick insight into your production e.g. short videos, trailers, and well-designed visuals
- Content that people can interact with e.g. quizzes, polls, and Q&As
- Content that's original and fits your show - this is different for every show

We will share all marketing that we're tagged in, but we're particularly keen on content that people are likely to engage with. Try to

- **Tell a story** - rehearsal room photos tend to get less engagement than a prepared photoshoot, because they don't tell an obvious story. Informal artist profiles can be a great way to tell the story behind your show.
- **Make a point** - articles that engage with a question related to the show, rather than giving a description of the music and plot, tend to get more engagement (the BBC does a lot of these).
- **Be unique** - keep a focus on your USP, find a tone that suits your target audience, and make content that fits in with your USP and tone.

Beyond cast biographies, graphics, and your press release, here are some other types of content you could explore:

- **Behind the scenes content** - share your artistic process. Remember who you're targeting - a general audience will probably be less interested in your conceptual and intellectual work than an audience of opera nerds. Done right, this can make people really excited about your unique method.
- **Video content** - unite the visual and musical elements of your show. This might include making a short trailer for your show, some backstage interviews, or film an extract. Show things that are visually and musically exciting - and remember, shorter videos get more views.
- **Alternative content** - be creative and do the unexpected! If your work calls for the characters all having their own Twitter account, a suggested reading list, or a collection of photographs, go for it! Make GIFs, draw a cartoon, or do a flashmob - if you surprise people, they're much more likely to notice you and want to come to the show.

This is especially important this year, as so much content is being pumped out online. It's impossible to know what will be a passing gimmick and what will be a viral hit - but if you are creating something that is authentic to your work and how you want to be seen, it's worth giving it a try.

Online content is quick to put up, so it's often worth testing something, seeing if it gets traction, and then deciding whether or not to keep going with it.

And that's it! Don't hesitate to get in touch with questions or ideas. I'm available at [leodoulton@googlemail.com](mailto:leodoulton@googlemail.com) - I look forward to working with you all for this year's Festival!

## Appendix

### Checklist

Have you:

Sent us your marketing information?

The name of your company?

Your company's logo?

A picture for the brochure (at least 1830 pixels by 1312 pixels)?

An 80-word description of your show?

A cast list?

Biographies for the main participants?

Sent us your press release content?

Three themes?

Three USPs?

Overview of the story?

Sent us any content you want us to review by 29th May?

Found your clear message (USP)?

Found your targeted audience?

Worked out how to target that audience?

Thought about how to bring your show into the offline world?

Told your friends, family, and professional contacts when your show is?

Given out some Tête à Tête brochures and posters?

Made a production schedule?

Chosen which social media platforms to use?

Decided on your marketing campaign's tone and content?

Come up with a range of exciting content to promote your show?