

STEPPING IN

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In September 2023, Isabella, a recent Fine Arts graduate with bilingual skills in Spanish and English, began her career in the arts and entertainment industry by working at the Shining Star Recital Hall in San Diego, California, a mid-sized performing arts venue renowned for hosting diverse cultural events. Despite her enthusiasm, Isabella felt that her contributions often went unnoticed by her manager and team. One afternoon, the venue faced a significant challenge: a client, booked for a three-week residency, arrived with a production team who spoke only Spanish, while the venue's technicians spoke only English. In a fast-paced industry, a day of delay had a major impact on operations. Miscommunication caused tension and client frustration. As the only bilingual staff member on duty, Isabella saw a chance to step in. "Miscommunication caused tension, schedule delays, and client frustration. As the only bilingual staff member on duty, Isabella saw a chance to step in.

Should she intervene in order to demonstrate her capabilities and thus advance her career in the organization, or would that be stepping out of bounds? What was the best way for her approach the situation? The way Isabella responded would determine not only the success of the event but also her standing and future opportunities within the organization.

Industry Background

The arts and entertainment industry in the United States has had a growth of 11.4% over the past few years and was expected to reach an estimated \$511.9 billion in 2025 (Dalal 2025). Globally, the entertainment and media industry grew by 5% in 2023, reaching \$2.8 trillion, and was expected to continue expanding at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 3.9% through 2028, surpassing \$3.4 trillion (PricewaterhouseCoopers 2024).

This industry was divided into several sectors, as shown in Exhibit 1, each with its unique characteristics, such as:

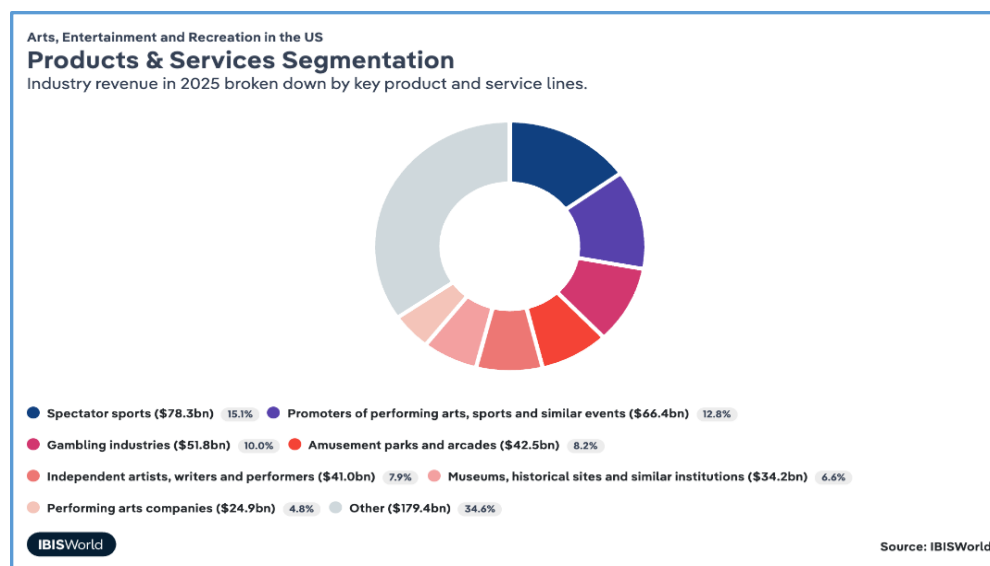
- **Film and Television:** This sector included movie studios, production companies, directors, actors, screenwriters, and technicians. In recent years, it also included bringing the comfort of cinema to people's homes through streaming services like Netflix, Amazon Prime, HBO Max, Disney+ and others.
- **Music:** This sector was of great importance in the industry as it included music scores for television, movies, and theatrical performances. Additionally, this sector included record labels, musicians, composers, producers, and distribution networks such as radio, streaming platforms, and concerts.
- **Theater and Performing Arts:** The exhibit of this art form in venues like theaters included performances such as plays, dances, and musicals. This sector combined artistry with live performance.
- **Visual Arts:** This sector included painting, sculpture, photography, and digital art, which could extend to galleries, auctions, and museum exhibits.
- **Literature:** This sector included writing creativity found in poems, screenwriting, and journalism.

- **Digital Media:** This sector referred to internet-based content like blogs, podcasts, and social media, streaming services such as YouTube, TikTok, and other platforms that influenced popular culture.
- **Gaming:** This sector referred to video games, game development, or e-sports. It was one of the largest sectors within entertainment, having a massive global audience and high revenue generation.

While the arts and entertainment industry continued to grow year after year, it faced numerous challenges and obstacles that needed to be overcome to have the best possible outcome. One of the most significant challenges was the encounter of various cultures and languages that were joined together to make art. *“Culture, in popular usage, has two broad meanings: it can relate to people and society, and it can relate to the performing and creative arts, [...] The cultural industries tend to rely on a process of collective creativity”* (Walmsley 2011 p. 168,170). In addition, the arts could vary according to the region of the world, as each region had the opportunity to share its culture with the rest of the world through its dances, movies, music, and literature.

Exhibit 1. Products and Services Segmentation in the Industry

Source: IBISWorld (2025)



Live Performance in Theaters

This was a dynamic sector in the arts and entertainment industry as it combined live performance and artistic expression with economic impact. Live theatre had its origin in ancient Greece; the Greek word *theatron* translated to “a place of seeing” (Bay et al. 1998). The ancient Greek theater was a major civic event in which people would gather for a festival in honor of Dionysus, the god of dancing, theater, and wine (see Exhibit 2).

The history of theater was a rich connection between culture, social, and artistic development that had been evolving alongside the evolution of humanity. According to the Metropolitan Opera (n.d.), “One of the festival’s highlights was a competition between the most important playwrights of the day, and it was for this competition that all of the Greek tragedies we know today were written.” Since then, live performances had gained popularity as “theater has taken its place within a broad spectrum of performance, connecting it with the wider forces of ritual and revolt that thread through so many spheres of human culture” (Theatre and the USA n.d. p. 6).

Exhibit 2. Ancient Greek Theater

Source: image from Greekacom



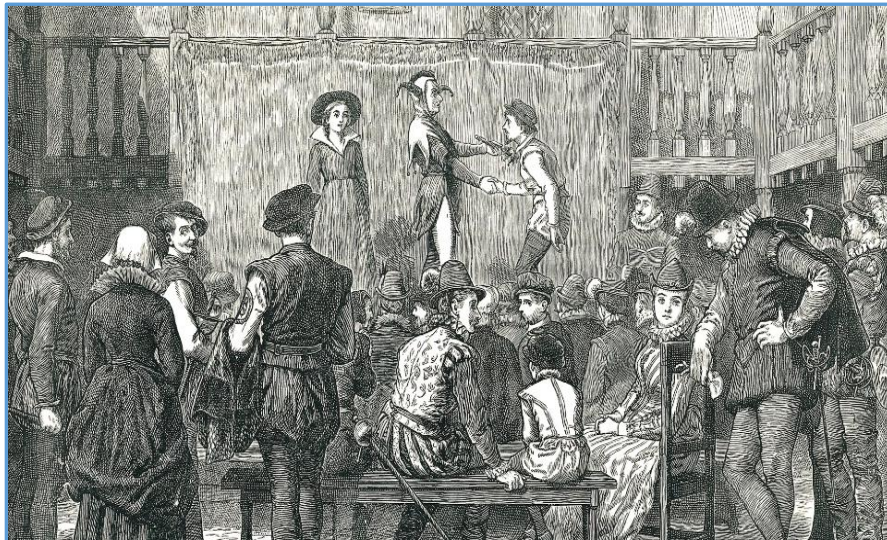
Evolution of Live Performances

Theater had been an enduring and dynamic part of human culture for thousands of years, serving as a mirror to society and a vessel for storytelling, rituals, and entertainment. Its evolution from ancient civilizations to actuality reflected human adaptations to stories and the delivery of the performance, from including more scenery in plays to the use of digital effects on screen. The evolution could be divided into the following categories:

- **Ancient theater:** including ancient Egypt's ritual performances, ancient Greece's major playwrights, and ancient Rome's elaborated stagecraft, engineering, and spectacle.
- **Medieval Theater:** In this era, after the fall of Rome, theater became mostly religious and liturgical. Performances took place in churches or town squares.
- **Renaissance Theater:** This era was the rebirth of classical knowledge and humanism. Personalities like Shakespeare were presenting their plays (see Exhibit 3).

Exhibit 3. Renaissance Theater Era

Source: image from Rackin (2019)



- **18th and 19th Century:** In this era, theaters introduced electric lighting to custom-designed performances. Additionally, Opera gained popularity with composers like Mozart, Verdi, and Wagner.
- **20th Century:** The rise of musical theater in this era was primarily focused in New York, as Broadway emerged as an important birthplace of the genre. Some Broadway show productions are portrayed in Exhibit 4.
- **21st Century and Beyond:** The integration of digital technology, projection, and interactive theater takes place in this era, including live-stream formats to watch online.

Exhibit 4. Broadway Shows Playbills

Source: image from playbillstore.com



Theater continued to evolve in response to technological innovation, global interconnections, and cultural landscapes. The digital era introduced new forms such as virtual theater, immersive experiences, and streaming productions. Issues of identity, representation, and social justice were at the forefront, as artists used theater to engage with urgent contemporary issues. At the same time, traditional plays remained vital, coexisting with modern innovations, passing the love of the art form from generation to generation, keeping the theater alive and present in our world.

Company Background

The Shining Star Recital Hall opened its doors in 2002, and since then numerous clients had used the facilities for performances. The performances ranged from local school graduations, dance and music academies' recitals, musical theater programs, and international performers. The fully equipped theater seated over 540 spectators and housed Broadway-quality shows and symphonies. The venue featured a 2,732-square-foot stage, orchestra pit, fly space, and support facilities like dressing rooms, meeting spaces, and more (see Exhibit 5). Additionally, the space rental provided clients with a minimum of four stage technicians and a production technical manager who would each be in their designated position for the show: the light board, sound board, or deck.

Exhibit 5. Theater

Source: image from Logograph



California, the state with the second-highest percentage of 13.2% of the theatre business (after New York), could guarantee a flow of performances year-round (see Exhibit 6). Furthermore, there had been a growth in this live performance sector by renting the venue to clients who sought to maintain modern audience engagement through major musical productions such as *Wicked*, *The Lion King*, and *Phantom of the Opera*, to mention a few. Additionally, alternative cultural

experiences, such as the *Candlelight Concerts* (see Exhibit 7) invited older and younger audiences who sought something different to experience in the theater (Wood 2024).

Exhibit 6. Business Concentration Map of the United States of America

Source: IBISWorld (2024)

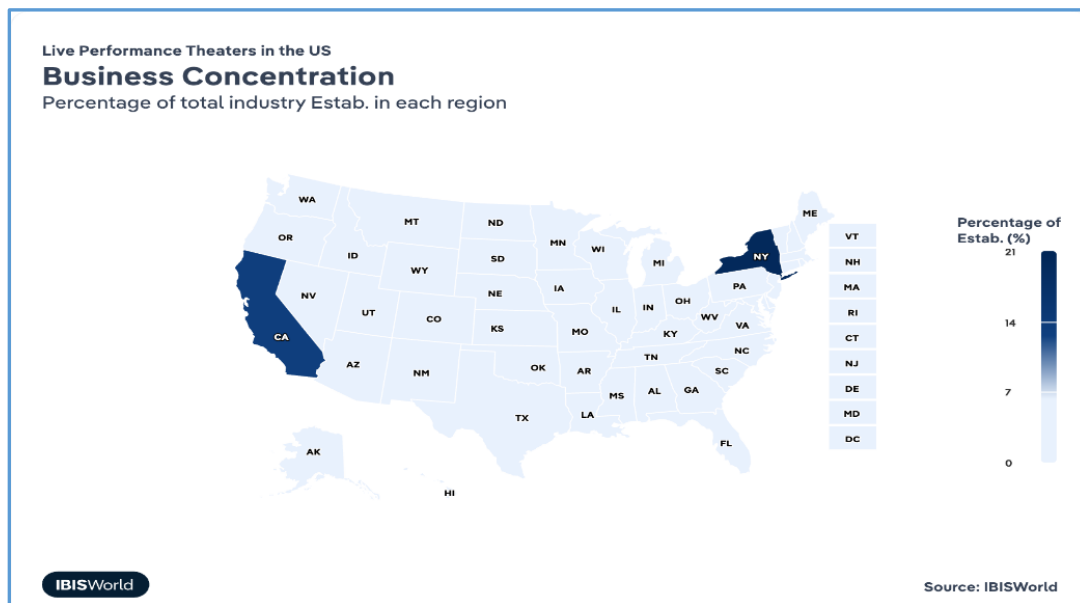
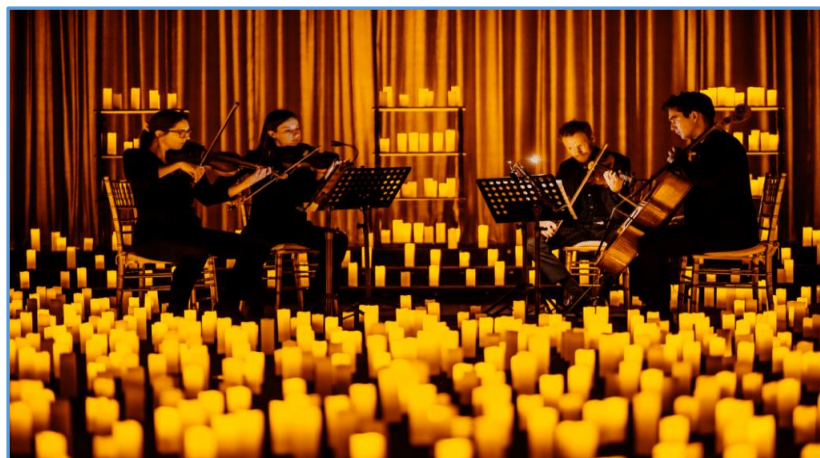


Exhibit 7. Candlelight Concert presented by Fever

Source: image from *Candlelight Concerts* (2024)



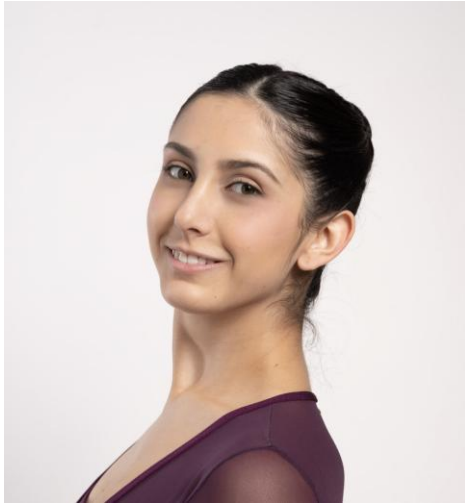
Shining Star Recital Hall's Dilemma

The recital hall's team encountered difficulties when welcoming a Spanish-speaking client group who had booked a three-week residency at the Shining Star Recital Hall. The language barrier between the client's production team and the Shining Star's English-speaking technicians disrupted event preparations. Recognizing the growing frustration, Isabella stepped in to offer translation assistance. She observed the struggle her manager faced and requested permission to manage communications for the booking, explaining that her bilingual skills could streamline coordination throughout the client's residency. Hesitant but willing to try, the manager allowed her to take over temporarily.

Isabella's initiative paid off; her clear instructions and leadership helped both teams collaborate effectively. Her manager was impressed by her performance and noted that the shows ran smoothly without any further issues. He mentioned that,

"her style of management allowed her to see the bigger picture of what was best for the client and us (the crew), not only what benefited us. And her time management was key when executing everything that was asked of her. Not only in that situation but in many others, I can see that she can lead a team and maintain a calm and friendly environment towards her co-workers and clients who come and work with her."

Isabella's determination to fulfill her role showed a promising future for her in every scenario. The experience affected her directly in a positive manner, as it gave her hands-on experience of how to lead a team. Additionally, it helped her develop and better understand her own leadership style. Through the challenge, she had the opportunity to demonstrate her full potential as a leader and proved to her manager and team that she could do more than her limited tasks. However, there were more Spanish-speaking clients booked for the rest of the year, and Isabella needed to decide if she should continue to Step In. What would be the best approach for Isabella to manage the next situation while earning respect and recognition from her team? How could these interventions help her grow in the organization?



ANDREA CAMACHO is an MBA candidate in Management at California State University, Los Angeles, expected to graduate in Spring 2026. She holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Dance, Music, and Theater from the University of New Jersey, which she completed in partnership with the Joffrey Ballet School in New York City. Her academic and artistic background reflects a strong interdisciplinary foundation that bridges the performing arts and business management.



JONATHAN ALEXANDER PEREZ is a Master of Business Administration (MBA) candidate at California State University, Los Angeles, concentrating in Financial Management. As a dedicated entrepreneur, his work excels in e-commerce with hands-on experience in data analysis, market research, and online marketing. He is pursuing a career in strategic financial planning to help businesses achieve sustainable growth and long-term value.



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