

# *The Society of the Rotherfield Players*

## **Production Team Notes**

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### **Introduction**

Each production should be managed by a core production team who report into the Rotherfield Players Committee. A core production team should ease the workload on any individual allowing each to concentrate on their particular area. In the event the core production team have any difficulties confirming any aspects of the show, immediate help and support should be sought from the Rotherfield Players Committee.

#### Core production team

- Director
- Producer
- Stage Manager

Some shows may also require a Musical Director and/or a Choreographer. These should be included in the core production team.

All members of a core production team should be included on the casting committee

### **Director**

The Director is the artistic driver behind the production and should choose a producer and stage manager that they can work well with, thus enabling the director to concentrate on “directing” and not have to get involved in the administration relating to the production. A director may choose to have an Assistant Director to help with rehearsals and blocking.

### **Director’s Responsibility**

#### **Choice of Play/Show**

This must be a choice that the director is enthusiastic about, although it does not necessarily mean it is essential to know the play/show well prior to selection.

#### **Style of Production**

There is no “one way” to direct a play, but thought should be given to this when selecting the play/show

#### **Musicals**

It is important to choose a musical director/choreographer and stage manager and involve them in the show selection process

#### **Availability Chart**

This is not essential, but proves very useful for planning rehearsals and assessing the possibility of “doubling up”

#### **Help Nights and Auditions**

Help nights are particularly useful. It gives people a chance to understand the play/show and the character parts. A short overview is usually all that is needed with perhaps some questions, answers and role playing. This gives the director a chance to see how well people bond with each other and how well they move.

Auditions should be done by the casting committee, as it is very helpful to discuss points with others and prevents any suggestions of favouritism or otherwise, however, it is the director who has the final decisions. Do not be tempted to pre-cast in the pub etc beforehand— people will continue to surprise!

## 2.

### **Rehearsal Schedule**

Although rehearsal schedules cannot be “cast in stone”, it is important to try to keep to the schedule as much as possible. Obtain any dates the cast cannot do prior to producing the schedule, usually at the auditions, and work around them as much as possible. Absences for holidays can be planned, but weather and sickness are unpredictable.

### **Blocking**

Opinions vary on blocking, but particularly with large casts it is useful to work out moves on paper prior to starting rehearsals. Some scripts have moves marked in them, which can be useful but may not work in your set/staging, as these have designed for bigger stages

### **Rehearsals**

Start and finish on time. People like to have fun but also work hard. Invariably a cast will enjoy a show more if they feel they are achieving a lot at each rehearsal.

Comments to the cast should be constructive and if things aren't working, discussion can usually sort it out. If a cast member feels strongly about something, encourage ideas from them.

Praise, encourage, facilitate and enjoy – but don't dictate!

### **Characterisation**

It is important that this is worked on with the cast, although the size of the cast may affect the amount of time spent on individual characterisation

### **Set Design**

The director should have a good idea on how they see the set and stage properties. It should be discussed with the Stage Manager early on after casting what budget has been allocated and a design proposed to allow the stage manager plenty of time to organise the set build and number of backstage crew required.

### **Costumes**

The director should discuss with the costume mistress/team their vision for the show and what budget has been agreed

### **Prompt**

The director may want to find a prompt of their choice, otherwise it is the responsibility of the producer to appoint a prompt.

### **Lighting**

Draw up a lighting plot for the lighting engineer and discuss early on what you are looking for in atmosphere and effects. Invite the lighting engineer(s) to come to rehearsals near to show time. In the event of a sound engineer being required, the same process will be required.

### **Performances**

The director's work should finish after the Dress Rehearsals. It can sometimes be unhelpful to give comments, other than praise, once the show has moved to performance.

## **Producer**

The Producer is responsible for the business element of the production. They are also in charge of everything that occurs in front of the stage once the show has moved to performance. They are also a useful “sounding board” for the director.

## **Producer’s Responsibilities**

### **Casting Committee**

Act as a member of the casting committee at auditions for the production

### **Budget**

A budget may have been drawn up by the director, but the producer has the responsibility of keeping everything to budget. Performing rights, staging, sound and lighting, costumes, properties and publicity etc, should be taken into account. The budget must be approved by the Rotherfield Players Committee.

### **Cost Management**

Approve all spending to ensure the budget is adhered to.

### **Scripts**

Order and pay for scripts. Scripts will be needed for the cast, prompt, stage manager and costume team leader. The director may already have a couple of scripts. Monies for the scripts/show fees should be collected by the producer. Some music scripts can only be hired and must be returned, pencil notes erased, by the producer

### **Licence**

Apply for the performing rights to the licence holder, ensuring they are available in advance and liaise with the Committee to confirm payment is made for the Licence.  
Apply for the Bar Licence

### **Insurance**

Check if any special insurance is required for a production, e.g Juniors

### **Child Protection**

The society has a nominated Child Protection Officer. If any Juniors are involved in a production, the producer must liaise with the CP Officer to organise chaperones for all rehearsals where juniors are present and during performances in dressing rooms etc.

### **Fire Officer**

Inform the East Sussex Fire Officer of the dates and times of performances in case they want to do a fire check

### **Hall Bookings**

Liaise with the Committee’s Facilities Manager to ensure that all the hall bookings have been made for rehearsals, set up and performances

### **Costumes**

A Costume Mistress/Team Leader should be appointed and invited to the Production Team meetings when appropriate. The director will discuss their vision of the costume requirements with the costume team.

### **Publicity**

Liaise with the Committee’s Publicity Officer to ensure they are given all the relevant information for the production

### **Posters**

Confirm with publicity that the posters are ready to go up approximately four weeks prior to show dates

## 4.

### **Proofing**

Proof read tickets, posters/fliers and programmes with a second person

### **Production Meetings**

Organise production meetings with the director, stage manager, publicity officer, costume team etc

### **Box Office**

Ensure the tickets are printed and given to the appointed Box Office Manager, who should distribute to the nominated shop "ticket" outlets when the publicity posters go up, and attend some rehearsals to ensure tickets are available to the cast and production team. The Box Office Manager is also responsible for each performance foyer table and ticket sales on the door

### **Front of House**

A Front of House Manager should be appointed to organise a rota for the front of house support roles for each performance and organise the purchase of the non alcoholic beverages. The front of house manager will need floats for the tea and coffees and programmes

A Bucket Collection person(s) with buckets appropriately labelled.

A Bar Manager should be appointed and provided with a float

The Front of House Manager is responsible for the floats and counting of monies at the end of each performance

List of front of house duties:

- Bar staff, who will organise the purchase of the drinks/hire glasses
- Teas and coffees
- Programme seller
- Chairs (and tables if being used) to be put out for each performance
- Bucket collection at end of every performance at the door
- Ensure the hall, kitchen and bar area are clean and tidy at end of every performance

The Producer should be available for support to the Front of House and Bar Managers at performances

### **Pre-performance Welcome Announcement**

The Producer is responsible for the welcome announcement to the audience prior to a performance. The announcement should include the whereabouts of the fire exits, toilets, including the disabled facilities, the switching off of mobile phones, the policy of no filming during performances, confirmation that the bar/teas etc will be open during the interval(s) and the current charity we are supporting (bucket collection at door). This may be a pre-recorded message or can be done live if preferred.

## 5.

### **Stage Manager**

The Stage Manager is in charge of the stage and backstage during the performance period for the show. They are responsible for finding the backstage crew and the safety of both the backstage crew and the actors on the stage.

### **Stage Manager's Responsibilities**

#### **Casting Committee**

Act as a member of the casting committee at auditions for a production

#### **Budget**

Check with the producer that all costs relating to staging the show are included in the budget. Work to ensure that spending is kept within the budget

#### **Backstage Crew**

The stage manager should find the backstage crew, who should be able to lift and move reasonably heavy items if needed.

Backstage jobs:

- Scene setting
- Scene shifting
- Curtain (if being used)

#### **Set Build/Set up/Strike Set**

Discuss the set and staging early on with the director to ensure everything the director has asked for is achievable. In the event some difficulties are foreseen, appropriate changes can be made in advance. Confirm a team of set builders and painters, these may include the backstage crew and members of the cast, and ensure they are available for the set up date. Some flats, backdrops may be painted well in advance of set up. Make sure there are people confirmed to help strike the set/get out on the Sunday after the show ends.

Ensure that all equipment is ready, e.g. paint and brushes, tools, ladders for set up

#### **Lighting**

The lighting engineer will have met with the director to go over the lighting plot. On set up and strike set days, the lighting people will need space for their ladders and equipment while installing the lights. The stage manager needs to ensure floor space is made for this. The stage manager will need to liaise with the lighting engineer during performances

#### **Properties**

Appoint a Properties person(s) and provide a list of stage and personal properties needed. Check with the props person regularly to ensure they are not experiencing any difficulties in gathering /sourcing any items. In the event some items are proving difficult to find, send out an email to the cast with a list of missing items for help, it's surprising what people have stashed away!

The Props people will need space and a table in the room adjacent to the stage to lay out the personal props for cast members to collect when needed. Stage props can be stored either side of the stage for easy access for the stage crew

#### **Continuity**

This is really important for large productions in particular. Small cast shows may not need a continuity person. When required this person has to be aware who is needed on stage and when!

#### **Curtain**

Ensure you have a curtain puller (if the curtains are being used) who is clearly briefed when curtain up and down is required.

Liaise with the Producer and Front of House Manager to ensure all performances start on time.