



DURHAM STUDENT THEATRE

A GUIDE TO PRODUCING

An A to Z of producing in Durham.



Introduction

A hopefully helpful little guide to everything you need to know about producing a show in Durham. Producing isn't easy but it is by far the most important part of the Production Process (although never tell a Director that, it deflates their egos...) and so you need to be really on the ball all the time. But don't stress, we're here for you whenever you need a little bit of help. This A – Z should provide the answer to every question, but please get in touch if there's anything else you need a hand with!

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Aftershow

It's great that this is first on the list, but A to Z means A to Z. Something that is often forgotten but always lovely to end a show. To be honest, the easiest place to have it is in someone's house. Some lovely 2nd or 3rd year is often kind enough to offer up their home for this last night of debauchery.

People tend to **get £5 off each company member** and this can usually cover the alcohol (and maybe some snacky foods).

Application for Performance Venue

This is probably the most important possible item on the A – Z. Chances are, you already have an idea of where you want to perform, but if you haven't, start thinking. **Everything will ultimately depend on your venue: its location, its capacity and its staging area.** So check out the list a little later on and see what suits your show best. Just a note, for college venues, you tend to need to have someone in the cast or crew who is IN the college to use the venue. It's then usually easiest if the booking of rooms goes through them.

Auditions

Auditions (along with rehearsals) tend to be held in **Elvet Riverside**. This is one of the centrally located academic buildings, available for hire (free) between 6.30pm – 9.45pm every weekday, 1pm – 9.45pm on Wednesday, and 9am – 9pm on Saturday. It isn't available on Sundays sadly. For info on how to book Elvet, please see the 'Rehearsals' section. **Make sure your auditions take place at least 6 weeks before the performance if that's possible.** Chances are, you won't get 6 weeks of rehearsals in, but it's a really good indication. Obviously this depends on the play, but just make sure that you're prepared to audition at the beginnings of terms, because this is when freshers especially are keen to just get involved with as much as possible!

What you'll need

- Signs pointing people to the auditions
- Audition Application sheet
- Applicant information sheet (not always necessary but sometimes a good idea. It would explain about the play, and the performance dates etc, so that no-one organises clashes and everyone knows where they are).



- Photocopies of the audition excerpts. The director will usually have found particular excerpts of the play that they want to be read at audition. Make sure you've printed out enough male/female parts for everyone who could turn up.
- To have sent your audition notice to student.theatre@durham.ac.uk by Saturday on the week before the auditions so it can be publicised in the weekly email.
- A box of pens (for the auditionees)

Budget

Budgeting shows is very important. When working with larger theatre companies they may allocate you an overall budget, which you will have to divide. Or you will have to work out your budget. Things to consider:

- Tech costs (hire of equipment/paint for stage)
- Scenery and props
- Rights
- Scripts
- Venue Hire

Cast and Crew Lists

DST and Experience Durham both keep up to date lists for both the cast and crew of all productions that are put on by DSTs Theatre Companies. We ask you send a cast and crew list to experience.durham@durham.ac.uk.

Committee

Just to explain what the Committee/Executive system is: very easy but worth a quick explanation. The bigger theatre companies (such as DULOG, DOE, CTC, etc) and the college theatre companies (such as Hild Bede Theatre, HCTC etc) are run by an committee/executive. That will include definitely include a President, Secretary, and Treasurer, usually a publicity officer or something similar, and almost always a social secretary. The people on these execs don't necessarily direct/produce the shows; but they will executively produce them – providing the money for the show; and helping out with budgets; basically just keeping an eye on things etc.

The DST Committee is made up of the DST Executive Committee and the DST Standing Committee.

DST Executive Committee

President: Daniel Gosselin (dst.president@durham.ac.uk)

Secretary: Matilda Hunter (student.theatre@durham.ac.uk)

Treasurer: Leo Mylonadis (dst.treasurer@durham.ac.uk)

Technical Manager: Jonny Browning (dst.technical@durham.ac.uk)

DST Standing Committee

Assistant Treasurer: Anna Jeary

Festivals Secretary: Izzie Price



Public Relations Officer: Penny Babkhani
First Night Editor: Hugh Train
Internal Hires Co-ordinator: Danielle Oliver
Social Secretary: Olivia Race

At some point in the summer term of each year, each committee will be looking for people to take over for the next academic year, so if you're interested in helping run things, definitely look out for these opportunities.

Communication

This can sometimes be tricky. Make sure you're always in contact with all of the cast and the rest of the Production Team and you sometimes have to act as the middle man between the two. [Get a contact list](#) (with emails and phone numbers) of everyone right from the beginning. You can usually steal these from the audition sheets. Remember you are the organiser of everything. You should essentially be able to fix any problem, but having good communication between all parties means that if you come to any difficulties, there is an open working relationship to fall back on! Make sure you don't step on the Director's toes though: if they're happy dealing with a problem: let them! It's less aggravation for you, and you're pretty damn busy anyway.

Costumes

The DST costume cupboard in the Assembly Rooms isn't great if we're being honest (we're working on it), but you're very welcome to use anything in it, [as long as you return it](#). There will be a £20 deposit, which you will get back when you give everything back at the end of the show! You can take as much or as little as you want for £20 and your name and contact details will be taken. You will then be held accountable for anything that isn't returned at the end of the show. You should contact the DST Hires Co-ordinator for more information (see the executive section below). It's always useful to actually get a dedicated costume person for the show to help you out! And while you're at it, get a make up person for production week if you need one!

DST Website Listings and Support

So how do you make your show visible on the DST website so that people know all the details? To do this:

- Go to www.dur.ac.uk/DST
- Click on *Members* in the top right hand corner.
- Click *Listings*
- Click *Create a Show*, and fill in the form!
- Make sure your image uploads okay

Any Website problems, please email the DST President dst.president@durham.ac.uk

Durham University Arts Management Group

See *Your Little Guide to DUAMG*.

Marketing

Pretty important when thinking about a show. This will be done effectively by working closely with the rest of the production team: especially the director. The marketing and the publicity (further down) will be what sell the show. So, the marketing is any little stunts that you might pull. Or any ideas that you have that you think could help sell a show. For example, some shows have had trailers in the past that they have posted on YouTube. Some have arranged 'flash mobs' (usually done for musicals: where you get some of the cast spontaneously in one place and get them to dance or something similar). In terms of marketing, just think about what is unique about your show that you can monopolise on? You and your director should brainstorm: What is it about? What are the themes? What's fun about it? What appeals to the public? The cast are usually really astute about it as well: after all, they're the ones who have been working on it for weeks. So chat to them about it too! Don't be afraid to ask for help: whatever gets those ticket sales up will work for you. Feel free to chat to us if you're having any troubles! **For more check out our Little Guide to Marketing.**

Programmes

These tend to be sold for 50p each. They need not be fancy, literally an A4 folded sheet is fine. Just so the public and reviewers especially, know who to praise!

Props

At the very beginning of the production, get a props list and costumes off the Director. As with costumes you are allowed to use the DST Props Store, contact the Hires Co-ordinator for more information. There are also fantastic places to find props in and around Durham. 'Cloth' fancy dress shop on Silver Street does props like fake cigarettes, masks, wigs, etc. if in doubt, always ask him: he's really great, and might be able to suggest an alternative or make something for you. There are loads of Charity shops around that will help out with things like ornaments or bits of furniture: especially try North Road for charity shops. For things like scrap metal, there's a scrap metal yard at the bottom of Sidegate; down by the Radisson Hotel. All in all, you should always be able to find what you need in Durham, or if not, definitely Newcastle! *But* if you're wise, you'll know far in advance, and so can order things *cheaply* off the Internet. The Internet is saviour for productions, just make sure you don't leave ordering to the last minute!

Publicity

Possibly one of the most important items on the A to Z. The publicity will be the printed work that will be distributed all around Durham to sell the show. Now getting someone to design this is easier said than done. But there are some exceptionally talented student designers hanging



around Durham who are usually happy to help. If you see some publicity from another show or event that you love, chat to the producer/organiser and find out who designed it! Chances are, they love designing, so would be happy to do yours as well. Just make sure you don't rush designers: the ideas used to make the publicity design should be a collaboration of the director, designer, (and you if they're happy for you to get involved), chatted about well in advance. But really, you're just there to instigate the director/designer relationship. Then, once your design is finalised, get all cast and crew to put it as their Facebook profile pictures.

Brand Guidelines

Use of any company logo (for sponsorship etc.) should be in line with the guidelines of the company, and it may have to be approved prior to printing. These guidelines and the approval process should be made clear to you when gain the sponsorship. **The DST logo also has accompanying guidelines, these *MUST* be adhered to or you will be asked to reprint your poster at *your* expense.**

What to order

- For a small show: Approx 150 posters and 200 flyers.
- For a bigger show (musical): Approx 200 posters and 450 flyers

Where to order

- If you get it done in advance, do this over the Internet at sites like www.stuprint.com, or www.stressfreeprint.co.uk. You'll need to leave 3 – 5 working days free, and you should be starting to publicise 2 weeks or so before the show. If you're pushed for time, Caroline at Cartridges Inc (on New Elvet) is great, so just pop in or call on 0191 383 9494.

Where to put them

- You'll find that you have hundreds left over UNLESS you share them out between your whole cast and crew. Freshers can give flyers out at meal times – stick them on all the tables etc.

Posters

- **Colleges** - Do a college bar crawl and put them up in all the colleges (bars, toilets, generally all around). Make sure you ask bar staff or porters where you can actually put your posters up, or they'll just get taken down.
- **Elvet Riverside 1 and 2** - You'll need to the key from the porters office in ER1, and then you have access to the poster boards in both buildings, which is the only place you're allowed to put them.
- **The Science Site** – There are plenty of public poster boards in the science site. Your best bet to find these is to ask at the receptions of each building.
- **The Assembly Rooms Theatre external display case** - If your show is in the Assembly Rooms we ask that you provide us with 4 posters *by the Saturday 2 weeks before your performance*, as we operate a this week/next week rotation on posters outside the Assembly Rooms Theatre.
- **The Assembly Rooms Theatre internal displays** – Any DST production may display internally in The Assembly Rooms Theatre. Make sure you submit one poster to us the week before your show so we can display it as an upcoming event.

Receipts

Collect receipts really vigilantly so that you can be reimbursed for every purchase. If you don't, you could essentially be personally funding each show. Don't let this happen.

Rehearsals

The best place for rehearsals (along with auditions) tends to be Elvet Riverside. This is one of the centrally located academic buildings, available for hire (free) between 6.30pm – 9.45pm every weekday; 1pm – 9.45pm on Wednesday and 9am – 9pm on Saturday. It isn't available on Sundays sadly. To book this room, go to <http://www.dur.ac.uk/timetable/students/roombooking> and fill in the form. They have very strict rules about eating and drinking in those rooms, so it really isn't a good idea to break them, because the theatre company may not be allowed to book them again afterwards. Other possible places to rehearse are in the colleges, but make sure that you get someone actually IN the college to book the room. They can just go and ask at college reception which rooms are available for student hire.

Reviews

You want to get a reviewer to your show. Now don't worry, you'll have at least one because DST's own reviewing system 'First Night' will send a reviewer to the first night of your show. If you haven't listed it on the website, we won't know about the show!

Other publications that review include:

- The Palatinate: stage@palatinate.org.uk
- The Bubble (they also do previews as well): drama@thebubble.org.uk
- The Durham Tab: a.j.d.earnshaw@durham.ac.uk

Rights

Almost every show performed in Durham needs to obtain the rights to do so. This is most definitely the most important item on the list. There are only a few exceptions to the rule:

- Shakespeare Plays
- Any show whose playwright died over 70 years ago (Note: for translations the translators also need to have died over 70 years ago).

To check who holds the rights to the play/show, just head to the major rights websites. For plays, Samuel French holds the most rights in the UK. You can search their website at www.samuelfrench-london.co.uk. They also have a few musicals, but not many. For musicals, try Josef Weinberger at www.josef-weinberger.com. If they fail you, MusicScope at www.musicscopeuk.com should be able to solve your problems. Josef Weinberger do a few plays as well, so if all else fails you can check them out.



If you don't find the play you want to do on any of these websites, you should be able to find it on www.doollee.com where it should list the publisher of the play. Get in touch with them, and if they don't own the full rights, they'll be able to point you in the right direction. The rights companies will ask you for the dates, the venue, and the seating capacity for the show, so make sure you know these before applying!

You can get very serious fines for performing a play without the rights, so don't try and break the rules. If you want to chat to us about it, please just email us on student.theatre@durham.ac.uk.

Set

Something you also need to think about is what your set is going to look like. Now this is very much part of your Director's vision for the show, but at the end of the day, it isn't going to be realised without a little help from you. So the Director may well want a set designer to help them with their vision, in which case (like the publicity) it might be a case of seeing some work of set designers on other shows and asking them to do yours. On top of that, it's probably worth making sure that you have sent an email to the tech mailing list as well. So, send a notice with all the details of what you're looking for to the DST Technical Secretary. Make sure that the set designer and the Director don't get carried away; always think about the budget. If you're working in the Assembly Rooms, make sure you look at the *Little Guide to The Assembly Rooms* because it has all the details about the flats/walls that can then be painted to help create your set. And that brings us onto the possibility of Set Painters. There are some very, very talented artists around Durham who would love to come and set paint. And they might not be on our database, because they never really thought they could do art in theatre, so ask around for suitable painters but remember paint is expensive!

Sponsorship

See the *Little Guide to Sponsorship*.

Stash

A term that you will become very familiar with; stash is the personalised clothing that each cast/crew gets for a show. And *you* are the organiser of this. DST have a discounted relationship with Andy and Sue Crossland at Phoenix Print, so make sure you order from them.

Head to www.phoenixprint.co.uk/catalogue/catalogue.html and have a look through the catalogue. People tend to go for hoodies (either zip up or pullover) because it's so cold in Durham, but you can also be a little adventurous with what you order. For example, a production of *Singin' In The Rain* bought stash umbrellas because it really went with the theme of the show. A bright colour is also GREAT because they really stand out! The most important aspect relating to stash is to make sure that you *collect all the money before ordering!* Phoenix Print need to be paid on delivery and it will probably end up being a personal cheque from your bank account. Now this is fine, as long as you have already been reimbursed by the cast and

crew. This is *really* important, otherwise you could spend hundreds on other people's clothing and once the show has finished, you haven't got much chance of getting that money back...

Tech

Your show cannot go ahead without a Tech team! So, you will need a Tech Director and Tech Crew. Typical positions include:

- Technical Director
- Stage Manager
- Deputy Stage Manager
- Assistant Stage Manager
- Lighting Designer and Lighting Operator (could be the same person)
- Sound Operator
- At least 2 members of Stage Crew
- (And remember your Costume and Make Up Girls/Guys)

Hopefully if you get your Technical Director early on, they should be in charge of finding the rest of the tech team. But it's always useful to know what's going on with every part of the production.

Best place to find all these people is by emailing the DST Technical Secretary and they'll post a notice on the Tech mailing list. Do this early on: there's nothing worse than having to find a techie at the last minute! The Technical Secretary can give you advice on what you'll need to hire in terms of Tech Equipment as well. So just chat to him.

Ticketing

At the Assembly Rooms, we will print your tickets for you. Elsewhere, just get them printed at Elvet Riverside. The printing there is pretty cheap, you can probably get about 8 per sheet. They don't need to be fancy at all, it's just so that you have proof that someone bought a ticket. In terms of pricing, a good average price is about £6 (Adults); £5 (NUS); £4.50 (DST). The DST price must always be the lowest price, just so you know.

Venues

See 'Your Little Guide to... Venues', which should have been given to you when you got this... If you haven't got this then ask me for this now!

If you got here, you deserve a medal. Congratulations! Now, obviously this is a really good reference document, but if you have any special circumstances which haven't been covered here, or just any general questions that haven't been answered, please don't hesitate to get in contact with us at student.theatre@durham.ac.uk



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THEATRE THAT SPEAKS VOLUMES



A Durham Student Organisation
Managed by Experience Durham

The Assembly Rooms, 40 North Bailey, Durham, DH1 4ET
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www.dur.ac.uk/dst