



Selection and Production of Theatre Plays Policy

Please direct any questions or feedback regarding this document to contact@sorellonstage.org

Sorell on Stage (SOS) are looking to produce 3 shows per year

One adult show during the first trimester, 3-4 short plays or one adult show in the second trimester, and a children's/family friendly pantomime style show in the third trimester.

For full length plays and the pantomime, we should aim for approx. 1 hour 20 mins with a 15-20 min interval (making the total show approx. 1 ½ to 1 ¾ hours). N.B. We've found that with the shorter attention spans that audiences now have, no-one is willing to sit through a long play anymore. This length seems to be a nice balance of value for money, but not too long.

It is highly recommended that there are only 2 acts with the first act being slightly longer than the second.

Directors need to consider the amount of stage space when casting. There is an option to extend the stage for a large cast, but stage size may affect the number of kids that can be cast in the pantomime show.

In addition to the short plays, SOS will produce 2-3 One Act plays to be entered into Hobart's OneFest and Deloraine's One Act Festival. These will both be held in October this year (2024). These must be no longer than 30 minutes in length.

SOS encourages original plays written by members. In the absence of an original play, SOS will seek to source scripts externally, including purchasing performance rights.

Sub-committee for selection of Theatre Plays

Craig Cherry, Vicki Delpero, Laini Colman, Saakia Itchins, Denise Seward, Ron Anderson.

N.B. If a member of the Selection Committee has a play that they are putting forward for consideration, they will stand down from the Selection Committee through the decision making process.

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Procedures:

1. Script Selection Process

Writers must submit their script to the selection committee by the following dates:

- First Trimester Play - **30 May** (of the year prior)
- Second Trimester Play - **30 September** (of the year prior)
- OneFest/Deloraine Plays - **30 April** (of the festival year)
- Third Trimester Children's Play - **30 January** (of the show year)

As part of the writing and editing process, writers are encouraged to hear their plays read out loud at a monthly play reading prior to submitting to the Selection Committee. This will allow the writer to test how the script is working when spoken aloud (thereby highlighting sections which they might feel need fine-tuning) and to seek constructive feedback on the script and staging. This is not, however, compulsory.

Each play presented to committee must have the script in draft form* with a full synopsis of the play and roles identified.

**SOS recognises that plays are finalised only when the director and actors become involved.*

Applications will be assessed by the committee using the following criteria:

1. The strength, quality and originality of the concept/story idea and the quality of the writing as evidenced in the submitted written materials.
2. The strength of the play to attract an audience to ensure its financial viability (for the trimester full length plays) and whether that audience is a good fit for Sorell on Stage.
3. The number of roles in the play to ensure lots of opportunities for existing members to participate and to attract new members to SOS†
5. Stage space considerations as well as ages and or gender that the play is written for. As there are limited male actors, whether the writer willing to rewrite or have females play the male roles if necessary
6. That content is suitable and we aren't being offensive, derogatory, racist, or crossing lines unless it is a deliberate choice (although this is not normally what we'd be looking for in comedy, which is most of the plays). We are committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment, including to cultural safety.

† The children's play can have adult characters in it, but writers are encouraged to include lots of roles for children

We have provided a standard template on how to present plays here:

https://australianplays.org/assets/images/files/ASC_script_format_example.pdf

Writers directing their own show

It is not necessary that the writer be the Director of the play. This can be decided by the committee in consultation with the writer. Please note SOS reserves the right to select or change the Director for any play that is produced (and at any point during production).

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2. Audition Process

Auditions must be promoted to the wider community working with the marketing team of SOS, inviting members and potential new members to attend. Rehearsal days/times and show dates to be included in promotion.

The Director is not allowed to approach any actors prior to the Audition confirming the role they might have in the play. The audition must be open to all comers, then roles selected on merit and the type of person they are seeking for that role.

We understand that in isolated situations, parts are written for specific people. If that is the case, the Writer needs to advise the committee, and any parts that are pre-cast should be indicated on the audition information so that auditionees are aware of the role which is not available.

Each audition should have the following information prepared prior to audition starting:

- Name of the show to be cast.
- Brief description and/or tagline of the show
- Names and descriptions of characters to be cast.
- Date, time, and place of auditions.
- When the production is slated to rehearse and run so that those with unavoidable scheduling conflicts won't waste their (or the Director's) time
- Contact information where they can ask questions.
- Attire for the audition. If there's going to be some dance, let the performers know so that they can dress accordingly.
- Excerpts of the script which are to be used for the auditioning process

The above allows potential cast members to request the roles they would like to read for.

To be present at auditions:

- Membership secretary
- Marketing Coordinator
- Director
- Assistant Director
- Representative of the Selection Committee.

Auditions to be carried out using pre-prepared script excerpts.

The audition should include a process whereby people get to read a short extract from the part/s they are interested in so that the director/writer can visually see the person in the role/s. Directors need to be aware that inexperienced auditionees may not be keen to read initially, so this process should be kept friendly and welcoming.

At/immediately following the audition, applicants are to advise the Assistant Director on any dates they are unable to attend rehearsals due to existing commitments. This will be considered in the selection process and used for rehearsal scheduling purposes.

Everyone who auditioned to be notified by email within 2 days as to whether or not they have been successful. All those unsuccessful are invited to volunteer for non-acting roles for the show and to participate in other non-show SOS activities.

Successful cast members to be sent a detailed rehearsal schedule.

Once actors have been cast, at the first or second rehearsal they will be given a brief introduction to SOS's policies and asked to sign the child safe/general code of conduct.

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3. Rehearsals

Rehearsals are extremely important because they give the actors a chance to practise their lines and act out their parts in collaboration with the other cast members and the Director.

Trimester play rehearsals will take place each week on Thursdays (7-9pm) and Sundays (4-6pm) at the Sorell Memorial Hall, unless otherwise notified.

Rehearsals for any One Act Festival Plays must fit around the current full-length trimester play which takes priority. As the One Act Plays are not income generators, Directors must find cost-effective solutions to rehearse, including rehearsing at cast homes. Consideration may be given by the Committee to approve requests for extra hall booking time.

Cast members are required to:

- Make attendance at rehearsals a priority, unless the absence is due to:
 - A commitment which the individual has made the Assistant Director aware of at or immediately following auditions
 - An illness
 - Last minute changes to an individual's work schedule.
- Arrive 10 minutes prior to rehearsal start time so that they are ready to begin at the start of rehearsal.
- Sit quietly and either watch the play, learn their lines, or move to another room to chat or rehearse their parts if not on stage.
- Be prepared and willing to fill in for any cast members absent

This link is a great introduction to rehearsal etiquette:

<https://broadwayspoonie.com/2020/06/01/beginners-guide-to-rehearsal-etiquette/>

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Production team roles

Sorell on Stage is always looking for new members to take on the behind-the-scenes positions.

1. Producer

Coordination role that brings together all the non-acting roles in the play. The Producer is basically the Project Manager who oversees the budget, ticketing, front of house (FOH) and marketing, with the support of the committee and members. The aim is to encourage and allow others to be involved in this process.

They work closely with the Director in coordinating the play so it runs successfully.

Key Tasks:

- Provide oversight to ensure that all elements* of Production are running efficiently (in a coordinated fashion) and all relevant SOS policies and procedures are being adhered to
- Provide regular reports to committee on show progress (all elements)
- Allocate budget (agreed on by Committee) to Production Departments
- Monitor and report to committee on spending under allocated budgets

* Ticketing, marketing, FOH, show production, set and costume.

2. Director

The Director interprets the script and turns it into the creative vision for the play.

The most important aspect of conveying a director's vision to the cast of a play is clear communication and collaboration. They work closely with the actors and provide them with the tools and guidance they need.

Key tasks:

- Organise the rehearsal schedule
- During rehearsals, communicate and collaborate with the cast on the creative vision for the play
- Run the rehearsals and guide the actors in their roles, instructing them where necessary on their lines, movements, blocking and facial/vocal expression
- Collaborate with the Production Team, and approve set, lighting, sound, and costume design.

A good Director:

- Encourages and restricts exploration, with a willingness to take artistic risks
- Has excellent communication and interpersonal skills - listens, thinks, responds, gives feedback when appropriate
- Has the ability to confront and resolve problems
- Is self-motivated and has the ability to motivate and inspire others.
- Is able to work as part of a collaborative team
- Has good time management skills

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3. Assistant Director

The Assistant Director works as a right hand to the Director, allowing the Director to concentrate on the stage direction.

Key tasks:

- Be the point of contact with the cast, communicating any information regarding rehearsals, and fielding questions
- Keep an up to up-to-date list of notified cast absences and communicate this to the Director for rehearsal scheduling
- Note and convey the Director's decisions to the Costume Co-ordinator, Stage Manager and Sound/Lighting Technicians
- Liaise with the Costume Co-ordinator to arrange day and time for measuring cast for costumes and for subsequent fittings
- Communicate with, and schedule, the lighting and sound technicians regarding lighting and sound requirements and tech runs.
- Hold copy of updated cue sheet for set changes, operation of curtains, props, and costume changes (provided by Stage Manager)
- Update the script regularly and communicate new versions to the cast

At rehearsals:

- Ensure all cast are present and rehearsals start and finish on time
- Record blocking notes (movements of the actors, including entrances and exits) and script changes
- Create and update cue sheets for lighting and sound.
- Prompt when required
- Fill in for Director when required

4. Stage Manager

During rehearsal phase:

- Consult with the Set Designer to ascertain and record set pieces and props to be used for each scene
- In collaboration with the Set Designer, organise and oversee set creation day (3 weeks prior to show) and identify members who can assist
- Set up and manage the Green Room (costumes and prop storage)
- Mark up stage space on the floor for location of set pieces and props (masking tape)
- Identify members who will assist with set changes, prop operation and curtain operation during the show
- Identify members who will assist with any rapid costume changes required

At rehearsals:

- Keep and update record of set changes, cues for operation of curtains, operation of props and costume changes, sharing an updated copy with the Assistant Director
- Source and provide any props or set pieces which may assist the cast with blocking (movements of the actors including entrance and exits) prior to set creation day
- Manage the Green Room - costumes and props

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During show:

- Ensure stage set up for opening Act and all set pieces and props for subsequent acts are ready
- Oversee management of costumes and props
- Give time calls to cast and crew
- Ensure cast & crew are standing by and ready for curtain
- Communicate with Sound/Lighting and Front of House in order to start the show
- Supervise set changes, operation of props and curtains
- Manage the backstage area and stage – tidiness, safety etc, during the ‘run’
- Manage and maintain the props, furniture and set during the show ‘run’ – organise any maintenance required

At end of each show, set up stage for next show and ensure costumes and props are returned to Green Room

5. Costume Coordinator

- Collaborate with the Director on the vision for costumes
- Liaise with Assistant Director to arrange day and time for measuring cast for costumes and for subsequent fittings
- Identify which costumes are currently available to SOS and which costumes need to be sourced/created
- Identify members who can assist in costume creation
- Co-ordinate and oversees costume creation within the budget allocated by the Committee*

6. Set Designer

- Collaborate with the Director on the vision for set design (set pieces, scenery, and props) creating a sketch which will help visualise the final product
- Identify which scenic elements are currently available to SOS and which need to be sourced/created
- Coordinate and oversee set creation within the budget allocated by the committee*
- Collaborate with Stage Manager to organise Set Creation Day (3 weeks prior to show)

** Costume Co-ordinator and Set Designer must find creative solutions and make cost-effective choices without compromising the artistic vision.*

This website gives a larger breakdown of some of the key roles in getting any theatre show to stage.
<https://getintotheatre.org/blog/complete-list-of-jobs-in-theatre-industry/>

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