

Charing Guild of Players

Notes for Producers

1. Obtain sufficient copies for casting reading. If there is a doubt about ability to cast try to borrow a set from the Drama Library, Springfield - phone Maidstone (0622) 671411 and ask for Drama Library. You will need the Guild library ticket held by the Chairman. If a set is not available you can order copies by phone from French's - 071 387 9373 - and quote your credit card number. Reclaim the amount later from the Treasurer. Again if ability to cast is in doubt it may be cheaper to order just sufficient for cast plus two; French's are very efficient and usually supply books within two days even if 2nd class post is specified, so further copies will present no difficulty. Before you order make sure the play is available for performance and that there is no "stop" on it.

This job can often be delegated to a member of the committee.

2. Arrange a date for the reading with the Barn Secretary (Margaret Ruglys). Mondays and Thursdays are most convenient.

3. Telephone members whom you think you may cast and make sure they are available and will be attending the reading. Never, never promise anyone a part. It is, however, a good idea to invite someone to design your set and to let them have a copy so that you have some idea of your entrances and difficulties etc. Members who produce will give you advice about this if you enquire from them.

4. Study your script and decide where you are going to make breaks to change characters. Prepare a list so that you can write in who reads, and what character. You may like to employ some secret marking system.

5. Read and cast the play. Phone actors to tell them of selection. You will need to cast a stage designer (if you have not already done so), a building team, a stage manager, people for lights, sound and wardrobe, painters and a prompt. Liaise with stage designer re painting team. Committee members who produce or build sets will be able to give advice about other appointments if required.

6. Call first rehearsal not later than a week after the reading (if at all possible). Usually Mondays and Thursdays are the rehearsal nights 7.30 to 10.00pm. Margaret Ruglys will provide a list of dates when the Barn is available. Draw up a rehearsal schedule remembering that one rehearsal fairly close to production will be broken up by a photo call and that you will also need one rehearsal (about a fortnight or ten days before production) just for the technical staff to set lighting and sound levels etc. Make sure they know the date of this and are available. We find 23-24-25-26 rehearsals including technical and dress rehearsals are sufficient, although we have produced successfully with as few as 18. We have also decided that it would be a good idea to include one date after the performance as a clearing up night when actors and backstage members return costumes washed and ironed, tidy props corner, clean dressing rooms etc. Ask stage manager to be in charge of this.

7. Mark out a plan of the set on the hall floor for rehearsals. Stage designer or building crew will usually help with this if required.

8. As soon as cast is definite give Margaret Ruglys a list so that she can circulate it.
9. Liaise with Marion Mead (Box Office) and whoever is producing the Guild Newsletter (usually Kay Bagshaw) to find out when your "blurb" about the play will be required - usually 5 to 6 weeks before production. The Chairman will be able to show previous newsletters to give you an idea of what is required. It is also a time saving arrangement if at the same time you also produce a piece about the play for the front of the programme although there is no necessity for this to be as early as the newsletter.
10. Liaise with sound person re music and effects required. In this case sound person refers to the person making the tape (usually George Hutchinson) not the person playing it during rehearsals and performances.
11. Check with committee member in charge of publicity (at present Carolyn Banham) about a) publicity, b) posters, c) Guild news for programme, d) press photocall, e) crits etc.
12. Use tea-breaks at rehearsal for discussion with backstage crew, wardrobe etc and for notes for individual actors. Visit the set at the end of rehearsal to discuss any problems and note progress.
13. Arrange for a photographer to attend dress rehearsal (first if possible). This is not connected with the press photocall, but is designed to produce "action" photos for Guild members and the Guild scrap book. Several Guild members have good cameras capable of producing acceptable results. Marion Mead has taken some excellent photos for us.
14. Check with the stage manager that positions of furniture on stage are marked if necessary, that dressing rooms are cleared, and that there are arrangements made for setting out chairs for the performance. This is usually done on a Tuesday night or Wednesday morning. The stage manager should also be asked to ensure that the hall is cleared and the chairs stacked after the final performance. This usually presents no difficulty as there is often an abundance of volunteer labour.
15. Post notices one each side of the stage re breakdown night, reminding that costumes must be returned washed and ironed.
16. Post notices as above re last night party.
17. During performances you should act as front of house manager, greeting patrons, helping them to get seated, generally sorting out any problems and deciding when the curtain should go up. To do this you should ensure that you understand how the telephone from the back of the hall to the stage operates.
18. Allow everyone to buy you a drink at the pub (the George Hutchinson rule).