

HIGHBURY THEATRE CENTRE - NOTES FOR VISITING COMPANIES

We hope that your show will be an enjoyable success, but we also hope that your experiences will be safe and secure. You may find the following notes helpful:-

TECHNICAL AND GENERAL LIAISON

A member of Highbury staff will be nominated, on the official acceptance form, as Liaison Officer. (S)he will advise on Highbury operating procedures relating to the use of facilities and as a contact for any of your general requirements including lighting, sound, stage crew and liaison with Front of House staff.

Visiting Companies will provide their own set and any other tools and equipment they need. Highbury Workshop is NOT at their disposal. There is a Fire and Smoke detection system in operation which will automatically call the Fire Brigade if it is activated unless alternative arrangements are made with the Liaison Officer.

Visiting Companies must make their own arrangements to conform to Child Protection regulations, royalties, etc.

PARKING

On-site parking (at the rear of the theatre) is very limited and is often a source of frustration for both Highbury members and visiting companies. On-street parking can also cause friction with the neighbours. You may find it helpful to make use of the very limited car park on the right hand side of Sheffield Road which leads to the football ground. It is not particularly well lit but is no less or more safe than other parts of the vicinity. If you choose to park on the street you should use the railway side (NOT the houses side) of Marston Road - beware Marston road is two-way whilst Sheffield road is one-way.

ENTRY TO THE THEATRE

Your company will be issued with keys to the theatre which must be returned to the Liaison Officer at the end of the letting.

Your company is responsible for locking the backstage areas at the end of each period of use.

The Theatre is a NO Smoking area but as part of this activity please check that there are no smouldering materials such as a lighted cigarette stub and that the taps in wash basins and sinks are turned fully off.

Cast and crew should enter only by the STAGE DOOR at the side of the building and should not attempt to make their way through the theatre if they have visited front-of-house or the box office.

On entry to the theatre all cast, crew, helpers etc. should ensure that they *sign in on the sheets provided by the visiting company*, and placed in the Green Room.

Audience members should enter only via the MAIN ENTRANCE, and not attempt to make their way forward to front-of-house, if they have deposited goods or cast to the stage door.

SECURITY

Visiting companies are responsible for their own security, so it is suggested that a door-keeper is appointed to prevent unauthorised entry to the theatre. On many occasions, rehearsals or meetings may necessitate Highbury members being in the building at the same time - if you don't know them - don't let them in! - They must make their own arrangements for entry.

Despite entry precautions, petty theft still remains an issue, so please do not leave valuables in changing rooms or the Green Room. Ask your Stage Manager for guidance on where best to store valuables.

It is recommended that the door between the backstage corridor and the vestibule to dressing rooms 1 & 2 is locked. This does not present a fire hazard, as escape can be effected readily through the Green Room, but it does mean that chance visitors will probably pass through the Green Room, and be challenged there.

There are number-access security locks on the stage door and on the doors leading from the front-of-house areas. These doors must be kept closed at all times.

POWER FAILURE & EVACUATION

When rehearsing in the auditorium please switch on the Front of House and Auditorium emergency lighting. The switch is located in the middle foyer near the kitchen door. (the STUDIO – RH side of Studio entry door)

The Stage Manager must familiarise himself with the "Fire Evacuation Procedures" posted near the main stage manager's desk which require the nomination of persons to take specified actions in case of emergency.

The Highbury Front of House Manager is responsible for coordinating an evacuation as defined in the above Evacuation Procedures.

If a Fire Alarm warning sounds (low level sound pips and strobe light) then await further instructions. If a full siren and strobe alert sounds then evacuate the theatre. During rehearsals the Stage Manager is responsible for coordinating an evacuation.

If there is a need to evacuate the theatre for this or any other reason, you should follow the exit signs to the nearest exit to join the audience and staff at the Assembly Point which is the gravel drive leading to the Football Field off Sheffield Road (towards the railway line) – which on exit to the road is to the left of the theatre.

In case of power failure, emergency lighting will activate automatically in the corridors and Dressing Rooms. If you are present in a dressing room - open the door. Additionally in the auditorium the emergency lights will illuminate the seated area and the front of the stage. If you are on stage, the area "STAGE RIGHT" will be lit and you should walk towards these lit areas, and thence via lit areas to the Green Room to await instructions.

FRONT-OF-HOUSE ARRANGEMENTS

A Highbury Front-of-House manager will be in attendance at each performance to supervise your activities, and will brief the Visiting Company Front-of-House manager on Highbury operating procedures and safety and security matters.

Highbury staff will operate the bar and the coffee bar.

Visiting companies will usually provide a Front-of-House Manager, staff for box office, and typically at least three staff for audience management. Visiting companies may wish to ask St. John Ambulance or The Red Cross to attend the performances.

GENERAL STAGE SAFETY ISSUES

The stage is a potentially dangerous place.

The Stage Manager has full operational control and his/her instructions must be followed immediately by all persons in the stage area.

Potential hazards include tripping, falling objects, lifting and handling of props and scenery, and falling from heights. The Stage Manager should ensure that these hazards are minimised. Cast and crew should take due care at all times, and familiarise themselves with the stage, and the particular set on which they are working.

The Stage Manager and the Highbury Liaison Officer must complete a stage risk assessment form (in folder by SM desk) for the production.

Hard hats are available for use. Gloves may also be required when handling scenery or ropes.

The Stage Manager must satisfy himself that any crew member is capable of carrying out safely any task delegated to them.

The Stage Manager must address the cast before they use the stage to point out any particular safety issues.

The Stage Manager's desk should be manned at all times during rehearsals and production so that liaison can be maintained between front-of-house, control room and the stage in case of an emergency.

When the orchestra pit is in use both of the passages to the pit must have free access at all times. The pit must be guarded from the stage and from the side of the auditorium steps right up to the start of the rehearsal or the house being opened and immediately at the end of the rehearsal or production.

No gloss paint or unproofed inflammable materials should be used in set or properties construction. Use of pyrotechnics, smoke or haze must be discussed with the Liaison Officer.

The Highbury Workshop, tools, equipment, scenery, costumes and props are not available to visiting companies other than by prior special arrangement with the appropriate Head of Department.

Smoking is only allowed in the designated and signed areas outside of the building.

Alcohol is not permitted backstage or to anyone working the stage during rehearsal or performance.

Accidents must be recorded in the Accident Book - available from the Front-of-House manager.

Food may be eaten in the Green Room; there are kettles, crockery and a microwave oven. Food or drinks must not be taken into the auditorium at any time.

Avoid quantities of strong smelling foods such as fish & chips, garlic etc. from which smells can pervade the entire building.

TOILETS

Backstage toilets are situated in each dressing room and the corridor. The corridor toilets service others using the Studio etc. Dressing rooms 1 & 3 each have a shower.

LEAVING THE THEATRE

At the end of the evening cast and crew may wish to visit front of house and the bar.

Please take your belongings with you as you leave the dressing room so that the dressing rooms and backstage area generally can be locked early as part of night-time security arrangements.

You will then be able to leave by the front door.

Local residents have complained, quite reasonably, about noise at the end of the evening, so please ensure that fond farewells are said inside the theatre, not outside.

END-OF-RUN

We hope that you found the theatre clean and tidy on your arrival.

Highbury does not have a paid caretaker so as part of the get-out process please ensure that you leave it in a clean and tidy condition.

Vacuum cleaners are available for use in the Green Room, dressing rooms, stage area, auditorium and the front-of-house areas.

All back stage rubbish which you generate must be taken away.

ADDITIONAL NOTES FOR STUDIO PRODUCTIONS – LIASION WITH FRONT OF HOUSE STAFF

There is a telephone on the landing outside of the Studio with which to communicate with FOH Coffee Shop staff. Show Relay to dressing rooms and FOH staff can be made available if there is no production on the Main Stage.

The Studio Stage Manager must meet with the Duty FOH Manager and agree times for the delivery of the audience to the Studio. FOH staff will arrange a "crocodile" of the audience and guide them to and from the Studio.

The Stage Manager should inform FOH five minutes before any interval and of the end of show so that they can be ready to guide audience members.