

# COVID-19 PRODUCTION GUIDE

**The following document outlines the changes to our theatre procedures as we deal with the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. It should be read alongside the Production Handbook. In the event of any conflict with any provisions of the Production Handbook, this document prevails.**

## **Theatre in the age of Covid: an outline**

Thanks to the flexibility of our three-studio space, we are able to run our theatre, albeit with a reduced capacity.

In order to make this possible, a number of significant changes have been made to the information in the Production Handbook. Production Companies must read this document carefully and ensure they are prepared to follow the instructions set out below (as well as the measures set out in the 'Covid version' of the Performance Agreement).

While we have been shut, we have also taken the opportunity to make some accessibility improvements to the OSO. Many of these improvements, such as automatic doors and redesigned toilets, have been designed to support a low-transmission day-to-day operation of the venue.

The pandemic is an ongoing situation, with government regulations likely to change at any given moment. The production guidelines set out in this document have been created to mitigate risk in as many foreseeable ways as possible. However, the nature of the situation requires us to remain flexible, and it is possible that any of the production guidelines below could change. We ask for your patience and co-operation as we navigate this difficult and complex time.

You can contact the Artistic Director (Jonny Danciger) at [jonny@osoarts.org.uk](mailto:jonny@osoarts.org.uk) with any questions, and we will keep all visiting companies up to date with any further significant changes.

# Venue Configuration

## Staging Configuration

In order to support social distancing whilst still maintaining a workable capacity, we will be opening all three studios into one large space. Our tiered seating will be stowed in the stage-left wing, with the audience seated 'cabaret style' around small tables. A seat on any given table will be at least 1m from any seat belonging to another table. Seats around the same table are grouped together, and as such tables should only be booked by members of the same household or 'bubble'.

With this layout, our revised capacity is **47**. This could be expanded or reduced if government guidance changes. It can also fluctuate around the average household booking size and size of the stage.

As a standard, all shows will be presented end-on, with Studio 1 as the stage, and both Studios 2 & 3 as the auditorium. If a production intends to use a configuration other than end-on, this must be agreed before the Production Agreement is signed.

Since the seating will no longer be raked, we recommend that all productions use our raised staging, which can be configured in various ways. Please see the technical specifications section of this document for more details.

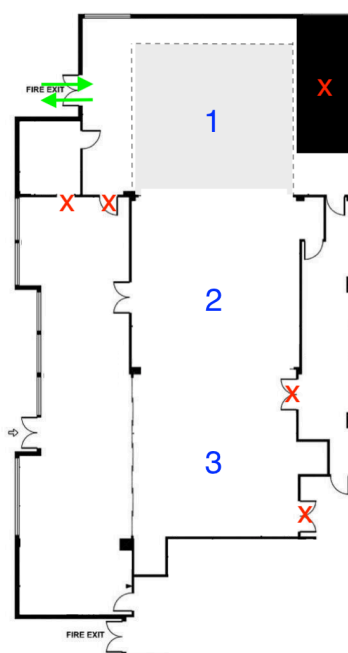
## Backstage Space

With this configuration, backstage space is extremely limited. With studio 3 being used as auditorium space, there will be no 'green room'. With the tiered seating stowed in the stage-left wing, only the stage-right wing can function as offstage space.

On request, the office can be cleared out to provide additional space, though this can only support 1 person at a time with social distancing in place. We have also cleared space in the back corridor for additional off-stage space.

Productions should therefore carefully consider the following:

- The stage-left wing is not directly accessible. This means that all entrances and exits should be from stage right or upstage centre.
- The 'get-around' from stage-left to stage-right will be blocked by the tiered seating.
- It is possible to use downstage-left as an entrance/exit, but the only way back to stage-right is across the stage itself. The tech desk will also be partially in the way of this entrance/exit.
- Actors must not pass through the audience, and must keep 1m+ distance from audience members at all times.
- Since there is limited space backstage, productions should minimise any props/costume that are not onstage throughout. Items of set should stay on stage throughout the performance.



It is also important that the area directly in front of the fire doors is kept clear at all times.

Our advice is to minimise entrances and exits altogether, and only use the stage right wing where entrances/exits are necessary.

Due to the limited backstage space, we are limiting the maximum number of people backstage at any one time (including actors and stage management) to **6**.

Shows will only be permitted to surpass this limit if they can demonstrate how this will be done in accordance with government guidance, and if agreed in advance with the venue management.

## **Front of House**

Members of the production should not under any circumstances enter the front of house area whilst the audience are in the building. Entrance into and exit from the building must instead be via the fire doors in Studio 1.

This means that actors **must not** enter the front of house area after the show. If they wish to greet audience members, they must do this outside after having exited the building via the fire doors.

The only exceptions to this are:

- If a member of the production must use the entrance ramp for accessibility reasons.
- If a member of the production (e.g. director) holds a ticket for the production, and is thus treated as a member of the audience.

Members of the production should only use the disabled toilet, to avoid coming into contact with audience members. This should be accessed via the back corridor (through the door downstage-left).

# Scheduling

## Programming

In addition to our theatre programme, the venue continues to be used by classes during the day. To provide them with ample space, the classes will be using Studios 1 & 2. This means that we cannot simultaneously host classes and productions as we usually do.

Consequently, we have decided to split our weekly schedule between classes and productions. Classes will use the building from Monday to Wednesday, and productions can then use the venue as a theatre from Thursday through to Sunday.

As such:

- The number of events per season is reduced
- Most productions will be one night only
- Productions with more than one performance will still have limited runs

## Pre-Show, Intervals and Post-Show

We will be opening the house 1 hour before the scheduled show start. Cast must be clear of the stage at this point (unless pre-set on stage)

To avoid unnecessary movement around the venue, we will be offering table service as an alternative to ordering food and drinks at the bar. This means that (beyond arriving and leaving) audience members should only need to move around the venue if using the toilets.

We ask all shows to have at least 1 interval if possible, so that we can stagger toilet use and operate our table service.

## Changeovers

The nature of changing over between classes and productions reduces the time available for get-ins. Get-in times will be agreed in advance and stated in the Performance Agreement.

During the daytime, Studio 3 is partitioned off and used as additional café space to support social distancing for our daytime guests. This will be converted into auditorium space a couple of hours before the show. Productions using the theatre space during the daytime for technical rehearsals will therefore only be able to use studios 1 and 2.

Any get-out tasks needing to take place close to the audience or in the auditorium must not take place until the audience have left this area.

# Marketing

## Assurances

We are very aware that audience members will be more hesitant to book in the current climate. To mitigate this, it is essential to offer the following assurances across all forms of marketing:

- Our 'cabaret style' layout facilitates a socially distanced theatre that will still deliver a fantastic audience experience.
- Audience members can book with confidence. If their performance is cancelled or Covid-19 regulations prevent them from attending, they will be offered a full refund.
- We are closely following government guidance and routinely adjusting our operations to ensure we are maintaining the safest possible practices.

## Print

To lower the risk of transmission, we are reducing the use of 'handled' marketing materials where possible. Instead, we will rely more heavily on online marketing. The general rule is that the more good content we have to share, the better. Please take to facebook, instagram, twitter etc, and be sure to tag us in every post about your show. We will share, retweet and repost.

We will be devising more specialised marketing strategies on a show-by-show basis, so make sure to touch base with the Artistic Director to discuss the approach that best fits your show.

With our recent venue improvements, we have replaced a number of indoor poster displays with digital marketing screens. These can show videos as well as display graphics. Please send any high resolution images and videos to the Production Manager that can be used on these screens.

We have increased the number of A1 marketing boards outside the OSO. We have also purchased some free-standing A1 display frames for inside use.

For shows running multiple performances, we advise ordering the following print:

- A1 poster x 2-3 (must be waterproof print)
- A2 poster x 2
- A4 poster x 10

For one-off performances, the A1 posters should be prioritised, though any additional print you can provide from the list above will be helpful.

You are welcome to order additional print beyond this for your own distribution. Any excess posters will be distributed locally.

We will have a small number of A6 perspex blocks (which can be sanitised easily) that can house flyer-size images on our cafe tables. If you are ordering flyers for your own purposes, please pass some onto us so we can display them on our café tables.

# Technical Specifications

## Tech desk

To ensure we have the maximum possible floor space for audience members to socially distance, it will not be possible to set up the tech desk in studio 2 by the wallbox.

Instead, the tech desk must be setup downstage left, up against the tiered seating so that access to the corridor is not blocked. This will make the tech desk visible from the auditorium, so lighting designers should avoid focusing lights on this position to make its presence less noticeable.

## Raised Staging

We have a raised stage made up of 20 1mx1m panels. By standard its height is 60cm, though this can be dropped to 40cm if requested in advance. We have two sets of modular stairs which can be set up at the desired entrance and exit points.

The staging can cover a maximum area of 4m (d) x 5m (w). If shows can use a smaller stage (e.g 3m x 5m) it is possible to add some extra seats in the space created.

The raised staging will be constructed as part of the show's get-in, and must be dismantled as part of the get-out for the last show before classes resume the following Monday.

## Lighting

To avoid unnecessary handling and ease stress on get-ins, we are asking all shows to use our fixed house rig. This consists of the following:

- 4x birdies and 2x parcans as house lights, all linked to one dimmer channel
- 3x fresnels providing a front wash (Left, Centre, Right) from IWB 1
- 2x fresnels (Left, Right) providing sidelight
- 2x RGBW LED profiles on IWB1 providing coloured front light.
- 4x ColorSource Pars with barn doors (one above each corner of the stage) for coloured lighting from all angles.
- 2x Source4 Junior profiles on IWB1 which can be focused as desired.

This leaves 10 spare 15a channels as 'specials' to fit productions' specific needs. Productions wanting to use these specials should indicate this prior to the start of the season if possible, so it can be integrated into the season's pre-rig.

If you need further information on the rig plan and/or DMX patch, please contact the Artistic Director.

All fixtures (except the LEDs) can be gelled as the Production Company desires. You are welcome to use our gel stock, but we cannot guarantee having any specific colour or gel type. If you desire a specific effect, we suggest you bring your own gels.

## **Sound**

With all three studios in use, we will be linking the speakers across Studios 1, 2 and 3 to maximise audio coverage.

By default, the speakers will be patched so that the speakers on each side are linked, allowing all 6 speakers to share a single stereo output. It is possible to change this patch, but only if agreed in advance with the Production Manager.

With the tech desk situated downstage left, we will not be able to support surround sound designs. All designs must be in stereo.

Any sound being played while the audience is talking should be kept as low as possible, to avoid the need for raised voices by the audience.



# Box Office

## Tickets

To enable us to function with a reduced capacity, all tickets by default are priced at £15 per seat. We will not be offering concessions, with the exception being discounted tickets for those in economic hardship.

Audience members book tables rather than individual seats. All guests at a single table must be from the same household or 'bubble'. As standard, we have the following number of tables:

Table of One x 5

Table of Two x 9

Table of Four x 3

Table of Six x 2

As a show sells, it may become apparent that audience members are less inclined to book tables of a certain number. A decision can be taken, where deemed necessary, to alter the numbers above by either:

- Combining tables (e.g. two tables of one combine for a table of two).
- Splitting tables (e.g. a table of six splits into two tables of two).

Splitting tables should only be done if deemed absolutely necessary, as this further reduces our capacity.

## Box Office Operation

Whilst we are operating under covid restrictions, we will only be taking bookings in advance. It is thus imperative that all prospective audience members are instructed to book as early as possible.

The box office will close 3 hours before the start of the show, to give front of house staff the time to prepare tables in the correct layout.

It is possible for us to process ticket bookings in the OSO, provided that this booking is made more than 3 hours before the show start time and payment is made by card. We will not be accepting cash.

For shows that sell out, we have set up a waiting list. Any additional tickets that can be made available will be offered to the people who sign up via this waiting list:

<https://forms.gle/EN2utaPFQ1MYfdtRA>

## Complimentary Tickets

Due to our reduced capacity, we cannot guarantee company comps.

# Secure Procedures

## Sanitation

The studios will be cleaned thoroughly by OSO staff between uses. All major contact points will be sanitised regularly.

The doors in the corridor will be temporarily fixed in an open position to reduce the number of contact points.

Hand sanitiser will be provided on entry to the building. All production company members are required to sanitise their hands before entering the building. Everyone is encouraged to wash and sanitise their hands regularly.

Company members should wear a face covering at all times (unless exempt), with the only exceptions being for eating or drinking, or whilst performing on stage. Production company members must always follow the instructions they are given by OSO staff relating to Covid-19 safe practice.

Sanitising wipes will be provided on the tech desk. The production's technician is required to clean all major contact points at the end of each day. This includes the faders and buttons on the sound and lighting desks.

Microphones must be wiped down between use if being shared by multiple people.

## Track and Trace

The production company is responsible for keeping an accurate record of which production company members are in the building at any given time, within the hours that the show is contracted to be in the building as set out in the Performance Agreement.

Any production company members in the building outside of the hours set out in the Performance Agreement must complete track and trace using the NHS app.

## Audience

We have created a thorough list of procedures to ensure that audience members have the safest possible experience. Since this is liable to change with government guidance, we will be informing audience members of what to expect via email a few days prior to the event.

Any questions on these procedures should be directed to the Artistic Director.