

THE SOUTH DEVON PLAYERS THEATRE & FILM COMPANY

Autumn Virtual Season - Audition Information Pack 2020



www.southdevonplayers.com



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WELCOME TO THE SOUTH DEVON PLAYERS THEATRE & FILM COMPANY

“The power of the final scene was such that the audience sat transfixed in silence, barely able to comprehend the beauty of what they’d just witnessed ”

Rick Stone – Audience member, 2019.

The South Devon Players Theatre & Film Company, offers a new approach to theatre-making. Involving people of all levels of experience, from beginners to seasoned professionals, the Players create full scale dramatic productions primarily focussing on historical events and classical texts, which have attracted local, national, and international awards, as well as glowing audience feedback both online and in person, for the productions performed at a variety of venues centering on, but not limited to, the region of South Devon, in the United Kingdom.

The South Devon Players Theatre & Film Company, offers a truly unique experience; taking a pride in creating excellent productions working to the strength of the venues, with painstaking research and attention to detail in perfecting costumes, props and performance, the shows often have a strong interactive element, making the audience feel part of the action.

Based in the beautiful setting of South Devon, showcasing the diverse and considerable talents of local people, our creative use of performance space allows us to create breathtaking, world-class theatre, with our own unique style, while not compromising the production itself. We bring together talented performers, writers, technicians and costume makers, from the Southwest, with enthusiastic, loyal audiences and together, we create magic.



What We Do



At the The South Devon Players Theatre & Film Company, we make theatre from some of the world's most powerful history, legends and classical texts; stories that help us see the world in new and unexpected ways, while revisiting both much loved classical texts and known historical events, coupled with also exploring commonly overlooked historical events which are invaluable insights into pivotal events which made our community, and world, as it is now.

With (in non-Covid times) a rehearsal base at Chestnut Community Centre, on the edge of our hometown Brixham, we tour our shows out to a variety of exciting performance spaces, mostly to local theatres, but also to museum spaces, church halls, and even open-air venues, facilitating accessible, approachable opportunities for people to experience theatre. During the Covid19 pandemic, our shows take place streamed online, and when times get back to something near normal, venue-based performances will still be livestreamed to reach wider audiences.

Our team members are welcomed regardless of initial experience, sexuality, religion or national origin. What we look for is the desire to create powerful new theatre productions in line with our fundamental values of excellence in performance, alongside personal empowerment; mutual respect between team members and the public; learning and improving new skills; and collaboration.

Over the course of a typical year, we produce two to four productions, as well as also collaborating with other theatre & film production companies to help our team members find further work in the area, in the creative industries. We also take our community responsibilities very seriously and support external community events, amateur groups, historical and cultural events with our skills, wherever feasible through time and our team members availability. As we are able to build funds and the organisation, the number of productions and collaborations will be able to increase.

We also seek to build an educational, training arm to facilitate accessible training to local people, of a wide range of diverse backgrounds, enabling them to develop strong performance skills to seek employment in the creative industries, and alongside that, develop excellence in transferable skills in communication, self-presentation, self-confidence, teamwork, literacy, and technical skills. This is a long term endeavour, again for the post-covid time.

Our productions have won awards including the Long Island Theatre Award 2019 in New York, the all- England Epic Award 2017, the Torbay Together: Creativity In The Community Award 2014, with national and international film festival nominations for our film and video projects, including the Los Angeles Cinefest, Miami Epic Trailer Film Festival, and UK Screen One International Film Festival.

We are passionate and determined to create high-quality theatre featuring local and regional performers, proving that local people can put on world-class performance.

***“Consistently high-quality shows and films created by a powerhouse of up and coming local talent ”
Gerard Christiaans - 5 star Google page rating***

***“It was educational, and entertaining in equal measure ”
Simon Parks – 5 Star Google page rating***

About our project

Our “virtual autumn season” is a response to the Covid19 restrictions on performing venue-based theatre. While we hope very much to return to normal theatre performance by early 2021, in line with the current government guidance, we feel it very important to keep working and creating at the same time.

For the time being therefore, we have moved into cyberspace, with our actors and crew joining us on screen from their home studios; rehearsing and performing over Zoom, and then streaming the performances to a paywalled online space, where audiences all over the world can access the performance, and the cast & crew can earn equal shares of whatever is made from the online performances ticket sales.

For our online season, we have teamed up with three new writers; Ashley Griffin, Germaine Shames, and Rachel O'Neill, all of whom we would hope to work with again, for physical shows, in future years.

Each play warrant's it's own page. Please note that you are welcome to audition for one or more of the plays, but separate auditions will be needed, working from the text of each show.

These are performed plays, not just a “scriptreading”, therefore we will be expecting all cast and crew to treat it as a full performance, with well-developed characterisation and line-learning. Working to sound and lighting cues, eyelines and “cross zoom” choreography/ interaction will also be necessary.

Cast and crew should be familiar with how to use Zoom, inclusive of how to use supplied digital backdrops, mute and unmuting microphones/ video, and have a quiet space at home with a plain wall (or sheet hung up etc) to work with the digital backdrops, and able to follow tech cues and direction promptly and confidently.

Full show scripts will be supplied to all selected cast and crew, via the locked cast and crew Facebook group. They must NOT under any circumstances be shared to persons outside of the team. All copyrights lie with the respective scriptwriters, and are formally licenced for these online performances.

Broadcasts of the plays will be ticketed events, via a link to a hidden area of our .com website, provided to ticket buyers at the time of ticket purchase. Tickets will be sold via our website box office, linked to our ticketsource account.

All cast, crew and writers, will each receive an equal share of profits from the ticket sales for their project, and box office sales reports from ticketsource will be made available after the event, in the Facebook cast and crew group for perusal. We usually provide clips to cast for showreels and demo reels when our scripts are inhouse or Shakespeare; in this case it will also be down to permission by the authors, as the script and dialogue is their intellectual property.

SHOW DATES:

Snow - Oct 2nd

The Lost Girl- Oct 24th

Sir Walter's Women- Nov 28th

Information: Play 1 – SNOW; by Ashley Griffin

Exploring the power and importance of storytelling, *Snow* (a new play by Ashley Griffin, creator of the pop culture phenomenon *Forever Deadward*, and the first person ever nominated for a major award for both playing and directing *Hamlet*,) follows three disparate storylines that all revolve around the fairy tale *Snow White*. Utilizing a structure similar to *Cloud Atlas* and *The Hours*, six actors playing multiple roles tell the stories of the Grimm Brothers (who originally collected and published the classic fairy tale), the Campbells (a Victorian theatrical family whose lives begin to mirror *Snow White*), and modern day Astrid (a young woman who, after her abusive mother puts her in a coma, must decide whether or not to wake up). Incorporating aspects of *American Gods*, and classic storytelling techniques a la *Peter and the Starcatcher*, *Snow* is a dark and moving play that mines our storytelling traditions both in style and subject matter. This work contains adult subject matter, including the death of a child, sexual content and drug use.

This show is meant to be performed almost as a traveling troupe of six actors “putting on a show.” There should be a large trunk out of which costumes and props should appear, and a couple of chairs. Any other scenery can be left to the imagination, or created by the cast a la “Peter and the Starcatcher.” Each actor should have a costume base of “actor black” over which they may throw a defining costume piece for each character they play (i.e. an apron for Dortchen, a vest for Arthur, etc.) When actors are not in a scene, if needed, they may return to their “actor black” and assist in creating the scene being performed (for example, becoming the demons in Astrid’s nightmare, assisting in the stylized fall when Astrid cracks her head on the coffee table, helping her “fly” onto the mountain, etc.) Lighting however should play an important part in the storytelling

CASTING PARTIAL ROLES

Man 1 (40s): Astrid’s Father, Jakob Grimm, Jack Campbell

Man 2 (20s): Wilhelm Grimm, Arthur Maberly, Tate

Woman 1 (Early 40s): Donna, Isadora Campbell

CASTING DEADLINE FOR SELF-TAPES: August 23rd 2020

SHOW DATE - Oct 2nd 2020

To apply, please email southdevonplayers@gmail.com with the title of the show you are interested in auditioning for, and the character(s) for whom you would like sides, for your self-tape. We will need the self-tape submitted by the deadline date above.

Information: Play 2 – The Lost Girl; by Germaine Shames

Based on the eponymous novel by D.H. Lawrence.

Alvina Houghton, the headstrong daughter of a widowed Midlands draper, comes of age just as her father's business is failing. In a desperate attempt to regain his fortune and secure his daughter's proper place in society, James Houghton buys a theatre. Among the travelling performers he employs is Ciccio, a sensual Italian who immediately captures Alvina's attention. A celebration of freedom, however fleeting, and a testament to the power of the imagination to transform even the most mundane life.

The script has been vetted by international D.H. Lawrence scholar, Catherine Brown. Jessica Levinson Young, Artistic Director of Untold Theatre, writes, "I absolutely loved this script for The Lost Girl. It has incredible pace and the dialogue simply leaps off the page!" Another of her D.H. Lawrence adaptations, THE VIRGIN and the GYPSY, received a reading at the 2018 Festival of New American Theatre.

Cast size is seven, and run time 90 minutes.

CASTING:

Alvina Houghton: Headstrong and contrary, if well brought-up, Englishwoman on the brink of becoming an "old maid"; late 20s

Miss Frost: Longtime housekeeper to the Houghton family; a second mother to Alvina; 60

Mr. Houghton: A dreamer and failed businessman; late 60s

Mrs. Houghton: Long-suffering wife and mother; mid to late 50s

Mr. May: Americanised man of enterprise; manager of Houghton's Pleasure Palace; 30 through 50s

Madame Rochard: A shrewd French artiste at the head of a small troupe; 40

Ciccio: Fiery, unpredictable Italian troupe member, 25

Max: Simple-minded Swiss troupe member, 25

Expectant Father: A nervous young man, 20s

Note on Doubling and Cast = : Intended cast size is 7. The dying Mrs. Houghton doubles as Madame Rochard, Max doubles as the Expectant Father.

CASTING DEADLINE FOR SELF TAPES: September 27th 2020

SHOW DATE: Oct 24th 2020

To apply, please email southdevonplayers@gmail.com with the title of the show you are interested in auditioning for, and the character(s) for whom you would like sides, for your self-tape. We will need the self-tape submitted by the deadline date above.

Information: Play 3 – Sir Walter's Women; by Rachel O'Neill

This is a one-act drama about the life of Sir Walter Raleigh as he manoeuvres his status as a favourite of Elizabeth I to satisfy his political ambitions. Into the Court arrives Bess Throckmorton. They fall in love and marry in secret, to the great and lasting displeasure of the Queen. The Queen dies and the envious James I comes to power and the play ends with Sir Walter's incarceration, trial and execution.

CASTING

Bess Throckmorton

Sir Walter Raleigh

Queen Elizabeth I

CASTING DEADLINE FOR SELF-TAPES: October 31st 2020

SHOW DATE - Nov 28th 2020

To apply, please email southdevonplayers@gmail.com with the title of the show you are interested in auditioning for, and the character(s) for whom you would like sides, for your self-tape. We will need the self-tape submitted by the deadline date above.

Auditions

All auditions will be required to be via self-tape. Each play above has a specific deadline for self-tapes to be received.

Auditions must be using a relevant script side, which is available by request from southdevonplayers@gmail.com (please state the play(s) and character(s) that you require sides for).

Castings will be announced at the end of the week following the deadline for the self-tapes, and will be subject to the usual contracts (as available on our website audition page).

All rehearsals will take place on the Zoom video-conferencing app, and the performances (using lighting, simple costume and digital backdrops) will be streamed via a Zoom performance, to our broadcast centre.

SELECTION PROCESS – the selection process is detailed on our website but in short, we look for excellent focussed characterisation, as well as pleasant socially acceptable behaviour at the audition. The self tapes will be reviewed by members of the production team as well as the author of the specific play.

REHEARSAL DATES – Flexible in line with cast availability. These will be focussed on UK timezones (weekends and evenings).

REQUIREMENTS – All cast must be confident with being able to use Zoom, taking direction/ tech notes, and, barring unexpected outages, have regular internet access. Because of the tight turn-arounds, this may not suit actors who are beginners. All cast selected will be expected to perform to an excellent, international standard, and contribute to a positive, harmonious, and respectful working environment. Actors are expected to attend a minimum 75% of rehearsals, and obviously the performance.

EQUALITY – Actors of any racial heritage, religious background, and gender-identity, are all most welcome to audition on an equal basis. We are a disability and diversity-confident team. Nobody is treated any different from anyone else.

WE HAVE NO OPEN CASTINGS AVAILABLE FOR ACTORS AGED UNDER 18 .

Where it all began: Brief history & Background of the South Devon Players

We were founded during the winter of 2005-2006, by four local actors. Struggling to find opportunities beyond those offered by annual amateur musicals, we decided to start our own.

We started with very little; one of us, who owned a car, was recruited to transport as much as the rest of us could “clear out” at home to a car-boot sale. This gave us starting funds of £80. In the meantime, we also found a small rehearsal space at the local Royal British Legion social club. Researching local history and discovering the court records of a 17th Century scandal in the nearby town of Totnes, provided material for our first script. And thus we began our journey.

Over the years we have encountered many challenges. Despite good reviews for our work, we found it very difficult, as a new organisation, for many years, to find good venues, and were heavily limited by public perceptions of what the quality of a show in a church hall would be like, thus finding ourselves usually performing to audiences of around 10 or 12 people (sometimes just one or two), and unable to attract the programme managers of actual theatres so that they could see our work.

The first big change came in 2013, when we first performed our production of Les Miserables; The Memoirs of Jean Valjean; a script we wrote ourselves, based on Victor Hugo's novel. During our tour to local church halls, a producer from London came to see our show. Within 24 hours, he had emailed us, telling us how impressed he was with the show and how more people should see it. He paid for us to take the show to the Palace Theatre in Paignton. We reprised the show, to excellent full-house audiences, who now willingly came, now that they could see us in a theatre instead of a church hall.

The glass ceiling of finding venues was broken. We were slowly able to move away from church halls, and into theatres. More and better venues began to accept us, although some continued to avoid us until more recently, due to our small beginnings, and we continued to slowly grow.

While we have never been able to successfully obtain grant funding to expand as we would have liked, we have managed to grow with scrimping and saving from having stands of plants & bric a brac at table top sales, sponsored activities, etc, and learning how to recycle and repurpose clothing and items obtained from charity shops and on websites such as Freecycle.

We have worked with a number of other local organisations, providing actors, historical recreations, photographers, voiceovers, and anything that we could help with, towards a shared goal of increasing participation and opportunity in the local arts.

The ultimate aim is to continue to grow into a successful self-sustaining regional theatre company which is not only providing work for local creatives, but also provides a significant contribution to the creative community of our home region. We welcome anyone who would like to join us on this journey.

Our Audiences & Marketing Reach

Awards:

Our productions have won international, national and regional awards including the Theatre Partner Award at the Long Island Theatre Awards New York in 2019, the BrixAward for community contribution in 2019, the All-England Epic Award in 2017, the Torbay Together: Creativity In The Community Award in 2014, with national and international film festival nominations for our film and video projects, including the Los Angeles Cinefest, Miami Epic Trailer Film Festival, and the UK Screen One International Film Festival.

Audience Figures for The South Devon Players Theatre & Film Company are growing:

- Between June 2018 and Oct 2019, our physical audiences increased by 490%.
- Online followers on social media increased to over 22,000 from 44 countries.
- Audiences grew with both many new attendees, and a high retention of returning audiences from previous shows.
- Audiences are also building abroad with those who cannot attend our shows in person, viewing our stage productions online. These include private individuals, and schools, primarily in the Americas, Middle East, and Asia.

Marketing Reach:

- Online newsletters and social media posts reach over 23,000 people internationally, directly, and many more with shared posts and forwarded messages.
- Printed theatre programmes for each show reach all audiences, around 63% of audience members purchase one. They are often shared when people make group bookings.
- Online sales have increased year on year although box office sales “in person” remain popular.

Audience Profile:

- We have a local physical audience based on regional demographics.
- The average local age is 44, with a higher number of retired people
- An average of 91% of residents are UK born, however in the summer we see an increased footfall from people on holiday due to being a high-tourist area.
- We have a large international following, who follow our shows online using such tools as YouTube or social media feeds. Our current social media following is over 22,080, before counting an organic reach.

Location & physical footfall:

- While our rehearsal venue is a small community centre out-of-town, we ensure that our performances take place at central locations in towns and cities, close to public transport as well as parking. From 2021, a majority will also be live-streamed.
- Show / project advertising in physical locations is centred on, though not in any way limited to, the town centres & city-centre locations where the shows are taking place. Current shows typically tour South Devon, and then go on to Bristol. We are hoping to expand further as funding and venues permit.

Performer and crew policy

Everyone in our team (actors, crew, admin) is integral to maintain the day-to-day operation of
The South Devon Players Theatre And Film Company.
(Hereafter referred to as "The Players".)

The Players recognise the rights of team members to:

Know what is (and what is not) expected of them
Have adequate support in their role

Receive appreciation

Have safe working conditions

Be insured

Know their rights and responsibilities if something goes wrong

Receive appropriate training, if necessary

Be free from discrimination, bullying, or other socially unacceptable behaviour.

Be offered the opportunity for personal development.

Be respected in the same manner as anyone else in our organisation.

The Players expect all team members to:

-Be reliable, honest and trustworthy at all times.

-Respect confidentiality

-Carry out tasks in a way that reflects the aims and values of The Players, and our reputation for excellence. -Work within agreed guidelines

-Respect the work of the Players and not bring us into disrepute

-Comply with the Players policies, and the law, including health & safety, equal opportunities, workplace respect, child protection, and data protection.

-Treat other members of the organisation and members of the public, as you yourself would wish to be treated. -To maintain the confidential information of the organization and its clients

-To meet time commitments and standards agreed to, and, when this is not possible, to give reasonable notice so other arrangements can be made.

-Attend rehearsals and performances in a reliable, consistent manner.

Team members are required to adhere to the policies and procedures of The South Devon Players Theatre & Film Company, and to legal requirements of entertainment law, in order to ensure everyone's well-being, foster a sense of respect, safe-space, learning, and creativity. Anyone who breaches the policies and procedures, may have their involvement immediately terminated .

The Players commit to the following:

Clarity and communication

- To explain the standards we expect for our services and to encourage and support you to achieve and maintain them.
- To make every effort to avoid lone-working. In the vast majority of situations you will be working with an experienced member of our organisation.

Provision to our team

- Any specialist equipment (including, but not limited to, tech, costume, notebooks, scripts, craft materials) is supplied.
- We ask team members not to spend money on our behalf, without checking in advance. We ask that any expenditure for which you wish to receive reimbursement, are discussed with, and approved by our admins, prior to the expenditure being made, and subject to the provision of receipts. Expense incurred outside of this agreement cannot be reimbursed.

Health & Safety

- To provide adequate feedback in support of our Health and Safety Policy, a copy of which is available from the The Players website, or a production director

Equal Opportunities

- To ensure that all team members are dealt with in accordance with our Equal Opportunities Policy, a full copy of which is available from The Players website, or a production director
- In essence, our equal opportunities policy stipulates that no person involved with our organisation, will be discriminated against, on grounds of race, religion, sexuality or gender identification.

Problems

- To try to resolve fairly any problems, grievances and difficulties you may have while you work with us.
- In the event of an unresolved problem, to offer the opportunity to state your case to officers of the committee.

The Players aim to treat all team members fairly, objectively and consistently. We seek to ensure that team members views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly and aim for a positive and amicable solution. The production team is responsible for handling problems regarding complaints or conduct, please refer any complaint/concern to them at the earliest opportunity. In the event of a problem, all relevant facts should be obtained as quickly as possible. Support will be provided by the Players to the team member while it endeavours to resolve the problem. All team members are subject to our members rules of conduct, and the disciplinary procedure laid out therein.

Zero Tolerance

The South Devon Players Theatre And Film Company has a zero tolerance policy in respect of aggressive verbal or physical behaviour, drug and alcohol abuse, sexual impropriety, bullying, gaslighting, harassment, antisocial conduct, theft, rehearsal disruption, or other behaviour not in keeping with the norms of socially acceptable behaviour, at any event, or location (physical or digital), towards any of our members or any members of the public. Any such behaviour, or clear evidence of such behaviour, may result in the immediate ejection from the premises, termination of your involvement and a lifetime ban from the premises and all events managed by South Devon Players Theatre And Film Company.