





THE SOUTH DEVON PLAYERS THEATRE & FILM COMPANY

GENERAL INFORMATION FOR VOLUNTEERS



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 national awards and international nominations, 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.

We invite you to be part of the magic. Read on to find out more.



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 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.

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.

Our productions have won international, national and regional awards including the Theatre Prtener Award at the Long Island Theatre Awards New York 2019, 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, 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



Urgently seeking volunteers and helpers to assist us.

(Roles available at the time of publication. The list may vary at short notice)

We are critically short-handed, which is seriously affecting our ability to run on a day to day basis.

We are seeking help from lovely people in Torbay – ideally Brixham – who are interested in assisting a successful and serious theatre team. People need to be reliable, communicative, and positive, with good standards of acceptable social behaviour and presentation. Training and induction provided.

We are a lively, friendly, down to earth group, and we are open to people of all ages from 16 to the sky's the limit.

In return can provide training, references, portfolio images/ video, help with seeking employment in the creative fields.

Stage/ set hands

Equipment and basic training provided.

This role involves helping construct set/ props, and to help with set/ stage changes during performances. Attendance commitment is at rehearsals (Wednesday evenings and Sunday afternoons weekly) at Chestnut Community Centre, Brixham for rehearsals, then local tours for the shows (Mostly Torbay but radius can extend to Plymouth and Exeter, occasionally to Bristol).

At some venues may be operating tech alongside our team, and at others may be liaising with inhouse venue technicians to assist them with cueing.

Publicity

This covers a wide range of activities, all of which can have varying time commitments.

What is very important is that everyone can do what they say they will, to deadline. We like people for this to be positive, smily and outgoing, but also calm and down to earth, and unfailingly polite even if someone is a bit difficult, for when dealing with the public. Good impressions are important!

Leaflet drops door to door (always with more than one person)

afternoons to suit, close to our public events, in Torbay. Or simply an agreement to do leaflet drops covering own home street is fantastic as well.

Needs to be fairly active for walking up and down roads.

Pleasant enthusiastic interpersonal skills needed when you end up chatting to someone by their gate (as happens fairly regularly)

Costumed walkabouts and outdoor events (always with more than one person).

This is out and about in town centres, costumes provided in theme with relevant show. May be asked to assume a character for the duration. Must be able to stop and chat to members of the public and be comfortable with photo-ops etc because people often ask for pictures, especially in tourist season.

Poster distribution

This is something that we are seeking outside Brixham (covering Paignton and Torquay usually). This involves a time to suit about six weeks to four weeks before an event, visiting local businesses to ask them to display posters for a coming show or open casting. Covering one town centre usually takes one afternoon. Can be done on own or with someone else. Again this is flexible timing and location to be discussed.

Photography and filming at rehearsals

This covers mainly our rehearsal venue at Chestnut Community Centre in Brixham. We find it critically important for our promotion to show good photos and video clips of rehearsals etc on social media. We also do a lot of cast interviews to share online as well. Camera equipment supplied if needed. Basic photo editing and video editing training can be given if plenty of notice before a production gets busy. Attention must be given especially if a show contains minors, and that images and videos are not "joking about", but are positive and showing good preproduction work. (so some vetting does happen). Dressing room photos are not permitted.

Fundraising

Again fundraising can cover many sub-tasks, and as you will understand, location and time commitments can be variable.

Grant Forms

Assistance is needed with writing successful grant bids.

This is all about filling out applications, and finding relevant arts grants. This can be done from own home, or in daytime meetings in Brixham.

Good spelling, and literacy is required.

Tabletop sales

Helping either "man" a table at a table top sale in the area selling bric-a-brac, crafts, or plants to raise funds for the group.

The locations and times vary as to where we have been able to hire a table. We may also organise our own sales as well. We do always call for "all hands" on the Brixham Pirate Festival in May as we have our biggest stall of the year there and need several people there to manage the crowd we get and to allow each of us to have food and toilet breaks. (lone working with your legs crossed for 8 hours isn't fun!)

Some of this can be done sitting down, but some can also require standing as well.

Growing plants and making items for table top sales

Also for the sales we will be looking for someone who is willing to grow some plants (seeds/ pots/ compost supplied) or make craft items to sell. These items can be collected in Brixham or on 12 bus route.

Helping develop sponsor packs

We want to contact businesses about finding sponsorship, but again need assistance from someone with business acumen who is also arts-connected to develop this to both high standards of arts promotion, and also to be friendly and approachable to local as well as bigger businesses.

Selling advertising space

Contacting local businesses to sell advertising space in the theatre programmes. (own time committent, may be done from home or our and about in person.

Stats, Facts & Impact

A snapshot of our growing reach and cultural impact

June 2018
October 2019

2017
Epic Award -
All England winner
*for innovative approach
to regional performing arts*

2019
Long Island Theatre Awards
New York:
Theatre Partner Award
For our production of Macbeth

2019
BrixAward
*For contribution to our local
community*

Audience numbers rising per show as we are accepted to more venues

1307-132
Macbeth (Tour1) - 537
Les Miserables- 552
Macbeth (Tour 2) - 779

Performer Numbers

1307- 12
Macbeth (tour 1)- 14
Les Miserables - 18
Macbeth (Tour 2) - 20

External local organisations
supported with cast, advice or
expertise.

8

Percent of 4 & 5 star
reviews online (Google, etc)

100% of 50 reviews

22,080 social media
followers in
44 countries

Towns performed in

6

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, 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 Hugos 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 survived and 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 on films, creating our own Arthurian feature film centring on the “dark knight” Mordred, which is now in post-production, and have now completed our production of William Shakespeare's Macbeth, to unfailingly strong reviews, some likening the quality of our productions to those at the Globe Theatre.

Our productions have won international, national and regional awards including the Theatre Partner Award at the Long Island Theatre Awards New York 2019, 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, UK Screen One International Film Festival.

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.

Volunteer Policy

This policy explains your role as a volunteer, The volunteer role is designed to help maintain the day-to-day operation of the South Devon Players Theatre And Film Company.

(Hereafter referred to as “The Players”.)

The Players deeply value the contribution made by volunteers and is committed to involving volunteers in ways which are encouraging and supportive .

The Players recognise the rights of volunteers to:

- Know what is (and what is not) expected of them
- Have adequate support in their volunteering
- 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 volunteers 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, including health & safety, equal opportunities, and data protection.
- Treat other members of the organisation and members of the public, as you yourself would wish to be treated.
- To be able to respect the confidentiality of 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.

Volunteers are unpaid and do not receive any material reward.

Volunteers are required to adhere to the policies and procedures of The South Devon Players Theatre & Film Company, 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 service immediately terminated .

Although our volunteers offer time freely and willingly without binding obligation, it is critical that there is a culture of mutual support and reliability.

Volunteers have the right to come and go as they wish, but we would request that they notify an officer of the Players (the Coordinator or the person organising the activity) if they are unable to undertake their voluntary task or role at any given time.

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 help you develop your volunteering, and wider specialist skills with us.
- To make every effort to avoid lone-working. In the vast majority situations you will be working with an experienced member of our organisation.

Provision to our volunteers

- All volunteers are entitled to free tea/ coffee/ squash, and light refreshments while working on a task with us.
- Any specialist equipment (including, but not limited to, tech, costume, notebooks, scripts, craft materials) is supplied.
- We ask volunteers 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 committee officers, prior to the expenditure being made, and subject to the provision of receipts. Expenses incurred outside of this agreement cannot be reimbursed.
- All volunteers are entitled to a reference for future employment or volunteering; photos or video for personal portfolios (especially important in creative tasks). These are for personal use, and may not be used by any other organisation or company.

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, a production director, or a committee officer.

Equal Opportunities

- To ensure that all volunteers are dealt with in accordance with our Equal Opportunities Policy, a full copy of which is available from The Players website, a production director, or a committee officer.
- 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.

-We may have to restrict some tasks dependant on age (IE we could not have a person aged under 21 running a raffle where alcohol is included in the prizes), or on criminal record (we would be unable to accept a volunteer convicted of a sexual offence or theft, as that would impact upon the safety of our team, and potentially our impression to members of the public).

Problems

- To try to resolve fairly any problems, grievances and difficulties you may have while you volunteer 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 volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. We seek to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly and aim for a positive and amicable solution. The committee is responsible for handling problems regarding volunteer complaints or conduct, please refer any complaint/concern to them at the earliest opportunity. If the problem involves a member of the committee, the problem should be referred to any other committee member. 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 volunteer while it endeavours to resolve the problem

- All volunteers are subject to our members rules of conduct, and the disciplinary procedure laid out therein.

Conflicts of interest

Our volunteers at the Players have a duty to act in the best interests of the South Devon Players Theatre & Film Company. Volunteers must not use their position to their own personal benefit. Conflicts of interest occur when a volunteer's personal or business interests or the interests of an organisation or person connected to the volunteer, conflict with the smooth running and decision making process of the Players.

Volunteers within the Players must not attempt to sway the decision making process in order gain personally or professionally from outcomes.

The Players volunteers must avoid all situations that may possibly lead to a conflict of interest and also have a duty to declare and discuss any potential conflicts of interest with the management committee.

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, theft, 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 reasonable suspicion of such behaviour, may result in the immediate ejection from the premises, termination of your membership and a lifetime ban from the premises and all events managed by South Devon Players Theatre And Film Company.

