

## **Hiring the Theatre - General Information**

Different from other theatres . . .The New Empire Theatre is a self-funded project currently run on a voluntary basis. All the work on the refurbishment of the building and the maintenance of the theatres is carried out in-house by a small team of dedicated people. Work is on-going as we continue to make improvements to all our performance areas, and we are constantly receiving donated equipment and materials. Because of this, the building and its contents are continually changing, and so any technical details will also be subject to change. Normally this is for the better and we will only be adding to what is already detailed below, however once you have confirmed your booking, please stay in contact with the theatre to keep updated on any changes.

## **Hire of the Theatre - FAQ**

### **Can We come and have a look?**

If you wish to come to the theatre and have a look (for companies new to the theatre this is advised), or if you have specific questions for the management and technical team relating to your show, an appointment should be made in advance with the theatre. On spec meetings and visits are not welcome, to guarantee you get our undivided attention it is best to come down at a pre-arranged time. Perhaps your questions can be answered by a simple phone call, by contacting the theatre direct.

### **What do we get?**

Hire of the theatres includes access to and use of stage, dressing rooms, auditorium, merchandise counter and patrons' bar. The hire fee includes Front of House Staff and Bar Staff (this does not include programme sellers), full use of sound and lighting equipment, operated by two fully qualified technicians. The theatre auditorium, foyer and dressing rooms are cleaned by the staff at the theatre. However, it would be extremely helpful if visiting companies could keep their dressing rooms clean and tidy, use the rubbish bins provided for litter, and pick up rubbish left lying around on the floor.

### **Who operates the equipment?**

Sound and lighting equipment can only be operated by the in-house technicians unless prior arrangements have been made to the satisfaction of the theatre. Followspots, flies and prompt desk facilities are also available, but advance notification is required for the casual staff to operate these if you cannot provide your own, an additional cost is incurred for this service.

### **Is the equipment included in the price?**

The hire includes any equipment already on site (see general equipment and venues page), with the exclusion of 8 radio mics for which we charge a nominal hire fee per mic used and for batteries. Should you require music stands for an orchestra or band, these can also be hired through the theatre by prior arrangement.

### **How long can we stay?**

The theatre has the right to charge for extra hours outside the times stated on the contract, at its discretion. Should you need to work later than the times specified on the contract, or come in on a day not specified, prior arrangement must be made with the theatre. Companies are also required to remove from the theatre all their equipment, scenery, costumes and props on the night of their last performance. Failure to take your things with you on final departure may result in them being thrown away or a charge for storage. The theatre does not have the facilities to dispose of unwanted scenery and other items, and companies are required to take EVERYTHING with them, even if they don't need it any more. If you have a valid reason for not being able to remove your things on the night of your last show, arrangements must be made with the theatre for a suitable time to do this, prior to your show and well in advance. Please remember you are not the only company using the theatre, and the next people using the venue do not want to be climbing over and working round scenery/props etc. left by someone else.

### **Safety and Security**

Full video surveillance equipment is in operation throughout the building. Full fire alarm system installed, the theatre holds all necessary documents and certification to enable us to hold an entertainments licence. The theatre has a strict health and safety policy, a copy of the theatre risk assessment is available on written request. The theatre has the right to refuse the use of equipment that is deemed unsafe. If you are building your own scenery/props, or bringing your own sound/lighting equipment, please ensure it is safe to use, and if necessary electrically tested to current safety requirements. Television receiving equipment must not be brought into the theatre as we do not hold a current TV Licence.

## **Are there any hard and fast rules?**

Normal theatre rules apply:

Performers, orchestra and crew must arrive and depart via the stage door only, unless prior arrangement has been made. When there are under 16s in the building, there must be a signing-in sheet at the stage door and we advise a responsible member of your company to be present.

Performers must not wear costume and make-up in the public areas unless it is part of the show.

Smoking and the drinking of alcohol is strictly prohibited in the backstage area, on stage and auditorium.

Hot food (including takeaways such as burgers and chips) are not allowed in the backstage area or auditorium.

Chewing Gum is not allowed on the premises.

No food or drink of any kind is to be taken on to the stage area. If you have dancers or people with health issues that require liquid, water in a sealed container is allowed. If you feel that you need to have sugar/sugary foods at the side of the stage, please consult with the Stage Manager of your company.

For stage marking please ONLY use PVC/LX tape. Gaffa can be used for running cables.

No naked flames are permitted on stage without prior consultation with the theatre.

Mobile phones must be switched OFF half an hour prior to the show or rehearsal, or when required by the theatre staff. Mobile phones affect the sound equipment and even if they are switched on and not in use they can cause interference which can damage the equipment.

Do not (and please ensure that children do not) touch any equipment, or plugs and sockets, unless asked to by the theatre staff. Items are switched on or off for a reason. If you think that something is irregular, please notify the theatre staff.

No unauthorised persons are allowed in the control room, kiosk, box office, or behind the bar unless prior arrangement has been made.

No entrances, exits, fire exits or gangways either on stage, backstage or in the auditorium, can be blocked by any items including bags, costumes, props or scenery.

Costume changes should not be made in the corridors because they cause an obstruction. Under no circumstances can costume changes be made in a fire exit. Please remember all exits and corridors are monitored by CCTV cameras.

Once the performance is in progress, do not use the pass door at the side of the stage into the auditorium unless it is part of the show.

Please do not sit on the arms or put feet on any part of the seating in the auditorium.

Please ensure the auditorium is cleared of people, rubbish and all other items half an hour before the performance or when required by the theatre staff.

All equipment in the building is the property of the theatre. Any breakages will be charged to your company. If a call-out has to be made because your company have deliberately blocked the toilets, you will also be charged.

Please do not stick, tape or glue equipment/posters etc. to any part of the auditorium/foyer i.e carpets, walls, ceiling etc. unless authorised by persons involved with the Theatre.

Remember any items brought into the Theatre are your responsibility.

## **Video Recording**

Unauthorised use of video recording is prohibited.

If you are having your show filmed, you must provide the theatre with the licence and paperwork required for authorisation from the rights holders.

The following rules apply when you are having your performance filmed:

- The theatre requires 28 days notice if you wish to have your show videoed.
- If you are having sound recorded using the theatre's sound system, this must also be arranged with the theatre prior to the show. The sound system can provide show relay from the mixing desk as balanced or unbalanced mic or line level.
- Video crews are required to arrive and complete their setup AT LEAST one hour prior to the performance. They must allow extra time for sound checks etc.
- Please ensure all gangways are kept clear of equipment, cables, tripods etc. Unmanned tripods are not permitted in any aisle or gangway
  
- Running of cables across the floor or under the carpet is prohibited, there are hooks on picture rails and in the ceiling for running cables across the auditorium.
- There is space at the rear of the auditorium for recording purposes, but a 4' gangway must be kept clear to the rear of the stalls, and please make contact with the theatre with regard to the wheelchair spaces.

## **Future Plans**

We also have plans for a Crew room with toilet, fitted kitchen, shower and laundry to be available in the near future. As previously mentioned, we are continuously changing the theatre, it's equipment and the facilities available. Please stay in contact with the theatre to keep up to date with any changes which may affect you.

## **Where can we get extra effects, props and scenery?**

For extra lighting, special effects, props and stage make-up, please contact Tee-Pee Lighting on 01268 566844. Re Pyrotechnics: Due to local council licensing, for certain pyrotechnics effects the theatre requires 28 days notice. For additional scenery, large props and cloths, our nearest supplier is Paul Lazell who can be contacted on 07885 489 9130. Should you require a photographer the theatre has the numbers of some local professionals.