

THE RUDE MECHANICAL THEATRE COMPANY

HOSTING A SHOW

A practical guide for communities and venues

The Rudes bring professional, original open-air theatre to communities across the region. Many of our venues are village greens, gardens, school fields and private grounds, and some have welcomed us back year after year.

We are always pleased to hear from people who think their community could be a good fit for a Rudes performance.

A successful visit is a partnership: we bring the production, performers, equipment, ticketing and touring experience; the local organiser brings knowledge of the community and helps us reach the audience.

HOW THE ARRANGEMENT WORKS

Most of our village and community performances use our TARA arrangement - "take all, risk all" - under which The Rudes carries the main financial risk, manages the ticketing and retains the ticket income.

In some circumstances, we may agree on a ticket income-sharing arrangement with a host venue. We normally only consider this with professional or well-established venues and organisations that have their own substantial marketing channels, an established audience and can provide significant infrastructure and support for the performance.

Where an income-sharing arrangement is agreed, The Rudes must first receive sufficient ticket income to cover the agreed cost of bringing the performance to the venue. Any ticket income above that level may then be shared between The Rudes and the host organisation at an agreed rate.

The precise arrangement is agreed individually with each venue before the performance is confirmed.

AUDIENCE POTENTIAL

For a performance to be viable, the community should normally have the potential to attract an audience of around 120 people.

This is a guide rather than a guarantee: we consider the venue, location, local support and wider touring schedule together.

THE LOCAL ORGANISER

Every new venue needs at least one enthusiastic local organiser, ideally supported by a small team.

People are far more likely to attend an unfamiliar company when the invitation comes from someone they know and trust. Local knowledge and personal recommendation are therefore central to making a performance work.

The local organiser will usually help to:

- spread the word throughout the community and introduce us to useful local contacts;
- share our publicity through community newsletters, noticeboards, email lists, social media and WhatsApp groups;
- identify any permissions needed from the landowner or local authority;
- assemble a small front-of-house team for the performance; and
- help confirm practical arrangements such as access, toilets and, where needed, accommodation.

MARKETING AND PUBLICITY

We provide the main publicity materials and guidance, and we handle our own website, online ticketing and wider press activity.

The local team promotes the performance within the community – for example, through parish magazines, posters, local groups, email lists and social media.

We will agree a simple promotional plan with you nearer the time.

FRONT OF HOUSE

Because the touring company is occupied with setting up and preparing the show, we normally ask for three or four local volunteers to help check tickets, sell programmes and direct the audience.

Local helpers should arrive before the audience is admitted and meet our tour manager for a short briefing. One person remaining available during the interval is particularly useful.

Complimentary tickets for agreed local helpers and overnight hosts will be confirmed as part of the arrangements.

COSTS AND FUNDRAISING

Under a TARA arrangement, The Rudes carries the main financial risk and normally meets agreed genuine event costs such as necessary venue hire, insurance and core publicity.

Please discuss any proposed local costs with us before committing to them.

A performance can support community life and bring people together, but it should not be treated primarily as a fundraising event for the host organisation.

ACCOMMODATION

Where a venue is more than approximately an hour's drive from our Eastbourne base, overnight accommodation may be needed for our touring team of six.

Hosting the company in local homes can make the visit more viable and is often an enjoyable part of the experience.

We normally require six proper beds, with suitable privacy; camp beds and sofas are not appropriate.

If local hosting is not possible, please tell us early so that other arrangements can be explored.

PRACTICAL REQUIREMENTS

Performance area

A reasonably level grass area of approximately two tennis courts is usually needed for the performance and audience.

Private gardens, village greens, school fields and similar outdoor spaces can all work. Public sites may require permission or an agreed way to define the performance area.

Vehicle access

We need direct access for our van, car and mobile stage.

Please check for height barriers, locked gates, bollards, narrow entrances or ground restrictions. If barriers cannot be opened, the site may not be suitable.

Toilets

Toilets must be available nearby for both the audience and company.

Existing facilities such as a village hall may be sufficient; hired facilities may be needed at some sites.

Power

Our shows run primarily from battery power, so a mains electricity supply is not essential.

Access to a standard 13A socket is nevertheless useful where available.

Seating and refreshments

Audience members normally bring their own chairs. Picnics are welcome at our open-air performances.

A host may offer food or refreshments, but this is optional and should be discussed with us in advance.

Timing on the day

The company normally arrives during the afternoon to set up.

Audience admission, performance time, interval and pack-down arrangements vary by production and will be confirmed for the relevant season.

Please ensure gates and vehicle access are available at the agreed times.

TICKETING AND BOX OFFICE

The Rudes sets ticket prices and manages online ticketing.

Tickets may also be available on the door, subject to capacity. Local organisers are not normally expected to sell tickets in advance.

Group or concession arrangements for a particular community can be discussed with us, but should not be advertised until agreed.

WEATHER, CHANGES AND CANCELLATION

Open-air theatre is naturally affected by the weather.

We make every reasonable effort to complete each performance, but the safety of our audience and company, and the protection of instruments and equipment, must come first.

A performance may be delayed, paused, relocated, rescheduled or cancelled when conditions make this necessary.

Current booking, transfer and refund arrangements are set out in the Terms & Conditions on our website.

PERMISSIONS AND INSURANCE

The landowner's permission will always be needed, and some sites may require additional approval from a local authority or another responsible body.

We will discuss with the organiser who should obtain each permission.

The company carries public liability insurance and can provide evidence of cover where required.

INTERESTED IN HOSTING THE RUDES?

Visit therudes.co.uk and use the Contact Form.

Please tell us about the venue, its location and the community or organisation you represent. It is also helpful to tell us about the proposed performance area, audience potential, local marketing opportunities and any facilities available.

We will then consider whether the venue could fit within a future tour and contact you to discuss the possibilities. Final arrangements are agreed separately for each venue and touring season.