

# PASSION TRUST

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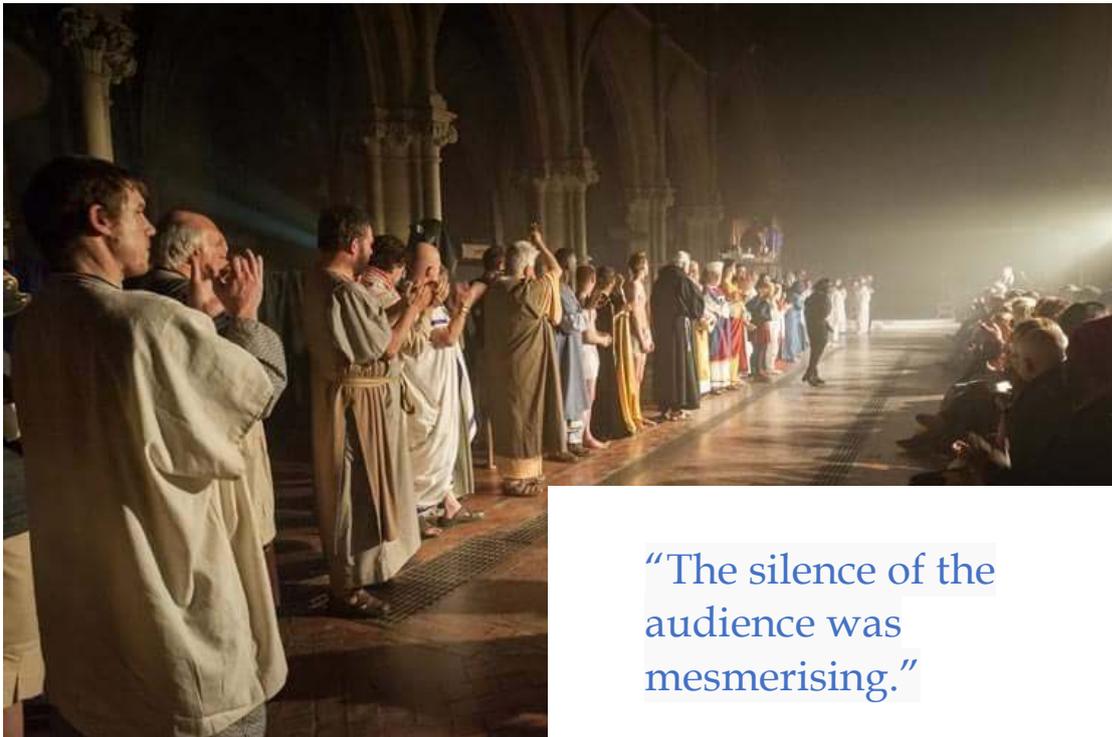
PASSION PLAYS: GUIDE  
TO PRODUCING THEM!



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“The silence of the audience was mesmerising.”

## INTRODUCTION: WHY DO A PASSION PLAY?

Why not? Working on these plays is a fabulous way to reach out to your community and to bring the message of Jesus to each generation in a fresh and inspiring manner. The church was born when a group of people all began to work together and a new community was created with a common purpose. They then reached out to the wider community in practical terms of help and teaching.

Theatre as we know it was born out of a desire from the church to communicate the Gospel to the general public. The first recorded piece of theatre in Britain was 4 lines spoken by 2 choirs addressing each other in a dramatic form - called the *Quem Quaeritis*. The Church soon realised the power of theatre as a way to communicate and provoke a response and began to produce what we now know as Mystery Plays and Passion Plays.

The term "Passion Play" actually refers to the last part of Jesus' life from the Last Supper to his Ascension but often modern Passion Plays include events from Jesus' life, such as his teaching or his miracles. This is very helpful to give context to his trial, death and resurrection for people who have never heard the Gospel before.

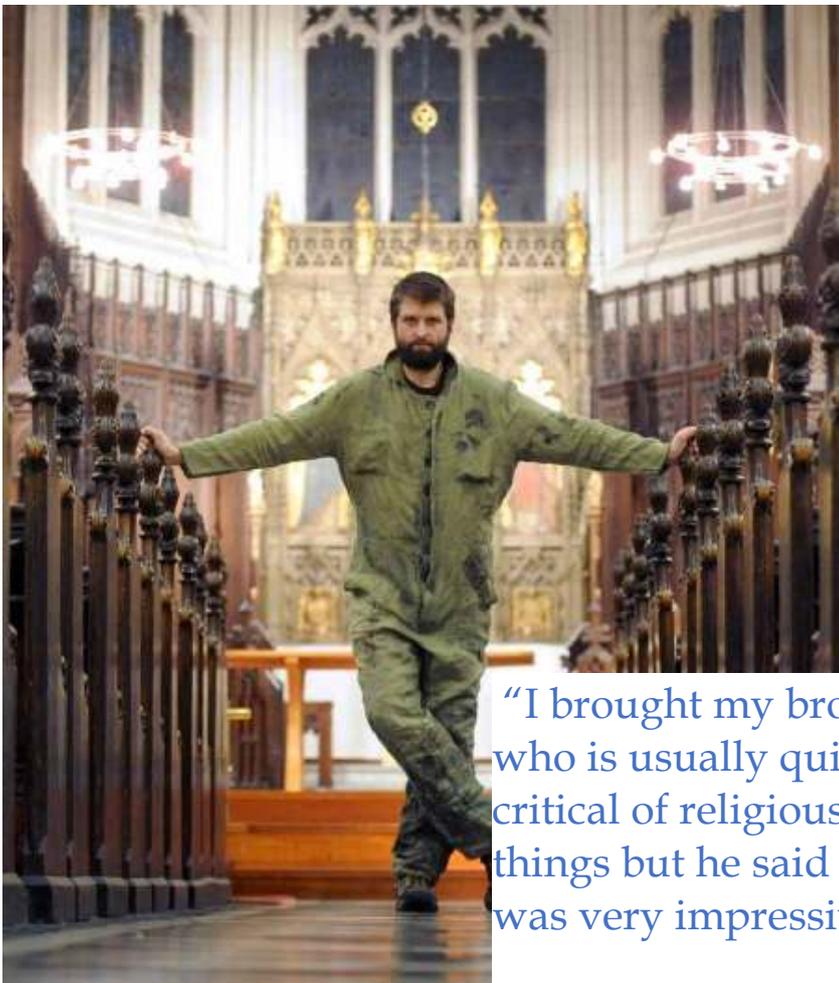
Remember, also, that not everyone knows what a Passion Play is and it can be misleading. This was the case in 2017 when Oxford City Council refused to give the Cowley Road Passion Play a licence because they thought it was a sex play! The word 'Passion' refers to the intense suffering in Jesus' life from the time of his betrayal and agony in the Garden of Gethsemane to his trial, torture and death. The word 'Passion' can mean 'agony, suffering, distress, torment, torture', as well as the more familiar use of the word to mean 'enthusiasm, fascination, zeal, fervour, excitement, devotion, love, desire'.

Just like the church in medieval England, we still have a need to bring the story of Christ to our society. While many people in medieval England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales were illiterate and *could not* read the Bible, many people today are biblically illiterate and *will not* read the Bible. Theatre is still one of the most powerful mediums that we have to present the Gospel story. Passion Plays are being produced around the world and attended by thousands of people and are still having an impact today.

One of the trends in theatre today is a recognition of the changing face of theatre. It is harder to attract people into a theatre building and so we are bringing theatre to the audiences! In Scotland, for example, companies such as Grid Iron and The National Theatre of Scotland have all produced site-specific Theatre. Not only does it enable you to use the natural site as a backdrop (who wouldn't want Edinburgh Castle as a backdrop?!) but it breaks down the barrier between audience and actors and that makes for exciting theatre for both audience and cast.

As Director of a number of these plays, it has been a privilege to work with those who have had the vision to produce them and to see their hard work and dedication. The term Community play really does describe the cast and crew. A small number of professionals are hired (lead role of Jesus and understudy) but the remaining cast are made up of anyone who is interested from professionals to children and everything in between! As the plays take 6 months to rehearse, the cast really does become a new community and it is great to see friendships being made, romances happen and support for each other when hard times hit. Whether the cast have any belief or faith or none is irrelevant - everyone works together to tell one of the greatest events of history. These truly are community plays.

Suzanne Lofthus



“I brought my brother who is usually quite critical of religious things but he said it was very impressive.”

## 1. FIRST STEPS

So, you have an idea to produce a Passion Play? Where do you start?

First things first. Find someone (might be yourself) who has the vision to see it through and the drive to push the project on and inspire others. It can be a long climb and you need strength, endurance, vision and faith to see it through! That person should be the **Chair of your Steering Committee** (the main committee that will handle the production through the nuts and bolts).

Then look for likeminded people with different skills to be on your **Steering Committee**. Ideally you are looking for:

- Someone with Finance skills to be the Treasurer.
- Someone with Practical skills to oversee the building of set, co-ordination of the area you will be performing in.
- Movers and Shakers who know other influential people especially in the fundraising area.
- Someone who can liaise with the local Council.
- Someone who will co-ordinate Health and Safety.
- Someone who will co-ordinate Stewarding.
- Someone who will co-ordinate Press/Marketing and Publicity.
- Someone with some Technical knowledge for sound is useful but not necessary as if you have a professional Stage Manager/Director, they can often liaise with the Sound Company.
- The Director of the play.
- The main Producer of the play (where the buck stops!)

Some of these roles can be merged and some roles are filled by others who do not have to be on a Committee but have regular meetings with the Director.

The **Operations Committee** (which can also be covered by your Steering Committee) covers the more day to day practical aspects of the production such as:

- Stewarding
- Traffic wardens
- First aid
- Driving the car for Jesus for quick changes (if needed)
- Cast/crew parking and vehicle access onsite
- Animals
- Props and Set
- Latecomers policy
- Audience movements and paths
- Cast party
- Take down of set

- Storage of props/costumes



“Performance was amazing. Had tears in my eyes. Special shout out to the drunk guy from Ireland who thought the crucifixion was actually happening!”

## 2. ORGANISATION

There are a number of ways you can organise yourselves:

- Trustees who accept liability (financial and otherwise) for the overall project. These people should be well connected in the Business Community/Council/Legal/Finance.
- Steering Committee who will manage the project on “day to day” basis. They are the ones who will make the decisions. (They could also be the Trustees).
- Operations Committee – the people on the ground who will build and cover all things practical. (Depending on how big your play is, this could be done by a Production Manager).

You should decide how you are going to operate legally:

- You can form a Trust and to do that you need to contact a solicitor.
- You can become a Registered Charity and to do that you need to apply to OSCR and may need to become a Company (see their website).
- You can come under an existing charity or company.
- The Passion Trust is able to help you with this so you can contact us as well.



***Roles in the Production:***

1. Producer
2. Director
3. Stage Manager/Production Manager
4. Props Crew
5. Construction
6. Costumes
7. Makeup
8. Health and Safety Co-ordinator
9. Head Steward
10. Set and Props Co-ordinator
11. Press/Publicity/Marketing
12. Ticket Sales
13. Catering
14. BSL Signer
15. Animal Co-ordinator
16. Church Liaison
17. Security
18. First Aid
19. Information Area
20. Photography/Video
21. Accounts/Treasurer
22. Child protection
23. Admin/Enquiries (how do you handle people asking to volunteer)
24. Fundraising
25. Site liaison
26. Sound liaison
27. Council liaison
28. Graphic Design
29. Insurance
30. Licences
31. Prayer

There should be clear communication guidelines set out and everyone should be aware of the decision-making process and who makes what decision! You can find more about the Delegation of Authority Diagram in Appendix 1 and about Job Descriptions in Appendix 2.

***Information for the Steering Committee***

1. Production

Passion Plays work best when they are open-air, site-specific or promenade performances (ie. the audience move with the actors as the play progresses around

different parts of the land). There are many ways to present your play. It can be split into two sections with the first part taking place before lunchtime and lasting around 2 hours with a one-hour lunch break for actors and audience alike then the second part lasting approx 2 ½ hours. You can use a shorter version for smaller venues or use a one-hour version which focusses only on the Crucifixion. The cast are drawn from local communities with one professional actor playing the role of Jesus Christ (although for the one-hour version, a talented amateur could play the lead role, as Neil Maddock did in his 'One Man's Passion' in Southampton in 2019<sup>1</sup>).



“Thank you all for a very blessed weekend it was so inspiring and will stay with me for a very long time.”

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<sup>1</sup> You can find out more about 'One Man's Passion' on the Passion Plays website <https://www.passion-plays.co.uk/southampton2019/>

## 2. Statement

It is necessary for that policy document are adhered to by the company, contractors and all involved in the project. Company members will be informed of the policies where applicable and contractors given a copy of the document if required. We will insist on each contractor giving us copies of their own Health and Safety Policies and test certificates where applicable. The company will do everything possible to ensure that the performance site is a safe environment for performers, contractors, workers and the audience alike. Training should be identified and carried out where necessary.

## 3. Insurance

The production should be covered by Public Liability Insurance and the Producers accept vicarious liability for any action "reasonably" undertaken by employees, volunteers (stewards, cast, etc). If the production is employing personnel (and volunteers), it should also have Employers Liability Insurance. Sound/lighting companies may not have their own insurance and might assume equipment (after delivery) is under the play's insurance. Be aware of that!

Each contractor has their own insurance and should be able to provide the Producers with a copy should they require it.

## 3. Terms used:

- "Build up" - the planning phase, design, selection of workers and construction.
- "Load in" or "get in" - planning for delivery of equipment.
- "Show" - planning crowd management, transport management, fire, first aid, incidents.
- "Load out" or "get out/strike" - planning for removal of equipment.
- "Breakdown" - disposal of rubbish, waste water, control of risks.

## 4. Meetings

There should be regular meetings with the main decision-making committee, probably once a month and can increase as and when the need arises (especially when it gets closer to performance dates). Health and Safety is discussed by the Steering Group on a regular basis and separate meetings and briefings should be held by the relevant personnel as and when required. A debrief should be held post production.

## 5. Familiarisation

All cast and crew should be taken around the site and made familiar with all areas including evacuation routes. All cast, crew and volunteers should be briefed on Health and Safety and given hard copies of any relevant documentation.

## 6. Audience

If targeting schools, then they tend to come on the weekdays. Fridays are not good for them as it can be an early finish. Also take into account school holidays and

exam times. We would recommend that the play is suitable for aged 8 upwards but younger children can attend with parents. All children must be accompanied by either teachers or parents and control of them will be primarily managed by the teacher/school or parents.

Weekend audiences will be mainly adults or family groups.

Whilst the audience will be moving around with the action, it is a controlled movement by onsite stewards and performers. Adequate space for viewing should be planned and based on previous performances we know that the audience tends to be very controlled in its' movements and attitudes.

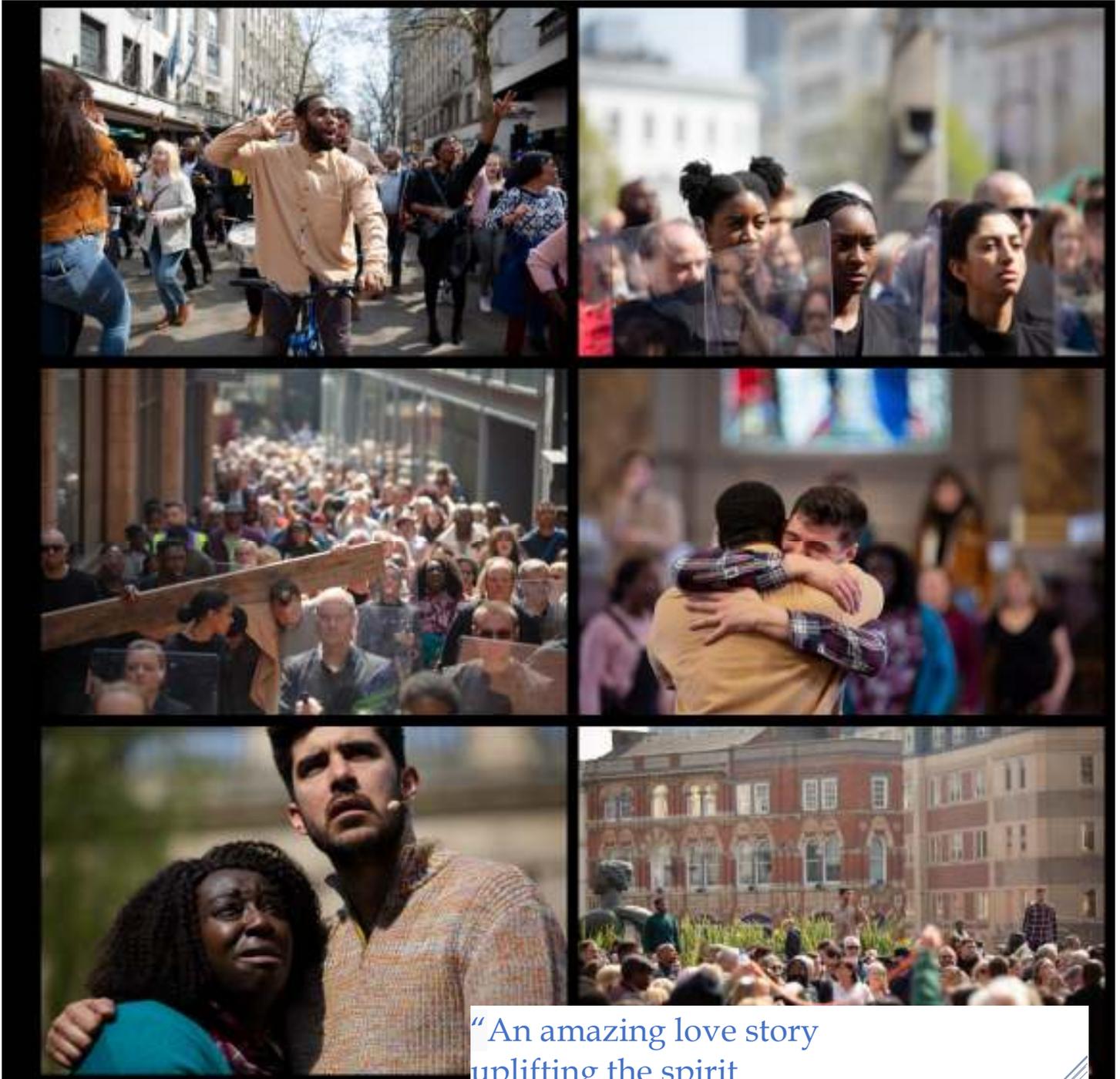
You should ensure that adequate plans are in place for less able bodied audience members. This can be a specified area set aside in each scene for wheelchairs etc or an area for deaf people to clearly see the Interpreter. Stewards should also be aware of plans on dealing with and aiding less able-bodied people.

However, in any pre-publicity, if your terrain is rough and not easily accessible, this should be made very clear in adverts, flyers and posters. It should also be stated when people are buying tickets.

You can put a disclaimer sentence on programmes or flyers stating that an audience attends at their own risk.

The audience should also be "warned" in pre-event publicity that the production may be cancelled due to adverse weather conditions and that due to the nature of the play, you suggest they come prepared for all weathers! It is up to each committee to decide what it's cancellation procedure will be but we suggest you don't cancel unless:

- The weather is proving to be a danger to the audience (high winds which could mean structural damage to scenery and thus endanger audience members).
- Torrential rain makes it unsafe for the sound equipment and the Sound Company advise they are turning it off. In this instance, you can ask the audience whether or not they want to stay and watch the play but without amplification.
- You can delay the start of the production but communicate with your audience at all times.
- If you notice that your audience are uncomfortable and some are leaving, then you may want to consider cancelling.
- If you decide to cancel and the performance has been ticketed (ie. they have paid) then the standard is that if you have performed more than 30 minutes of the play, there is no refund. If less, then you can decide to refund all or a percentage of the ticket cost.
- You can take out Cancellation Insurance on your policy if you want, but it hikes up the premium quite drastically.



“An amazing love story  
uplifting the spirit  
strengthens the faith.  
Messages of love peace and  
sacrifice hope it has  
reached to those who have  
forgotten about it.”

### 3. NOW I'VE GOT MY COMMITTEE, WHAT NEXT?

1. Have your first meeting where roles are clearly defined and the structure is set in place.
2. If you haven't already hired a Director, then do so. You do not have to have a professional Director, there are very talented Amateur Directors of local groups. However, a professional Director comes in very useful if you don't have a great deal of knowledge or experience with theatre.
3. Issues for your committee to discuss:
  - Where the play will be performed
  - Dates of the production
  - Cast (community and professionals)
  - Where to rehearse
  - Land issues (what needs clearing and preparation)
  - Set and props
  - Costumes
  - Health and Safety Policy
  - Audience issues (transport, disabled provision etc)
  - Traffic Control
  - First Aid
  - Car Parking
  - Stewarding
  - Toilet facilities for cast and audience
  - Sound
  - Insurance
  - Ticket Sales
  - Catering
  - Website (good to launch one very quickly. Always ensure it has the dates and how to book ticket information and that it is kept updated)
  - Data Protection (see Appendix 4)

As you progress, you will need to think about all the above in the order:

- before the play
- during the play
- after the play (storage)
- debriefing

It is best to create a Matrix with time schedule (see Appendix 3) which allows you to keep to deadlines and not miss anything.

#### Meetings

Have regular meetings that are minuted. You can also create a group email list to ensure that everyone receives the correct information. In the Easter play, there is a list for the steering group which means that everyone on the committee sees every email to do with the production initiated from within that group. This can be time consuming but it ensures that everyone is kept in the loop. Please note that the Director should be kept informed of everything that is going on.



“Wow...that certainly brings the Crucifixion story close to home, quite horrific in its message...a very emotional time for all.”

#### 4. HOW DO I RAISE THE FUNDS NEEDED?

First create a budget that covers:

- Wages and Fees (Director, 2 actors, stage manager)
- Costumes
- Set
- Props
- Grounds and Car park (if private ground)
- Website
- Sound
- Generators if required
- Printing, postage and stationery
- PR, Advertising and Photography
- Insurance
- Transport for Schools if required
- Toilets and portakabins
- Health and Safety
- Secretarial and Admin
- Cast party/catering
- Legal fees if applicable
- Miscellaneous

See Appendices 47 to 49 for examples of Passion Plays budgets.

There are several ways to raise funds necessary:

1. Applying to Trusts and Funds. This is time consuming and isn't always successful – so a lot of work filling in forms for nothing sometimes. However, the best way to go down this route is to see if any of your Committee members have any connections with any Trustees of a Fund who can make a personal application or lobby them to support when your application comes to the table.

There are online subscriptions to Trusts (both of which cost money) of the different Trusts available – again very time consuming but can be worth it. Go through and mark suitable funds. There is no point applying to any charity that won't fund “religious projects”, but you can apply to youth, educational, theatre funds.

There are some funds in the established church organisations such as The Church of Scotland or Churches Together. Also, some local councils have seed funding to help with start-up costs.

If applying to a trust, it is worth a phone call to find out exactly what format they want an application to be in and if there is a specific contact (sometimes they

require an online application, sometimes only a letter etc). It also can be worth taking a member of the trust board out to your site to explain the vision.

## 2. Churches

One of the most successful ways is to personally contact your local churches and ask to do a 10 minute presentation (you can create or use a presentation with footage or images from your previous productions or from other Passion Plays as an example) and to ask them to consider supporting the project financially both as a church and asking the individuals in the church. (See Appendix 5 for an example of a letter to churches)

## 3. Individuals

These can be people who hear about the project in a church or some other way. Remember to claim Gift Aid if you are a Recognised Charity which can be a huge boost. Also, encourage people to give by Standing Order which will ensure you have a regular income. You can set something up on your website too.

### *Timetable for fundraising*

- 4 months before
  - a. Letters sent to churches (can be from Trustees or Patrons) outlining the fact that the play is happening with dates and details and asking for support both financial and volunteers.
  - b. Decide how received money will be banked. Ensure you have a Bank Account opened and signatories agreed.
  - c. Ensure you have Gift Aid forms available (and online).
  - d. Create a newsletter to go out to churches via email and hard copy.
  - e. Promotional leaflet asking for volunteers prepared.
- 3 months before
  - a. Promotional leaflets distributed to churches with a letter offering a personal presentation at the church if required.
  - b. Support raising letters sent out to trusts and individuals for finance.
  - c. Regular newsletter updates sent out.
- 2 months before
  - a. Follow up churches letters to promote the play.
  - b. Ensure you have posters and publicity material for distribution.
- 1 month before
  - a. Newsletter updates.
  - b. Keep note of any finances received and acknowledge with thank-you letters. Decide on how those gifts are being acknowledged (in the programme or on website) and ensure this is done.

## 5. WHAT ABOUT THE SETTING?

If you are producing the play on private land, it makes life much easier! You will still have to apply for an Entertainments Licence from the Council, but you don't need to go through your local Council planners etc for approval on what you do with your land.

You need to do several walkthroughs with your Director to establish where the actual acting areas will be and ensure you are in agreement. If you are changing the landscape at all, then permission needs to be sought especially if on public land. You will need permission for:

- changing the landscape if that is possible and required,
- erecting any structures (market stalls, platforms),
- erecting the cross(es) as those need to be embedded into the ground with concrete or a metal structure built into the ground.

If the play is to be performed on a private estate, it is the legal responsibility of the owner to ensure that all possible steps are taken to ensure that the site is safe and that this policy document is adhered to. Health and Safety at work is considered to be primarily the responsibility of management through a hierarchy of control

If on private land, it can be great if you can have a pond of water and we have in the past, had small ponds built that can take fish and a boat!



If you are working with a Council then the following needs to happen:

1. Contact the person who will grant the licence and meet with them. Outline your proposal and enlist their support (you will need it!) Get advice from them as to how the Council works and the way forward. For example, Edinburgh Council has a system in place that involves a series of meetings called an EPOG (Edinburgh Planning Group) and they are the people who can stop or help your production!

2. You will need to apply for a licence and there are forms that you will be given. This varies with each Council but you can either get:

- a street theatre performance if you are doing it outside in public area (tends to be cheaper than a Theatre licence and this one is good for only one-off performances).
- a street theatre performance again for public but more than one performance.
- a theatre licence but ensure it is specified for an open-air performance as it is cheaper.

As above, by meeting with this Department, you can help get them on your side and get their advice. There is then a process to go through which may involve a visit from Police and Fire Department to ensure you have covered all aspects. It is often helpful to give them copies of your safety policy sections that apply.

There will be a site visit by the Council member in charge of licensing at some point and can be 30 minutes before your show starts! You don't always get the piece of paper that is the licence but if you don't get assurance in writing if you can that you have been granted a licence. If you get the licence in advance, that should be displayed in public place.

3. This licence application will kick off a whole heap of checks and visits by the Fire, Police, Council

4. Issues they will want to discuss:

- health and safety procedures and documentation,
- route plan for audience,
- anticipated crowd numbers,
- toilet facilities,
- clash diary (any other events on),
- any road closures needed,
- set structures,
- use of buildings owned by council (check fees required),
- police notification,
- medical facilities,
- stewarding and security,
- communications onsite,
- licence,

- inspections – electrical, safety, fire, set,
- waste management plan.

**Biggest piece of advice – get them on your side!**

Legalities needed:

- Entertainment Licence from local Council
- Music Licence to allow you to play recorded music (PPL and PRS licences) Your venue may already have these, so check first. (Note: The music licence is included in the hire of Princes Street Gardens, so no action required there)

Insurance

- Public Liability Insurance
- Employers Liability Insurance
- Ensure equipment is insured for Sound etc
- Include information for cancellation to cover Fees, Contractor fees, Advertising
  - Cancel within 24hrs – 50% fee
  - Cancel within 72hrs – 25% fee
  - Outside this – no fee.

This can be negotiable and sometimes dependent upon contractor contracts.



“It was the first time I thought of Jesus as my friend.”

## 6. SHOULD I SELL TICKETS?

Passion Plays work best when they are free for all. However, you may find that many people want to pay because they have enjoyed the performance so much. You may want to have people with 'donation buckets' among the crowd at the end of the play, or you may be able to hire a portable contactless device. The Passion Trust has one which is available for you to borrow, if you would like to contact them. The Passion Trust has a contactless donation device which we can lend you if you want to collect donations after your performance. The GBx Core is a custom-built contactless donation device which is effective in both unmanned fundraising environments and manned fundraising drives (with 4 hours battery life). If you want to borrow it for on the go fundraising please contact the Passion Trust.

Another way to think about selling tickets is to organise a way for people to book a 'refundable' ticket online. This works well if you are in a venue or site that can only accommodate limited numbers and will ensure people will turn up!

There are a number of outlets to explore:

- Online via your website. You can set up a way of people paying by Visa card online.
- Bring in a Ticket agency (can use Eventbrite, Ticketmaster, your local Theatre or concert hall). However, these places will charge you for printing tickets and their services. We have found it worthwhile though! They then sell through phone lines, websites and people buying at their box office.
- Handle ticket sales in your own office. You need to think about printing tickets (can be done through a printing company or inhouse).
- Ensure you have a Box office on the day with facilities to pay as there will always be "walkups" - people who just turn up.
- You may want to issue complimentary tickets to sponsors, donors, VIPs, Press. The lead actor, understudy and Director usually get an allocation too (but no more than 6 each).
- Other complimentary tickets (comps) are given upon the Producers discretion
- Keep notes of statistics if you can especially for Schools, addresses, how many attended, how they booked and dates. Collate statistics and compare each year.

## 7.HOW DO I PUBLICISE THE PRODUCTION?

If you can afford it, hire a PR company to come up with a campaign or an individual who has press/marketing experience. The main benefit of this is that they often have contacts they have built up over the years which makes getting colour supplements or larger articles easier. However, this role can be done by a volunteer.

You need to create a campaign:

- Initial press release to local papers looking for cast and the dates/location.
- Press releases to monthly publications to see if you can get interest in articles.
- Releases should always have basic information with location, times etc; contact details for more information, quotes from key people
- You should follow up releases with phone calls to journalists
- send press releases to Radio stations, local TV stations, Websites (see Appendix for Websites)
- Set up any interviews (usually with Producer/Director/Lead Actor)
- Arrange for a photocall (an opportunity for press to send their own photographers) and send that out as a separate press release with date, time and location of the call. Allow 30 mins to 1 hour for this and they often want actors in costume. (See Appendix 11 for Photocall release)
- Contact local churches (See Appendix 10 for some contacts).
- Have Press Packs available for press on the day (with a programme, any other publicity material, cast list, information about the play).



- Great if you can have photos that can be emailed to picture desks. And if you have, always put at the bottom of your release “Images available”
- Meet Press if possible so that you can answer any questions on the day, however, don’t stay with them if they are writing a review!
- Always liaise with the Director and Stage Manager with any requests for filming, interviews or photocalls.

### *Creative PR*

Remember the most interesting and successful aspect of PR is the opportunity to be creative! The Passion Trust has more help and guidance here in the ‘Resources’ section of their website.

- Look for interesting angles to tempt the Press
- Talk to the cast for any interesting stories they might have
- If doing a Signed performance, then that is worthy of a release
- Arrange any training for interviews if needed for Production staff/actors
- Remember that if they have done an article, they may want to review the play. You can’t stop them doing that.
- Check to see if anyone in the cast or crew has any press contacts
- Ensure that Production crew are aware of any articles coming out so they are aware and can pass on information. Also keep copies of all press clippings

### *PR Timetable*

- Basic release for cast 3 months before
- Releases to periodicals, radio stations, Christian press 3 months before
- Try to book “op ed” editorials in daily newspapers 1 month before
- Radio interviews 2 weeks before
- TV interviews 1 week before
- ensure Wesley Owen in Glasgow and Edinburgh have a box of leaflets each and are kept stocked up
- Have local Christian shop if you have one sell tickets
- contact Christian TV and radio stations
- get personal contacts in churches/schools in cast etc to be the advocate and publicise
- start times to be advertised “be seated by 10.15” – play starts at 10.30 prompt.
- Churches with signage at front may take posters
- bus companies advertising to their overseas tourists also Saga
- check cast for their contacts with schools and churches to be ambassadors and go to the school/church to advertise

### *Leaflets and Flyers*

You need the dates, location, times, great visual images, ticket booking information, contact details, summary of the play, how to get there information (can put on website too), parking information, catering and clothing (wrap up warm!).

Different groups have done different things. The Easter play in Edinburgh creates a “how you can be involved” leaflet that is sent to churches primarily and has boxes volunteers can tick to get involved. This also acts as publicity for the play and must have the dates and locations on.

Up to 100,000 flyers can be distributed to churches, theatres and public places (for example, through a distribution company) and other places. Also give flyers to the members of the cast to hand out.

Posters can be created. If you have access to private land, you can create posters on posts which can go alongside a roadway (this works very well for Dundas) These can be displayed in Churches and anywhere that will display posters. Posters should be displayed 6 weeks before the production.

You can also do bus advertising (some places may do it for free for you)

Programmes – usually you estimate 1/3 of an audience will buy a programme.

### *Sponsors/VIPs*

- invite Bus Companies/Tour Operators to an open day/lunch
- have a sponsors drinks reception/video/pack
- invite National Theatre of Scotland people and other Theatre personnel
- ensure your VIPs have all been invited and sent tickets. Programmes should be available if required. Meet VIPs on the day (this can be done by the Producer)

### *Marketing*

You should draw up a Marketing plan that includes:

- EAE (or relevant distribution company. Can be expensive, but gets flyers out to Arts Venues)
- Culture venues (cinemas, theatres, etc)
- Tourist offices
- Tourist attractions
- Bus Tours may take flyers
- Shops

- Community centres
- Sports Centres
- Bus and train stations
- Pubs/hotels/ bed and breakfasts
- Libraries
- Groups (Scouts etc) and Associations
- Local amateur theatre companies
- Colleges and Educational centres

## Signage

Ensure you have Signage in place (you can use AA or RAC signposts if needing to direct traffic) or simply posters in Public Park but make sure they are waterproof!



“I got more than blessings watching. I burst into tears when Jesus walked back alive. Thank you all so much for your hard work.”

## 8. SCHOOLS

If you are targeting Schools, they need initial information about the production 6 months in advance to allow them to plan a trip. More detailed information and booking details can be sent 4 months in advance. (See Appendix for example letter) For a June production, Schools need advance information by November/December latest.

Schools addresses are easily available on websites but best to find out if anyone in the cast/committees have any personal contacts so that you can get information direct to the Head Teacher or relevant Teacher.

If you have produced the play before, ensure you keep records of Schools attended and contact them each year with a personal letter asking if they are attending again and detailing any changes or developments.

You can run competitions to attract.

You can try to get transport subsidy to help Schools hire a bus (local companies such as Stagecoach may provide free buses also).

It helps the School if you make it as easy as you can for them. You can do this by creating a Risk Assessment (see Appendix) and sending that with booking forms.

Also by checking what the Curriculum is and ensuring that your letter contains information as to how attending the play will tick those boxes for them.

You could have an open day and invite RE teachers/Drama teachers.

You could also offer workshops for Schools where the Director/Actors could come in before the play and take a Drama Workshop.

Ensure teachers must stay with pupils at all times.

See Appendix 12, 13 and 14 for Educational information and ideas.

## 9. HOW DO I GET A CAST?

You must liaise with your Director who will lead the recruiting of the cast. The majority of your cast will be drawn from your local community. The best way to get them is to:

- Contact your local churches and try to recruit via them (by sending posters, doing announcements, doing presentations).
- Contact Amateur acting groups (there is a website run by The Scottish Community Drama Association [www.scda.org.uk](http://www.scda.org.uk) which will give addresses of groups in different areas all over Scotland).
- Get an article in your local papers that you are looking for actors (put a contact number for people to contact you on as the papers often miss this out!)
- Get friends involved.
- Once the cast starts coming, encourage them every week to look for potential cast in their own circle of friends. That is how your cast grows fastest!

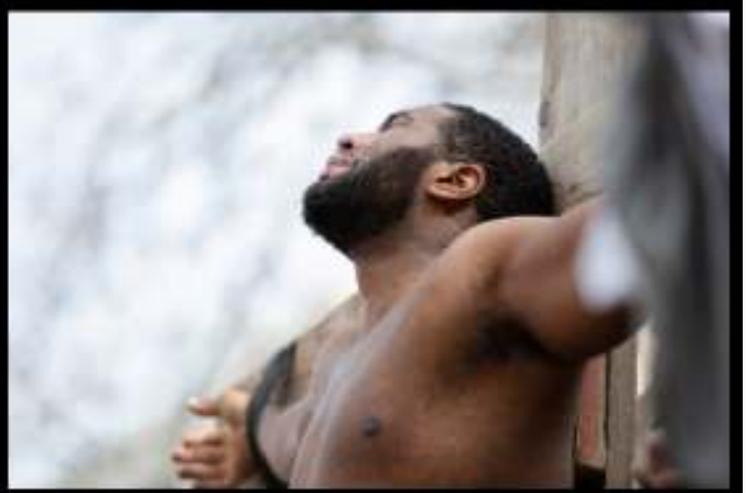
The professionals involved in the cast are the actor playing Jesus and the understudy who also plays Judas or The Narrator. Your Director should contact local Actors Agencies (see below). Also contact the main drama Schools – Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama ([www.rsamd.ac.uk](http://www.rsamd.ac.uk)) or Queen Margaret University College ([www.qmuc.ac.uk](http://www.qmuc.ac.uk)) Both are paid. We recommend that they join the cast from the start, especially Jesus. However, you can bring the understudy in 2-3 months into rehearsals as you are paying them a lesser fee.

You should audition for these roles. The audition will be led by the Director with the Producer present. When auditioning, have the actors prepare two speeches – one Classical and one modern. Have them or their Agents send a CV with photo.

At the audition, have them try out some of the script of the play and try different ways of them saying it if you feel the actor has potential. Don't waste time if you know they are not right from the beginning.

If you like a couple of actors, call them for a "recall" audition onsite to see how they use the area. Send them a piece of text from the script to memorise and try that onsite being done in different styles (eg. With more energy, angry, jovial etc)

Once you decide on your actor, if they are with an agent, contact the agent direct to confirm details. They will contact the actor. If the actor doesn't have an agent, then contact them direct. A letter of agreement (see appendix) should be sent with a rehearsal schedule and the terms of employment.



## 10. WHAT DO I DO AT REHEARSALS?

This is for the Director of the play to decide how they will run rehearsals but some tips:

- a rehearsal schedule should be agreed on and printed ready for first rehearsal so that the cast know what they are committing to (See Appendix 6 for Rehearsal Schedule from Hornchurch 2020 and Appendix 17 for Rehearsal Schedule from Edinburgh 2005).
- get cast details when they first arrive (See Appendix 18 for form from Edinburgh 2005).
- scripts should be agreed on and copied ready for cast by 3rd rehearsal latest
- it is a good idea to have the Producer at the first rehearsal to chat to the cast about the ideas for the production and generally enthuse!
- The first few rehearsals are about getting to know the cast, so a lot of get to know you and improvisation games are a good idea. However, I recommend that you also do some text work as the cast get quickly frustrated if not working on the play itself.
- If you are doing the full production, then I tend to break up the reading over a few weeks as it becomes too tedious to try to read it all in one week.
- Doing a reading helps you with casting but remember that a lot of people are not confident with reading and you may have some people who suffer from dyslexia. I always precede a reading with an announcement not to worry about reading as I don't cast from that. Some people may come up to you privately and tell you about dyslexia, others will simply refuse to read. Don't embarrass them in front of others, simply accept that and have a quiet word after to ask why they don't want to read.
- Always check to see who doesn't want a speaking role at all. I always have a quiet word with them after a rehearsal again to check why. It may just be fear, in which case, it is my job to help them with that – some gentle persuasion may work, but never force.
- Announce casting and update each week as you progress (See Appendix 19 for basic cast list from Edinburgh in 2005 and Appendix for a summary of scenes and characters from Hornchurch in 2020),
- do badges with the character name early on in rehearsal so that people know who each person is,
- If you have done the production before, then it is a good idea to allocate new people a buddy (someone who has done the play before and who will keep them right during rehearsals) straight away,
- Find out who is a first aider at rehearsals and take note,
- Encourage actors to do research from read books, internet, movies. (See Appendix 21 and 22 for character notes and basic research).

Co-directors (very useful if you can have one)

- do warm-ups (breaking the ice type games),

- rehearse children,
- rehearse finer details of market scene/triumphal entry/trial scene/walk to cross,
- can choreograph and rehearse fight scene if trained ensure the animals are “rehearsed” ie. the actors and animals have had time to rehearse their scenes with sound etc,
- act as production manager – overseeing practical aspects and being the point of contact,
- rehearse on other sites as and when required.

### Cast/Rehearsals

- Give out general acting notes that can be useful (see next section)
- If a “surviving this play” note has been done, then that is a great handout. Encourage your actors to write one after the first production which can be used for subsequent productions

### Rehearsals should comprise of:

- Welcome to new people (always get them to complete a contact sheet at their first rehearsal which should be collected. (See Appendix 18)
- Notices
- I have always given birthday cards out or special occasion cards if you know of an occasion. This builds a sense of community.
- Warmup games especially initially as the cast are getting to know each other
- Improvisation in the early stages of rehearsal is very useful to help the cast gain confidence in acting, try out different characters, get used to improvising the more general scenes like the market scene and also is a great tool to help the Director cast the play
- In Community Theatre, we don’t tend to audition for the roles as that can be quite terrifying. Best to cast from watching people in rehearsal and in the readings
- If you have not done the play before or there are changes, always do a read through of the play. Simply sitting and reading through the play. If you are doing the full four hour version, best to do a read through in several rehearsals as it will be too tedious to do it in one go!
- Scene rehearsals. Up to the Director as to how they split the rehearsals and the way they work. There are several methods for this:
  - you can rehearse a scene, give notes at the end of the scene then rehearse it again
  - you can rehearse a scene and give notes, stop and start as you are working on it and then rehearse it again
  - you can rehearse a few scenes, give notes and leave to when you next get to that scene.

- I tend to do a mix of the above, depending on what is needed at the time. It is important that you don't over rehearse one scene unless absolutely needed, as the cast get very bored.
- Ensure that you only call those needed for the scenes you are working on and update your cast each week with a reminder or any changes.
- Ensure you have a separate rehearsal for the Cross with the Engineer or creator of the cross to ensure that all safety procedures are adhered to. Have all the actors who will be raising and lowering the cross at that rehearsal. Do it first with no-one on the cross, then use the actors. We have a safety procedure that if the actor playing Jesus says "no" at any time (as that word isn't in the script), then something is wrong and you need to get him down. The sound company should also be made aware of this as should the stage manager to ensure that all mics are switched off when the cross is being raised or lowered in the case of this happening, to allow the issue to be sorted. We always have a spare costume that goes along with the sound company in case they need to go onsite during the performance (it happens more than you think!)
- If you are using vehicles to get around the estate with actors or props, then you should have a rehearsal to ensure there are no timing problems with that or issues like blocked routes and ensure all users of the site are informed so that no routes are blocked.
- If using animals, then you should have separate rehearsals for them or at least set aside time to get actors used to them and animals used to actors and sound. NB Horses can get spooked by the sound, so important that they are taken to the site and hear the music if applicable and speaking through mics.
- There should be separate children's rehearsals or time set aside to rehearse the children. See later section on child protection.
- Do a children's rota for acting in performance and ensure it is posted and confirmed each day. Also that the actor playing Jesus knows who is on each day for performances.
- If you are having any stage fighting, ensure that is rehearsed separately and the more complex the fight, the more the actors should rehearse that. There are professional Fight Directors, but they can be expensive. Most professional actors have done basic stage fighting and can work out a simple routine with those involved. Keep it simple and SAFE!

(See Appendix 20 for detailed acting notes which can be given out to casts).



"I was moved to tears by the Gethsemane scene. As a psychological drama it was fascinating. The music and lighting made all the difference. Operatic in its scale. We were emotionally shattering watching the performance. The cast must be totally exhausted, but thank you for performing "The Passion"."

## 11. WORKING WITH CHILDREN?

Children in the cast play a vital part, but it is recognised that there are many issues surrounding children. You must create a Child Protection Policy and have a named person in charge of Child Protection. (See Appendix 23 for policy from Leicester in 2013 and Appendix 24 from Edinburgh in 2005).

- Give a child protection talk to adults and children alike.
- The main rule is that no adult should ever be alone with a child.
- Talk children through Jesus' blood makeup, let them see it being done if needed as they often are a bit scared.
- Have 2 or 3 separate children's rehearsals where you work with them separately.
- Depending upon your policy, children can come to rehearsals at other times but we suggest they are either accompanied by their parents or you have a person whose duty is to be in charge of children (like a chaperone) at rehearsals and that person **MUST BE POLICE CHECKED**.
- Have a children's rota for acting and announce each morning.
- Children should have separate dressing area from adults.
- If you are doing the Nativity, have 2 babies on a rota. Get the mother to bring the babies to meet the actors who will be handling them to ensure she is happy with the actors and gives any tips on how her baby likes to be handled. The mother should arrive onset no less than 15 mins before the play starts each day and be ready to hand her baby to the actor and then take the baby away after. The baby should always be in a white jumpsuit to ensure they are warm enough. They will be wrapped in white muslin also.



## 12. WHAT ABOUT A SET?

The set should be kept simple and safe. If structures are needed to be built and will have actors using them, then you should have safety certificates (easy enough to have a builder do that). Set decoration doesn't need certificates but everything should be tested to ensure it is safe and won't endanger the general public or the actors. Try to use your natural surroundings where possible. Any set built or material used should be flame proofed (you can buy spray like Protexit from Lighting Suppliers).

Ensure any set built doesn't obscure the acting from the audience and there are clear sight lines.

If using private land, do a safety check on the grass and general grounds, removing any rubble that might cause trip injuries, filling in any pot holes, killing and clearing any nettles. (Be aware of vegetation - in one production an audience member pointed out that there were poisonous plants growing in an area used by the cast!)

Wood chip or bark can be put down to minimise slipping problems in areas. Although it isn't a good idea if making a path up a hill, better to cut "steps" into the ground and then cover with bark chippings. Always think about what that area might be like if it rained.

If doing a "walking on the water" scene, that can be built with scaffolding built into the base mud/rock and a wooden platform just under the water line. However, that walkway must be cleared away at the end of the run as the wood would rot otherwise, it is also essential for the walkway to be cleared of any moss or algae that makes it slippery between performances.

### *Ground preparation*

If using portaloos and portakabins, you might want to consider covering them up from public view by Hessian coverings between poles to shield them. just makes it look better. This must be done by the Tech rehearsal. Hessian can be used to cover over areas that you want hidden, or open windows, doors, hiding actors etc but if for hiding actors, ensure you double it over as it can be quite see through.

### *Set*

We tend to have in the full version:

1. Nativity Scene has an inn, stable, 2 pillars (ours are made out of polystyrene) for the Temple. We also have a variety of stalls, manger but not many props.

2. Baptism – water.
3. Temptation – we built a few platforms into hilly ground to allow actors to stand on them but they must be safe!
4. Market place – we have a small pier to tie up a boat, market stalls covered with Hessian, material to sell, fruit and veg (no bananas as they didn't have them!), pots, horses, animals. We also create a temple by having 3 pillars again and tree stumps for the priests to sit on. Some tables and a small home for Lazarus. A well for Samaria and on private land, we have dug a hole (shored up inside to make safe) for a child to be hidden inside. There is a small mound built up over that with a hole in the middle to allow the child to hand up the bread for the Feeding of the 5000 (one of the tricks!)
5. Last Supper – a long table and 13 tree stumps or cushions for disciples to sit at. Goblets and plates with food and drink on.
6. Gethsemane – great if you have a natural wooded area. We also have built a stream in the past and rocks to sit on.
7. Trial by Sanhedrin – nothing required.
8. Pilates Palace – we have created a large platform built out from a hill (this was professionally built to take actors weight) but you can simply have a throne type chair.
9. Crucifixion – try for 3 crosses if you can but if you can only get one, you can still have the thieves' conversation but staged as if they are being arrested by the Soldiers and shouting up at Jesus as they are taken away. (Remember, after the crucifixion, you need to get the actor off and changed VERY fast, so you need a place to do that and helpers).
10. See Appendix 25 for notes on building the cross. You will also find lots of help and examples on the Passion Trust website in the extensive 'Resources' section.
11. Resurrection – We were very fortunate to have an ice house in Dundas already built into the land, but we have also built a tomb with hay bales and covered it over with a back entrance for Jesus to escape from. We have also used existing statues in public parks.

12.



"The children were very well engaged and entertained. The performance was perfect for our curriculum. They enjoyed the story and singing and they kept looking at me knowingly because they had already heard the Easter story the day before and they were excited to learn about it in a different way."

Ascension – nothing required but great if you can use a place of height for Jesus to disappear.

### *Set up and Pack down*

#### **Set up**

The set should be created or brought out of storage and in place (if a private estate) 3 weeks before the first production. If on public land, then it must be put in place the day before and taken down as you finish the scene or by the end of the day (depends on what security risks you have).

Safety checks must be completed on all set

#### **During performance**

Safety checks made each day especially on the Cross and ensuring there is no damage to platforms that actors may be standing on etc.

#### **Post-performance**

All the set must be taken down and stored carefully to ensure that it won't rot or be knocked about in storage that could cause serious damage. A place that is watertight and dry is essential for storage.

### 13. WHAT PROPS WILL I NEED?

Your Stage Manager should read the script thoroughly and working alongside the Director, decide on props that will be needed. Create a Props list (See Appendix) Keep it simple. Ask the cast for any that they might have (baskets etc) but if you are borrowing, then keep a note of who gave what, so that it can be returned at the end of the play.

Once a list of props is made, then the Stage Manager will co-ordinate getting those props into rehearsal when needed, on site for the performances and stored or returned when the play is over.

See the Stage Manager section for more detailed notes on props and setting.



“I found the whole experience exciting, emotional and spiritually uplifting and compelling.”

## 14. WHAT COSTUMES WILL I NEED?

You need a Costume Designer/Co-ordinator who will be in charge of costumes from the beginning. You may also have a team of Costume people who make/maintain the costumes pre, during and post run. You should at least have a Wardrobe Mistress (could be the Co-ordinator) onsite at all performances and a few rehearsals before the Dress Rehearsal. The costume Co-ordinator then needs to find people who are willing to make costumes. There are a number of costumes being used by the Dundas and Easter play productions and they could be loaned out to help a new play get off the ground. However, it is advisable if the production has a long term plan, to create your own costumes.

Repairing, replacing and washing should be the responsibility of the hirer/borrower if you are hiring out. Costume hire stores don't always expect you to wash costumes but do expect a good state of repair. Loaning out existing costumes should be accompanied by an inventory and agreement to wash and repair.

### *Set up and Pack down*

The Co-ordinator meets with the Director to establish the vision for costumes and the cast list to determine how many costumes and what look the production will have. It is important to do Costume Research

If using last year's costumes, then ensure they are in a fit state (no mould etc) on them and any repairs done

If hiring any or borrowing costumes, keep a note of what is being borrowed and from where so that accurate returns are made. Can be a costly mistake to lose a costume!

The Co-ordinator is given a budget by the Producers and must keep them posted on expenditure.

Each cast member should be measured for their costume (See Appendix 27 for a useful form).

Costumes are then made, bought, borrowed or hired and fitted at different rehearsals and the Director approves each one. You can do this by having a separate rehearsal with a costume lineup where the Designer and Director discuss each costume and any changes needed. When making costumes, make them roomy enough to fit all sizes and have space for warm clothes that the actors may want to wear underneath

Ensure there are spare costumes available for helpers (horse handlers, sound people) Dark coloured blankets are useful in case of cold weather.

The final rehearsal before the show is called the Dress Rehearsal and is the one where all the actors wear full costume as if it was a performance. It is useful if they have worn the costumes for a few rehearsals before so that any problems can be identified earlier. Last minute changes are made at this rehearsal.



### **During the show**

The Wardrobe Mistress is responsible for helping cast get into costume and that any checks are made to ensure no jewellery, t-shirts etc. Continuity is important.

It is a good idea if you can have access during the run onsite to a sewing machine as inevitably there are repairs to be done.

Any repairs or washing is done by the Wardrobe department - checking with the actors

There should be two Resurrection costumes in case one gets lost or ripped/not dry in time. For instance, we wash the white resurrection costume each night and ensure it is dried and back in time for the actor the next day. Be careful of shrinking it though!

The Wardrobe department may be involved in helping with quick changes during the show (eg. Mary and Jesus).

## **Post show**

Ensure all costumes are returned to the Wardrobe personnel where they are boxed or bagged up (we suggest you don't use black bags as it is too easy to throw them out by mistake) and labelled for washing (keeping colours together, costumes for dry cleaning, costumes that are not washed etc). You can buy cheap, sturdy bags at dry cleaners or Ikea.

If washing is farmed out to a variety of people, number the labels and make a tear off slip with the label number and contact number of the washer, so you can chase up if needed!

When all costumes are washed and dried, they should be boxed up and stored in a dry environment.

Any hires are returned.

## ***Armour and Roman Soldiers***

There are historical re-enactment societies that specialise in Roman centurions, many of whom are willing to be involved in Passion Plays. You can find information about some of these by contacting the Passion Trust. There are also videos, photographs and advice for making crosses from them on our website. It may be worthwhile having armour made for all Scottish productions. You will need:

- 3 Roman Helmets (one with plume for Centurian)
- Breast plate and Backplate for Centurian
- 3 Swords and Scabbards
- 2 leather stripped belts
- 2 Poleaxe spears
- 6 pins for breastplate (keep separate and ensure returned)

## ***What makeup will I need?***

You don't really need makeup, just ensure that actors are dirtied by using mud and dirt simply to take the edge off! Watch they don't go overboard though and not all actors need it!

The main thing that you need is makeup to create the lashes on Jesus' back. This should be done first thing in the morning and takes at least one hour to create (an early call for him!)

The lashes are best created by:

- using plain kitchen roll
- latex glue (available from A&A Studios in Edinburgh)

- Barrier cream (can be a simple moisturiser to protect his skin)
- Stage makeup for bruising effect and red lashes
- Stage blood for the fresh blood (available from Pigs might fly) or you can make your own (check the internet on how to do that – although it tends to stain)

If doing the 3 crosses, then the thieves also need fresh blood and some scarring but not much. The fresh blood is put on their wrists and feet at the time of them going on the crosses

If using a body double for Jesus taking him off the cross and on a stretcher, we usually have one hand loose so the audience see what they think is his arm. It also needs blood on the wrist.

### Jesus lashes:

The actor should be in his loin cloth first and have his radio mic already attached as you put the makeup over the mic lead. The lash effect is created by:

- applying barrier cream to his back thinly,
- tearing strips of around 1" maximum width of kitchen roll and gluing them to his back in random lash effect (don't do too many or it gets ridiculous),
- very carefully with a sharp pair of scissors (medical ones are best as they have a protective part where you will connect with his skin!), cut a hole in the middle of the strips and tear, so that it looks like skin,
- cream flesh coloured foundation needs that matches the actors skin tone goes all over the back to merge the strips in so they look like flesh,
- then using carmine and deep red/purple, paint on the skin the area you have just exposed in the middle of the strips, so it now looks like weals and torn skin. You can also do some random red stripes,
- powder gently over all to set the makeup.

When the actor is at Pilate and is sentenced to be flogged, he takes off his costume and fresh blood is applied from a bottle to the wounds so that it drips down his back and looks like he has just been flogged! Simple and very effective!!! Just time consuming. Our advice – have someone artistic do this, looks much better!



## 15. DO I NEED ANIMALS?

Animals can be a great addition to the play but have their own issues! If you are on private land, it again is easier to bring in animals. Strictly speaking you should send a letter to the City Vet stating you are doing a play with (specify the animals) and detailing what they will be doing, how they will be cared for and where they go at the end of each performance. Other issues:

- animal rehearsals should be held at least one week beforehand
- horses should be “bomb trained” which means that they don’t frighten at the music etc
- horse handlers need costumes
- ensure that anyone bringing animals knows the correct times to bring them each day for performance and rehearsal
- there should be wipes in the dressing rooms for actors and in production cabin for anyone handling animals especially,
- safety requires that all horse riders wear safety hats, so we build the costume hats around safety hats which are borrowed. If Pilate was to ride a horse, then he would need a Roman helmet or sign a disclaimer saying he was happy to ride without protection

Animal Requirements for full play:

Nativity:

- 3 horses (or camels)
- sheep in pen
- 2 pigeons
- can have cows in stable
- Donkey

Baptism – dove in Jesus bag to be released

Market:

- sheep/goats in pens
- horses if you want
- pigeons in basket for temple clearance
- Donkey for triumphal entry

Trials – horses for Pilate (although we don’t tend to use that now due to health and safety and the need to wear a riding hat).

## 16. WHAT ABOUT SOUND?

There are a number of Companies in Scotland who deal with such productions and a number of others who may have experience. It is important to check whether they have done any outdoor performance work and that they have the manpower to work on such a large project.

You should go out to tender (See Appendix 28 for example) to ensure you get the best financial deal. To do this, you need to have a script, an idea of how many radio mics you need (most large-scale productions use 15 mics and have a complex plot for swapping mics between actors), an idea of how many scenes and where they are to be. It is best to invite each company to do a walkthrough with the sound company to show them your area as the quote can be very dependent upon the area they need to cover with cables and sound points.

The sound control points should also be covered in some way (so either by a gazebo or a wooden hut) Depends on how many performances you are intending giving, we would recommend wooden huts and built to the sound company specification (they need a certain area and a window area). The huts need to be able to be locked if staying onsite (tends to be on private estate only as it is too risky to leave sound equipment overnight in a public place) This adds to your quote. You are responsible for providing security if needed and also for providing the huts or gazebos. (although you might find the sound company has wet weather provision and best to ask them to include that initially as it may save you having to provide it).

The Easter Play huts we used were 8ft x 6ft with door and window at front, and large bench directly under window. Window should be openable (preferably hinged from top) to allow the operator to hear from inside better but keeping everything dry! Will also need CO2 fire extinguishers (one per control point) which sound company may provide or may be cheaper if you can get hold of some. Not dry powder are not appropriate, except for power generators where they are necessary.

### Information that you need to go out in your tender letter

Dates of the production and timings of rehearsals beforehand. Ensure they meet with the Director to do a site visit and walkthrough. They may have suggestions with regards to speakers, sound control points etc

- We need (15) radio mics and 2 spare in case of problems. (at least one should be flesh coloured for Jesus) (You may need less than this).
- Batteries for mics and micropore/elastic to attach mics to actors should be provided by the Sound Company.

- The producing Company will provide huts for sound control points.
- Overnight security of the equipment is the responsibility of the Sound Company (can be discussed with the Producers).
- The Sound Company should have insurance for their equipment (See earlier mention of Insurance. The Producers do have Insurance for the play and equipment. A list of the equipment should be given to the Producers for their Insurance).
- The Stage Manager and Director will provide the Sound Company with a mic plot which should be checked by the Sound Company and rehearsed at the Technical Rehearsal (or before).
- The Producers will provide the Sound Company with a script. The Sound company should attend a rehearsal before the Technical to check out the movement of the actors.
- The Director of the play will be available to do a site visit to help the Sound Company provide an accurate quote to meet requirements for speakers and any changes.
- The Sound Company should provide their own method of communication between themselves (walkie talkies) The Producing Company will provide walkie talkies for their own production staff (Note: this may be part of the quote requested from the Sound Company).
- The minidisk with the music should have the titles of the music tracks on it to allow double checks to be made. A music cue sheet should be created to ensure all correct (See Appendix 29).
- For the Dundas play, we run the Technical rehearsal with actors in two parts. First and longest part is on the Saturday before the show and the second part is on the Sunday.
- The Sound Company must provide windshields for mics.
- There should be a Sound Company representative monitoring sound from out front.
- There will be a costume provided by the Producing Company to allow a sound person to go onstage to fix any problems during the play.
- The Director, SM and Producers will meet with the Sound Company to talk through timings, cues, music etc.
- The Sound Company must have the facility to make FOH announcements in case of an emergency.
- The Sound Company should provide their own fire equipment in case of fires caused by the sound equipment (see previous notes).



“I Loved that not only did you perform on the streets of the city centre, but that you actually SET it in Birmingham, using local landmarks etc. The use of modern day language brought the Bible to life and special mention to the actors for really capturing and expressing the humanity of the disciples.”

Other aspects that need to be covered in discussions:

- Requirement possibly for Sound company to apply for licences for use of radio mics in a specific location.
- find out who gives out mics each day and if they are checked.
- ensure Jesus mic is brought to him first thing in the morning (as he needs it fitted before makeup) and remember he is onsite 1 ½ hours before the production starts.
- Mic plot (See Appendix for example) should be created usually by the Stage Manager and Director and checked before technical rehearsal and rehearsed earlier. We now type a card and have the actors rehearse with the card first till we iron out any problems, then when set, laminate that card and attach to each mic pouch.
- Every mic should have a mic pouch which should be made by the costume department and is simply a pouch that can be tied round neck or waist of an actor. It should have a period look and not be too white!
- Cast should be briefed on sound (not walking in front of speakers, wait till music ends etc, use of mics; not speaking out of character ever, ensuring mic packs and ribbons are hidden; where to position mic on costume; rustling and wind awareness).
- Ensure sound company have their own walkie talkies or communication system.
- The production team need walkie talkies themselves to allow communication between Director, Producer, Head of Stewarding and Stage Manager at all times during the show.
- Put speakers in acting areas where possible so that voices and action are closer linked to ensure that there aren't "disembodied voices" coming from nowhere but all coming from where the audience can see the action.
- Ensure the mics for Joseph and Mary at Nativity are kept down until they are in sight with the donkey as this can be a clumsy set up. Any set up or offstage action should have mics off (at the sound control point, not by the actors).
- If doing the full version, we suggest that you tech the first half of the play on the Saturday before the show opens and the second half on the Sunday or whatever days are set aside for Tech (instead of doing all on one day).
- The Tech rehearsal is primarily for the Stage Manager and the Sound Company. Everyone else takes second place that day. It is an idea to stop after each scene and make sure everyone is happy with it before proceeding.
- Have windshields for mics – include this in your tender. These are small shields that minimise (they don't stop) the interference you get from the wind. Encourage your actors to be aware that if it is very windy, where possible, they should turn their head away from the direction of the wind. (they are not always aware that it is causing problems).

- Have sound person monitoring sound from out front if possible, that way they can adjust the volume.
- Have a costume always beside the sound company in case they have to go onsite to change a mic.
- Director, SM, Producers should meet with Sound Company and talk through the music, timings and cues especially if producing the play for the first time.
- Must have facility to make Front of House (FOH) announcements to the audience if the play is going to start late or you need to make an announcement. Ensure sound company are aware of the safety procedure for stopping the show from PA.
- One of the most common problems is that the sound company don't have mics up in time to hear the first words of every sentence. This should be stressed over and over!
- Another of the most common problems is that any music comes on abruptly and ends abruptly. Ensure all music is FADED in and out.
- You can put an echo on God and devils and angel.
- Ensure you have all sound effects (SFX) eg the flogging on minidisk and ready to go. Test the flogging volume (loud) and the sound of the cock crowing (quiet).

### *Set up and Pack down*

#### **Setup**

The sound Company will need to be onsite (if a private estate) to dig in cables and set up equipment at least 3 days (if doing the full version) before your Technical Rehearsal to ensure they are ready to start on the Tech. You should have the sound huts erected 2 weeks before they arrive. If doing one production in a public place, then they are usually the first there and may need a team of volunteers to help with set up and moving equipment between scenes. It isn't unusual to "leapfrog" sound desks and equipment from one area to another during the play as this will keep your costs down.

Electricity supplies need to be identified and/or generators for areas that don't have electricity. Be warned though generators are expensive, and it is essential that they are not noisy (however the quieter they are, the more expensive they can be).

All cables must be dug into the ground (if on private estate) or covered by plastic matting if audience are going to walk over any cables.

### **During performance**

The Sound company should be onsite checking all equipment and sound is working first thing.

Jesus' mic must be delivered to him first thing.

The actors should be given out their mics by the Sound company or by a responsible person.

The Sound company check in with the Stage Manager when first onsite and go over any issues.

Keep Jesus mic up when he is on the cross to allow us to hear laboured breathing (only when the cross is fully up) Take it out when he dies.

### **Post performance**

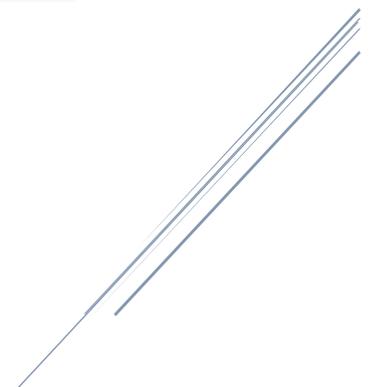
All mics are collected by Sound Company.

Sound huts are made secure if equipment staying overnight or equipment stowed away if being taken down (struck) every night.

Sound company representative should attend a post-show briefing straight after the show to take any notes from Producer/Director and also the final de-brief for the Show and give notes as to improvements for next year.



“It felt like we’d been present at Jesus’ crucifixion.”



## 17. PERFORMANCE PRACTICALITIES

So, we have all in place, what do we do for the Show?

### *Production Team*

It is important that you establish onsite space for the Producers, Director, Stage Manager, Department Heads to liaise. This space should be private if possible and quiet.

A space for props and costumes is also important.

A separate dressing area for the actor playing Jesus is also important

The cast should be split into different changing areas with separate areas for children.

### *Stage Manager*

Having an efficient Stage Manager (SM) is **essential** to the smooth running of the play. They are in discussions early on with the Producer and more specifically the Director. If your budget allows, or you have a volunteer, then that person should be at all rehearsals from the very beginning. If not, then bring them in around 6 weeks beforehand

- there should be an Deputy Stage Manager (this could be a volunteer) on the play from the start to take any notes, write moves in the script and to communicate to the SM for sound and others. This person would also be the liaison person for any ground staff (or estate staff if on private land) to do the smaller props/setting one week beforehand.
- Props should be onsite at least two weeks beforehand so the actors can rehearse.
- There should be 2 reliable props people for tech and all performances (at least one dedicated props person and can be supplemented by cast members helping).
- SM to create sheet of technical rehearsals, performances and contact telephone numbers to sound company, production team, estate and backstage workers by week 4 before production.
- SM to meet with production team, estate workers, safety officer, animal co-ordinator and sound company to check preparations etc by week 3 before production.
- SM does props check with Director, estate workers by week 2 before production.

- SM does cast lists for checking in each day
- SM does final check ins with all departments by week 1 before production.
- There should be a Tech meeting to go over sound and other technical details.
- SM to check with Director before end of lunch in case of any changes
- Need to ensure that there is always a supply of bin bags, tea, coffee, milk, biscuits, toilet rolls, paper towels in the production area and toile.
- Brush needed to clean the cabin during rehearsals.
- Any fake grass being used, for example, on the mound needs to be on earlier than dress rehearsal to give it time to grow so that it isn't too noticeably different.
- fires each day are lit by the estate or person in charge of the set/props. Ensure they are put out by the same people or that someone (not an actor is designated to extinguish them) Remind actors (especially children!) not to go near the fires.
- Ensure that there is a bread order put in or collected each day for the feeding of the 5000. this can be provided by a bakery. You also need one unleavened bread for the Last Supper (can use a large naan bread).
- cast/crew meal forms need to be filled in if there are options and collected. Try to ensure that the cast are not collecting lunch in costume, it ruins the effect!
- ensure safety checks have been done each day.
- preset water for drinking for Jesus (check with actor where he wants it)

## **Setup**

Stage Manager meets with Director to discuss script and any issues. Walks site with Director and others.

Checks Safety Policy and adds/changes anything they might see.

Works with actors on getting them used to mic plot, props and any practical issues they might have.

Can be used as the prompter in rehearsals (unless there is someone else to do that. Note: we strongly suggest that you state there are no prompts in a performance.)

Keeps a list of any equipment/costume/armour etc that has been hired.

## **During Performance**

Usually the first to arrive (along with Sound), the SM and DSM/helpers get the kettle on! Then they set up any props and set that need to be done that day and ensure that they follow their checklist.

Checking in with the Director/Producers when they are onsite and the lead actor to determine what needs to be done or any notes.

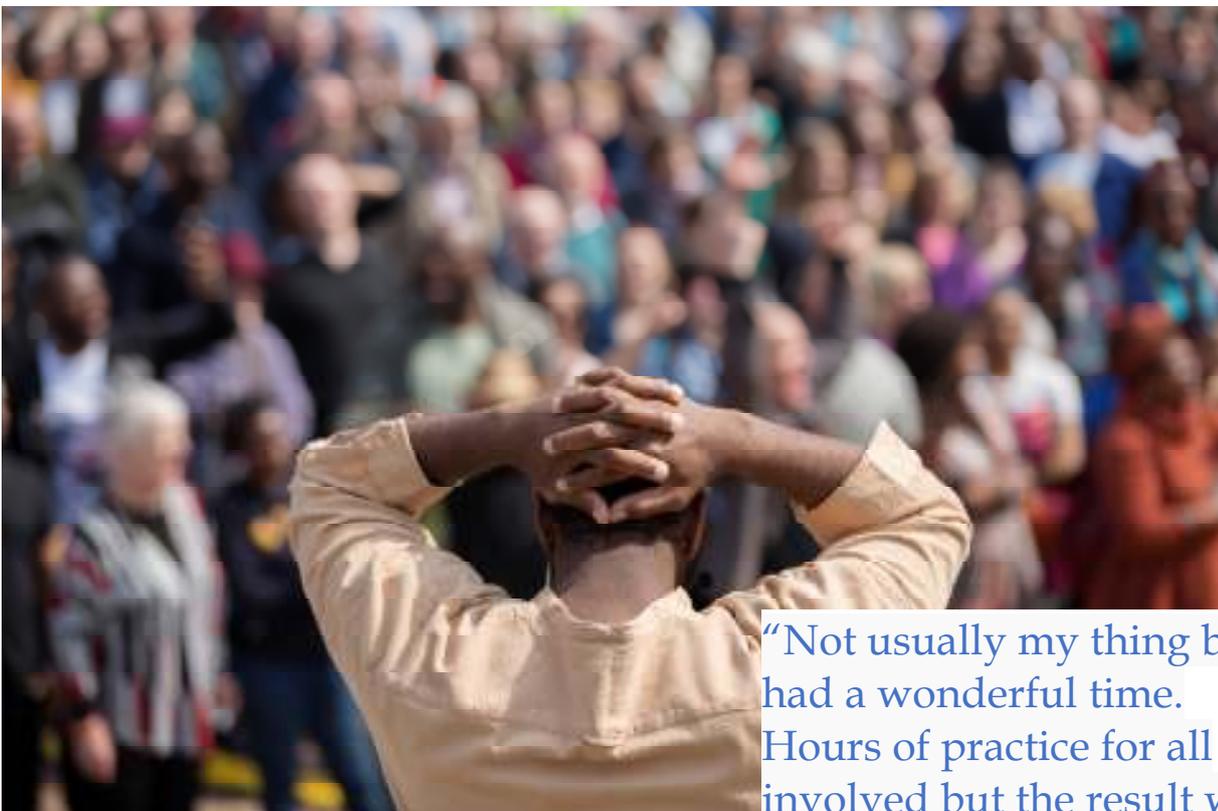
A well-earned cup of coffee before the performance starts!

Attends the cast briefing led by the Director who gives the SM time for their notes to be given to the cast.

When clearance is given by the Director to start the show, the SM is in charge of the production from that moment on. If the Director or Producers have any notes or concerns, they should be written down and given as notes at the end of the show (or the first appropriate time) Under no circumstances should the SM be interrupted during the show unless it is a Safety incident.

During the show, and dependent upon how the SM and Sound Company choose to work, the SM will cue the show (ie they tell the sound company which mic to bring up and when) You can also give "Standby cues" ½ page before eg. "standby mics 12,13, 14" so everyone is ready.

Any set and props that need struck after each scene is done by the DSM.



"Not usually my thing but had a wonderful time. Hours of practice for all involved but the result was super. The choir was excellent too, very uplifting. Well done everyone!"

Some prop issues that need to be considered:

- ensure blood is up at cross (for thieves and Jesus) and Pilates area (2 sets) early on.
- If doing multiple performances, Jesus costumes (especially the whites) are brought back and given to wardrobe mistress for washing and drying and is brought back each morning to actors dressing room (note – wash bloody costumes separate from whites and low temperature so that they don't shrink).
- shroud cloths (2) should be folded and put in an easy place to be seen inside the tomb.
- ensure Cleopas has bread in his bag for Emmaus each day.
- the purple cloth is preset at Pilates and then brought back from either there or cross each day also bring back Jesus robe which is left at Pilates each day.
- stone is always away from tomb as audience go up and guarded by a steward.
- the crosses are always down as the audience pass and the central cross raised after that scene so it is up as audience leave.
- all props must be onsite for tech rehearsal.
- disciples need food to take back from Samaria.
- twigs for Mary to gather at nativity.
- costume mistress to be there to help Mary get bump in place for donkey ride.
- fake baby preset in stall (this is used in place of the real baby when Joseph and Mary have to run – a safety aspect).
- table for matthew the tax collector in the market place.
- cast dress the market place as they have time to do this.
- judas needs a pouch for money.
- needs to be water in the well if you are doing the Samaritan scene.
- ensure cast know to be careful with props and not break them (crooks and spears especially).
- Jesus needs a bag for dove and bread in his bag at same time.
- tell actors that props should NEVER be moved.
- lots of fruit and veg/colour on stalls (but warn cast not to eat it all – becomes very expensive!).
- Jesus needs a stick and wood to whittle at Samaritan well.
- There should be bread in the little boys basket at feeding of 5000.
- Actors are responsible for setting their own water bottles but check to see where the actor playing Jesus wants his set and ensure they are set each day.
- If there is a pin for the cross hinge, it must be safe, clean and greased (not too much) .
- There should be ladders for the thieves to get up and down the crosses.
- Ensure the stretcher is safe to carry an actor.
- Check the grounds for pot holes.

- Ensure the bread is ordered for Feeding of 5000 (if not using a pre-dug hole for this scene, the actors simply always have the bread in their baskets but it is covered until they need it).

### **Post Show**

Any props are collected and packed away each night or made ready for the next performance.

The SM attends the debrief meeting after each show to go over any notes with the Director/Producers and any action taken.

Ensure everything is made secure for the next days' performance.

Ensures the weaponry is stored safely.

Leaves the script onsite in case of any accident to the SM which means the show can still be cued.

After the run, all props are collected and stored safely for the next year.

Ensure that all portakabins and changing areas/storage areas are clean and any lost property is collected.

Anything that has been hired (eg the armour) is returned by the SM or they ensure it has been returned.



## 18. WHAT ABOUT HEALTH AND SAFETY?

### *Setup*

A Health and Safety Policy should be written (see Appendix 31 and 32 for examples from Edinburgh in 2005 and Dundas in 2006). A great guide to read is what is called The Purple Book which is a Government publication available from HMSO about Events Safety Management (Events Safety Guide).

Every organisation should read this guide and then can use the Appendix Policies as a template to create their own Safety Policy (it will be slightly different with each venue).

You must create a Risk Assessment for each area that the public will be in and a generic one for the whole event (your licensing department in the local council can help you with that and it is a good idea to get them to do a walkthrough with you and have them point out the risks they see. By getting them onboard and their advice early, you get them on your side and it can sometimes make things go smoothly with that department who ultimately give you your performing licence).

The council will have a number of forms for booking which kick off their Health and Safety procedures.

You should prepare early on a route plan marked with facilities (toilets etc), acting areas, audience areas and audience flow of movement (See Appendix 33).

### *Stewards*

You should recruit a Head Steward (can be your Health and Safety Co-ordinator). This person is responsible for helping to recruit Stewards, briefing the Stewards and co-ordinating any rotas.

The Safety of the Audience is extremely important and due consideration should be given also to ensuring there are facilities and space for less able-bodied audience members to see the play safely and securely.

It may be that you also have some deaf people in the audience especially if you are having a signed performance, due consideration should also be given to them and work with the Director, Interpreter and Stage Manager to ensure the best place for the Interpreter is found and for the deaf people in the audience to see the play and Interpreter.

- a plan should be made or notes sent to the Head Steward for where stewards should NOT be and also any key points that we think need stewarding attention
- if doing the longer version, stewards need to stay on set at lunchtime to ensure audience not going onto set and they put any stage fires out

- stewards ensure the audience are kept back a bit from the tomb entrance
- At Dundas we let audience leave the walled garden at the beginning. If they want to leave before the walk to the cross that is fine. Also don't hold the audience back from the action, let them go. This is to alleviate any blockage caused by a thousand people trying to get through one gate!
- when Jesus has passed the first gate (next to sound hut) outside walled garden, the audience can be let out that gate but not before as it will obstruct the play action

### During Show:

- Report to Head Steward for duties that day
- welcome the audience
- help with car parking if required
- hand out programmes (can be done by others)
- guide the audience to the starting areas
- guide the audience to the different scenes
- ensure the safety of audience is top priority at all times
- stop anyone who might try to interrupt the play
- help less able-bodied audience members
- keep the set safe when not being used especially in a public place and ensure nobody tries to destroy or take props.



“The script was an absolute masterpiece – I’ve been using parts in Easter sermons; The words keep going around my head – and out of my mouth.”

**Post Show:**

- ensure audience leave the premises safely
- help with tidying up of litter etc
- check in with Head Steward if required

**Traffic Control**

If you are in a private estate, then this needs to be taken into consideration and plans put in place for:

- flow of traffic entering the grounds
- where coaches go
- car parking
- flow of traffic leaving the grounds

If you are providing car parking then put someone in charge of the car park. It is an idea also to put toilets in the car park.

If you are in a public place, then this doesn't really apply but your staff, actors and crew will need to know where to park. The Production team need a place close by and easily accessible as there are often last-minute dashes! It is an idea to produce car passes, so that you can control who is parking.

For both cases, you should notify the Police Department about your production dates and discuss any issues. You can ask for Traffic Wardens to help direct traffic (we use this at Dundas).

***First Aid***

See the Policy for details, but depending on your size of audience, this dictates what you need for First Aid. You can also be guided by the Council if a public space. St Andrews provides volunteers but requires a donation. You should take note of any trained (and current) First Aiders in the cast and crew and who can do what. Just because you have a Doctor in the cast doesn't mean you are covered as they are not supposed to intervene.

You may want to inform the St Andrews that an event is taking place and the best route for an ambulance.

The procedure for calling an ambulance is - the first aider onsite calls an Ambulance and then informs the Stage Manager and Head of Safety who then inform the Producer and Director.

## *Toilets*

If you are in a public place, simply know where the nearest facilities are and ensure your stewards know this information to pass onto audience. You can print it in the programme

If in a private area, you may need to hire in portaloos and make sure that they are clearly signed for the audience (one of the Health and Safety requirements is clear signage).

Ensure you have someone to clean them on a regular basis.

## *Other Issues*

### Catering

You need to cater for the cast and crew during the performances as it can be a long time without food.

We always make sure that onsite are facilities for hot water, coffee, tea and biscuits for onsite rehearsals. It can be very cold work!

You may want to consider bringing in a catering company to provide lunch facilities for the audience such as burgers or sandwiches. Check the Health and Safety policy for food handling etc.

Note, we have found it best over the years not to have this open before or during the show but only open at lunchtime. Also check where you site the van as the generator can make a loud noise which can interrupt your production.

At Dundas, we provide the cast with lunch from these caterers and have developed an order method whereby the actors put in their orders for the week and their name. The Catering Company prepares lunches in separate packs and delivers to the actors lunch area each day. (note the stage crew collect their own just before the play breaks for lunch)

The Easter play has a volunteer catering team who prepare hot soup and rolls with a Mars Bar for energy and that is provided for lunch

Both at no cost to the actors and volunteers, they are giving up a lot of their time and it is the least you can do for them in return!

If on public property, you may find there are already ice cream vans and this needs careful negotiating to have them move out of acting areas if that is their patch! Also

to have them switch off their generators during the performance. However, they all have licences that can be revoked by the Council, so don't let them threaten you!

#### Security Passes (See Appendix 36)

It is a good idea to have all Production Team issued with passes, the Cast don't need passes, but you should have a list of their names. Any cars can also have passes



“First Class! Thought provoking and challenging is the best way. I did not want it to end. Congratulations to all!”

## 19. SO WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENS ON THE DAY?

Well, for one thing you all need a calm head and Spirit! If everyone knows their own area, responsibilities and who is in charge, it will all go like clockwork!

The Stage Manager is the person who is overall in charge on the day of performance and reports to the Producer and Director. A timetable is a useful thing to adhere to especially if you have a lot of people to oversee. Department heads should all check in with the Stage Manager first thing on the day so they know you are there and can get any last minute notes.

An example of the day:

- Stage Manager and crew arrive onset – GET THE COFFEE ON!!!!
- Sound crew arrive (may have arrived earlier)
- Producer and Director arrive
- Dept heads report as they arrive to SM
- Set is checked and dressed with props
- Actors start arriving and get into costumes
- Actors preset any costume changes or personal props they need (and water for themselves)
- Box office and programme sellers arrive
- 30 mins before the production, Director gathers cast and gives notes
- Director and SM liaise with Producer to give go ahead to start
- Play begins and is run by the SM (do not give notes during the play to anyone!)
- If there is a lunchbreak, actors to dressing rooms, rest to Production area. Notes can be given then
- Play finishes
- Debrief meeting with Producer, Director, SM, Sound and Technical at the end of the play
- Props and costumes reset for next day and stored securely

When the run is finished, all costumes gathered for washing, props and set for storage or return and post production meetings held.

**EPILOGUE: What Next?**

HAVE A PARTY! REST! THANK GOD! AND....

DO IT ALL AGAIN!!!!!!!!!!!!