



# ADC Theatre Publicity Guide

Last updated August 2010

## I. Introduction

There are no hard and fast rules for how to publicise your show, but getting people to come to your show depends on creating a 'buzz' about it so they are interested and want to see it. The Publicist (or producer) should work closely with the Producer, Director and design team, together coming up with a striking and memorable concept that can be used to portray your production.

Every show has at least one **unique selling point** (USP), and this/these should be exploited: create a theme for media. Use several themes to appeal to different audiences. You will need to discuss the show's themes with you director and pick up on one or two to use in selling your show.

There are plenty of people about to give advice: the ADC Management are on hand from 11am Monday to Saturday. (Remember that they do get days off, so don't leave contacting them to the latest possible time!) If you're an Amateur Dramatic Club Show talk to the Committee publicist, Richard Bates. Most other groups have a publicist to give advice.

### **ADC Theatre contacts:**

Ben Hosford (Production Manager – your main liaison in all cases): [ben@adctheatre.com](mailto:ben@adctheatre.com)

Richard Bates (Marketing and Bar Manager): [richard@adctheatre.com](mailto:richard@adctheatre.com)

Phil Norris (Theatre Manager): [phil@adctheatre.com](mailto:phil@adctheatre.com)

### **a) The role of publicist**

Many smaller shows do not have publicists – the producer tends to do all the publicity. However, try as hard as you can to find someone, as publicity is a big task and the producer has many other jobs to do. Publicists need no experience, just enthusiasm, and plenty of friends/cast members to help out.

The Publicist is then responsible for masterminding the publicity campaign and producing publicity material, based around this concept. They are also responsible for organising the distribution of publicity, (posting and flyering) and keeping the selling of the show at the forefront of everyone's minds.

### **b) Schedule**

1. **When you know you have a slot.** Submit your **brochure text and graphic**. Ben will tell you the deadline for these when he emails you after your show has been selected – **STICK TO THEM!** There's more information on your brochure text and graphic below.
2. **6 weeks in advance, or before the holiday if an early-term or major show.** Have a **publicity meeting** with Ben at the ADC. This is a really useful opportunity to talk through any ideas and queries and find out a bit more about doing a show at the ADC Theatre.

If your show is in weeks 1-5 you should make sure you meet Ben at the end of the term before so that you can get started over the holidays. If your show is week 6 or later then it's fine to have the publicity meeting at the beginning of term, unless you're a really big show (for example, the Panto or the Lent Term Musical) in which case it's a good idea to meet the term before.

3. **4 weeks in advance. Posters and flyers** – Your designs MUST be emailed to Ben at the ADC a minimum 4 weeks before the first night of your show. This is very important, as you need to allow time for alterations and printing. And the sooner you get them back, the sooner you can put them up!
4. **The Monday 2 weeks in advance. Press release** – You must send text and images to Ben by the Monday two weeks in advance of your show. This is an unbreakable deadline. If you don't send the press release in time it doesn't just make your show look bad – it means that local newspapers stop saving coverage for ADC shows because they're worried they will end up with blank space, meaning that other shows get less coverage.
5. **A week in advance. Programme** – Whatever happens, get this done a couple of days in advance. Do not turn up at the ADC with a nicely designed programme on a CD/USB stick an hour before the show is due to start wanting to print it out here – invariably we don't have the program you designed it in or the photocopier is broken! Plan ahead! Remember that Ben needs to approve it.

### c) Budget

You will need one. Wrangle with your producer for as much as possible and get them to give you a definite figure to work with. Your budget will ultimately define the avenues that are available to you to publicise your show, but don't let your budget dominate you. Think of ways around lack of money; for example, advertising in programmes, sponsorship on posters.

#### **Publicity ordering guidelines (figures are given are the maximum to be ordered, to avoid waste.)**

*Mainshow:* 500 posters, 5000 flyers. For flyers, this will suffice for having piles in the theatre and in town, and college pigeonholing. However, if you have something special planned for flyers such as getting bookmarks or going out flying in Cambridge, or having any sort of publicity stunt in the Grafton centre, launch party, college bar or similar, you could get 10,000.

*Lateshow:* 250 posters, 5000 flyers max. See above for details. There is no reason why a lateshow team should not shift as many flyers as a mainshow one, but in reality the cast and crew is often smaller.

*One-night-stand:* 100 posters, 0 flyers (you won't need flyers, and print 100 posters on the ADC photocopier. Speak to Ben if you're unsure how to go about this).

*Lent-term musical:* 1000 posters, 20,000 flyers. A two-week run hence the large numbers. It is usual for the entire cast and crew to flyer on the two weekends leading up to the show, and before the matinee on both Saturdays. This will pay off. Opportunities to sing at the Grafton centre/ Borders/ do other stunts in town, should not be overlooked.

*Panto:* 750 posters, 10,000 flyers. A two-week run can do with more than a normal mainshow, but in reality it is more difficult to get panto casts to flyer, as the show run falls entirely within term, hence the smaller amount than the Lent Term Musical.

#### **Things to remember when spending your budget:**

Don't always spend it all on posters and fliers

Remember to factor in your mailout (letters about your show to go to press and schools) if you do one (check with Ben how much yours will cost)

### d) Sponsorship

Sponsorship is a very good idea. You have to sell your show to potential sponsors just as you do to your potential audience and the media. Get advertising in your programme or offer to put their name on your poster – use examples of previous work, or show programmes similar to the one you're planning, and make sure you get their money up front. Sponsorship could allow you to put on a much better, glossier, well-presented show, it also forms town-student links.

You can also get payment in kind for props and set, in return for adverts in programmes.

Try forming links with restaurants and clubs, e.g. 7a Jesus Lane, Domino pizzas, The Junction, to get reduced entrance/meal price for people with programme/ticket. Check with Ben for details of businesses who have been open to sponsorship / programme advertising in the past.

This requires a lot of effort and must be planned well in advance. Most businesses will need a letter and personal visit before they'll part with any cash. They'll also need chasing for their artwork for programme advert or sponsorship on your publicity. It can be achieved, especially if your show sounds interesting and likely to pull in a crowd, so don't get discouraged too easily.

## 2. Brochure Text and Graphic

Your brochure blurb and graphic are also VERY important – this is your chance to reach 20,000 potential audience members! Do not underestimate how important this is and make sure you get them handed in on time!

Your blurb should be approximately 150 words selling the show. Don't give the end of the show away and make sure that reading it would make you want to go and see it (perhaps get some friends to give their opinions). It should not be overly intellectual or essay-like, but if you are doing something interesting and new you should say so – you shouldn't restrict it to just a synopsis. Be original and quirky in what you write. If it's over the top, we will edit up. Be aware that it will probably be edited anyway to give the brochure continuity. Don't include the names of anyone involved – they're not famous (yet!).

Now that the ADC Theatre brochure is printed in full colour, the choice of graphic for your show is more important than ever. The more striking your image the greater chance you have of a more prominent brochure entry and potentially a slot on the front cover. Please think carefully about the image(s) you supply.

Images downloaded from the internet are **almost never** suitable for use – they are simply too low resolution. The ideal resolution is 300dpi at the final size at which your image will be used. 72dpi images (e.g. those used on website sites) are very rarely adequate, but photographs taken with a reasonable digital camera are usually of acceptable resolution. Please be careful about potential copyright issues if supplying images from printed media (books, magazines, etc).

One source of good quality images online is [www.istockphoto.com](http://www.istockphoto.com). You don't need to download the final image yourself, you can simply give us the reference number for the image(s) you would like to use for your show's brochure entry and we'll obtain it for you.

Please avoid submitting images that are combination of a graphic with your show title – these are very difficult to incorporate into the brochure and you are likely to be asked to supply another version without the overlying text! Please don't crop images yourself – it is often helpful for us to have a degree of flexibility for the purposes of page layout and design. For this reason, if you are able to supply a selection of images, please do so.

## 3. Posters, flyers and other printed material

Traditional show publicity revolves around a standard poster and flier campaign. It is important that what you print works hard for you, conveying what you want to say about your specific production and communicating your Unique Selling Points (USPs). A poster is first and foremost a piece of publicity. It is not a work of art. Discuss your USPs at your publicity meeting and how these are going to be conveyed.

However, you should not necessarily limit yourself to posters and flyers. Have a brainstorming session with the rest of the production team to come up with new publicity ideas, and then talk to Ben at the ADC to see if she can give you any advice on how to move from ideas to reality. You could start by thinking about alternative flyer formats and materials – for example balloons, keyrings, beer mats, door hangers or die-cut shaped fliers. Stickers work wonders for a show suitable for children, or beer mats for a student comedy show. Postcards are far more likely to be kept and noticed than

fliers, and bookmarks are also ideal fliers in a university town. Be unusual! The more innovative you are, the more people will notice you.

### a) The theatre's requirements

The Theatre requires that the following information is included on **posters and flyers**:

1. The ADC Theatre logo:



Ben can email a high-resolution copy of this to you, or it is available on the production office computers. The logo need to be at least 5cm wide on an A3 poster.

2. The dates and times of your show, including the year, in the format: 7.45pm, Tue 1<sup>st</sup> – Sat 5<sup>th</sup> January 2009
3. Ticket prices, in the format: Tue-Thur £Full/£Conc, Fri&Sat £Full/£Conc or £full/£conc for whole run
4. Advance booking details in the form:  
Free online booking: [www.adctheatre.com](http://www.adctheatre.com)  
Box Office: 01223 300085
5. Publicity designs need to have a resolution on 300dpi

There is a stock blurb about the ADC Management and the licensing of the Theatre that **must** be included in **programmes**. Ask Ben for a copy – alternatively, it's located in Shared Files so you should be able to get it directly from a computer in the production office. We will refuse to sell any programmes that get to print without the blurb included.

### b) Design Information – using computers

For theatre shows, designing the publicity often happens on the computers in the production office at the ADC Theatre, or on someone's own computer. Shows that are not performing at the theatre may also use the computers here but they may be charged for the time they spend on the computer - arrange a price with Ben.

If you are designing a poster or programme on the computer, then be prepared for it to take some hours. It will take an hour or so to familiarise yourself with the programmes, and up to 12 hours (or sometimes even more) to create a finished poster, depending on how complicated it is. It is best to spread the time out over two or three days, and not to try and do it all in one go as it can be a very frustrating experience!

In order to put together a poster or programme etc. two main computer programmes are used: if you get stuck, Ben can ensure you get a helping hand.

You can use the photocopier to scan images. You will need to use one of the box office computers to access the scanner. This is how photographs and drawings etc. get from the page to the computer. Anything can be scanned, although pictures with contrast are often easier to manipulate - for instance cutting out a face from a plain white background is easier than cutting out a face from a busy background. Photos can also be taken with a digital camera and uploaded or emailed.

Once scanned, pictures are opened in Photoshop where they are manipulated and tidied up. A myriad of opportunities open up - dust and scratches can be removed, whole areas can be lightened or darkened, different sections can be cut out and enlarged, colours changed etc. You can then use either Photoshop to produce the final poster document, or you can use a linked program, InDesign. At the end you will need to make sure you keep your layered Photoshop document (.psd) and also save it as a jpeg (.jpg) to email to the various people who will want to see it.

If you're unsure about which format your printer would prefer, ask when you accept the quote.

Once a poster is designed, all the computer files connected to it are sent to the printer on a CD-R, which can be bought from the theatre for £1.

### c) Printing Information

**Always** ring ahead to get a quote for the design you intend to use.

**Always** ring at least three printers to get the most competitive quote, and NEVER be afraid to bargain. Printers that are being used a lot at the moment include:

<b>For posters:</b>	The ADC photocopier (these won't look as good, but are cheap) Face Media Group Digital Imaging Centre
<b>For flyers:</b>	Century 23 Face Media Group
<b>For programmes:</b>	Piggott Black Bear Blueprint

Ben has information about which printers are most frequently used, and gets info from new companies, so ask if you are unsure about which company to use. There is also a very helpful list in the "Infobase" on [www.camdram.net](http://www.camdram.net).

**Always** get your final design approved by Ben BEFORE sending it to print. Don't forget to leave yourself time for corrections. If necessary also get your design approved by your funding body (ESSENTIAL if this is the Amateur Dramatic Club). If you do not get your design approved, the Theatre may refuse to pay the invoice, and pass it straight onto the show for payment.

**Always** Check with the printer what format they'd like you artwork to be in e.g. TIFF, PSD, JPEG. Make sure that your poster is in CMYK colour format rather than RGB if you're using colour.

**Always** include bleed and margin on posters and flyers which are being professionally printed.

**Always** ask the printer how long the job will take, and when you place your order, get a firm delivery date.

**Always** check the job acceptance sheet and proofs carefully (if offered). Are they agreeing to print exactly what you expect? On the right paper? For the right price? On the proofs check everything is there and in the right place. If the proof is really bad ask for another one, as you are entitled to one. If you do not check the proofs properly and a mistake is printed you can't really complain. However, if you checked everything and something has been printed wrong do not be afraid to complain.

### d) Technical requirements

When you're getting something professionally printed (e.g. not the ADC photocopier) you need to have a bleed and a margin.

Printers can't print right up to the edge of a page, and leave edges that have white bits and look messy. To get around this, professional printers use paper that is slightly bigger than usual, and then chop off the edges. The bleed is an extra few mm of print that is cut off to make sure your final document has a neat edge. This means that your virtual document needs to be a few mm bigger than your actual document will be, but your image needs to run right up to the edge of the bleed (the edge of the virtual document).

Common sizes:

A3	Without bleed: 420mm x 297mm With bleed (an extra 5mm on every side): 430 mm x 307mm
A6:	Without bleed: 105mm x 148mm With bleed: 111mm x 154mm

When the edges are cut off the printers don't always cut it in exactly the right place, so to avoid any important text being cut off you need to make sure you don't put any text near the edge (in the 'margin'). Margins are usually 5mm for A3 and 3mm for A6, and are measured from the edge of the actual document, NOT the edge of the bleed. Practically, this means that if you are doing an A3 poster, you should not put any text within 10mm of the edge of your virtual document (5mm of margin, and 5mm of bleed).

If you're using Photoshop you can 'drag out' line guides from the rulers on the top and left. You can have as many of these as you like, and you can use them to draw your bleed and margin.

If the poster/flyer is being printed in full colour it needs to be in CMYK (in Photoshop go to Image, then mode, then tick CMYK colour). It also needs to be 300dpi resolution (in Photoshop you change the image size and resolution by going to image, then image size).

If you are printing your posters on the ADC photocopier it's less complicated – you can use normal paper sizes (without bleed), but make sure you have a margin of at least 10mm, some of which will not get printed.

### **e) How much/how many?**

Guidelines for how many posters/flyers a mainshow and lateshow should be aiming to distribute can be found under part c in the introduction of this document. But in general shows at the ADC should order a minimum of 200 posters and 5000 fliers, although many shows manage to distribute close to 10,000 fliers/postcards and 300 posters. If you put a flyer in every pigeon hole in the university (that you are allowed to!) then that gets rid of 10,000 on its own, and it's easy to get rid of large amounts if you do some flyering in town. The amount of publicity you are realistically able to distribute depends on the size of your cast and crew.

It is much cheaper to get extra posters printed at the same time as the original run, but much more expensive to get more printed later.

### **f) Distribution**

Having worked hard to produce a poster and fliers, the next challenge is to make sure that they get distributed. Here, the golden rule is to involve the entire company. Emphasise the importance of publicity in getting an audience. No actor wants to perform to an empty auditorium. Make sure you have your director behind you on this, as casts are often more likely to listen to what they say.

Think of canny ploys to make sure they are doing publicity, and not leaving the material lying under their bed. Try:

1. organising a cast and crew poster and flier run that EVERYBODY has to attend. Perhaps with a company meal / drinks outing afterwards to give them an incentive.
2. to organise lists of who has to poster where, and send people off in pairs to do it.
3. to supply the pairs with cellotape, bluetac and pins so there is no excuse!
4. to ask friends from different colleges whether they've had a flyer in their pigeonhole.

**REMEMBER: Fly posting is ILLEGAL** - your show can be fined by the council or disciplined by the university proctors. Posters must only be put up where you have permission from the owner of the space; NEVER on bus shelters, lampposts, empty buildings etc

### **The ADC Theatre**

This is easy – as long as you ensure that enough posters and flyers get to the ADC's management office, Richard will put them up front-of-house to attract passers-by and audiences for shows in the weeks before yours. For most productions, 20 posters and a 15cm-deep pile of flyers is sufficient. If your show has a two-week run, is very early or late in term, or the publicity is arriving unusually far in advance, then more would be better. Contact Ben to discuss numbers if you're unsure, as well as if you have anything more you would like to display (photos, set designs, etc). It's often simplest to use the production office to store all your posters and flyers, then Richard will usually take what she needs when they first arrive.

### **College postering sites**

**Anglia** - At least poster the East Road site, by the Mumford.

**Caius** - JCR and MCR and butterfly area in the back court, also K staircase which everyone sees on their way up to the computer room.

**Christs** - Go through the first court and up the buttery stairs in the near right-hand corner of the second court - there are several poster boards up the stairs.

**Churchill** - Go along the main corridor and use the relevant poster board at the end on the right.

**Clare** - Clare cellars - go down staircase A in the near right-hand corner of Clare main court and poster in the bar corridor area. And try H staircase, round to the left.

**Corpus** - JCR and pigeon hole area - left hand corner of the first court (where there is a ramp access).

**Downing** - Posters must be given to the Porters who will then put them up.

**Emma** - Pigeon hole area - turn left as you enter the first court and they are along on the left.

**Fitz** - JCR/ Buttery area - go through the P'Lodge and take the main door in the centre of the buildings on the right, use the relevant postering board within.

**Girton** - Pigeon hole area, along the corridor to the left as you enter through the main door. Also near the bar and dining hall. You can put listings online at [www.srcf.ucam.org/girtonmcr/](http://www.srcf.ucam.org/girtonmcr/)

**Homerton** - By the drinks and snacks dispensers - go in via the P'Lodge and turn left along the corridor. Tim Gray will take posters in the Library.

**Jesus** - Go through the archway and turn right, use the board in the first passageway you come to. And also do the post room round to the left of the P'Lodge.

**Kings** - Pigeon hole area - go in through the main gate and turn right up the steps.

**Magdalene** - ask at the porters lodge.

**New Hall** - JCR - go through the "Goldfish Bowl" and along the corridor, turn left through the double doors and the JCR is on the right. Also poster along the ground floor corridor - there are poster boards at each corner.

**Newnham** - Give posters to the Porters and they will date stamp them.

**Pembroke** - Poster outside the bar - go in through the P'Lodge, through the buttery corridor opposite and through the archway then take the double doors up a few steps on the left.

**Peterhouse** - Give a poster to the porters to stamp or poster the JCR and bar in the right hand corner of the main court.

**Queens'** - Bar area in the back left of Cripps Court.

**Robinson** - JCR at the end of the corridor going off the right-hand side of the courtyard.

**St.Catz** - Pigeon hole area - left at the P'Lodge and go down the stairs.

**St. John's** - Outside the bar - through the great gate, through to the second court and the bar is in the left hand corner.

**Selwyn** - the Porters must stamp Posters. Pigeon hole area - turn right after the main archway and go to the right hand corner.

**Sidney** - Pigeon hole area - turn into the court on the right and go straight ahead.

**Trinity** - Outside the JCR (stairway opposite Hall), back entrance to Whewell's Court, entrance to the Wolfson building, need a Trinity University card to gain access.

**Tit Hall** - Get posters stamped at the P'Lodge, go into the first court and, turn right through staircase B, then left to A and up the stairs and round to the right where you'll find the poster board.

### **Sidgwick Site:**

**English Faculty** – take a poster to the office to your right as you enter the main door and they will put it up on the poster board. Put flyers in the flyer racks and on tables.

**History Faculty** - coffee lounge (1st floor) & noticeboard outside library.

**Economics Faculty** - stairs by library but they have to be stamped in Rm.7 of the faculty building (they will then be taken down after 7 days)

**Law Faculty** - basement coffee area.

**UL:** Wall of locker room and hand one in to the map room and they put it up outside the tearoom.

### **Postering around City Centre**

We are now part of the **Visit Cambridge Scheme** so the Tourist Office will take 2 or 3 posters from you, and flyers.

Try all **pubs, cafes sandwich shops** and small places like **bookshops** or grocers. If big shops don't accept your poster for in the store, ask for it to be put up in the **staffroom**.

There are a few postering sites around the centre of town and the inside bit of the **Grafton Centre** but try all shops around the Grafton Centre in Burleigh Street, etc.

Go up **Castle Hill** and down **Mill Road** also take trips down in the **Newnham direction** and along **Kings Road** to poster in shops and pubs. A good way of getting all the shops covered is to put up a list with peoples names and give them a couple of streets to do and their faculty.

The central library will also do displays of your posters for a small amount and if you give them material far enough in advance they will send it to their regional libraries.

**Hills Road Sixth Form College** are keen to take posters so when you're postering Homerton, take a couple into the reception there for the English/Drama Department.

### **City Poster and Flier Sites**

These have been known to take publicity in the past. If you can't get them to take a poster ask them to take a small pile of fliers. It is not an exhaustive list but they're good places to start.

1. The Castle
2. Baska Design
3. Galloway & Porter - the second hand bookshop on Bridge Street
4. Art-D.co.uk (20 Magdalene Street)
5. Bowns Gowns (25 Magdalene Street)
6. The Pickerel
7. Baron of Beef
8. Mitre
9. Arundel House Hotel
10. The Boat House
11. The Maypole
12. Bridge St Patisserie
13. Nadias on St John's Street
14. Gardies
15. Don Pasquale
16. Peppercorns on King's Parade
17. Primavera on King's Parade
18. Indigo coffee shop
19. Arts Theatre
20. The Chop House
21. Phillip Hellier hairdressers
22. The Eagle
23. Cornucopia
24. Bath Ale House
25. The Cow
26. New Museums Site
27. Downing Site
28. Revolution on Downing Street
29. The Castle on Regent Street
30. University Arms Hotel
31. The Elm Tree
32. The Cricketers
33. The Regent Hotel
34. Gonville Hotel
35. YMCA
36. Kelsey Kerridge Sports Hall
37. Parkside Pools
38. Chemistry Department
39. Anglia Ruskin University
40. Boat Race (170 East Road)
41. Lensfield Hotel
42. The Snug (67 Lensfield Road)
43. Cross Keys
44. Newsagent opposite Engineering Dept
45. Engineering Dept
46. Fitzwilliam Museum
47. University Centre
48. Granta Bar (in University Centre)
49. The Mill
50. Hat and Feathers (35 Barton Road)
51. The Tram Depot
52. Sidgewick Site
53. University Library
54. University Accommodation Office
55. Nadia's on Silver Street
56. The Anchor
57. Tatties
58. Christ's College
59. The Brewery
60. Bun Shop
61. Jesus College
62. King Street Run
63. Clowns
64. The Radegund (129 King Street)
65. The Hopbine (just off Maids Causeway)
66. The Zebra

## **4. Mailouts**

### **a) Non-student theatre goers**

You may wish to do a direct postal mailout – this can be targeted as you wish, from the Theatre's large database of customer records. The Theatre will provide printed sticky labels, envelopes and use of the franking machine, but you

should arrange manpower to fold your items, put them in envelopes and get them franked. Costs depend on the size of the mailout, from 30p per item inclusive of materials, printing and postage. Given the time and cost involved, you would normally select between perhaps 50 and 200 individuals to send to, based on their prior booking history, location, gender, etc. The information you send can then be targeted specifically to those people, explaining why they, specifically, will enjoy this show based on what you know about them from the box office data.

Have a chat with Ben about what would be most beneficial for your show, and what you can afford. She may also be able to suggest other productions to do joint mailouts with to save on postage costs; these can be between 2 or 3 similar productions running close together. Mailouts need to be done around 3 weeks before your first performance so make sure you arrange them in time.

## **b) Schools/Colleges/Students**

If your show has obviously academic potential, this is also worth exploiting: if it might be on GCSE or A-level syllabuses, or on the English/Languages/Philosophy course in the university, exploit this! You could telephone schools and talk directly to teachers to gauge their interest, or just send off the info. We can give you printed labels for school mailouts if you need them. We can target specific schools with specific interests from our school's database.

**Please talk to Ben about what we offer to schools – information packs, question & answer sessions, backstage tours etc.** Be prepared to provide production notes, a synopsis, and related activities etc aimed specifically at school groups.

For students, flier the appropriate lectures. Look up college Directors of Studies in the University Prospectus and flier them through ICMS. Ask lecturers to endorse your show at the end of lectures, and supervisors to endorse it to their students. Flier the text in college and faculty libraries, and leave a few fliers around the UL in the appropriate areas...people are normally very bored in there, so a few casually left fliers might be a very good idea.

## **c) Targeted e-mailouts or 'e-shots'**

These are becoming more widely used as more and more people use email on a regular basis! Talk to Ben to arrange one; she'll discuss it further with Richard, who's actually responsible for sending it. We don't charge for e-shots, but these will be formatted and sent by Richard when she has time: please don't assume it can happen on a 'next day' basis. Richard will make up your text into a full-colour html email that can include hyperlinks, pictures, different font sizes and colours: so you might do well to arrange the thing in MS Word so Richard has a good idea how it should look. Include images as separate files as well, but they don't need to be too high resolution. The e-shot will also get sent in a plain-text version, though, so as to be easily readable in Hermes Webmail – make sure Richard can easily adapt what you've done for plain-text.

The e-shot can be sent to any subset of those customers on our database that are happy to receive emails from us – currently around 8000 in total, as of July 2009. Don't be tempted to try to reach everyone. You'll have a far greater success rate if you pick a smaller, relevant group, e.g. people that attended one or more similar shows within the last academic year, or people that recently made a 'family' booking for two adults and a number of under-16s. You should write your e-shot text with this specific group in mind, so that when they read it, it's really clear why they've been sent the email (and why it is that they, *yes they*, will love your show). The more you write with a *specific* typical customer in mind, the better this will work. Richard may refuse to send an e-shot if it's just your standard marketing blurb, your press release text, or other generic words: these turn customers off and encourage them to unsubscribe from our email lists altogether, which benefits nobody. (N.B. your email will start with a direct salutation, "Dear Mr Smith," rather than just "Dear theatregoer,")

Bear in mind that your show will be advertised via email to all 8000 email-recipients the week before your show opens, in Richard's regular weekly marketing email. Therefore if you wish to do an e-shot it should be **considerably in advance** of this, to grab advance-booking customers who will definitely enjoy it, rather than last-minute on-a-whim customers.

## 5. Press Releases and Media Information

### a) Press in Cambridge

Richard has a long list of local and national press contacts; all press information that you supply gets added to a special section of the ADC's website and she notifies all relevant contacts by email when something of interest is added.

Details of how press information is distributed are in flux at the moment, so check with Ben or Richard for updates. Generally, however, brief listings information for each season is sent to all press contacts as soon as it is confirmed. This consists of the basic time/date/price details with your brochure blurbs and images, so you don't need to send anything more for that. If you do have anything extra at that stage, though, it's worth sending it across as it may well get used!

Where you need to spend time is on producing a good-quality, specific press release and arranging high-resolution costumed photographs for the production. Please see our separate guide, "How to write great press releases for Theatre" for further information (ask Ben if you don't have a copy already). The absolute deadline for receipt of a final version of your press release is three weeks before your show starts – any later than this and it's unlikely to be of any use to even the weekly local papers, let alone monthly glossies and TV/radio stations. Shows early on in term generally have to settle for just small-scale coverage, as copy deadlines for monthly magazines may be before your show is even confirmed! Monthly magazine deadlines are often as much as 1½ -2 months before they are available (e.g. mid-October deadline for the December edition). TV and radio are often flexible, but will only alter their schedule near to airtime if there's something that *really* merits it – and most productions are, ultimately, just another production to them. Essentially, you want to place as much importance on getting the PR done as you do on your poster and flyer designs – the earlier the better.

### b) What you should do to complement the press release

We currently have a good relationship with local media, and do get journalists ringing to ask for more information if they want to follow anything up. However, if you're a Mainshow (particularly one local residents are likely to be interested in) it's a good idea to ring local press and make sure they are planning to preview (or review) your show. Sadly, Richard doesn't have time to do this for every single show! She can give you a list of names and telephone numbers to go through, though.

A preview article lifted from the press release is far more effective than an actual review when it comes to non-student press, so do all you can to persuade media contacts to write one. You can use the phone in the production office to make your calls; we don't charge you anything for calls to landlines.

Don't be nervous about following up press releases: just introduce yourself and remind them of the show, check that they have received the press release and ask if you can provide them with any additional information or photos. Ask if they would like to arrange an interview with any of the cast or the director. Then suggest possible methods of coverage: be enthusiastic, describe the show and its background, and focus on what is new, different or quirky about this production. Have all the details to hand and be prepared.

### c) TCS and Varsity

Richard does send press releases to TCS and Varsity, but because the staff changes every term, the response can be varied. In general, both papers understand how ADC schedules work and aim to review most, if not all, shows each term; they might arrange these with Richard in one flurry at the start of term (which is great!) but they might not...some theatre editors expect the individual shows to contact them if they care about coverage.

It's therefore a good idea to contact them a couple of weeks in advance, to check that they've arranged press tickets for a first-night review (with Richard), and to discuss whether they might run a preview or an interview with cast or the director. TSC often attend dress rehearsals rather than first nights (especially for late shows), as this allows them to have something in the newspaper when it comes out on Thursday, and both TCS and Varsity often like to take their own photographs of the dress rehearsal – make sure they know where and when it is being held!

When talking to TCS and Varsity, you can sound as intellectual as you like! They have a very different readership that may well be interested in your director's vision.

## 6. Hoodies/T-shirts/“stash”

T-shirts and hoodies are great, because cast and crew must each pay for their own, so it's basically free publicity. Shop around, get a good deal and an attractive design, and with any luck people not only wear them whilst flying but also off-duty. It's also worth thinking about getting other items printed; hats, bags, umbrellas...

Talking Ts near Magdalene is often a good bet for t-shirts, but they do get busy so get shirts sorted well in advance if you decide to have them. Shows have recently found some good shirt deals on the internet but these companies can take quite a while to deliver. Another good place to try is Hand Print (01209 842614) based in Cornwall, as they're often a little cheaper than Talking Ts.

## 7. Websites

### a) The ADC Theatre website

The Theatre's website has a news page which can be used by companies to provide more information about the show than is possible in the brief blurb in the 'What's On' page. You could provide a photo gallery of rehearsal photos, director's notes, a production diary or a brief history of the play and any notable productions. Please email material to Ben at least a week in advance of your first night.

### b) Your own website

Recently many shows have constructed their own websites in addition to the coverage given on the ADC site. A website with a cheap and recognisable domain name can be a very good idea – but only if designed well and constructed well in advance of your show.

If you want to have a website for your show it's best to bear these things in mind:

1. Look on free-parking etc for available domain names related to your show. Make sure the name you select is easy to remember and not too expensive. Most of the prices quoted are for a year or more, and you'll only effectively use them for a week or two. Names ending in org.uk or co.uk are cheaper than .com. As a rough guideline, try not to pay over £10 for a domain as it may not make it back in ticket revenue.
2. You'll have to find someone to design your website and also somewhere to host it. Don't pay a large amount of money for two year's worth of hosting as you'll only need a few months worth and your funding body probably won't reimburse you for the cost.
3. Make sure your site is well designed, informative and easy to navigate. It's best to tie in the image of your site to the theme of your publicity campaign and to make sure the site has worthwhile information on it - such as synopsis of the show, mini interview with the director, biogs of cast and playwright etc. Try not to use lots of fancy gimmicks on the site so that it's easy for visitors to find essential info (like dates!)
4. Most importantly, if you have a website make sure that the address is on all of your publicity and is linked to the theatre's site (tell Ben the domain and ask her to put a link on your page in the ADC's site). It's no use putting a lot of effort into a site and getting no hits. Make sure the site is up and running before your publicity goes out!

## 8. Publicity stunts

A great way your show noticed is to flier/sticker (only ever sticker on people, never on immovable objects, or else there's big trouble) in the centre of town/the Grafton Centre - especially if you're doing it on a Saturday/during half term/IN COSTUME.... actors have a great resistance to flying, especially if they think they're going to look at all silly, so a good alternative to costume is to get them to flyer in T-shirts (see above).