

Press Releases Guide



A really good press release and accompanying press photo(s) are a vital part of your show's marketing strategy, *whatever* the show.

The point of a press release is to make journalists aware that your play exists, and to make them want to write about it.

A press release (PR) is not direct means of selling tickets. It *will* increase your ticket sales if written and used correctly (by encouraging preview features/articles, listings, and review articles), but it should always be created with this point in mind. To make the point again a different way:

The people that read your PR will NOT be interested in buying tickets.

If you keep this Golden Rule of Press Marketing in mind, it's very hard to go wrong with your PR. The corollary to this rule, however, is that **the journalist needs to know why they should feature your play, not another one.** An emphasis throughout the PR of *why* your show is unique (known as the show's 'hook'), is crucial to the PR's success.

What will the PR look like?

From Lent 2010, all ADC Theatre press releases will be placed on the theatre's standard template. We do this for you if you just provide us with plain text copy.

The template has the advantage that it has the ADC logo clearly on it, meaning journalists immediately know who they are dealing with. If your show is being funded by a 'resident company' at the theatre (CUADC, CUMTS, Footlights etc) your layout will also include a short blurb about the company and their logo. If you're with a non-resident company, please feel free to include a short blurb about your company, and a logo if you have one.

Writing good copy for a PR

1. Aim for around 350 words. Lots of lazy print journalists will often lift sections of text straight from your PR into their articles, if it's suitable, because it fills space in their paper with less effort on their part. This means that **the more you write "like a journalist", the more likely you'll be featured.**
2. Make sure the press release has **a story**. This could be something unique about the show such as a premiere performance, or how the play is relevant to current affairs, or why you've chosen to perform your show. **NEVER JUST BASE YOUR PRESS RELEASE ON YOUR BROCHURE OR FLYER BLURB!** Journalists can get this easily from the website already, and it doesn't make for a great news story. Write exactly what you'd like to see printed in the paper. Email Rich if you'd like some help thinking of ideas for a unique 'angle' for the PR,
3. Be sure to include **quotes** from your director and/or other relevant cast and crew members. This again makes the PR into a ready-made newspaper article, and encourages the journalists to give you column inches.
4. Give the PR a **headline**. This can be the name of the production, but it's better if it is something that sums up the angle of your PR.
5. In the **Notes for Editors** section at the bottom, include anything else that a journalist will need to know, but doesn't fit into the PR's main body, such as a sentence or two about the

author, if this isn't included in the 'angle' (or isn't already blindingly obvious, such as Shakespeare...) or the history of the play.

Photography

You should **always** supply at least one high-quality (at least 300dpi, and at least 8"x4" in size) press image as a separate file, in .jpeg or .tif format. (If you use jpeg, ensure it is saved at the highest possible quality by your image software). This image is one that you'd want to see in print, next to an article about your show. A really engaging, well-lit photo could make the difference between a one-line listing, and an entire editorial.

If you have a range of photos that you can't choose between send a few over – we can place a zip file of them on the website or choose the best ones.

Without a photo you are unlikely to get any good press coverage.

Submission

Send the press release to the Production Manager before the deadline day on your contract. We will then pass it on to a large number of local and national press outlets (as appropriate). A fortnight is very last-minute in the eyes of many press outlets: the earlier the better. If you can send it in more than a month in advance, the number of potential press outlets you can reach will increase significantly: this is strongly recommended for high-profile shows.

We will then place the press release and photos on the press area of the Theatre website (www.adctheatre.com/press.php) ready to be accessed by journalists. We also send out a press notification to lots of journalists, letting them know your press information is now available.