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corpus playroom production handbook

2021 edition

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Corpus Playroom Production Handbook Contents

This production handbook contains the necessary information you will need over the course of your production. If you have any questions, please contact the Production Manager on production@adctheatre.com.

There is always help available at the ADC Theatre, so please get in touch at any point if you need assistance or advice.

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1 Key Contacts

The Corpus Playroom is run by the ADC Theatre, a department of the University of Cambridge run by six staff who keep things running smoothly. We are here to help you and co-ordinate the activities of all those using the Playroom.

Theatre Manager	Jamie Rycroft	manager@adctheatre.com
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Production Manager	Lucia Revel-Chion	production@adctheatre.com
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Operations Manager	Luke Dell	operations@adctheatre.com
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Technical Manager	Eduardo Strike	technical@adctheatre.com
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Office Administrator	Anna Perry	officeadmin@adctheatre.com
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Box Office Administrator	Lauren Sandall	boxofficeadmin@adctheatre.com
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We are in the ADC Theatre office seven days a week between 11am and 6pm. We can be contacted on 01223 359547.

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1.2 How many shows can I do per term?

There has never been a strict limit on the number of shows students can participate in, but it has been frequently observed that the large number of shows we put on per week can lend itself to a culture of overcommitment. This has led to undue amounts of stress and high burnout rates among the student community and, whilst we want to encourage as much involvement in our activities as possible, we feel we can no longer ignore these increasingly adverse effects.

With that in mind, from Lent Term 2022, the ADC Management team will be offering the following guidance:

1. No one should take on roles across multiple shows within the same week (regardless of show size or venue)
2. No one should take on significant production roles across shows in consecutive weeks

“Significant production roles” are explicitly defined as Producers, Directors, Musical Directors, Choreographers, Lighting Designers, Technical Directors, Sound Designers, Stage Managers. Under this definition, the exceptions to the second recommendation are therefore assistant/associate roles (in any department) and anyone doing a One-Night Stand (though they should still not take on more than one show in that week).

Actors fall into something of a grey area, as it is harder to differentiate between the different kinds of acting parts in any one production – for this reason, we ask actors to bear these recommendations in mind and apply the same ethos when considering which shows they can commit to across a reasonable timeframe.

Furthermore, ADC Management will be formalising the rule that anyone involved in either the Michaelmas Term Pantomime or Lent Term Musical should not take on any other roles beyond Week 4 of that same term. These shows, with double the run length, are a significant step up in terms of commitment and should be treated as such.

The idea behind these recommendations is to ensure that students are able to take part in a wide range of theatre, performing their roles to a standard they can be happy with and are able to reduce stress placed on themselves and the people they work with due to overcommitment. By doing fewer shows, we hope that students can also perform the roles they have taken on in a way which closer resembles the industry standard – for example, where Stage Managers and tech team are present at rehearsals from an early stage – which will be beneficial for those looking to move into this industry professionally after they leave Cambridge.

We want to emphasise that no production is worth jeopardising your mental health for, particularly when combined with the ongoing demands of a Cambridge degree. This advice comes from a place of concern and a desire to see the Cambridge theatre scene grow outwards in a positive way, by increasing the number of individual opportunities available – we want everyone to be proud of their involvement in our activities and we are excited to see the community expand and improve as a result.

If you have any concerns or questions about this, please email the current Production Manager, Lucia, on production@adctheatre.com.

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2 Finance

2.1 Contract and Hire Costs

You should already have agreed and signed the production's contract.

All our charges are subject to VAT at the prevailing rate.

Hire Charge

We normally use a hire charge of 37% of the total box office sales. There is a minimum hire charge of £40 on Mainshows and £30 on Lateshows and One-Night Stands.

Box Office Commission

A proportion of the box office and ticket printing costs is passed on to our companies as a commission of 9% on advance sales and 5% on door sales.

2.2 Other costs

There are a number of other costs you should allow for in your budget if applicable:

Skip Charge

If your show needs to throw away items in the ADC Theatre's skip, then the skip charge recoups the cost of our skip getting emptied. The charge for a full skip is £354: we charge productions in increments of 10% of the skip filled (£35.40), i.e. if you fill 20% of the skip, you will be charged £70.80. We don't charge Playroom shows for any skip usage unless they have substantial waste (e.g. they've constructed a set) to dispose of at the end of the run.

Sundries

Sundries items can be bought from the Theatre for use. We normally issue items as they are needed and take the cost off the final show settlement. Producers can check how much they have spent so far on Sundries by asking at the Administration Office or emailing the Production Manager.

Flameproofing

All flammable props and cloths have to be flameproofed before they can be used on stage. Either they can be bought flameproofed (NDFR or IFR fabric) or sprayed with Flamecheck, which can be bought from Sundries for £18 per bottle.

PPLPRS Charges

PPLPRS charge royalties on music use in performances (see page 7). The charge varies depending on the use. There are three kinds of ways you can use music in a play:

Entrance/Exit/Scene Change Music - This is music that only plays before the show, during scene changes and afterwards. Your show will be charged a flat fee of £6 if you use it.

Incidental (Background) Music - This is music that underscores a scene, but is not acknowledged or reacted to by characters on-stage. Your show will be charged a flat fee of £11.10 if you use it.

Interpolated Music - This is music that is sung, danced or reacted to by characters. How much you are charged depends on how much of the show proportionally is made up of copyrighted music, but will range in increments from £2 per performance if the interpolated music lasts for 0 to 2 minutes, to £25 per performance if the interpolated music lasts for 16 to 20 minutes. You can ask the Production Manager for an estimate once you've filled out the Interpolated Music Application Form (See 3.3.2.).

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If your show is a concert or popular music event, the above charges don't apply to you. Instead you will be charged 4% of your gross ticket sales.

Bear in mind that these charges only apply if you're using copyrighted music. If the music you're using is original, or is in the Public Domain, then these charges don't apply.

Photocopying and printing

You can print and photocopy in the production office at the Theatre: the cost is normally taken off the final show settlement.

Insurance

If your company does not have its own public liability insurance, you will need to be included on the Theatre's policy, at a cost of £30.

Account payments

Anything bought on the ADC Theatre's accounts (see page 17) will be added to the show settlement to recoup the cost.

2.3 Show Support Fund

We have a Support Fund to financially assist shows with exceptional production costs that would otherwise cause an unavoidable financial loss. On application, the Executive Committee of the ADC Theatre consider your ideas and current budget and can offer a guarantee against loss. There is the possibility of a grant if you'd like to achieve something different that might not be possible otherwise.

For more information on this and to see whether your show may be able to set up such a guarantee, please contact the Production Manager.

3 Licences

3.1 Performance Rights

The ADC Theatre Production Manager handles all applications for performance rights – they should have applied for all rights as soon as the show is programmed, but do check in with them if you aren't sure or would like a copy of the rights agreement!

3.2 PRS for Music

If you plan on using music during your performance then you may need to apply to *PRS for Music* for permission. As far as licensing is concerned there are three ways you can use music:

1. **Audience Entry/Exit and Scene Change Music.** This does not need to be declared.
2. **Incidental Music** (e.g. atmospheric or background music). You need to fill in a purple form with the music you use, and the length of time it is performed for. This form needs to be returned as soon as possible after the end of the production. We submit these forms to *PPLPRS* on a quarterly basis.
3. **Interpolated Music** (anything the characters in the show react to). You need to complete an electronic 'Application for Dramatic Right' form. This needs to be emailed to *PPLPRS* **28 days before** the production and confirmation received before music can be used, so please send it to the Production Manager well in advance of this deadline!

Forms can be downloaded from the website (adctheatre.com/productionresources); submissions should be made through the Production Manager.

Please note the following things regarding *PPLPRS*:

- If all of the music being used has been originally composed specifically for the show, then this does not need to be declared to *PPLPRS*.
- If all of the music being used is out of copyright (at least 70 years after the composer's death), then this does not need to be declared to *PPLPRS*.
- In addition, the music in complete musical theatre productions is covered in the rights payment to the publishers of the show and doesn't need to be declared to *PPLPRS*.

The *PPLPRS* royalty charge will appear on the settlement at the end of the show. The royalty charge will vary depending on the way music has been used and is usually between £10 and £20, but can be more in certain circumstances. You can get more information on *PPLPRS* charges by visiting their website.

3.3 PPLPRS: Musicians to Avoid

There are some musicians that are nearly impossible to licence for interpolated music (but fine for scene change or incidental music). The following artists should preferably be avoided:

ABBA	David Bowie	Prince
Andrew Lloyd Webber	Disney songs	Queen
Bee Gees	Elvis Presley ¹	Rolling Stones
Bob Dylan	Music from <i>Grease</i>	Any currently playing musicals
Bob Marley	Theme songs to <i>James Bond</i>	
The Beatles	Jimi Hendrix	

A full list of the songs that you can't use in an interpolated manner can be found here: <https://www.prsformusic.com/-/media/files/prs-for-music/licensing/excluded-works-list.xlsx>

¹ Though only if the show is about Elvis or features an Elvis impersonator.

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If your show is a concert, then you are allowed to perform songs in the above list, but there can be no visual references to the original source: i.e. you can't dress like Elvis and perform 'Blue Suede Shoes', and you can't dress like Elsa and perform 'Let it Go'.

3.3 Permissions for Special Effects

There are some stage effects that require individual licences from the City Council:

Weapons other than firearms
Strobe Lighting

Mock Firearms

These are also applied for through us: you will be asked what permissions you need to apply for when completing the General Information Form.

While Mock Firearms are allowed provided that enough notice is given to the Production Manager and the licence conditions are followed, blank-firing guns may not be used as the venue is so small that it could significantly damage the audience's hearing.

There is no charge associated with licensing these effects.

3.4 Smoking and Smoke and Haze

Please note that, because of poor ventilation and the nature of the fire alarm in the Playroom, we are unable to use any effects that involve flames or that may produce smoke. This includes naked flames, smoking, smoke and haze effects, and pyrotechnics.

3.5 Under 16s

If the production features children under the age of 16, you will need to arrange the correct licence for them from the County Council. The relevant documents can be found on their website:

www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/residents/children-and-families/schools-&-learning/education-your-rights-and-responsibilities/children-in-work-entertainment-and-chaperones

You should allow **21 days** for a licence to be issued, and you will require licensed chaperones to accompany the child. The Young Actors Company based in Cambridge will normally provide companies with licensed chaperones to accompany children that work with them.

There is an exhaustive list of the regulations regarding Children in Performance on the County Council website. You should ensure you are familiar with them all if you are using children in your production. The following regulations are particularly relevant to productions at the ADC Theatre:

- Children must have left the place of performance by 10pm (11pm if the child is 5 years old or over).
- Children are only allowed to perform in 2 performances in any one day.
- Children cannot perform or rehearse for more than 6 consecutive days.

We have an internal form that you should fill in and return to the Production Manager along with a copy of the licence before any rehearsals take place in the Theatre. This internal form can be obtained by contacting the Production Manager.

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4 Publicity

More information about publicity and marketing can be found in the ADC Publicity Guide, which can be downloaded at adctheatre.com/guides.

We ask to see all publicity before it is made public. There is a recommended timeline for the production of publicity in your production schedule (see page 14). All publicity should include our logo, which can be downloaded from our website (www.adctheatre.com/productionresources).

4.1 Poster Banner

We generate a standard format poster banner for each of our shows, designed to be put on the bottom of poster and flyer designs.

The banner has two main purposes:

- Help to create a consistent ADC branding, so that posters for our shows are more instantly recognisable;
- Help to provide the correct details in the correct format, to save corrections during proofing.

The poster banner for your show, as well as a guide to using the banner correctly, can be downloaded from our website (www.adctheatre.com/productionresources).

4.2 Website

Our website has a separate page for each upcoming production.

We will require the following material from you before we can put a page up on the website:

- A publicity blurb of 100 – 150 words in length.
- A high-quality image, preferably landscape, which is at least 600 x 600 pixels.

4.3 Posters

Posters are normally A3 size and we would recommend 50-100 for a Mainshow, 50-75 for a Lateshow and 25 for a One-Night Stand. A paper weight of 120gsm is usually fine.

We need to proof all posters before they go to print.

Publicity should be at a minimum resolution of 300dpi and usually needs to be in CMYK.

Posters that are being professionally printed require a minimum 3mm bleed.

We are definitely interested in productions making more unconventional forms of print publicity (beermats, playing cards, etc.), provided that they still have the elements of the Playroom banner, and that the design is proofed in advance by the Production Manager.

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4.4 A1 Posters

Our Front of House posters are in A1 format. Once the poster has been designed, email an A1-size (841 x 594mm at 300 dpi) PDF file to production@adctheatre.com and we will print up to 3 at a cost of £6.50 each, which is then added to your show settlement.

4.5 Putting Up Posters Around Town

Historically some sites around Cambridge have allowed posters to be attached to their railings. As a rule, stretches of railing with no posters indicate that posters may not be attached there. Where possible, do ask a representative of the site if you can display your poster there – you need their agreement as you do not have the automatic right to attach posters to their railings.

There are a number of regulations regarding putting up posters around town: they are displayed at the ADC Theatre, and an electronic copy can be provided on request.

4.6 Press Release

You may want to produce a Press Release that can be sent to newspapers, magazines and websites. There is a comprehensive guide to writing a good press release on our website (www.adctheatre.com/productionresources).

Bear the following tips in mind when putting together a press release:

- Identify a story, so that the press release has a strong ‘hook’.
- Include some quotations from the production’s director and/or producer.
- Give the press release a headline.
- Include any additional information as ‘Notes for Editors’:
 - A couple of sentences about the author, if they are not well-known.
 - A couple of sentences about the producing company.

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5 Ticketing and Front of House

5.1 Tickets and Seating Locks

The Corpus Playroom holds a maximum of 80 people, not including the stewards. Tickets are sold through the ADC Box Office, and can be bought online, over the phone or at the counter.

There are a number of seating locks that we include as standard:

House Seats	4	We hold these back for 'ticketing emergencies' in case we need to give someone a seat on the night	A couple of minutes before the show starts if there are people waiting
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5.2 Checking Ticket Sales

We set up weekly sales reports that email automatically to the production's producer every Monday, with an update on how many tickets have been sold for your show.

5.3 Complimentary Tickets

The Producer of a production can issue complimentary tickets to production team members and those who have helped or contributed to the show.

Complimentary tickets can only be arranged by emailing the Production Manager in advance.

5.4 Front of House Stewards

We require two volunteer stewards for every performance in the Playroom, to sell and tear tickets. They are also responsible for fire safety in the auditorium.

People can sign up to steward by registering at stewarding.adctheatre.com and signing up for slots once their account has been approved.

5.5 Videoing the Show

Please arrange filming with the Production Manager as soon as possible if you wish to do this: for fire regulations it is necessary to book out a number of seats. All cables must be taped down well out of the way. None of the fire passages may be blocked by equipment.

If you have not told the Theatre Management of your intention to video the show, you may be refused permission to do so.

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6 Production Teams and Companies

6.1 Production Teams

Your production will usually require a number of production team members.

The most common way for student shows to advertise is on camdram.net (see page 16):

- Log in at the top left corner
- Click 'Show Admin' on the menu in the top-right corner
- Find the show and click 'Add Technical Team Advert'

Adverts created on camdram will be automatically pulled through into a weekly email sent out to everyone on the CUADC's technicians' list.

If you have any problems filling vacancies then you can seek the advice of the CUADC Technical Director (td@cuadc.org), who can talk to you about your technical requirements and help find crew. Each major role, from Designer to Technician to Stage Manager, has its own CUADC Representative who can provide advice; you can find their contact details at www.cuadc.org

If you are not a student company, it is worth contacting the Penguin Club: they are a Cambridge-based group for amateur designers and technicians, and they provide production teams for a large number of our out-of-term shows. For more information, go to their website (www.penguinclub.org.uk) or email them on clubcontact@penguinclub.org.uk.

6.2 Crew Requirements

Any show at the Corpus Playroom will normally require a bare minimum of one running crew, who will normally operate lighting and sound cues from the technical desk at the back of the auditorium. If the show is a bit more complex, you may want two crew members on the desk, one for each of lighting and sound.

You may also want to find additional crew members to assist with organising props and costumes backstage.

6.3 Responsible Person (RP)

Each production at the Theatre should appoint at least one Responsible Person. It doesn't have to be an individual named role: usually, a show's Technician, Lighting Designer or Producer will take on the role.

RPs run the get-in and get-out for your show and are responsible for the safe and correct use of the Playroom and its equipment. Their responsibilities are detailed in the hire contract, and there is an RP guide that establishes good practice in the Playroom.

RPs must sign a form to say that they are comfortable with their responsibilities. If they are unsure of anything, you should get them to contact the Production Manager.

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6.4 Casts and Auditions

Auditions for shows are normally advertised on camdram.net. Creating an advert means it will be automatically pulled onto the CUADC's bi-weekly Actors' list email.

- Log in at the top left corner
- Click 'Show Admin' on the menu in the top-right corner
- Find the show and click on 'Add an Audition'

If your production features children under 16, you will need to apply for a licence (see page 8).

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7 Production Process

7.1 Production Schedule

You should have received a production schedule which lists the deadlines we will ask you to meet, and also outlines a recommended timeline to help guide you through the process.

Your risk assessment folder will also have a copy of the schedule on the front of it.

7.2 Initial Meeting

The Production Manager will be in touch about an initial production meeting, normally about 6 weeks ahead of the show. The meeting is normally held with the Producer and Director, though other members of the production team are welcome to come along if it may be helpful.

The initial meeting gives you a chance to ask any questions you may have about doing a production at the Playroom, as well as giving us a chance to get an idea of your plans for the show.

7.3 Publicity Deadlines

We do not put hard deadlines on getting publicity printed, as it is a flexible process, but you should aim to have posters and flyers ready a minimum of 4 weeks ahead of the show.

We have a poster banner for use on posters and flyers (see page 9).

7.4 General Information Form

The General Information Form is an electronic form we use to find out information about which licences your production will require.

It needs to be completed no later than 3 weeks before the start of your production.

It can be completed online at www.adctheatre.com/playroomgeneralinformationform

7.5 Risk Assessment

Your production will be given its own risk assessment folder. The risk assessment is designed to encourage the production team to think as a whole about both practical and safety issues in advance, and will reduce the number of problems encountered subsequently.

The Risk Assessment in the folder comprises a full risk assessment for your show. It is simple and straight-forward to complete, and can be filled in by any member of the production team who knows the show sufficiently. You should ensure that every part of the production is properly covered and planned. If there is anything unusual or difficult, let the Production Manager know as early as you can.

The deadline for the completion of risk assessment is important and **cannot be missed**.

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7.6 Production Week

Productions will normally start their get-in on the Sunday before opening night.

The Sunday, Monday and Tuesday of the production week are reserved for that week's incoming shows. The sharing of the space between Mainshow, Lateshow and One-Night Stand is flexible: it is usually best to contact the producers of the other shows in your week directly and come to an arrangement with them.

The get-out normally runs immediately after the final show comes down, most often on Saturday evenings. All members of the company are expected to assist with cleaning and tidying of all backstage areas of the Playroom.

Equipment that needs to be returned to the Theatre can be taken back on the night, though please bear in mind that there may still be a show going on while you are returning.

If equipment needs to be left in the Playroom to be collected after the get-out, please leave it in a neat pile that can be easily accessed, and label it with the name of the company and the day it's leaving.

Any keysets signed out by the production should be returned to the Management Office at the ADC Theatre on Saturday evening after the get out, unless otherwise arranged with the Production Manager.

7.7 After-Show Party

On the evening of the last performance, once the get-out has been completed, Playroom shows are welcome to join the ADC Theatre after-show party, held privately in the ADC Bar for companies who have just finished their show.

Those funding the show can offer their company a free drink (or two) if the show has made a profit. The Producer should give the Duty Manager a list of all the people eligible for a free drink (generally taken from the programme, if there is one). This must be arranged before the party begins. The cost of the drinks will be included on your settlement. Any food consumed at the party is taken at your own risk.

Bear in mind that get-outs at the Theatre may take significantly longer than get-outs at the Playroom and so the after-show party usually starts in the early hours of the morning.

7.8 Show Settlement

It will take a maximum of 45 days from the final performance until you receive your settlement from the Theatre. You may want to arrange a time to come and discuss your settlement with the Theatre Manager to sort out any problems there may be.

If a profit has been made, we can make payment either by cheque or BACS transfer. If your company has not traded with the University of Cambridge before, you will need to complete a BACS form before you can be paid by BACS transfer. The form can be downloaded from our website (www.adctheatre.com/productionresources).

If the show hasn't taken enough money to cover its expenditure then you will receive an invoice.

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8 Playroom Resources

8.1 camdram.net

Camdram is Cambridge's Amateur Dramatics database. It is linked to several of the systems we use here at the Theatre, including the room booking system and the CUADC's weekly email lists.

You can log-in with Raven, Facebook, Google or Twitter.

Once you have created an account, you can create an entry:

- Click 'Add a Show' on the menu in the top-right corner
- Complete the form and click 'Create'
- The new entry will require authorisation from an administrator of the relevant venue or society. ADC shows will receive authorisation from a member of Theatre management.

Once the entry has been created and authorised, you can add administrators as necessary – usually the Producer, the Director and any assistants should all be able to administrate an entry.

Once you have an entry, you can:

- Display adverts for auditions and production team vacancies.
- Log in to roombooking.adctheatre.com to book rooms.
- Display cast and crew lists, displayed on both Camdram and our website.

8.2 Booking Space

The Playroom auditorium and both its dressing rooms may be used for rehearsals or meetings dependent upon availability. There is an online booking diary where you can check the availability and book space for your show at: roombooking.adctheatre.com/playroom.

You will need to have created an entry on Camdram before you can log in to book rooms (see above).

Productions are allocated 12 hours per week for rehearsals: if you require extra then contact the Production Manager.

We also have a workshop at the ADC Theatre that productions are welcome to use to build sets or properties.

8.3 Tech Specs and Equipment

Up-to-date technical specifications can be downloaded from our website at www.corpusplayroom.com/technical.

Productions at the Playroom are welcome to use the ADC Theatre's equipment free of charge. Stock lists can be downloaded from www.adctheatre.com/technical.

8.4 Computers

We have four Computers available at the Theatre for use by anyone putting on a show at the Corpus Playroom. All have Photoshop and InDesign CS5.

A folder will be created for your show which you should use for storing all files related to your show. These files are accessible from any of the computers. Please do not store files anywhere else on the computers as they are liable to get deleted.

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Your file will be located in sharedfiles(touchstone)\Shows.

8.5 Printing and Laminating

The Theatre has a photocopier that Playroom productions are welcome to use. You should have received a four-digit photocopier code, which will allow you to photocopy, print and scan documents as necessary. The printer can produce A5 and A4 booklets as well as A4 and A3 sheets.

The code tracks how many sheets have been printed and we will charge the cost through to the show settlement.

We also have a laminator that can be used to laminate posters to be put up around town. Cable ties for attaching posters to railings can be purchased from Sundries.

8.6 Sundries

The Theatre has a sundries store that keeps a stock of useful consumable items that can be purchased by productions. These include tape, paint, bulbs, batteries, laminating pouches, screws and so on.

A full stock list and price list can be found on the website at www.adctheatre.com/sundries.

8.7 Ordering on account

The Theatre has a credit account with a number of different companies, including timber merchants and print houses. You can order goods on account by getting an order number from us and telling us your order details. The Theatre will then pay the company from which you have purchased and deduct the relevant amount from your settlement.

Deliveries to the Theatre should be made between 11am and 6pm any day.