

Program Director

Play Reading Sub Committee

Role and Job Descriptions

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Background

The Play Reading Sub Committee (PRC) was created to read scripts submitted by potential directors and actively to seek out scripts considered suitable for production by Southern Peninsula Players (SPP).

The PRC was asked to submit plays to the Management Committee with their recommendations. It was recognised from the outset that the Management Committee (as the producers of SPP productions) would retain the right to final approval.

The system has failed to work adequately, largely because of an uncertainty as to their role expressed by the PRC members and lack of cohesion in the play reading process.

The Management Committee has approved, in principle, a proposal to appoint a Program Director on an annual basis. Amongst the Program Director's responsibilities would be the coordination of PRC activities and direct liaison with potential directors for each season.

Program Director Job Description

- ❖ In consultation with the Management Committee, to be responsible for planning the next year's performance calendar, together with any proposed artistic endeavours, i.e. workshops, play readings, etc.
- ❖ Seek submissions of plays from potential directors.
- ❖ Actively recruit potential directors if necessary, including directors for plays nominated by the PRC and approved by the Management Committee.
- ❖ Actively seek out plays for consideration by the PRC.
- ❖ Supervise and coordinate PRC play readings and meetings.
- ❖ Serve as an elected member of the Management Committee.
- ❖ Present in person and/or in writing the recommendations of the PRC to the Management Committee.
- ❖ Liaise with potential directors and relate PRC recommendations on scripts submitted by directors. Should the PRC recommendation be negative, ensure that the Director has the opportunity to put her/his case to the Management Committee before final selections are approved.
- ❖ Serve on all production committees with particular responsibilities for liaison between the Director and the Management Committee, and persons responsible for technical aspects of the production, i.e. lighting, sound, design and stage management.
- ❖ Submit the next year's performance calendar for approval by the Management Committee prior to the staging of the November season to allow promotion through the production's programme.

Play Selection Procedure and Criteria

The Committee

The Committee should be elected/appointed on the basis of their perceived ability to:

- ❖ Read plays knowledgeably
- ❖ Read a play within an allotted time span, i.e. one week
- ❖ Rate plays within the established criteria
- ❖ Be available to attend meetings of the PRC arranged by the Program Director

The Procedure

The Program Director will convene a meeting of the PRC as soon as practicable after their election/appointment at the AGM. The first meeting will endeavour to:

- ❖ Define the play selection criteria for consideration by the Management Committee
- ❖ Set deadlines for submission of plays by directors for all the following year's seasons
- ❖ Canvass members and select additional plays for consideration as potential future productions or to offer to potential directors
- ❖ Establish a rating process for the plays being read
- ❖ Establish a timetable on reporting to the Management Committee with recommendations (i.e. including a further meeting to formulate the recommendations and supporting statements)

Criteria

The selection criteria for plays should have considerable scope and encompass all types of productions, i.e. Shakespeare to farce. However, the following questions should be applied as a means of establishing interim guidelines.

- ❖ Would the production be acceptable to and popular with SPP audiences as we understand them?
- ❖ Are the technical requirements achievable?
- ❖ Are we confident that the play could be adequately cast?
- ❖ Do we have an appropriate Director or are we confident we can find one?

Further criteria, which could be considered:

- ❖ The one act season (should it be revived) to give precedence to new directors

Further procedures

In the event of a play, which has been submitted by a Director being considered unsuitable for production, the Program Director will:

- ❖ Seek the Director's views in support of the suitability of the production from his/her point of view
- ❖ Offer an invitation to direct an alternative production suggested by the PRC
- ❖ Convene a further meeting of PRC to discuss outcome of these discussions
- ❖ In the event of the PRC determining not to recommend the play submitted, the Director will be offered the opportunity to put his case to the Management Committee for consideration, together with the PRC recommendation

* **The Management Committee, as producers of SPP productions will, at all times, retain the final right of approval.**

Job Descriptions

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Box Office

Responsibilities

To prepare seating plan and tickets to Committee specification for each performance and have them available for sale to theatre patrons, thus allowing smooth running intake of maximum numbers of viewing audience.

1. Ensure that sufficient tickets are ordered in good time
2. Prepare seating plan for each performance showing marked rows and seat numbers
3. Prepare sufficient tickets marked with date, row and seat number. (Suggest only first four rows for most nights and six for second Friday and Saturday, until bookings commence)
4. Prepare block bookings for groups as contacted. Mark on plan with highlight yellow. Put tickets and copy of seating plan in envelope clearly labelled for group coordinator to collect.
5. Prepare booking sheet either separately or on back of each nights seating plan to keep careful listing of patrons taking tickets, **prior to payment**, for re-sale, for their own use or for collection from the box office at performance time.
6. Label all pre-booked tickets with performance date, **name** of patron, type (adult or concession) and amount to pay on collection.
7. Mark sold seats on seating plan as follows:

Adult	i.e. full price with a	/
Concession	Pensioner or student with	Red highlight
Complimentary	with large	C
8. Prepare sales sheet. As tickets are sold and cash collected, list on sheet the name, performance, type, row, seat and amount paid, plus a running total
9. All monies collected to treasurer and mark on sales sheet the date and amount handed over. Sales sheet to treasurer on completion.

Performance Night

1. Attend box office at 7 pm (1pm matinée) with all tickets, seating plans, booking sheets and sales sheets. Request sufficient float change from the Treasurer to cope with demand
2. Check auditorium to have seating arrangements match the booked seat plan
3. Pre-booked tickets should be readily available for collection and marked off on booking sheet as they are paid for
4. Seating plan should be marked according to type as tickets are sold
5. Collect ticket stubs from FOH, count and reconcile with box office takings and float
6. Write details of reconciliation on booking sheet for the performance, confirm numbers actually present and pass information to the kitchen
7. Prepare a float for the next performance. Pass all other monies, ticket stubs, seating plan, booking sheet and sales sheet to the Treasurer. Obtain receipt
8. Keep list of names and telephone numbers of patrons as far as possible, for personal contact in the future.

Cast

When chosen to be in a play, there are certain things to consider before one makes oneself available. In most cases, the member concerned will be aware whether she/he is under no other major commitment that will interfere with the production of the play. Unforeseen circumstances, of course, cannot be helped.

Primary obligations of the cast are:

10. To be a financial member (subject to club ruling on when membership was acquired)
11. To endeavour at all times to be punctual to rehearsals, meetings and working bees concerning the play
12. To be willing to accept direction from the Director, Stage Manager or delegated person(s) during the course of or pertaining to the play – both on and backstage
13. Respect for props, whether borrowed or owned by SPP
14. To be willing to assist in any aspect concerning the play, as directed by those in charge
15. To behave and act in accordance with the SPP Code of Conduct

Catering

The Committee is to establish rosters for preparation and serving of pre-show sherries and tea, coffee, biscuits and cordial for interval.

1. To ensure that appropriate supplies of tea, coffee, milk, sugar, cordial and biscuits are available
2. To set up cups and biscuits as required. Note: On cabaret nights, assistance will be required during the afternoon to set up tables and chairs
3. Provide each dressing room with a jug of chilled water and sufficient cups for cast members
4. Preparation of tray including hot water, tea, coffee, sugar, milk and biscuits for the cast refreshments. Same to be taken backstage just before interval
5. To ensure that an appropriate supply of sherry and glasses are available for pre-show beverages:
 - ✓ Set up tables in passageway near foyer entrance
 - ✓ Clean tables, store sherry and wash glasses
6. After interval, clean and store supplies and ensure kitchen is in good order
7. As required, tablecloths and tea towels to be laundered.

Director

Responsibilities of the Director are:

- ❖ To select and submit a play for approval by the producer (Southern Peninsula Players Executive Committee)
- ❖ To successfully interpret and direct such approved play or such other play approved by the producer
- ❖ To choose a cast by open audition and to cast preferably from existing SPP members where possible
- ❖ To be answerable in all respects to the producer and to work within the budget and guidelines set by and authorised by the producer.
- ❖ To hold open auditions for all of the characters in the play
- ❖ To work with the producer to choose backstage crew as required including, where deemed necessary, prompt, props, curtain, sound, lighting, wardrobe, make-up, Stage Manager, Assistant Director, assistant to the Director and/or others as from time to time may be needed or desirable for the success of the production
- ❖ To hold rehearsals as determined by the Director and producer
- ❖ To direct the 'blocking' of the play
- ❖ To direct the cast with moves, costumes, personal props, make-up and with role interpretation
- ❖ To select all music for use at the opening, during and at the closing of the performances. In conjunction with the producer, select the music for pre-curtain, interval and post curtain
- ❖ To select and approve all sound and lighting effects as required
- ❖ To give guidance as felt necessary for the design of the set, dodgers and contents of the programmes
- ❖ To de-brief the cast at the end of each rehearsal and segment of rehearsal as a guide to improving the overall performance of the cast and the individual development of each cast member
- ❖ To foster the desire for mutual discussion in developing appreciation, competence and higher skills in creating and developing a successful, interesting and enjoyable production for our cast, crew and audiences
- ❖ Generally, to inspire and lead the cast and crew through successful, happy and enjoyable auditions, rehearsals and performances

Director's Assistant

Position Objective

To act as personal assistant and to provide support to the Director in all areas.

Key responsibilities

General

1. Act as a personal assistant to the Director
2. Ensure that the script is up to date, with current moves and directions noted

Specific Tasks

1. Prior to the commencement of rehearsals, to have studied the script sufficiently to be familiar with all characters and scenes
2. To attend all rehearsals and take note of all moves and stage directions given to the players by the Director. These must be written in the Assistant's copy of the script. It is a good idea to have blank pages between each page, to enable particular moves or stage placings to be recorded
3. To follow the script closely during rehearsals, so as to be able to advise the Director of the page number, if necessary. This enables the Director to follow the action without having to look away at the book
4. To take notes as dictated by the Director during the dialogue, if necessary
5. If unable to be present at any rehearsal, arrange for a substitute and leave the script for that person's use
6. To carry out any other duties as requested by the Director

Front of House

1. The Committee is to establish rosters for Front of House for
 - a. Ushers including door person
 - b. Raffle table
 - c. The selling of sweets
2. The Committee is to delegate the task of preparing the raffle prize
 - a. Arrange appropriate supply of raffle tickets and pens
 - b. Arrange with treasurer the money change float

Responsibilities

To organise, guide and control the FOH crew, including ushers, raffle ticket sellers, chocolate sales, programme issuers and any others from time to time required, to facilitate the smooth and comfortable accommodation of all patrons. To control the house lights and all FOH lights; to coordinate all of the various tasks involved in FOH and to facilitate the smooth opening of each performance.

1. Arrive for duty on all performance nights and matinees at least one hour before curtain up
2. Check with box office to assess the anticipated number of seats required for each performance and to adjust the numbers available, whilst spacing rows to give maximum comfort and to spread the seating over a greater area of the floor on the occasions of smaller audiences. Assess the need for and set out additional seats, at least 15 minutes before curtain up when greater numbers arrive than estimated
3. Ensure that the external lights are switched on – coloured lights over the entrance, flood lights over the car park, passage lights, foyer lights and all house lights, with the exception of the pelmet lights
4. Ensure that tables are available in the foyer for the raffle, in the main hall for the programs and inside the main hall for the lighting console
5. Organise ushers to issue programs and conduct patrons to their seats and assist in this process as groups of people arrive
6. **Collect from all ushers all ticket stubs**, count these and, after the curtain rises, **hand in all stubs to box office** and **check numbers against ticket sales**. Convey information on the numbers in the house to the people staffing the kitchen to enable adequate preparation for the supper interval
7. Communicate with the lighting operator to advise on the state of late arrivals to help in the timing of, “House lights down” and “Curtain up”. **Extinguish the house lights** at the appropriate time and control these lights at each interval and at final curtain
8. Ring the bell to call people to their seats before each “Curtain up”
9. Assist with the moving of the raffle basket from the foyer into the supper room after curtain rises

Membership Secretary

Responsibilities

1. Review existing membership records
2. Maintain individual membership cards and, where relevant and possible, enter theatrical experience
3. Produce and maintain a membership list (including telephone numbers) and distribute copies to all members of the Management Committee
4. Review categories of membership, i.e. full members, subscribers, etc.
5. In liaison with the Treasurer, collect the payment of membership fees by the due date
6. Prepare a proposal for the Management Committee which addresses options for membership development
7. Subject to funds being available, write and produce a membership promotion brochure

Prompt

1. The aim of the Prompt is to do nothing at all. All actors should know their lines and the play well enough to cover themselves
2. It is important to have read the play several times before the first rehearsal
3. Attend all rehearsals, particularly the first and early ones, when blocking is taking place
4. The Prompt should know how each actor reacts when a prompt is necessary
5. All moves should be in your book, such as 'down right' etc.
6. Learn exactly where pauses are. **Do not prompt too soon!** You can usually tell by the movements of the actor. Some experienced actors have a signal if help is needed – for example, touching the ear
7. One thing a Prompt **cannot** do is interrupt and give a forgotten line
8. Make sure your prompt is heard
9. It is important that you **watch the book** instead of the action.

Property Manager

1. The Property Manager and his/her crew assemble and construct all the required properties under the supervision of the Director. The Director must pass on their acceptability for stage business and correctness as to period, form and colour
2. Once properties are approved, they become the responsibility of the Property Manager and his/her crew. Details regarding their placement on stage, and manner and order of removal are determined at briefings with the Stage Manager
3. In any scene change, small props are the first to be removed. This can be done by two crew members who make a circuit of the set, collecting all such items and placing them in a large box or basket. Wall hangings, pictures and fixtures are all marked for easy identification, with their proper positions on the set walls. Chalk marks or tape marks on the stage floor are used to place the floor props in the correct position
4. Hand properties, at least those that are carried on and off the stage by the cast, are usually dispensed and collected from a table placed offstage, near the main entrance of the set. A crew member is assigned to this table and their main duty is to collect the props from the actors as they leave the stage: this will eliminate the exasperating job of locating missing hand props after a performance
5. Boxes with props from each scene and placed on furniture from each scene will save time. Time savers include putting chairs on tables before moving. Two chairs can be stacked seat to seat and carried as one. All small decorative props from tables, buffets, shelves, etc. must be cleared before furniture can be moved.

Publicity Officer

Responsibilities

To ensure that the appropriate publicity is organised for productions as directed by the Executive Committee and to collaborate with the Director regarding special needs.

Note: Publicity expenditure must not exceed \$500

Standard Procedures

1. Dodgers – preparation of layout, organisation of printing and distribution
2. Correspondence – letters requesting support for publicity, including copy of dodger for the following:
 - a) Community groups
 - b) Radio and TV stations
 - c) Theatre groups (Peninsula)
 - d) Peninsula schools
3. Prepare and submit advertisements to:
 - a) Local newspapers
 - b) Stage Whispers
4. Prepare and submit notices for What's On columns in:
 - a) The Age
 - b) Herald Sun
 - c) Theatrecraft (Victorian Drama League)
 - d) Stage Whispers
5. Communicate with Arts Editors of:
 - a) The Mail
 - b) Southern Peninsula Gazette
 - c) The Flyer
6. Arrange photography for cast and stage action
7. Dress display boards for foyer, Port Phillip Plaza and library
8. Prepare layout of program and arrange for printing of it

The Publicity Officer may delegate to others any of the tasks involved, but he/she remains accountable to the Executive for the execution of same

Any further creative ideas for promotion of a production are most welcome, providing they meet with the approval of the producers (President and Committee).

Secretary

1. Post Office Box 197 (Rosebud) to be checked on a regular basis. The Treasurer and Secretary both have keys
2. Ring and remind all Committee members of meetings
3. Take minutes of all meetings. Nothing fancy, just a record of the meeting. Type up, and a copy goes in minutes book and also a copy to each of the Committee members. This is for Committee, General and Annual General Meetings
4. Follow up with any letters or business that is your responsibility from meetings or any Committee members have asked you to do
5. After AGM, financial statement and public officer forms to be sent in. This will need a cheque of \$33.00 to be sent with it to office consumer and Business Affairs within one month of meeting
6. Rights of performance – this must be applied for as soon as possible after play has been decided on. Apply through script suppliers (e.g. Dominie). Provide all information such as dates, times, where, what play, seating
7. Bookings for Rosebud Memorial Hall to be applied for after July 1st for the following year. These requests will be considered and, if approved, will be confirmed by September 30th
8. Update members list (an ongoing thing)
9. All members to be notified of meetings, set building, coming events. This will be usually done through the Newsletter
10. Send flowers, cards, etc. when necessary

Set Construction

Responsibilities

To take the set design, either from the model or from the Director's description and, with the assistance of members, construct the set **within the allocated budget** set by the producers (SPP Executive Committee). To make the best use of the playing area, whilst allowing adequate space for furniture and props both onstage and offstage, all necessary exits and entrances, backgrounds, masking and generally to create the 'picture' of the venue for each scene, allowing for accurate use of sight lines.

1. Write and provide for the set building working bees, a task list and a work schedule, preferably grouped in highly skilled (i.e. carpentry work and electrics), semi-skilled and general
2. Arrange to bring the stage cloth from under the stage. Lay out the stage cloth and **staple round the edges** to provide a **flat, safe and sound-absorbing** floor covering
3. Chalk in sight lines, striking the base from the **left and right front row seats**
4. Chalk in the foot lines of all flats, doorways and windows using sight lines to ensure adequate masking of off stage movement and illumination. **Allow at least 80 cm** between back wall of stage and first upstage row of flats of back cloth for cross traversing of stage off set
5. **Starting from stage left** or from the Prompt corner, position and strap all upstage flats to theatre cross beams on the rear wall of the stage area **to give safe rigidity to scenery**. If more than one row of flats is needed, strap the second row to the rear row of flats and, if necessary, use triangle supports to provide additional stiffness. Angled corner flats and stage left and stage right flats are fitted next and strapped to the mezzanines. Corner flats often need top strapping across the inside angle of the adjacent corner flats to provide additional, and sometimes the only, rigidity
6. **All flats must be chocked at the front and back foot for safety reasons** to eliminate movement by impact
7. Doors are normally to be hung to open offstage with hinges to be upstage. (There are occasionally exceptional circumstances, dictated by essential requirements of a scene, when a door might be hung to open onstage.)
8. All pelmet borders to be adjusted to hide the top edges of the flats as far as possible
9. When the set is to be painted and not wall papered, to avoid visible backstage movement and illumination, all visible abutting edges of flats are to be vertically covered by masking tape before painting
10. All mirrors and glass faced wall hangings are soaped to eliminate unwanted glare
11. Paint and decorate only surfaces visible to the audience.

Stage Manager

1. Secure a copy of the play and study the script before attending rehearsals. Use this script for underscoring warning cues, action cues, light cues and so forth
2. During the absence of the Director, or any Committee member backstage, the Stage Manager has full authority over actors and crew
3. The length of time the Stage Manager attends rehearsals, preceding the first technical rehearsal, depends upon the Director's need for his/her services and the complexity of the production. In all cases he/she must attend rehearsals, in advance of the technical rehearsals, a sufficient number of times to become familiar with the sequence of scenes, the actors, stage business, use of props and placement of furniture
4. Make out an actor's checklist, containing the name of the actor, the character (s)he plays and his/her telephone number. Post a copy of the list where everyone backstage can see it. Insist on all actors checking in as they enter the theatre
5. Draw a plan of the property and furniture layout for each scene. Pay attention to each key prop such as a fan, letter, etc. that must be placed by the props crew before the opening of each scene. Check and note on your plan the position of doors and windows. Are they to be open or closed at the beginning of the scene?
6. Check sound effects controlled backstage. Telephone bells or buzzers are usually operated by the sound crew
7. Become familiar with the operation of the following stage equipment before the first rehearsal:
 - a) House lights
 - b) Lights controlled from the Stage Manager's desk
 - c) Warning bell for audience (FOH)
 - d) Controls for the main curtain
 - e) Asbestos curtain
 - f) Fire hose and extinguishers
 - g) Backstage work lights
 - h) House phone system and walkie talkies
 - i) First aid supplied
8. Keep an accurate time schedule of all dress rehearsals and performances, showing opening and closing time of each scene, elapsed time between scenes and acts and the reason for any delay during a scene change

Stage Manager's Operational Checklist

1. Check front of stage to see that nothing has been left in front of the main curtain
2. Give the first warning call to the actors 30 minutes before the curtain and a second call 15 minutes later. The final call is given at 8.00 (or 2.00 if for a matinee) at which time all actors who open the play should be on stage
3. Between first and last warning calls, the Stage Manager should check all scenery, lights and props for the opening act
4. Under no circumstances should the play be opened until the majority of the audience is seated. Information of the condition of the house is available from FOH
5. After receiving word that the audience is in and seated, the command 'Places' is given. All crew members clear the stage and the actors take their positions for the opening
6. Turn off all backstage work lights
7. Over the headphones, call the lighting operator to check on lights and, if ready, have house lights dimmed
8. When house lights are completely out, give cue for the opening of the curtain. Enter on time schedule the exact time the curtain opened
9. Enter all times of curtains at the end of the acts or scenes on schedule
10. Do not turn on the work lights backstage until the auditorium lights are up. This can create a bad light spill under the front curtain
11. During dress rehearsals, the back stage crew will not begin a scene change until the 'Strike' command has been given by the Stage Manager as the Director may want a repeat of a scene or a complete act
12. Three minutes before the end of interval, sound the audience bell three times
13. Note the exact closing time of the play on the time schedule. Complete the total playing time and total shift time. Give the Director a copy of this record
14. Before leaving the theatre, make sure all backstage lights are off, including dressing room lights. Check that all backstage heaters are off and that all backstage doors are secure