

THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON

STUDENTS' UNION THEATRE GROUP CONSTITUTION 2016/2017

1. Name

- a. The name of the society will be "The University of Southampton Students' Union Theatre Group" known simply as "SUSU Theatre Group" or "Theatre Group" (hereinafter referred to as **the Society**).

2. Aims

- a. The aim of the Society is to provide opportunities to students interested in pursuing any area of the theatrical arts. These areas include performing in, writing, directing, producing and viewing shows. The Society is there to provide a training service in all of these areas.

3. Membership

- a. Any union member or member of staff shall be eligible to become a member of **the Society** upon payment of a subscription fee determined by the committee.
- b. In order for a union member or member of staff to participate in Society productions they must hold **Theatre Group** membership.
 - i. Staff and Associate members shall be entitled to the rights and privileges of members except that they may not hold office or vote.
 - ii. Persons who have ceased to be members of the Society shall have no rights or interests in the property and funds of **the Society**.
 - iii. Any member expelled from **the Society** for whatever reason, or who resigns, cannot obtain a refund in their membership fee.
 - iv. Members can be expelled from **the Society** at Committee's discretion.
 - v. Any member expelled from **the Society** for whatever reason may appeal to the **Student Groups Committee**.

4. Officers

- a. A committee of elected representatives will oversee, and be responsible for (with limited liability) the actions of **the Society**.
- b. This committee will consist of the following officers with their roles being defined below:

- i. President: will organise and chair all society meetings where possible and be responsible for overseeing the general running of **the Society**. They are also responsible for overseeing the wellbeing of the committee members.
- ii. Vice-President: Will fulfil the responsibilities of the President when they are otherwise indisposed, aid the president with responsibilities tasked to them by the Committee, and be responsible for the booking of space for rehearsals and committee requirements when required.
- iii. Secretary: responsible for taking minutes at every society meeting, following up on action points before committee, and is in charge of the Committee swear jar.
- iv. Treasurer: responsible for maintaining **the Society's** accounts, assisting in the budgeting and claiming process for all productions, as well as monitoring membership of **the Society**.
- v. Publicity Officer: responsible for promoting **the Society** as a whole and its productions through the use of a regular newsletter, the management of social media, liaising with media outlets and producing specific publicity for individual productions and events when necessary.
- vi. Social Secretary (up to 2): responsible for organising any social trips and events for **the Society**. Up to two people can run together for this position, if elected they will have one committee vote each.
- vii. Tours Officer: responsible for organising the accommodation, transport and venue applications for **the Society's** Edinburgh show(s) as well as acting as Show Liaison for any and all Edinburgh shows if possible. If not possible, Committee elect show liaisons as usual. If possible, this elected liaison will be a presence in Edinburgh and in Southampton for the rehearsal process. They also assume responsibility for finding new opportunities for the society to attend or perform at other festivals throughout their tenure.
 1. The outgoing Tours Officer will be required to attend committee after the AGM, however they will not be able to vote on society matters.
They will be classed as non-committee members.
- viii. Workshop Officer (up to 2): responsible for organising and running the weekly workshops, any professional workshops and overseeing the Showcase production, including finding a venue. Up to two people can run together for this position, if elected they will have one committee vote each. Where possible they will act as show liaison for the Freshers' Show.
- ix. Webmaster: responsible for maintaining and developing **the Society's** online infrastructure and keeping content accurate and up-to-date.
- x. Ordinary Committee Member (up to 2): assists with any tasks not explicitly covered by other positions including taking the minutes when the Secretary is

unavailable. They will also function as a point of contact between members of **the Society** and the committee. In the event that no member of committee runs for Original Writing officer once elected on to committee, Ordinary Member will oversee and promote original writing feedback in the way they feel is most suitable when there is interest from writers.

- xi. Tech Liaison: (This role will be elected from within the existing committee) is responsible for liaising between **Theatre Group** Committee and the **Stage Technicians' Society** Committee (herein referred to as **StageSoc**) and, if possible, providing tech support for any Independent shows.
 - xii. Production Liaison: (This role will be elected from within the existing committee) responsible for providing advice and support for all show production teams that begin during their season, and providing a production schedule for each team if necessary. As Production Liaison, they must also ensure that production teams keep on track with their production schedule
 - xiii. Librarian: (This role will be elected from within the existing committee) responsible for maintaining and running the play library as well as adding to it. It is up to the discretion of the Committee as to how much money is dedicated to the Play Library.
 - xiv. Original Writing Officer: (This role will be elected from within the existing committee) responsible for overseeing and promoting original writing feedback through regular drop-in sessions and any other form of support that is deemed appropriate by the officer and committee, when there is interest from writers.
- c. In addition to duties listed above, all officers may be required to fulfil ad hoc duties at the discretion of the committee.

5. Committee

- a. The President shall chair all meetings. In their absence, the Vice-President will assume responsibility. The President or Vice-President must be present at all meetings.
- b. All committee members are subject to expulsion if they fail to adhere to their duties in an appropriate manner. This decision must be voted on and passed by consensus of the remainder of committee.
- c. The quorum for any committee meeting shall be 50% plus 1 additional officer, including either the President or Vice-President in the chair. (i.e. for a committee of 12, the quorum will be 7).

- d. Any member of **the Society** may attend committee meetings, but shall not be entitled to vote upon matters discussed at that meeting.
- e. Any member of the committee, who fails to attend 3 consecutive committee meetings without submitting apologies beforehand or consistently fails to attend committee meetings without appropriate reason, may be asked to resign their post at the discretion of the committee. This will not affect their membership of **the Society**.

6. General Meetings

- a. Where possible, the **PA** and **Student Groups Officers** shall be informed of, and invited to at least seven days beforehand, any General Meeting held by **the Society**.
- b. The quorum for all General Meetings shall be 8 members of the committee (including the President or Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer) and 25% of the remaining **Society** membership.
- c. Where possible, the President and/or Vice-President will be responsible for informing all members at least seven days before any general meeting, through **the Society's** mailing list and on **the Society's** social media. If this is unfeasible, members should be informed as soon as possible. This must be at least twenty-four hours in advance.
- d. Annual General Meetings:
 - i. There shall be an Annual General Meeting in the spring term at which officers for the coming session shall be elected.
 - ii. Nominations should be opened at least seven days before, but will also be received at the meeting.
- e. Extraordinary General Meetings:
 - i. Extraordinary General Meetings may be called by the President, Vice-President or Secretary or on written application from at least 20% of **the Society's** membership giving reasons for which the meeting is desired.
 - ii. An Extraordinary General Meeting requested by **Society** members should be held within two weeks of being called.

7. Elections

- a. Elections to the committee shall take place at the Annual General Meeting.
- b. Only Society members who are full-time students of the University may nominate themselves for positions. This can be done in one of the following ways:

- i. By stating their intent in written form at or before the Annual General Meeting.
 - ii. By informing the President or Vice-President of their intention once nominations open.
- c. Elections shall be by ballot or by show of hands as decided by the committee prior to the elections.
- d. The chair of the meeting will not vote in elections, however in the event of a tie, their vote will act as the decider.
- e. If for any reason **the Society** decides not to elect a full committee before the end of the season, a President, Secretary and Treasurer at least shall be elected and they shall be responsible for ensuring remaining members are elected at the beginning of the following season.
- f. In the case where a committee member resigns or is expelled before the end of their session then an Extraordinary General Meeting will be held, and the same voting process will be conducted as the Annual General Meeting but for the one position that is vacant only. Until this meeting, the committee will either share the responsibilities of the vacant position or delegate to another committee member.
- g. All outgoing committee members must give their corresponding incoming member a hand over within 4 weeks of term time after the AGM.

8. Society Administration

- a. The Secretary shall keep minutes of all Committee Meetings and General Meetings which should be available to **Society** members, the **PA** and the **Student Groups Committees** on request.
 - i. Minutes can only be made public after being approved by committee.
- b. The Treasurer shall maintain the accounts of **the Society**, which shall be available for examination and discussion at the Annual General Meeting, and to **Society** members, the **PA** and the **Student Groups Committees** within seven days of being requested.
- c. The **Officers of the Society** are jointly liable for the proper management of **the Society's** finances and ensuring that the Union's Grant Aid (funding) regulations are applied.

9. Productions

- a. It is recommended that committee hold pitches for a set number of productions per year subject to availability. Any other ideas for performances outside of these slots must be presented to committee in an Independent pitching slot for full discussion. The current specific slots are:

- i. Halloween Show in October.
 - ii. Winter Show in Semester 1.
 - iii. Freshers' Show in Semester 1.
 1. This can only be performed by **Society** members who have not been involved in any other Theatre Group production, with the exception of Showcase.
 - iv. Show in a Week.
 - **The Society** may have up to two Show in a Week's per academic year. Committee must open pitches at least twice for the slot.
 - The pitching team must select a week which coincides with as few PA productions as possible, and should take in to consideration time needed for members' revision during exam period
 3. This show will have a limited budget when needed, and one week to rehearse and perform in.
 4. All proceeds of this show will go to a charity chosen by the pitching team or selected collectively by the cast and crew of the production before the week starts. In the latter case, the production team must consult with committee once a charity has been chosen..
 - v. Spring Show in Semester 2.
 - vi. Summer Show in Semester 2.
 - vii. At least one Edinburgh Play in August when a viable option.
 - viii. A Showcase of original writing by **SUSU** members, excerpts of shows and improvisation that can be performed at any time throughout the year, usually Semester 2.
- b. In addition to these slots, **the Society** will provide at least three opportunities a year
for teams to pitch for an Independent slot. (see Article 11)
- c. Every production must have at least one director and at least one producer directly responsible for seeing the play through from start to finish.
 - d. **Committee** should ensure no director should have precast a production before auditions and call-backs. If a director is found to be doing so, **the committee** may take action as they feel is suitable from asking the director to not have a say in casting to requesting they step down from the production, or even the society.

- This includes approaching individuals to audition stating that the member would be suited for a specific part. Any director may encourage anyone to audition, but it should not be implied that they are wanted for a specific role.
 - In original writing pieces, roles should not be written for specific actors.
- i. At least one producer or director is required to give a production update to the committee every week.
- d. Every production will also be allocated a Show Liaison from the committee. They will be responsible for collecting and compiling show feedback, giving weekly feedback at each committee meeting on the progress of the rehearsal process and liaising with cast and production team. They must not be involved in any way with the production.
- i. The President will aid in compiling show feedback. If the President is involved in the production in any way, the responsibility will fall to the Vice-President. If the Vice-President is also involved in the production, the responsibility will fall to a member of committee nominated by committee at a prior meeting.
 - ii. When presenting the feedback at each committee meeting all production team members of the show in question, as well as non-committee members, can be asked to leave at the Show Liaison's discretion.
 - iii. In the case that an issue does arise, the Show Liaison may discuss with the committee first how to proceed or use their discretion to decide on the appropriate course of action, ensuring they inform committee as soon as possible.
 - iv. If a show contains a scene that may be deemed to be potentially uncomfortable or distressing for the cast as a whole, a cast member or the production team, it is the responsibility of the Show Liaison to ensure they have spoken to the parties involved and to make sure these scenes are handled with care and sensitivity before they are rehearsed.
- e. Directly after a production's performance run, cast, production team, members of the society and audience members will be encouraged to leave feedback on the production online. This feedback will only be available to the Show Liaison, who will organise and compile it to present it in a committee meeting.
- i. This post-show feedback will be made anonymous and stripped of any material deemed non-constructive by the show liaisons, for instance comments of a personal nature, shall be omitted by the show liaison before being presented to the committee. Before presenting post-show feedback, the Show Liaison may use their discretion to inform the most senior member of committee who is not involved in the production in order to seek advice regarding feedback that may

be highly sensitive and upsetting (but still necessary for discussion) for anyone involved in the production. In the unlikely event that feedback is deemed to be of a nature that may be highly emotionally/psychologically distressing for anyone involved, the committee may use their discretion to give this feedback privately to the parties concerned and not release it publicly to other members.

- ii. At the Show Liaison's discretion, non-committee may be asked to leave for a part or all of this feedback.
- f. Every production must have a budget devised by the production team, which must be presented to the committee upon request and then passed. An initial budget must first be presented to and passed by the Committee at the beginning of the production process and then finalised no less than three weeks before the show's opening night. If necessary edits to the budget must occur between the budget's finalisation and the show's run, the production team must ask permission of committee. If permission is not granted, any losses resulting from spending not approved by committee will not be covered.
 - i. When requested, the Treasurer or Production Liaison will provide help in creating an initial budget.
- g. Production team members must not be committed to more than one overlapping production slot (not including Independents). This is up to the discretion of the committee.
- h. The committee will liaise with the Students' Union regarding the proposed production dates and venues for productions for the coming year.

10. Pitching process

- a. For every production slot there will be a pitching meeting where any union member or member of staff may pitch a play to the committee. This can be attended by any member of the Society.
- b. The meetings shall be chaired by the President or Vice-President. The chair must not be a member of the production team for any pitch, and will still be eligible to vote. If both the President and Vice-President are unable, then a member of the committee will be assigned as Chair at the discretion of the committee prior to the meeting.
- c. If a committee member is part of the production team for any show pitched at the

time of pitching, then that member shall not be allowed to vote on that specific slot. d. The quorum of voters for any specific pitching meeting slot shall be 50% of the

committee including one out of the President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. (i.e. for a committee of 13, only 6 may pitch with the quorum being 7).

- i. In the instance where this quorum is not met, an Extraordinary General Meeting shall be held with the voting process following the same format as for elections, but with a discussion.
- e. All pitches must be submitted to the chair by the date specified by the committee. This date must be made known to the Society members at least a week prior to the meeting.
 - i. This chair in question must comply with Article 10(b)
- f. All committee members must read all information about each pitch before the decision meeting.
- g. The committee requires as complete a version of the script as possible to be submitted with the pitch by the deadline stated above.
 - i. If it is a devised piece, then sufficient evidence of intended content and devising process must be provided that satisfies committee.
- h. The committee reserves the right to re-open nominations (RON) for any pitch.
- i. The committee shall formalise in writing the intended pitching dates as soon as is realistically practical.
- j. Any potentially sensitive scenes will be highlighted to committee during the pitching process.
- k. When opening and publicizing pitching sessions, the committee should give a rough suggestion (with a minimum and maximum) on the cast size that they deem is appropriate for each specific slot based on the size of and interest shown by the society.
 - i. Any member of the society may pitch a show that is smaller than the minimum cast size but the committee reserves the right to use cast size as a deciding factor in voting on the pitch.
 - ii. Any member of the society may pitch a double-bill for Annex slots to increase cast size of the production, but there should be at least one director and producer on each individual show, and there should be a clear link between the two shows chosen.
 - iii. In the situation where there is one pitch vs RON for a slot, **the committee** must make a clear decision based on the pitch in its current state to whether the show is selected or if the committee must RON. However **the committee** may suggest in pitch feedback that if the team were to double-bill, it potentially would be more

successful, but it is up to the pitching team to decide if they wish to and to then find a corresponding show and team members. If asked by the pitch team, the **Committee** should help with this process.

- I. If a show slot receives no pitches, with Committee having opened the slot twice, it is up to Committee to decide whether to take the show into 'Committee Care'.
 - i. 'Committee Care' means that the Committee take the responsibility of the show slot into their own hands, generating a production team (that doesn't have to be within Committee, just approved and organized by), selecting a show (a show that, rather than satisfying creative impulse, adheres logistically to the demands of the slot and provides equal opportunities for members.
 - ii. In compiling a Committee care show, it is important the Committee is aware of the importance of the nature of the issue and do best to make themselves free for any emergency meetings. In times of hostility it is important that issues are dealt with in person.
 - iii. The show committee choose must be as appropriate for the slot as possible. As Committee putting on the show, it is imperative no committee positions are abused. The show must be executed with a professionalism that represents the societies' ethos.
 - iv. 'Committee Care' should be about creating opportunity for the members of the society rather than satisfying the creative desires of a Committee member.
 - v. A working budget should be generated and the show should aim to be as financially sustainable as possible.
 - vi. Throughout the preliminary discussion period, nothing about the show should be announced to society members until Committee have confirmed the budget, production team, rights (in event of) and show itself.

11. Independent Shows

- a. **The Society** will provide three opportunities a year for teams to pitch for the money in the Independent Theatre Fund.
 - i. If this fund reaches zero, the committee will provide £200 as a top up if possible.
- b. These shows have no restrictions in cast size, gender split, location or length.
- c. All profits from these shows shall go back into the Independent Theatre Fund.
 - i. The Independent Theatre Fund is an accumulation of the money made by previous Independent shows. Expenditure for Independents is to come from this fund and profits will return to it, but the Committee holds the right to utilise this

capital in any means they see fit to benefit the wider members of the society.
This may occur if the Independent Fund is larger than the Society's Fund itself.

- d. Any successful pitching teams will have to sign and abide by the Independent Show Contract (see Appendix A). Any infringement of this will result in the Society withdrawing their funding and support.
- e. Committee will hold independent pitching sessions upon request at committee meetings.

12. Edinburgh

- a. **The Society** will endeavour to take up at least one show per year to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe under the name of **Gone Rogue Productions**.
- b. Shows must pitch to the **Theatre Group** committee with a provisional fundraising plan to be developed with the Tours Officer if the pitch is successful.
- c. **The Society** takes ultimate financial responsibility for any and all shows.
- d. In line with the Tours Officer's responsibilities, they will take charge of accommodation, transport and venue application for any and all shows and act as their Show Liaison where possible (see above – 4.b.vii).
- e. Committee reserves the right to recall the show in lieu of any behaviour it deems unacceptable.

13. Constitutional matters

- a. The Secretary of **the Society** and the **Democracy and Creative Industries Department** shall both keep a copy of the constitution and it shall be available to the membership at all times.
- b. The committee shall have the power to interpret any matter within this constitution.
- c. This constitution shall be reviewed by the Officers at the end of each active session.
- d. It can only be changed subject to a 2/3 majority at a General Meeting. All changes must be ratified by the **PA Committee**.

This constitution was written by **Theatre Group's** Secretary and Treasurer Eliya Beachy and Sam Beath, and passed at the Annual General Meeting on 15th March 2010 under the presidency of Alexis Forss. Amended by committees 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015, 2015-2016, 2016-2017. This replaces all previous constitutions recorded.

APPENDIX A: INDEPENDENT SHOW CONTRACT

Pitching and Finance

Theatre Group will provide £_____ which will be allocated in discussion with Theatre Group Committee. In the event of a loss, this will be taken out of TG's investment before coming out of the production team's personal finances. The Independent Theatre slot has no restrictions on cast or venue. The creative decisions lie entirely with the production team, provided they comply with Theatre Group's present values. Teams must have an approved budget and a rationale for the investment from Theatre Group. Theatre Group committee has the right to reclaim their funding based on the intention to show inappropriate content that is not endorsed by the society. The team's own money can be invested into the project in addition to the amount asked for from Theatre Group but Theatre Group is not liable for loss of that money. The profits from the show go into the Theatre Group Independent Theatre Fund.

Conditions of the Independent Slot

Any breach of these will result in a withdrawal of Theatre Group support. The Independent Theatre Slots are provided 'In association with SUSU Theatre Group'. Participants must be fully paid Theatre Group members. Theatre Group and Performing Arts logos must be used on any promotional materials produced for the project. Insurance must be fully covered for any and all performances. If for any reason the insurance of the performance is not covered by the Theatre Group insurance, it is the responsibility of both the production team of the project and Theatre Group committee to ensure cover is secured before any performance is carried out. Shows must be cast via open auditions.. The Independent shows can be performed at any time but they cannot clash directly (the same days as) with any other Theatre Group show slot. Theatre Group committee has the right to select up to two Show Liaisons to provide communication and feedback between the production team and the committee. Theatre Group committee has the right to be provided with any information regarding the show by the production team both during the production and after the production has been concluded. Feedback will be provided via the Show Liaison(s) in accordance with (Article 9.e, Theatre Group constitution). Any props and/or costumes purchased for the production will be given to Theatre Group to be added to the Performing Arts house or auctioned off.

Theatre Group committee

Theatre Group committee promises to provide support to the crew and cast of the winning team(s) for the Independent slot. The teams have the right to advice and assistance from the committee including production assistance and tech support from their Tech Liaison. Their Production Liaison will provide production support to the team and feedback to committee on any issues. Theatre Group committee will promote winning pitches through the newsletter, on the website and through social media.

Signatures

THEATRE GROUP

I, a representative of Theatre Group committee, understand and agree to the terms of this contract, and agree to provide funding and support to the specifications laid out above:

Signed: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

PRODUCTION TEAM

I, a representative of the Independent show production team, hereby understand and agree to the conditions set forth in this contract and sign representing the entirety of the production team:

Signed: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____

WITNESS

I, the undersigned, have witnessed the signing of this contract:

Signed: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____