

STAMP Resources

Contracts

Why are they important?

- To know your rights from all sides of the process to ensure when things go wrong there is a backup.
- Main protection
- Sets out all expectations for the period of the contract
- Avoids exploitation.

General Notes about contracts

- The union/equity get involved once things go wrong
- Common mistake - people only start looking at the contract once it starts going wrong
- Common mistakes - lots of venues copy each other's contracts and becomes un-clear
- Ensure there is clarity on both sides
- Contract's don't need to be super long - make them as simple as possible and then get help with the legalisation side of things.
- Terms of agreement can be out of date - ensure you look at this.
- Make sure to be consistent with wording and clear- e.g. project be more specific.
- Writers - The rights card are all details that a writer is entitled to. (The Writers Guild) Found all on the website.
- Southbank centre - Venues always send standard contracts make sure to challenge and ask those questions if things seem un-clear. Venues send out hundreds of contracts so some details won't be relevant to your project.
- Outline clearly the payments by highlighting what's expected and how it will be presented by the due date. STAGE EACH PAYMENT-Especially for when producers come into project late on.
- If you are a member of the Union, there is care for helping with overseeing contracts - lawyers can have a look. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.
- People who don't expect contracts are usually ones who are not experienced.

Co-Collaboration

- Be careful when looking online. American contracts are VERY different.
- Copyright - has to be original and has to be fixed. If it's fixed it means that you have some sort of documentation or writing to prove that it came from you.
- To avoid copyright, have a contract for a scribe to document the rehearsal process.

- Ideas for contracts in the creative process - one person makes all the decisions, everyone has shared copyright and rights to the performance, having a scribe etc.
- The contract needs to cover what you're doing - make sure its specific to your project. E.g. don't have a writer contract that has an actor's terms.
- Defining everything that you plan on doing and all the roles to avoid issues.
- Power to negotiate - don't always feel the need to say yes. Make sure you say your terms if anything is going to change. E.g. if actor ends up becoming more of a director in the devising process.
- If company splits up and changes make sure there is agreements regarding who owns the work etc.
- A lot of companies fall out because of the contracts. You may be friends etc but things can change with stress and a working situation!
- Look into termination clauses and have them in place for the project.
- Clear on first refusal and ensure there is a time scale on making the decision.

R&D

- Don't just assume that if you were involved in R&D you will be involved in the production.
- Don't be afraid just to put in the contract the time scale and a definition of the role at the beginning of the contract.
- Contract should be broken down in two stages - one the R&D and then the production etc.
- Commissioning vs R&D – difficulty in payments between rehearsal/creation time and then when it becomes a full-scale production. Make sure there is a contract in each stage.
- The writing fee - the fee for the writing of the work. Rules found in The Musical Theatre kit on the Writers' Guild website. Can set out fees etc. with percentages to ensure it is fair between.

Going on Tour

- Ensure you have a clear contract with the venue!
- Ensure you have insurance
- Ensure you have clear dates
- What the theatre can do for marketing e.g. when can they promote on social media, when do they need flyers
- Check clarity on costs and timings - box office, technician, get in, rehearsal time, are you going to be able to store stuff?
- Clear on payment dates around ticket revenue to avoid chasing the venues up.
- Health and safety - how to behave and responsibilities and obligations.
- Fire safety procedure - ALWAYS ASK.
- Ask what they expect from you.
- Ask venue for a breakdown of costs.
- Check public liability insurance
- Get contract in before tickets go on sale.
- READ AGREEMENTS AND CONTRACTS! (The writers guild)
- Split roles out between writer, performer etc to manage your costs.

Main Points

- Be clear and consistent
- Be careful with wording - don't be afraid to just point out what something means.
- Have a time scale for EVERYTHING - what each role entails and how you are going to present that you've completed it by that date for payment.
- Challenge anything that doesn't look right - don't be afraid to say No.
- It doesn't need to be long - the simpler the better as long as it includes everything you need!

About STAMP:

STAMP is a group of venues and organisations based in London who supports and produce new theatre and performance work. STAMP's mission is practical collective action to improve the ways in which artists are supported by our organisations and the industry, and are valued in society more widely.

Find out more at www.stamlondon.org