



Manchester Universities  
Technical Theatre Society

# Working With Us





# MUTTS

*Manchester Universities Technical Theatre Society*

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Chair's note
- 1.2. Who we are & what we do
- 1.3. Hire types and scope
- 1.4. Communicating with us

## 2. Planning For Your Event

- 2.1. Example Week-long Production
- 2.2. Timescales
- 2.3. Venue Information and Site Visit
- 2.4. Lighting
- 2.5. Sound
- 2.6. Operators and Crew

## 3. Expectations

- 3.1. Equipment responsibility
- 3.2. Professional Etiquette
- 3.3. Health and Safety
- 3.4. Discounts
- 3.5. Timescale on invoices
- 3.6. Photos and Media
- 3.7. First Meeting Checklist

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1. Chair's note

MUTTS was set up to provide technical theatre services to student societies based in Manchester. We've provided crew and equipment for everything from Pangaea to Musical Theatre. This gives our members valuable practical experience in this industry we work in whilst providing professional and high quality technical production to your event.

We're all unpaid volunteers and don't aim to make a profit from your production. This is one of my favourite parts of the society – we're here to provide you with sound and lighting for your production and training to our members.

We're lucky enough to have a large cohort of alumni, whose expertise and time have been a major factor in our success so far. Experience is key to this industry, and this experience directly affects the quality of the service we can offer you.

We look forward to working with you in the future.

Louis Bond- Chair (2018/19)

## 1.2. Who we are & what we do

Manchester Universities Technical Theatre Society (MUTTS) is a group of Undergraduate, Postgraduate and Alumni members with a passion for technical theatre. Technical theatre as a discipline covers Lighting, Sound and Rigging for a variety of events.

Our society's mission statement states that we aim:

- To provide technical theatre services such as lighting, sound and staging, to student groups in Manchester for theatre, musicals, comedy and other events.
- To provide an environment for students with an interest in technical theatre to be trained and gain practice.

The first point shows that we are here primarily to ensure our equipment functions in the way you need, safely and on time. However, we also provide our members the opportunity to gain experience for our discipline, which is equally as important.

The scope of what we define as technical theatre services is defined by:

- Rental of technical equipment
- Advice, Design and Planning for Lighting and Sound at your event
- Rigging and operating technical equipment

Our Committee consists of 5 positions detailed on our website (<https://www.mutts.org.uk>)

## 1.3. Hire types and scope

We aim to define, with you, what you need for your production during the initial meeting. The level of service we provide depends on your needs and budget – we offer equipment hire, set up and crew to man it for the duration of your event as well. Below is an overview of what we can offer for your next event:

**Dry Hire** - Hire of technical equipment only with no crew or installation. We can deliver this equipment to your venue and collect it afterwards if required.

**Equipment Hire With Installation** - Hire of technical equipment with an installation crew included. We will deliver the equipment to your venue and provide crew to install it and make sure it is all operational before handing over control to you. Our crew will not be present during the event so you must ensure you have enough people to control the equipment supplied (e.g. a Lighting Operator and a Sound Operator for a small theatrical performance).

**Full Technical Production** (AKA “Wet Hire”) - A combination of the above along with crew to remain with the equipment throughout the duration of your event, operating Lighting and Sound desks for your production and carrying out any maintenance where necessary.

It is worth noting at this point we as a society don't offer set building, ticketing or house services. We can however provide contact to other societies offering set building.

## 1.4. Communicating with us

Communication with us can happen through email to our committee, our Facebook page and also face to face meetings. We ask for contact details of your society and a point of contact for your production. Any other contact details needed will be confirmed in our initial meeting.

Our society consists of students and alumni – we have full time responsibilities other than the society. We therefore may not always be contactable however aim to reply to emails within 24 hours. Please bear with us in busier weeks (weeks 6-12 of semester 1 and 2) as often we have multiple events on at the same time.

We will make available our emergency contact details to you, however these should only be used in an emergency. Planning and ample notice are key to these not being needed. Training for your needs (i.e.: operating a desk for a dry hire) will be given and helps mitigate the need for this.

## 2. Planning For Your Event

### 2.1. Example Week-long Production

Although each show is different, an example timeline of a 4-night run is given below. This varies job to job and we will confirm this to you in advance. Ensuring we have enough time to set up for a show safeguards your event starting on time – keep the set up and load out time in mind when booking a venue as this is often overlooked resulting in lost time for rehearsals/your event.

Day	Description
Sunday	Load in and set up of equipment
Monday	Lighting Focus, Tech rehearsal
Tuesday	Dress Rehearsal
Wednesday – Saturday	Running Nights
Sunday	Load out

### 2.2. Timescales

When planning technical support for events, particularly larger ones, it is crucial that we have enough notice from you to allow us to ensure that we can supply the required equipment and people to fulfil your needs. Timescale varies by job, but for a standard theatrical show or one-off concert the following example would be sufficient:

**8 Weeks** – Initial contact. Notice of the event - dates, contact details and venue location.

**6 Weeks** – Meeting to start quote, site visit at venue (if applicable). If possible, please bring a basic plan of the space you're using showing set, audience, desired lighting etc., it doesn't need to be technical - we can do that for you.

**4 Weeks** – Quote finalisation. Band Rider confirmed, plan of any lighting specials needed confirmed.

More complicated events may require more discussion and face-to-face meetings to ensure that every aspect of the production is covered in enough detail. If you have any questions feel free to contact us so we can ensure there is ample time to plan technical support for your event.

We pride ourselves at providing services for so many events, and only on rare occasion do we regretfully have to turn down jobs. Prior notice, planning and communication with us reduces this risk to your event.

## 2.3. Venue Information and Site Visit

We've worked across many venues in the Greater Manchester area so in a lot of cases we can discuss many aspects of your production without visiting beforehand. However for most events we do expect to be able to conduct a site visit with someone from your organisation so we can accurately plan your event.

Generally we need to know about:

- Fire Alarm system information – particularly if you require smoke/haze machines.
- Venue Power
- Venue floor plan if available
- Venue ceiling height/Rigging points (if applicable)
- Loading access to the stage (E.g. lifts/stairs, parking for vehicles)
- Noise Curfews
- Venue Access and Security (E.g. access for other users of the space, out of hours access)
- Existing technical provision

And specific information for Lighting, Sound and any extras that are discussed in the sections below. It is fine if you can't answer all of the above yourself, as long as we are able to access the venue with you we can find out what we need to know.

## 2.4. Lighting

Lighting requirements are varied depending on the event. Some events will not have any at all, whereas more technically complex events such as Theatrical Performances, Musical Theatre and Concerts will rely quite heavily on lighting to create the correct atmosphere.

Before meeting with us make sure you consider what kind of look you are trying to achieve. Whilst we are here to assist with the design of your lighting, it should not always be our sole responsibility and there needs to be input from your side to finalise any design before going ahead with the plan. If you need any particular "specials" (for example spotlights in particular places to pick out actors, strobe effects, or moving lights) make sure you make us aware of this during a meeting or over email so we can factor that in to your quote.

## 2.5. Sound

Similarly to Lighting, Sound requirements also vary drastically depending on what you want to achieve. Usually if you provide us with information on what kind of things you'd like to amplify (e.g. vocals, any Instruments such as guitars/pianos) then we can propose a sensible package to cater for your requirements.

If you are organising an event with a live band performance you may receive a technical rider from them with their expectations of what will be supplied on site for them to use. For best results we recommend you pass this straight over to us. We are happy to liaise directly with artists if required to iron out any irregularities and/or equipment questions.

## **2.6. Operators and Crew**

If your show requires someone to operate sound or lighting equipment we can provide technicians for the entire event duration. We aim to have one operator per run per desk (i.e.: one for sound and one for lighting), and they will attend the tech and dress rehearsals.

Operators require writeable script copies (one each) for cues and other relevant notes.

Ample notice (especially during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of each semester and the exam period) is required to ensure we can provide operators. Please let us know as soon as possible so we can arrange this and avoid disappointment.

Our crew and operators are free, however we may reasonably charge for some costs, such as those caused by unsociable hours or remote venues.

We aim to reduce these costs by using public transport and shared lifts, and we will endeavour to confirm any additional costs at the quote stage before your event starts.

# 3. Expectations

## 3.1. Equipment responsibility

Acceptable use of our equipment will be defined in the initial meeting. In the cases where we are providing hire of equipment with crew included, our crew are the only people allowed to power on and use our equipment unless agreed otherwise. This extends to lighting and sound desks, use of ladders and all power equipment.

Any equipment plugged into MUTTS power distribution equipment must be checked by our technicians. You are responsible for any electrical equipment you provide and any damage that might be caused by this faulty equipment.

In some cases, it's possible for us to train you in use of our equipment for when crew are not available. This can often be mitigated by more notice being given to our crew. Unsupervised use is a privilege. We endeavour to be onsite to provide you the service you require however in some cases at our discretion we may allow this. This privilege is at our discretion and does not extend to repeated use - permission for this is required every time the space is powered on in our absence. An example of an acceptable use is given below.

'You require access to the PA system to practice sound cues for a certain scene, and no crew are on site. You've been previously told how to do this by a MUTTS Committee Member. You've asked the crew lead for the job for permission to power on the space, power on the sound equipment and use the sound equipment. You then power on the space as trained, use the equipment then power off. You replace any dust covers on the equipment.'

It is your responsibility to ensure the venue is secure when our equipment is inside. **You are liable in case of loss or damage to any equipment.**

## 3.2. Professional Etiquette

MUTTS is a society providing professional style technical theatre services. Your project may be used as part of training our members to operate within a professional theatre environment. Therefore, we expect to be treated professionally by your group. To that effect we have a few requirements to ensure a safe, friendly and efficient environment for the job. These are:

- During the Load in the director and stage manager, or equivalents, must be on site and make themselves available to the MUTTS Lead Technician.
- Our equipment must only be used as described above in section 3.1.
- Any issues or disputes (technical or otherwise) between your team and MUTTS Crew need to be brought to the attention of the on site lead.
- No food or drink near the tech position, or any other MUTTS equipment.
- Cast shall assist with load in and/or loadout as agreed with the onsite lead, if arranged ahead of time. Appropriate measures should be taken by the cast to ensure they are able to support this should be taken.



### **3.3. Health and Safety**

All of MUTTS crew has received training and has the correct knowledge to safely operate and work with our equipment. All equipment is regularly tested and maintained, and all our work and equipment is covered under risk assessment(s).

You are required to assess any risks contained within your production, with the exception of equipment and services provided by MUTTS. You are expected to obtain a risk assessment of the venue and provide this to MUTTS during pre-quote discussions. You are expected to produce a risk assessment of your own production and to provide this to MUTTS.

Any clarifications and corrections to risk assessments must be resolved prior to the load in.

### **3.4. Discounts**

From time to time MUTTS may request to view your show as part of our social calendar. We would hope therefore, that discounted rates for our crew to attend your performance would be available, as part of the package, although this can be agreed on a case by case basis.

Discounts on hires are available to societies at our complete discretion. Details of discounted rates should not be shared with other groups or societies.

### **3.5 Timescale on invoices**

Invoices will be sent out soon after the completion of the job in question, these must be paid to us in full within **30 days** of receipt of the invoice via email. Any problems or queries with regards to an invoice should be directed to [treasurer@mutts.org.uk](mailto:treasurer@mutts.org.uk), unless otherwise indicated . We are aware that the University of Manchester Students' Union financial system can often introduce unexpected delays, and a suitable degree of leeway will be offered on a case by case basis if reasonable effort has been made to ensure timely payment.

### **3.6. Photos and Media**

As MUTTS provides our services for free, and only charges for equipment and transport we would like our contributions to your project to be acknowledged. To that extent, MUTTS would like our logo to appear within your program if it exists. We also would like our logo to appear alongside any use of yours for event specific media, not including branding.

MUTTS relies on successful projects for publicity purposes, and therefore from time to time we may take photos of the build, construction, technical rehearsal and take down of your project. We promise to never make public private/personal information or reveal unknown details about your show. MUTTS reserves the right to use any of these photos for our own publicity.

We also may ask to use your photos with permission for our promotional materials.

## 3.7. First Meeting Checklist

When the first meeting for a project is arranged with a member of MUTTS, they should discuss every point of this checklist as a minimum, however please also bear the checklist in mind yourself, to both prepare your answers and to ensure that no vital information is neglected.

- Venue location & proposed transport (if relevant)
- Show name
- Running dates – including when the venue is booked for
- Build/Break dates - including times and access requirements
- Your set design/ stage plan
- Tech provision needed (sound, lighting)
- Specific tech requirements – Specials, radio mics, band rider
- Operator requirements
- Contact details of your director, society, and society chair
- What our crew will do for you
- How to communicate with us
- What you agree to by working with us