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**Volunteer Pack**

This ‘Volunteer Pack’ is designed to tell you a little about the company, supply some background information on what we do and give you some practical information on the Sanctuary Theatre and the area that surrounds it.

Address and contact information

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* Lizzie Howard, Company Manager. 07305 069597    companymanager@brightumbrella.co.uk
* Chairperson, Mark Gavin, mark@areema.co.uk.  07748 148841
* Trevor Gill, Artistic Director.  07885 748727

Web: [www.brightumbrella.co.uk](http://www.brightumbrella.co.uk/)

Twitter: @UmbrellaDrama

Find and like us on Facebook

An Introduction to Bright Umbrella

Bright Umbrella’s Mission Strapline is ‘Entertain.  Educate.  Challenge’.  We present contemporary productions of classical works; support the school curriculum through drama; challenge audiences through issue-based work; highlight aspects of Belfast and NI culture; and seek to contribute to the regeneration of East Belfast.

Our vision is to become one of NI’s leading professional theatre companies recognised throughout the UK, Ireland and further afield for the excellence of our output.

BU operates from a converted church which houses two performance / audience spaces.  The ‘Little Theatre’ acts as a café area for audiences and is used for performances and rehearsals – its capacity is around 60 people.  ‘The Sanctuary Theatre’ holds around 110 audience members.  However, we are currently restricted to an audience capacity of 60 people under the entertainment licenses we hold from Belfast City Council.

Bright Umbrella’s Ethos

* Bright Umbrella is here for the long term
* We seek to grow and improve our practice and programme year on year
* We are a professional theatre company promoting quality and good practice
* We remunerate personnel within available resources whilst maintaining our financial viability. We aspire to payment at industry-standard rates when possible.
* We encourage emerging talent e.g. new actors, directors, producers and writers.
* We develop appropriate and mutually beneficial partnerships with other organisations including umbrella organisations, festivals and regional theatres.
* We are committed to the welfare of all those who engage with us including providing safe and welcoming environments for actors, crew, audiences and volunteers.
* We are actively against bullying, sexist, racist, homophobic and sectarian attitudes.
* We seek to operate within guidelines set by representative organisations such as Theatre and Dance NI and Equity.
* We do not organise children’s drama programmes.
* We do not produce musical theatre.

Why we need you?

Bright Umbrella is a new organisation, it’s only 5 years old! It’s been reliant on volunteers this whole time. Our Artistic Director (and founder) Trevor Gill is a full time volunteer, as are all our board and committee members. Since we’re in the final stages of formally taking over the Sanctuary and Little Theatre’s we have new tasks and skills required for the job. We want to maintain our can-do attitude and engage directly with communities of people that have a passion for arts and theatre and are happy and able to lend their time.

What we can give you

We’re hoping this is a first step in a formalised Volunteer Programme. We know that the skills you can learn in a theatre are valuable for work and life. Instead of us deciding which are valuable to you, we’re leaving it open so you can tell us what that might be. Where possible we’ll try and give you tasks and experience with things you’re most interested in, and hopefully link you up with professionals in the field. For others, training isn’t as important as finding a new space you can stop in and see friends, and we’d love to be that space for you.

As a volunteer you’re entering the Bright Umbrella community, you might want to use the space to drop in and have a chat, as a resource of other like-minded people. We have a Classic Play Reading club every 2 weeks, hosted on Zoom that keeps many of our members engaged regularly. Volunteers also have access to our Bookcase which has a number of Theatre books and similar. Speak to Trevor if you’d like to borrow any.

How it works

We’ll put out a Doodle Poll at the start of each month with the dates and times of any Volunteer shifts. Some months that might be lots, other months there might just be one date. You can add your name to any that you’re interested or available for.

There’s also an option for Maybe: which might mean- I’d rather not, but if you’re stuck. You can add notes to the Doodle Poll or follow up with an email saying specifics as to the dates available.

You can offer as much or as little time as you’d like. We’d advise getting stuck in at the start so you’re familiar with the tasks and similar though.

Roles

Front of House

In theatre terms, we describe the Theatre as the ‘house’. Front of House therefore means anybody working in a customer facing role, those welcoming people at the door, running the Box Office or showing people to their seats.

Back of House therefore refers to the many people working ‘behind the curtain’.

Let us know if you have a role in mind you’d like to do and we’ll try our best to match you with it.

For a typical show we have a Show Lead and a FOH team.

Show Lead

A Show Lead is a volunteer supervisor. They meet a little bit earlier than the rest of the team and might even assign the rest of the teams roles (after they’re familiar with the role and everyone else). Show Lead’s will know in advance of their role – and it is by agreement.

They are responsible for checking in with the Stage Manager and Crew as to when the doors can open, liaising with Box Office and generally ensuring everyone’s working together well.

Front of House – Usher

This is the main role in the Theatre. There are two parts to this, you may be greeting people at the door, directing them to Box Office or the Café, or you may be at the Theatre Doors, showing people to their seats. The Greeter will split the Covid 19 requirements with Box Office.

In the Theatre the rows are marked on the end of the Pews in red paint. You can take a few glances to familiarise yourself of the layout. You then walk the audience member through, showing them to their seats.

Box Office

Normally one person runs Box Office, with extra help from the Greeter or Ushers as needed.

The Show Lead will have a printed copy of the Booking List. This will give you the name of the booker and how many tickets they have. It will also show the seats allocated to this booking. You can tell the customer their seats, tick them off the list and

We use free software called Ticketsource to do this. If you’re working Box Office you can download their app and scan tickets on your Smart Phone. There’s no issue if you can’t do this or don’t want to use your phone- you can use the paper version.

On some occasions there may be walk ups to the Theatre. We have a theatre that officially fits 120 people but our Belfast City Council Entertainment permit is for 60. The most important role of Box Office is taking a total tally of audience numbers so that we are not in breach of this.

**Café Bar**

We run a small Café Bar to make some income during shows. It’s also staffed by volunteers. You may be asked to help here from time to time. Typically one person handles payments, Card is taken via the Zettle reader, or we have a Cash Float, whilst the other makes any teas/coffees.

Setting up the café area and taking stock count are one of the Pre-Show tasks you may be asked to complete.

**The Little Library**

We don’t sell alcohol (as this requires a licence), we sell Books from the Little Library. If you buy a book (or a CD or DVD from the Bookshelf) you will get a complimentary drink of your choice. Complimentary alcohol does not require a licence.

Covid 19 Rules

**Volunteers must wear a mask at all times unless seated. They are also responsible for reminding audience members to do the below:**

* **Audience members must wear a mask while moving through the building.**
* **They can remove it when seated in the Café to eat or drink, or whilst seated in the Theatre.**

We’ve asked that everyone attending the theatre show full vaccination status or proof of a negative Lateral Flow Test within 24 hours. The Greeter or Box Office will be responsible for checking this.

* We are happy to accept a NHS vaccine card, the QR code on smartphone or any other EU vaccine passport.
* The Lateral Flow Test must be registered online, the proof of this must be shown.

As a volunteer if there are any disputes or similar surrounding this please pass it along to the Artistic Director or Company Manager. We are upholding the industry standard measures to keep everyone safe and our Theatre open.

Radios

In Theatre terms, the Theatre itself is the ‘house’ and it gets handed back and forth between teams. The radio is used to do this.

One radio will be with the Stage Manager/Tech Team (BOH), another will be with the Show Lead (FOH). The third radio may be with the Cast, Director or another member of staff as needed.

Let’s say- the Show Lead is watching the Café Bar area, it looks a little bit busy. They’d like to open the doors to the Theatre and let people take their seats.

They would call to the BOH over the radio and see if the House was ready for the audience. The exchange would sound like this:

*Show Lead:* Lizzie to Christine

*Stage Manager:* Go ahead Lizzie.

*Show Lead:* It’s a little busy out here, do we have the House?

*Stage Manager:* Give me 2 minutes to get the pre-show music on.

*Show Lead:* No problem.

A few seconds later, Christine radios back…..

*Stage Manager:* Christine to Lizzie

*Show Lead:* Go ahead

*Stage Manager:* That’s us set, you have the house

This formally means that all cast or crew are in positions ready to begin, that the Theatre is prepared and ready to welcome the audience.

Pre-Show Preparation:

**1 Hour before the show**

**Pre- Show Briefing**

The Stage Manager, Director and Show Lead will discuss with FOH any details about the show. This will include:

* Expected running time
* Intervals and similar
* Any additional information the audience need to know (ie. Strobe lighting etc)
* Latecomers Policy

The Show Lead will then take over and assign Volunteer roles. They will bring up any Access Requirements noted (such as Wheelchair users or similar).

**Pre- Show Checks**

Dependent on your role you will then move on to Pre-show checks. This includes

* Making sure fire exits are clear
* Checking bathrooms are stocked with Loo Roll etc
* Preparing Café Bar area, turning on machines, grabbing ice etc
* Checking bin bags are in place and similar
* Trip checks

**30 mins before the show**

The audience will begin to arrive and be invited to wait in the Café Bar. Show Lead will check in with BOH to see when they have the house and Doors Open. Once the Stage Manager has cleared the house, the Show Lead can then direct the volunteers assigned to ‘Doors’ to open the doors to the Theatre and start showing people to their seat.

**10 Mins before the show**

At about 10 minutes before the advertised start time, the Show Lead will ring the bell. Just like in a bar, that’s a last call to take your seats in the Theatre. FOH volunteers can assist by speaking to any individuals at tables and inviting them through to their seats.

Show Lead will then check in with Box Office to see if everyone has arrived or if there are any latecomers expected.

**5 Mins before the show**

At 5 minutes before the show everyone in the Theatre should be in their seats. The FOH will then close the doors to the Theatre. The volunteers working in Café Bar or similar can move back to the Theatre to watch the show if they’d like. Ushers and Box Office can also take a seat in the Theatre if they’re going to watch the show.

Show Lead can make a call as to wether to wait for Latecomers or to proceed. They can ‘hold’ the show for a couple more minutes for people to arrive.

Show Lead will radio BOH to confirm that they have the house, and formally pass it back to the Tech team and actors. Show Lead and a FOH member will turn the lights off in the auditorium and the Show will begin!

Other information

 Keys

Keys are signed in and out – from the office upstairs. If you are given keys you will need to sign them out and record again when you have handed them back. On being given the keys you will be taken through the full lock up procedure.

Breaks

Our volunteer shifts shouldn’t typically be long enough to need a formal break. If you’re asked to work longer hours than this there will be a formal mealtime and break. (We’re known for throwing pizza parties when things drag on…) You can help yourself to tea and coffee while you’re in the theatre and just let us know if you need a second to step out.

Marketing

We invite you to share FB, Twitter and Instagram posts when we publish these.  Making personal invites to your friends is often the most effective marketing tool, e.g. by personal message as well as blanket social media statements.

Public Transport

The Sanctuary Theatre is a short walk from Lanyon NIR railway station. We’re also on all major bus routes to East Belfast including the Metro Routes 3, 4, 5 & 6. There is also a Glider Bus Stop 100 m away on the Albertbridge road.

Shops

Russell Cellars (7 minute walk)

* head up Castlereagh Street, turn right at the Beersbridge road, turn left at the lights. Russells is on the left.

Gordons Pharmacy (5 minute walk)

* 187 Albertbridge Road – This is straight ahead from the Theatre on the right.

Petrol station – Spar/ BP garage

* 310 Albertbridge Road – 3 minute drive on the left hand side – opposite the entrance for Connswater.

The Mount Conference Centre - Café for lunch or coffee (weekdays)

* Just next door, turn left on leaving the building and walk round along the Woodstock road to the entrance gates on the bend.

Expenses

We don’t currently grant expenses to Volunteers, simply because we don’t have the income to do so. The funding that we do receive is largely tied up in production costs. We are aware this means not everyone will be able to volunteer and is something we hope to change in the future. In the meantime, we do try to maintain a discretionary fund where resources are available.

Quiet room

If you need a quiet room whilst volunteering, for any reason, mention it to the Company Manager.  The Vestry Dressing Room is a designated a quiet room – we just need a bit of notice to make sure it’s ready for you.

Under 18’s

We currently do not have enough staff to facilitate formal safeguarding training. This means we are not able to engage directly with anyone under 18. All children must be accompanied by an adult.

Equipment

We have multiple bits of equipment ranging from a filter coffee machine to tools and similar. No tools or equipment should be used until you have be walked through how to use them safely.

Working at height

Volunteers will not be asked to work at height.

Fire Exits

In the event of the fire, you must leave the building immediately. The fire exits are at the front of the building and via the rear door in the Little Theatre out to the Back Alley. Once you are at a safe distance you should call emergency services.

Complaints and issues

We try to run a happy ship here at Bright Umbrella based on mutual respect and patience.  However, disputes and complaints do arise from time to time. As a volunteer we expect you to be treated with respect and to feel safe and confident in any tasks you may have been given.  In the case of an issue:

* If you’re having difficulties with a task that you’re working on, say, you feel its for more than one person, is a problem you don’t feel you can resolve on your own, or its out of your comfort zone, do raise it with your Show Lead. If they can’t help please pass it along to the Company Manager, Trevor or any other longer term volunteers.
* If you’d like to raise the issue with the Company Manager, request a meeting if you’d like a quiet word or send an email of any difficulties you might be having.
* If you’re not comfortable raising it with the Company Manager, bring it to Trevor or Mark, their contact details are above.
* Anything you raise will remain confidential and be brought to the attention of only relevant parties.

Making everyone feel welcome:  our Equality and Diversity Policy

A full copy of this policy can be provided on request, there follows a brief summary.

Bright Umbrella recognises that in our society power is not held equally and that groups and individuals continue to be discriminated against on many grounds including, for example, race, sex, age, disability, sexual orientation, class, religion, marital status and where they live.

* We also recognise that where direct or indirect discrimination occurs within the Bright Umbrella, it is both morally and legally unacceptable.  Here are some actions we will take:
* We will take action to ensure that group activities and events are open and welcoming to everybody entitled to join in our activities.
* We aim to make our meetings and events accessible to people with disabilities – e.g. provide transport, meet in accessible premises, provide sign language interpreters when necessary and produce information in large print.
* Members who have experienced discrimination can make complaints to the Chairperson, Artistic Director or Company Manager.  If these individuals are unable to resolve the complaint, it will be referred to the Management Committee.
* People will be treated with dignity and respect regardless of race, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability and/or age.
* At all times people’s feelings will be valued and respected. Language or humour that people find offensive will not be used, e.g. sexist or racist jokes or terminology which is derogatory to someone with a disability.
* No one will be harassed, abused or intimidated on the ground of his or her race, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, disability or age. Incidents of harassment will be taken seriously.

**Covid- 19**

We will comply with all COVID 19 regulations in place at any point in time.  This is likely to include keeping a record of who is in attendance, making temperature checks, the wearing of masks when moving about the theatre, provision of hand gel and any social distancing regulations which are in place.  You will be asked to not enter the theatre if you have recently experienced symptoms. We also encourage you to get fully vaccinated and to regularly use Lateral Flow Testing. We may also specifically ask for Lateral Flow or PCR tests to be conducted from time to time.

Volunteers will be treated with respect and in line with Equality and Diversity policies.