

# Hounslow Light Opera Company Members' Guide

## Membership

Membership is open to everyone. You don't have to audition to become a member of the Company.

Our membership year runs from January to December. You need to renew your membership **every year** by paying the membership fee. The basic membership fee is currently £30. If you want to take part in the musical show there is an additional show fee, which is currently £54.00.

You can pay your membership fee all at once or in instalments. Many members find the easiest way to do it is to pay monthly by standing order - please ask the treasurer for details. If you have difficulty paying the full fee because of your financial circumstances the committee will consider granting a concession. Please ask the treasurer or any committee member about this. If you don't renew your subscription by the end of March, we will assume you have resigned from the Company. You can become a member again at any time by paying the membership fee.

## Productions

For the main musical show, as a general rule the committee collects suggestions from members and compiles a shortlist, then the show is decided by whole-Company vote. The committee reserves the right to change the show if the one chosen is unavailable or turns out to be impractical for some reason. We try to alternate Gilbert and Sullivan shows with other shows every two or three years, depending on what shows are available.

The committee generally decides the choice of plays and concert themes in consultation with potential directors.

Any member of the Company is welcome to suggest potential shows, plays or concert themes, and to offer themselves as a potential director.

## Auditions and casting

For the main show, the principals will be chosen by an audition panel which usually consists of the director, the musical director, the choreographer and at least one other person who is not auditioning for a part. You don't have to audition to be in the chorus.

Anyone can audition, but if you are not currently a member of the Company you will need to pay a £5 'audition fee' as a contribution towards the cost of putting on the auditions. If you are cast you will need to pay the subscription, including the show fee (and minus the audition fee) in full.

We will always try to cast shows from within the Company first. If a part cannot be filled from within the Company the committee, in consultation with the director, may invite someone from outside to play the part.

The play is usually cast by the director from a reading. Again, we will always try to cast plays from within the Company before inviting anyone in to play a part.

For concerts, the concert organiser may ask members of the Company to perform certain items or invite them to suggest items they would like to perform, depending on the format of the concert.

## **Ensemble working**

Our productions are 'ensemble' pieces in which everyone is important. While the director/production team is responsible for the overall 'look and feel' of the show, the musical director for interpretation of the score and the choreographer for stage movement and dance, every member has an important part to play, whether you are a principal or a member of the chorus.

It is important that everyone attends as many rehearsals as the director thinks is necessary and arrives on time. Please contact the director, preferably in advance, if you cannot make a rehearsal. Again this applies to everyone, whether you are a chorus member or a principal. If you have agreed to take part in a production but then find you cannot attend rehearsals regularly, please talk to the director as early as possible.

If someone's attendance (chorus member or principal) is causing problems for the production the director/production team will refer the matter to the committee, who will decide what action to take.

## **Show week**

The main show takes over your life for a week – but it's worth it! Here's an idea of what to expect from show week.

### **Saturday**

The last Saturday rehearsal before the show is 'costume fitting' day for hire costumes. You'll need to come to the Saturday rehearsal prepared to try on your costume and take it away with you ready to go into the theatre on Sunday.

### **Sunday**

The Sunday before the show is the 'get-in' day, when we get into the theatre, put our costumes in the dressing room and have the 'band call' where we rehearse the music with the orchestra for the first time. This is usually in the afternoon. After the band call we generally run the show on the stage, and it's usually a good idea to wear your costume. This can go on into the evening, so make sure you don't arrange to do anything else on the Sunday night before show week.

### **Monday**

During the day, anyone who is available (and not in work) is welcome to help with painting and finishing the set. Monday evening is the 'technical run' where the lighting, sound and stage crew work to make sure all the technical bits of the show are working. This can take some time, and can involve going over things several times or missing bits out. It can also go on quite late.

### **Tuesday**

This is the dress rehearsal and will run non-stop as if it was a show, with costumes, make-up and the orchestra.

### **Wednesday-Saturday**

The show is on! This is what all the months of rehearsing have been leading up to. You will need to be at the theatre in good time – 6.30pm for evening performances and 1.15pm for matinees as a general rule, as the musical director usually runs a vocal warm-up before the stage goes 'live' – so do remember to make any arrangements that you need to with your work. The director/production team will let you know what time you need to be there.

## **Saturday evening**

After the show, we need to clear the dressing room, hang up the costumes and help the stage crew take the set down before we go to the after-show party!

## **Sunday morning**

It's not quite over yet. On Sunday morning we need to clean out the dressing room, sort the costumes for delivering back to the hirers (which usually involves loading them into someone's car) and put the stage back to the condition it was in before we moved in. This is definitely a case of 'the more the merrier' and there's an opportunity for a late breakfast/lunch afterwards.

## **Concerts**

Check the time you need to turn up with the concert director; as a general rule this will be around 6.30pm for an evening concert and 1.15pm for a matinee. There is usually a dress code for concerts which will be made known well in advance. Again, please check with the concert director to be sure.

## **Plays**

Arrangements for the play week will be similar to those for the main show, but on a smaller scale. The 'get-in' is usually the Sunday before and the times for getting in may vary depend on what other bookings the venue has.

## **Publicity, social events and other activities**

There's always plenty do to as well as rehearse.

We've found that one of the most successful ways of publicising our shows is to mobilise as many members of the Company as possible to put leaflets through letter boxes about six weeks before the show or play. Leaflet drops are generally on a Saturday morning and there will be at least two dates. Anyone who would like to help with leafleting, but can't make any of the organised dates, is always welcome to take some leaflets and a map and do it at another time.

We like to have a few social events throughout the year, some of which act as fund-raisers as well as being fun! In the past we've had quizzes, barn dances and wine-tastings. All suggestions for social events are very welcome – please talk to the social secretary or any other member of the Committee. Social events are generally open to non-members.

From time to time we are invited to take part in other events such as the yearly 'Art in the Park' festival at Osterley House in June. In the past we've also put on things like 'murder mystery' evenings. Suggestions for events – especially if they might involve fund-raising for the Company – are always welcome.

## **Contact details**

If you have any questions please talk to any member of the committee or contact:

Paul Huggins (Vice-Chair)

Phone: 07743 482 172

or

Felicity Morgan (Publicity officer)

Phone: 020 8898 4606

Email: [tonyandfliss@blueyonder.co.uk](mailto:tonyandfliss@blueyonder.co.uk)