

SOME THOUGHTS ON PUBLICITY PHOTOS FOR YOUR SHOW



Photos for the press and photos for Front of House are not necessarily the same thing.

The following guidelines are by no means definitive, the director and photographer bring their own ideas to the task and it often follows that what you and I thought was a terrific shot doesn't get published at all which can prove annoying and frustrating all round!



Ideas – plan your photos ahead

Map out a few ideas, on paper or in your head, of scenes from your play – think about animation, interaction, frozen action, emotional intensity and colour. Try to find a “unique selling point” that encapsulates your story



Shots exploring a relationship between characters (for example love, hate, seduction, family etc) are more interesting than a photo of two actors frozen in a formal pose.

Costumes and props

Check out costumes for the photo shoot **in plenty of time.**



Have everything you need to hand – costumes or props don't have to be the actual ones to be used in the show as long as they give an impression of the play. Often a particular symbol, setting or object is essential to the theme of your play so find a way to simulate it or suggest it in your photo.



Backgrounds

Think about backgrounds, the less dark, confusing or cluttered they are the better. Try to avoid light switches, radiators, fire doors and shadows cast from overhead lighting.



Remember that shots taken in the auditorium don't necessarily work well – especially if your cast are wearing dark costumes or have dark hair against the dark background - that blackness swallows up the cast and dominates the picture. Yes they CAN be photo-shopped afterwards and I have done it, but it is best not to need it.



Consider taking your cast out of the rehearsal space and taking pictures in places like Kentwell Hall, Belle Vue Park, even someone's house or the car park if it is appropriate to the setting of the play.



Rehearsal Shots

Try to avoid too many of these as they don't really say anything about the show, although of course they can be used for Front of House or in the SDS board in the bar, they have a limited interest beyond cast, friends and family. Shots with the Jetty mirror in the background immediately show that the location is a rehearsal studio, even when actors are costumed and when you can see the photographer is reflected in the mirror..... !!! (it happens – see picture)



Poses

You don't need the whole cast in a publicity photo. Unless there is a dramatic context to pictures of the whole cast, they won't sell your show. Having said that, they are nice to include in your shoot and for the cast to keep and they do get used for Front of House.



Plan shots of two or three people. The press are much more likely to use photos which feature only two or three people, single photos of the leading actors or the title characters are good choices only if they indicate some emotion or are specifically wanted for Front of House.



Try to be aware of empty space in the shot and keep heads close together even in a possibly unnatural way, to avoid it. I have often photo-shopped here too to remove that space in between heads and bodies but again it helps to be aware and to avoid it in the first place.

