

Unsolicited Script Guidelines

Please Note: At present, WACtheatre are primarily interested in scripts from writers based in the North East of Scotland. We are particularly interested in seeing work from individuals based in Aberdeenshire. We are happy to consider scripts from writers in other areas, however the possibility of us producing such work is slim.

We are also keen to develop relationships with our writers and prefer newcomers to attend at least one or two **WAC Wednesdays** to get a feel for how we work. Writers only interested in having someone produce their plays should probably try another company.

We do **not** accept short stories, synopses, television, film or radio scripts. We are happy to discuss other genres, but only through prior agreement. Please **do not** send scripts by email until requested to do so by the company. Scripts do not have to be complete and can be in the form of excerpts or work-in-progress. We are also happy to discuss ideas/concepts etc.

Advice for Writers

Any script taken forward for development by WAC will be read by lots of people, including actors, directors and stage managers. They do not want to have to puzzle over who is saying what to who, and where on the stage an actor is sitting, standing or paragliding while they are saying it. Therefore the script must be clear, consistent and legible. There should be no doubt about which bits are dialogue, which are stage directions and so on.

While there are no specific industry standard templates for theatre scripts, there is an expectation in professional theatre of how a script should look, therefore:

Scripts submitted to WACtheatre MUST fit closely to one of our layout examples.

Here are some do's and don'ts:

STAGE DIRECTIONS

Do keep stage directions to a **minimum** and separate them from directions for actors, and put them in **bold** or *italics*, NOT CAPITALS.

Stage directions can tell us when an actor sits, moves or hits someone. However, actors and directors are perfectly capable of interpreting the script for themselves. They do not want to be told every time a character waves a hand, sits on the sofa or wipes a tear from their eye. If it's not essential to the plot, **leave it out**.

Example:

*The door opens and **Gerry** runs across the stage and leaps majestically through the window.*

Descriptive directions may be important to the plot, for instance, if a Ming vase (which the protagonist is planning to sell in order to pay for his chemotherapy) is standing on the coffee table, then it's fine to say so. But only tell us what is essential.

Do not:

- Describe the scene in great detail unless there's something unusual about it (like if there's an arm sticking out of the freezer, or a pool of vomit on the sofa);
- Describe a character's hairstyle, clothing, level of emotion or facial expression;
- Tell us what they are thinking;
- Tell us what he/she was doing prior to appearing on stage.

DIRECTIONS FOR ACTORS

Do keep directions for actors to a minimum and only use them when it is important for the actor. Remember – actors and directors want to explore how the play is performed, rather than simply follow a list of instructions from the writer.

Directions for actors can tell us how a line should be said when it isn't obvious from the dialogue.

Example:

HAROLD (*Sarcastically*) I love you so much.

Do put such directions in brackets/italics, so it is clear they're not part of the dialogue.

Don't be tempted to use directions for actors to tell us what the character is thinking. Again, it should be obvious from the dialogue.

Example:

DEREK (*Angrily, with a mean look in his eye and knowing the repercussions of what he is about to say*) You don't know Layla at all and just for the record I've been shagging her for weeks!

Upstage, Downstage etc

Don't tell us the movements of the actors unless it's absolutely vital. We don't need to know which side of the stage **Harry** exits at, or where he's standing when he berates next door's cat.

"SPEECH MARKS"

Don't use them. Ever.

CHARACTER NAMES

Do write character names out in full - provided they aren't incredibly long. LORD HENRY OF ARCHAEOLINK for instance, might simply be know as: HENRY.

Don't have characters with similar sounding names: Joan, John, Joe etc.

HEADERS AND FOOTERS

Do use headers and footers to identify your script. You must include:

The name of the play

Page numbers

Your name

The year of composition

(If you'd like support to use the correct layout etc, do let us know).

WHITE SPACE

Don't double space everything. It is enough to have a single space between each bit of dialogue.

Example:

BURKE

(To the audience) Helen McDougal, occasional companion to my good self, and I dare say anyone else that'll give her the price of a pint pot.

HELEN

Huh. And that from a man who can't fasten his own britches.

HARE

Excuse me, missus. Your husband and I are currently engaged upon a matter of entertainment. Just get us a drink, will you?

GRAMMAR & SPELLING

Do check spelling and **don't** rely solely on your spell check – it won't pick up typos.

SCRIPT LAYOUT

Do use one of the examples of script layout provided by WAC. **If you don't, we will not read your script!**

When Submitting a Script, please ensure that it:

- is type-written on A4 paper
- is securely bound
- is printed in an easily readable font – Arial, Verdana or similar, in a point size of either 11 or 12 and that pages are numbered. **Do not** use Courier – we don't like it!
- includes a title page stating your name, address and phone/email details
- includes a list of characters

Acknowledgment of receipt of scripts will be via **email**. If you do not have access to email or would prefer postal acknowledgement, **please include a stamped, self-addressed postcard** with your script.

WAC is a small company. We read everything we are sent, but it takes time. Writers who hassle us may find their script goes to the bottom of the pile. However, if you have not heard from us within two months, then it's fine to drop us a gentle reminder.

Scripts will not be returned, so please remember to keep a copy.

All scripts should be sent to:

Colin Garrow/Suzanne Enoch
Joint Artistic Directors
WACtheatre
c/o Education Dept
His Majesty's Theatre
Rosemount Viaduct
Aberdeen
Aberdeenshire
AB25 1GL

For further information contact Colin, Louise or Jessica:

colin@wactheatre.co.uk 07850 546889

Louise@wactheatre.co.uk

Jessica@wactheatre.co.uk

or check out the website: www.wactheatre.co.uk

Script Examples...

SCRIPT EXAMPLE 1

BURKE

It was a cold winter's night...

HARE

And the snow was falling thick and fast...

Pause.

And the snow was falling thick and fast.

Maggie and Helen can be heard o/s making a poor attempt at singing **Christians Awake**.

BURKE

And in the sky the stars a-flickered...

HARE

You what?

BURKE

The stars a-flickered...

HARE

What sort of talk is that?

BURKE

Get them in the mood.

HARE

And in Tanner's Close, a dark secluded street, a light shone brightly from a lowly room...(To **Burke**) Is that alright for you?

BURKE

Lovely.

HARE

From a lowly room, where a landlord, that's me, his wife, and two acquaintances...

BURKE

Me and Helen ...

HARE

Gathered round the table for a seasonal drink...

SCRIPT EXAMPLE 2

SHONA Tell me something about yourself.

PETE You already know everything.

SHONA Yes, Pete, I already know, but they don't.

PETE Oh, right. Well...not much to say, really.

SHONA You could talk about your job.

PETE Video shop. Yeah. I work in a video shop. I like films.

SHONA So...?

PETE So it's good that I work in a video shop.

SHONA And you're a big fan of Fellini?

PETE Fellini? Oh. Yeah.

SHONA You did say you were a big fan...

PETE Aye, I did.

SHONA Well...?

PETE I'm not, really.

SHONA Why did you say you were?

PETE Just making conversation, wasn't I? I was nervous. Meeting a smart young woman, wanted to make an impression. Preferably a good one. And I wasn't exactly lying. There'd been this guy in the shop that lunchtime. Total Fellini nut, he was. It was kind of in my head. I suppose. Thought it might make me sound cultured.

SHONA Look Pete, this isn't a bit like I remember, and more to the point, it isn't anything like I wrote in my notes.

PETE You were taking notes? About our date?

SHONA I said I was going to.

PETE I thought you were joking.

SHONA No. Why would I joke?

PETE How should I know? I mean, Christ, who takes notes when they're out on a date?