

THE HANDLEBARDS

Cycling Shakespeare Tour 2024

Call for Company Managers

The HandleBards are seeking a **Company Manager** for their 2024 touring production of **The Comedy of Errors**, which will be visiting (mostly) outdoor venues from May - September 2024.

The HandleBards are a four-strong troupe of cycling actors, who have performed their unique brand of irreverent, energetic and environmentally sustainable Shakespeare in venues across the world. In Summer 2024, a troupe will cycle from London to Edinburgh, stopping every 30 miles or so for nightly performances of *The Comedy of Errors* in castles, gardens, theatres, bicycle shops and stately homes throughout the UK.

The role would suit broad-skilled stage managers, producers and project managers (although this isn't an exhaustive list) with a flair for adventure - who are comfortable with long distance cycling, have a clean driver's license and are also comfortable driving a van.

The role will require the Company Manager to cycle approximately 30 miles per day, for up to six days per week during the length of the contract. The troupe typically perform a six-show week with most performances taking place outdoors in all weathers.

Bikes and related equipment will be provided by the HandleBards. Set, props and costumes will be transported using two bicycle trailers, which will be carried by company members on a rota system.

Accommodation is provided by the company for touring days, and will largely be in hotels and Airbnb's with room sharing, but will occasionally include dormitories and homestays. Please note that we cannot provide accommodation for the rehearsal period in London.

For more information on what touring by bicycle with The HandleBards looks like – please read through the day-in-the-life of a Company Manager document at the end of this pack.

We want our workforce to be representative of all sections of society and welcome applications from everyone. If you require the information in this callout in a different format, or would like to discuss any access requirements for the role, please contact us at info@handlebards.com.

KEY TASKS

1. To cycle with and manage the company on tour, acting as team leader, liaising with venues.
2. To be the chief mode of contact between the troupe and the production/creative teams during the tour.
3. To maintain 'the book' during rehearsals, write daily rehearsal reports during the rehearsal period and aid in the preparation of the props and costume inventory.
4. To participate in regular production meetings throughout and prior to the contract.
5. To take responsibility for navigation and leading the daily ride and to be responsible for regular maintenance, cleaning, repairs of the bikes and trailers whilst on tour (for which training and remote support will be provided if required).
6. To draw up and communicate company calls – including maintaining the tour schedule.
7. To undertake and co-ordinate get-in and get-outs of touring shows and to stage manage during performances, undertaking technical duties as required.
8. To write ride reports, and daily show reports (including simple creative notes for the director) and circulate them to the production and artistic team, and feed back to the company as needed.
9. Recording and maintaining accurate time-sheets for the company.

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10. To assist the production team in updating social media streams with relevant, topical content throughout rehearsals and the tour.
11. To assist with the setup and sale of merchandise at each performance.
12. To organise, or undertake repairs and laundry/dry cleaning of props, set and costumes as required.
13. To be the primary first aider for the troupe on tour (for which training will be provided, if required).
14. To assist the producer with end of tour wrap up, including cataloguing equipment, preparing kit for storage and coordinating transport to storage.

This is not an exhaustive list of duties and we may, at any time, allocate additional tasks or duties which are of a similar nature or level.

PERSONAL SPECIFICATION

We're looking for people with broad skillsets who are up for an adventure, and we are aware that those skills could come from a range of backgrounds including stage management, producing, technical theatre, project management and production management – although this isn't an exhaustive list.

We're really keen to hear from as many candidates as possible, so if you don't meet all of the criteria below but think you'd be a great fit please do apply or get in touch with any questions.

Essential

- Experience of supporting theatrical or live productions.
- Experience of managing and supporting small teams.
- Great problem solver.
- Excellent communication skills.
- A passion for cycling.
- Clean driving license and comfortable driving a van.

Desirable

- Experience of stage management, producing or project managing.
- Theatre touring experience.
- Experience of long-distance cycling.
- Interest in/experience of noting performances creatively and feeding back to casts.
- Bicycle maintenance skills.

The tour involves some international travel, so all applicants must hold a valid passport and no reason to be denied entry to EU member states.

All applicants must have the right to work in the UK.

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The fee for the post is a company wage of £535 per week plus a £27 per diem for touring days. The contract is approximately 23 weeks long, and includes around 1500 miles of cycling.

The terms of the contract and tour schedule will adhere to the conditions of the Equity Charter for Outdoor Theatre and any applicable variation agreement.

The details of contract lengths and key dates can be found below.

Please direct all questions about the positions to the producer, Will Orton, at info@handlebards.com.

To apply, Please submit a short personal statement outlining how your skills meet the personal specification and a copy of your CV by 6pm on Thursday 18 January to info@handlebards.com, with 'Company Manager Application' followed by your name in the subject, and complete the equal opportunities form <https://forms.gle/Mr6ZqCZB8X579CFBA>. The form will be kept separate from your application and will not form any part of the assessment of your application. This data will be stored securely and anonymously and will only be used for internal monitoring.

Statements can be submitted in written or video format. We are also open to submissions in any other format that allows you to show off your experience in the best way, and if you have any questions or want to discuss access needs for the application process or working with us, then please get in touch. We encourage applications from candidates of all backgrounds and welcome different experiences, skills and stories.

Initial interviews will take place w/c 22 January.

We are not currently planning for a second round of interviews, but in the event that we do these will be held w/c 29 January.

The HandleBards: *The Comedy of Errors*

A four-actor production of Shakespeare's original, slightly abridged.

Key dates and information:

Application deadline **6pm - Thursday 18 January**

First-round Interviews **w/c 22 January**

Decision made by **w/c 29 January**

We will acknowledge all applications by email, and will let both successful and unsuccessful applicants know of their application's progress at each stage.

Contract starts **8 April**

Rehearsal period **8 April - 10 May**

First performance **13 May**

Last performance **8 September**

Contract ends **15 September**

Rehearsals will take place in London and we are unfortunately unable to provide accommodation for the rehearsal period - with occasional work outside of London during the rehearsal period for which accommodation will be provided.

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A Day in the Life of a Company Manager

This example schedule should give you a good idea of what a day of cycling with an evening performance looks like with The HandleBards.

Tonight's Venue – An outdoor amphitheatre north of Edinburgh

7pm Show Mid-August Weather - Drizzle

9:30AM – Travel Call

You've called the company for 9:30AM to check over bikes, load them with panniers, hitch the trailers up and get ready for the cycle ahead.

10:00AM – Start Cycling

Today's cycle is approximately 25 miles but quite hilly. For a cycle like this you'll normally be pedalling for approximately 3.5 hours with an hour extra allocated for punctures/stoppage just in case.

11:00 – 11:15AM – Pit stop

Quick pit stop at a corner shop to stock up on flapjacks and snacks.

12:30PM – Lunch (break in travel call)

You stop at a local village for an hour's lunch break and you let the company know they're called back at 1:30pm to resume cycling.

1:30PM – Travel Call – Back on the Road

You've got around 9 miles left to go.

1:45 – 2:00PM – Puncture!

Someone has a puncture! You fix it quickly and are back on the road.

3:15PM – Arrive at the venue - End of travel call (3:30PM)

The company break on arrival while you check in with the venue manager for 15 minutes before breaking – the venue are providing some lunch.

5:00-9:30PM - Show Call

5pm – you give the company the next day's calls and coordinate the set build/performance area setup (this doesn't take too long as everything fits on the back of a bike), 5:30pm – the company warm-up, 6pm – help seat the first audience members to arrive/sell programmes, 7pm – 9pm – the show: record timesheets, write show report & daily admin tasks, 9-9:45pm – pack down.

10:00PM – End of Day

You've booked a taxi to a local hotel where you're sharing a twin room.

It's a long day but we make sure to balance things out over the tour: there are days with no cycling when you're at the same venue for 2-3 performances, cycle days with no shows, scheduled days off and some shorter cycles. Our working hours also adhere to the Equity Charter for Outdoor Theatre.