



TOT B.V.
technische oplossingen
voor de culturele sector

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Practical Information

about theatres and touring in the Netherlands

TOT is a technical management agency and acts as a representative for Dutch producers, working with theatre companies from all over the world who perform in The Netherlands.

Before beginning a detailed technical and production preparation for the tour, we'd like to explain a few particularities about the theatres and the touring theatre culture in the Netherlands.

We are sending you this information in order to give an impression of what to expect. Our goal is to present performances of high artistic and technical quality.

The theatres

The typical Dutch theatre is a roadhouse and has standard equipment to suit most people's needs. There is no residential company, but theatres have a different company every day, usually seven days a week. This is a very important fact that influences many aspects of our work.

Crew

Dutch technicians tend to be all-round technicians. Although every technician has certain skills, they help with all that needs to be done. This does not mean that you cannot have specific people helping you with lights, stage or sound. But the same people that unload in the morning may work on the lights later in the day. This sounds confusing, but it is the way we do things and it saves time and resources. When a job is done, technicians do not like to sit around and wait, but want something else to do or else they will leave.

In the Netherlands the theatre provides the same amount of technicians as the company brings along. Theatres understand that this is expensive for foreign companies and generally do not mind providing a couple of extra technicians – however: this is getting more difficult over the years. The producer hires an experienced touring technician who knows the theatres and the people. This person will join your team and help with the rental equipment. If you prepare yourself well using the information we send you, this will save you a lot of time.

House crews do not like to work alone. A visiting company is expected to do a fair share of the work, from unloading till end of strike. If you tour with rented equipment, theatre crews consider this your gear, and if you do not touch it, you may have a hard time getting the work done. Leaving after the show, before all the work is finished, is considered offensive. All this may sound tough, but if you respect the basics your tour will be a smashing success!

Since theatres do not have a residential company, there is no wardrobe staff. Most places have a washing machine and a dryer that companies are welcome to use, plus an iron and ironing board, but nothing like a sewing machine. Theatres do not provide towels, so if you don't have any the producer will take care of them.

Schedules

The Labour Law is very strict. People are not allowed to work for more than 12 hours a day and should get 11 hours of rest between two days of work; four times in four weeks eight hours of daily rest is allowed, but that is the absolute minimum. This a European law, and both producer and visiting company risk heavy fines if crew members, including your own, work too long or do not get enough rest!

You will need to respect working hours. This could mean reducing technical requirements to what can be done within available time. We will send you a technical working schedule for your tour as soon as we have the information we need from you.

Typical working hours in the theatre are 10:00-12:30, followed by a 30-minute lunch break, 13:00-17:00, a two-hour dinner break, then 19:00-23:00. So if your strike finishes after 23:00 the theatre crew will generally need to work in two shifts. By the way, starting at 10:00 usually means having coffee at 9:45!

Pre-rigging options for your set up are virtually nonexistent, as there always is a get-out the previous night, so expect the whole thing to get done on the same day.

Safety

The theatre business may be unique, but we have to respect European laws and standards regarding general health and safety at work. The law is enforced more and more strictly as years go by.

Rigging materials need to be certified, and the safety factor in the theatre is 1:10 (the industrial safety factor is 1:5), meaning that the material has to be strong enough to carry 10 times the weight that it carries during the show. All parties are responsible for their own material: the theatre for its fly system, you for the gear you bring. But if you want to hang something that is not safe, the producer and theatre staff is responsible.

If you use any open fire in the show, theatres will need to get permits from their local fire department. Getting a permit for pyrotechnics is virtually impossible nowadays, so we advise you not to do this. All materials of the set need to be flame resistant, even if you do not use fire, and we need to be able to show certificates. Of course this does not apply to steel, but it does to almost everything else. Electrical equipment needs to meet European standards and will be checked by the theatres' technical staff. As far as personal protection is concerned, steel toe shoes for technicians are mandatory.

A written risk assessment needs to be made for every production. We will provide help with it.

The company has to obey theatre rules, and when in doubt, not do anything without the permission of the theatre's stage manager. For liability reasons, company members are not allowed to touch the fly system or to work on the theatre's lighting bridges without the permission and supervision of the theatre staff.

The stage

Stages are usually made of hardwood in a mid-tan colour, and only a couple of stages in the country still have a rake, all others are flat. Screwing into the floor is not a problem. If you need a black floor, you can use the theatre's marley dance floor, but you cannot drive screws through it.

Big theatres have two or more stages: one or two large proscenium-style main stages with fly systems and a smaller black box theatre.

Black or dark blue masking, an off-white cotton cyclorama, and a main curtain that opens sideways are available. Fly systems on the main stages are all computerised as a result of changes in labour law enforcement.

A foundation called *Stichting Tekening* provides AutoCAD drawings of all the theatres: plans, cross-sections, and sometimes a lighting plot. We e-mail them to you with the technical information of the theatres.

Lighting

On the main stages there is a big difference between fixed (i.e. on bridges) and mobile lights.

There are one or two FOH bridges, usually equipped with 2 kW profiles. Behind the proscenium (i.e. the typical position of LX1) there is another bridge called the 'portal bridge'. Its height is adjustable and it typically holds two rows of 1 kW profiles and/or PCs. In the stage towers on the side of the proscenium there are more spotlights, and the towers can move onstage or offstage. On each side of the stage just outside the flying area, there is a side gallery about 8 or 9 metres above stage level, which in most theatres is loaded with 2 kW profiles.

When you set up your show, you will be handed the standard lighting plot with the fixed lights on the bridges, and you can use as many of them as you like. You are not supposed to move them around.

On the overhead, the only standard thing is the cyclorama lighting. You are free to use it and change the colours, but in most theatres, it is in a fixed position.

In the black box theatres it's easier to move lights around, but even there most theatres prefer to keep a certain base for the one who comes the day after you.

Touring culture in the Netherlands, or more precisely the need for complicated set ups in one day within limited working hours, has companies touring with their own lighting computer, including lights, dimmers and cables for the overhead and the floor. Nowadays, this is what happens 95% of the time, even in black box theatres. Although every theatre has some spotlights stashed away, their quantity and quality vary considerably. By the way, every theatre does work with the DMX 512 standard.

As a foreign company coming to the Netherlands, you often need to tour with your own equipment. Individual theatres do not hire additional equipment for visiting companies. If there are special things you absolutely need, you can probably bring them with you or we can rent them for you.

Sound

You can always use a theatre's sound system. A standard PA system with a couple of monitors, some effects devices, a CD player or MD player and a few microphones should not be a problem. It would be best if you worked with the equipment available at theatres, as they do not hire extra equipment for you. If you have very specific needs, there are three options: the venue happens to have it and lets you use it, you bring your own, or we rent it for you.

Video

You can expect the theatres to have a video system for showing the stage image in the backstage areas. Usually, there is no other video equipment and they don't hire any. Dutch companies who use video in their show bring all the equipment (projector, mixer, player, monitor and cables) themselves. If you need such equipment and cannot bring your own, we can rent it for you.

Studios, food and drinks

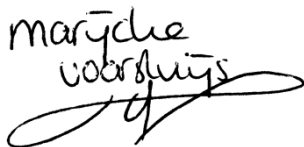
Since there is no residential company, there usually is no studio or rehearsal space in the theatre.

The tap water is of very good quality and is safe to drink. There is a canteen or green room in the theatres where you can buy food and drinks that is usually open from the end of the afternoon on show days until half an hour after the show, although in some cases much longer.

The consumption of alcohol and drugs of any kind during working hours is forbidden. Smoking is prohibited in all public buildings, including theatres.

We hope that this information is useful for the collaboration between you, the theatres and us as well as guarantee a pleasant working environment and a fantastic tour!

Looking forward to working with you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "marijcke voorsluijs". The signature is written in a cursive, lowercase style with a long, sweeping underline.

TOT B.V.

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