

PERFORMING AND
HOLDING EVENTS AT
THE GROVE – A GUIDE

INTRODUCTION

The Grove Theatre is an intimate arts and community venue in the centre of Eastbourne, located beneath the town's central library on Grove Road. It presents a varied programme of theatre, music, comedy and spoken-word events, alongside community-led activity, and welcomes both local and visiting companies.

In addition to the main auditorium, the Grove also operates The Box, a smaller second stage located in the bar. This space is used primarily for live music but is equally well suited to solo performance, readings, and small-scale work that benefits from a more informal and close-up setting.

The theatre operates on a not-for-profit basis and is supported by volunteers. Its scale is compact and its atmosphere informal but professional. The close relationship between performers and audience makes it particularly well suited to work that benefits from immediacy and direct engagement.

The Grove is easy to reach by public transport and plays an active role in Eastbourne's cultural life. In addition to ticketed performances, it is used for workshops, meetings and venue hire by external organisations.

This guide explains how the Grove works with performers and hirers, setting out expectations clearly so that events can be delivered smoothly and to the benefit of audiences and artists alike.

MANAGEMENT TEAM

- Steve Scott – Artistic Director
- Lisa Gillette – Director, Volunteer Coordinator, Book Club Coordinator
- Becky Loveridge – Director
- Stefan Antoniuk – Associate Artistic Director
- Emerson Cooper – Principal Tech
- Dave Brinson – Premises Licence Holder & Safeguarding Lead
- Lucy Trapp – Administrator

AT A GLANCE

- Main House capacity: 130 seated / 180 standing
- The Box capacity: 30 seated / 80 standing
- Hire options: 60/40 box office split or flat hourly hire
- First point of contact: grovetheatre@eastbourne.com
- The Grove is a compact venue and not a fully staffed receiving house
- Publicity materials should be supplied at least six weeks in advance
- Accessibility arrangements should always be discussed in advance

PUBLICATION NOTE

This edition of *Performing at the Grove – A Guide* was published in March 2026.

As the information in this document may be subject to change, hirers are advised to refer to the Venue Hire page of the Grove Theatre website for the most up-to-date version.

VENUE HIRE

The Grove Theatre is available for hire by performers, companies, and organisations seeking a flexible, well-located space for performance and events.

Capacities for the main house:

- 130 seated (airline style)
- 180 standing

Capacities for the Box:

- 30 seated (airline style)
- 80 standing

HIRE OPTIONS

There are two standard ways of hiring the Grove:

1. BOX OFFICE SPLIT (60/40)

Under this arrangement, ticket income is split 60% to the visiting company and 40% to the Grove. The theatre manages ticket sales and lists the event on its website, brochure, and social media channels. Ticket prices are set in agreement with the Artistic Director.

Bookings under this option begin with a proposal form. Owing to demand, not all proposals can be accommodated.

Where the Grove manages ticket sales, we will confirm the settlement due within ten working days of the performance. Provided a valid invoice is received within five working days of that notification, payment will be made within 28 days of the invoice date.

2. FLAT HIRE RATE

The hire rate for the main house is £30 per hour, the Box is £20 per hour.

Minimum hire periods apply:

- Six hours on Fridays and Saturdays
- Four hours at other times

For ticketed events under this option, the visiting company is responsible for ticketing and publicity and retains all ticket income. For outright hires, the visiting company is responsible for providing appropriate Front of House cover for its event, including admission, audience supervision and door sales where applicable, unless other arrangements have been agreed in writing. The Grove bar will operate separately.

You will need to the facility to take payments on the door, either by cash or card.

SEATING LAYOUTS

The Grove can accommodate a range of seating layouts depending on the nature of the event. In addition to a standard seated arrangement, alternative formats including cabaret-style layouts may also be possible by prior agreement.

USE OF HIRE TIME

Hire time includes access, get-in, set-up, rehearsal, performance, interval and get-out unless otherwise agreed in advance. Hirers should plan their schedule accordingly. Additional time,

where available, will be charged at the published hourly rate.

BOOKING CONFIRMATION, DEPOSITS AND CANCELLATIONS

A booking is not confirmed until it has been agreed in writing by the Grove. For flat hires, the theatre may require a deposit or advance payment in order to secure the date. This will be confirmed at the time of booking.

If a hirer cancels, any refund will depend on the notice given and on whether the date can be re-let. Where costs have already been incurred, these may still be payable. If the Grove is required to cancel for reasons beyond its control, any sums paid for the hire itself will be refunded, but no liability is accepted for consequential loss.

PHOTOGRAPHY AND RECORDING

Any proposed photography, filming or audio recording at the venue must be agreed in advance. It should not be assumed that performances may be recorded as of right.

BAR AND LICENSING

The Grove operates the bar for all events at no additional charge.

Where applicable, PRS and PPL fees are payable by the hirer.

INSURANCE AND RISK ASSESSMENT

Visiting companies are expected to hold appropriate public liability insurance and to provide evidence of this if requested. Where relevant, companies may also be required to supply a risk assessment in advance, particularly where technical equipment, unusual staging, children, or other higher-risk elements are involved.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

The Grove provides a straightforward technical set-up suited to small and mid-scale performance. Visiting companies should note that the venue is not equipped as a fully staffed receiving house, and productions are expected to plan accordingly.

MAIN HOUSE

The main auditorium is equipped with a basic but reliable sound and lighting system.

SOUND

- Soundcraft Signature 22 mixing desk
- 2 × Yamaha speakers
- 3 × SM58 microphones
- 3 × SM57 microphones

This system is suitable for most small theatre productions, acoustic music, spoken word and similar work. Users with more complex requirements should plan to supplement or replace elements of the house system.

LIGHTING

- 17 × parcans using coloured gels
- Alcora lighting desk with manual faders

The lighting rig is simple and designed to support general stage illumination rather than highly technical design. Productions requiring advanced

lighting should bring their own equipment.

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT

Visiting companies are welcome to bring their own technical equipment. All electrical items must be recently PAT tested, and evidence of this will be required before use in the building. Any equipment left overnight remains at the visiting company's own risk.

If you are hiring from an external supplier - Sussex Events, for example - you must also arrange to be present for delivery and collection. The Grove can provide a venue; it cannot assume responsibility for private equipment or third-party logistics.

HOUSE EQUIPMENT AND VISITING EQUIPMENT

Any visiting equipment brought into the venue must be compatible with the available power supply and physical access to the building. Companies with specialist requirements should discuss these with the theatre well in advance.

SPECIAL EFFECTS AND RESTRICTED ITEMS

Any proposed use of smoke, haze, confetti, glitter, replica weapons or other special effects must be discussed with the Grove in advance and may not be permitted. No such item or effect should be assumed acceptable without

prior written agreement. Use of naked flames or pyrotechnics is not permitted.

STORAGE

Storage space at the venue is limited. Scenery, cases and equipment should not be assumed to be storable before or after a booking unless this has been agreed in advance.

THE BOX

The Box, our second stage located in the bar, does not have a dedicated lighting or sound system. It is intended as a flexible and informal performance space. Users are strongly advised to provide their own equipment to meet the needs of their event.

PARKING AND LOAD-IN / LOAD-OUT

Loading bays are available adjacent to the stage door on Grove Road for loading in and out. Elsewhere, parking is metered and limited to two hours, with charges applying from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Saturday. All-day parking is available at the nearby Enterprise Centre, next to Eastbourne Station.

A PRACTICAL RULE

In general terms, if we do not have a specific item of equipment, visiting companies should assume they will need to supply it themselves. Early discussion with the theatre team is

encouraged so that expectations are clear and events run smoothly.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

The Grove works regularly with a small number of trusted freelance technicians. However, as a general rule, visiting companies are expected to provide their own technical support and to manage their production accordingly. Early discussion of your technical needs is encouraged. Clear planning at this stage will help ensure a smooth get-in, rehearsal and performance.

If you are hiring the venue outright, you will need to bring your own technician to operate sound and lighting. If helpful, we can provide a list of technicians who are familiar with the Grove's equipment and working practices.

BOX OFFICE SPLIT TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Box office split engagements include up to four hours of in-house technical support on each performance day, based on the venue's standard technical set-up. This covers the standard performance-day call only. Dedicated rehearsal time, extended get-ins, pre-rigs, and any specialist or additional technical support are chargeable separately at the venue's published hourly rate of £15 per hour. If you require technical support, this must be stated on your proposal form so that appropriate arrangements can be agreed in advance.

EMERGENCY EVACUATION

Emergency evacuation procedures will be explained on arrival where necessary. Visiting companies must ensure that performers, crew and any accompanying staff are familiar with these arrangements and comply promptly with any instruction given by Grove staff or volunteers in the event of an evacuation.

POSTERS AND NOTICES

We ask that no posters, notices or other materials are brought in and attached to walls, doors or other surfaces within the venue unless this has been agreed in advance.

MARKETING AND PUBLICITY — SUMMARY

This section summarises how marketing and publicity are handled at the Grove, and how responsibilities are shared between the theatre and visiting performers or hirers. It is intended to ensure clarity and to give each event the best chance of success.

For all events, timely information is essential. Publicity materials and event details should be provided at least six weeks in advance. Both the Grove and the visiting company are expected to promote the event through their own social media channels, subject to the information supplied being complete and accurate.

OUTRIGHT HIRE

Where the Grove is hired outright, responsibility for marketing and publicity rests primarily with the hirer. Performers are expected to design and produce their own promotional materials and to organise any external distribution. Posters and flyers may be displayed at the theatre if suitable.

The Grove can offer marketing or design support if required, subject to availability and an agreed fee. The Grove logo must be used on all publicity, and all references to the theatre must be approved in advance.

Unless the event is private, it will be listed on the Grove's website and Facebook events page. Inclusion in the

printed brochure may be possible if deadlines are met, for a small additional charge.

BOX OFFICE SPLIT OR JOINT ARRANGEMENTS

For events presented on a box office split or other joint basis, marketing is more collaborative. The Grove will promote the event across its social media channels, website, and relevant local listings, and will include it in the brochure where possible.

Designs and text from the visiting company are welcomed. The Grove can assist with design, printing, and limited flyer distribution, though some costs may be shared. Performers are still expected to actively promote their event through their own networks.

All publicity must use the Grove logo and be approved in advance.

TICKET SALES

For outright hires, visiting companies must manage their own ticket sales. For box office split, ticket sales are handled by the Grove through its ticketing partners and on site.

The theatre team is happy to discuss publicity approaches or specific needs in advance. Clear communication and early planning make a material difference.

VENUE ACCESSIBILITY — CURRENT POSITION

arrangements can be made within the present limitations of the building.

The Grove Theatre is housed within the Central Library building, which was designed in a period when accessibility was not given the consideration it rightly demands today. As things stand, there is unfortunately no route by which a mobility-impaired person can enter or leave the venue independently.

From the outset, we have been working to address this and continue to explore possible improvements. Discussions remain ongoing with East Sussex County Council and include a full disability access audit. Until permanent changes can be made, our arrangements must reflect the building's current layout and the requirements of fire safety.

In line with guidance agreed with the County Council's Fire Officer, any mobility-impaired visitor must attend with their own supporter or carer and be able to leave the building in an emergency. Where it is helpful, we can also arrange access to the building in advance of the usual opening time. These arrangements should always be agreed beforehand.

Seats with arm rests can be provided, subject to availability, and we are happy to arrange one if needed.

We would always encourage early contact so that individual requirements can be discussed openly and sensibly, and so that the best possible

FINAL PRACTICAL NOTES

DRESSING ROOMS

The Grove provides two dressing rooms for performers' use. Each is equipped with its own toilet and sink and will be made available for the duration of your booking. Tea and Coffee making facilities are available in the bar.

WASTE AND RECYCLING

Recycling bins are provided in each dressing room. We ask visiting companies to use them appropriately and to leave dressing room areas in good order at the end of the event.

BACKSTAGE ALCOHOL

Alcohol may be brought into the venue for backstage use only. It must not be consumed by anyone under the age of 18. The Grove reserves the right to remove alcohol from the premises if this condition is not observed.

ADVANCE BOOKING

As a general guide, shows are usually booked six months to a year in advance, though this is not fixed. The Grove also presents a substantial programme of in-house activity, and availability can therefore be limited.

TOUR SCHEDULING

If you are planning a tour with dates in East Sussex or Brighton and Hove and are seeking to perform at the Grove on a box office split, we encourage you to consider the spacing and proximity of nearby performances. Experience suggests that dates scheduled too close together can affect ticket sales. There is no absolute rule, however, and each proposal is considered on its own merits.

WORKING WITH THE GROVE

The Grove is run by a committed team of volunteers. We ask that they are treated with courtesy and respect. Visiting companies are expected to be self-sufficient and to provide their own additional support where needed.