

Stage Manager

“Stage Management is more art than science.”

-Daniel A. Ionazzi

General Responsibilities:

- “Mine is not to report problems; mine is to solve them.”
- There is no one job description for the stage manager.
- You should be friendly/polite with all involved in the production.
- Callboard related duties include:
 - Keep the callboard neat, organized, and useful.
 - Only use Times New Roman when posting information.
 - Remove all useless or inappropriate material.
 - Anything you post on the callboard pertaining to a specific date must be posted no later than ten o'clock on the morning of that date.
- Do not cause problems; solve them.
- Be a good listener.
- When something goes wrong, you must take responsibility for the issue.
- Keep confidential information confidential.
- Know what to do if somebody is injured during any part of the production process.
 - See the “Disaster” section of this document.
- Plan ahead.
- Keep all paperwork up-to-date.

Pre-Rehearsal:

- Read the play. Determine what is required in all aspects of the production.
- Type the script. Do not cheat on this step.
 - Typing the script assists you in understanding the production
- Meet with the director.
 - Discuss the rehearsal schedule, running rehearsals, rules of the director and the director’s general idea of the play.
 - Determine if there will be an assistant director and their role in the production.
- Meet with each of the designers.
 - Let them tell you about their designs.
 - Discuss what they will need from you as a stage manager.
 - Receive any necessary paperwork/information.
 - Remember: You are not a member of the design staff. You are to facilitate the design and not to provide opinions or perform alterations, unless specifically asked.
- Make sure that scripts are given to all of the people who require one.
 - This includes the director, designers, assistants, crew heads, stage management, and actors. (and perhaps others...choreographer, musical director, musicians, etc)

Paperwork:

- Ensure that all of your paperwork has a title, a date and the author's name.
- All confidential paperwork should be clearly labeled as such.
 - This information must not be given out without the permission of stage management or the owner of the information.
- Create the following paperwork:
 - A properties list
 - A character plot
 - An actors contact list
 - A technicians contact list
 - A production calendar

Auditions:

- Assist in publicizing auditions. Information to include:
 - Audition location and times
 - The type of audition: cold readings, prepared monologues from the script, etc.
- Go over how the audition will run with the director and your assistants.
- Prepare the audition space
 - Ensure the space is neat and clean and well lit.
 - Set up tables and chairs as needed.
 - Have a separate sign-in area where the actors can fill out their audition forms.
 - Tech sign-ups can also occur in this area.
- Have copies of the audition pieces photocopied and ready, if necessary.
- General procedure
 - Actors arrive, sign in, and fill out their audition forms.
 - The stage manager or director will give a short introduction and then auditions will begin.
 - After their audition, thank the actors and remind them to check the callboard the following day.
- If a director asks your opinion when casting the show, give your professional opinion of their work and work ethic.
- Be aware that a director may have callbacks the following day.
- Callbacks follow the same procedure as auditions.
- Post a callback list on the callboard the morning after auditions.
- When auditions are over and the final casting is complete, create a cast list and post it on the callboard the following morning by 10am.
- Email this list to all designers the night of casting, before midnight.
- Before leaving the audition space each night, restore the space and turn off the lights.

Post Auditions/Sign-ups:

- After auditions, give the completed tech sign-up sheets to the technical theatre professor.
 - After the crew list has been completed, it will be posted. Posting the list is not the responsibility of the stage manager.

- It is the responsibility of the stage manager to collect all contracts and to ensure that they are delivered to the head of the theatre department.
- Create a complete contact list including all actors and members of the production team.

Rehearsal Period – Preparation:

- Create an email list of all actors and production team members.
- Create a stage manager's kit.
- Ensure that you have enough forms of the right varieties, including accident report forms.
- Ensure that you have a stopwatch or another means of timing the rehearsals.
- Prior to the first rehearsal use spike tape to tape out the set.
- Speak with the director and the technical director to be sure of where rehearsal will be on any given day.
- Prior to the first rehearsal, you must have a meeting with the entire stage management team.
 - Discuss how things will be run, the division of duties and answer any questions.
 - Ensure that the entire stage management team can read each other's blocking and cue notation.
- Learn the names of everyone involved in the production.

Rehearsal Period – Daily:

- Send out a rehearsal report to every actor and member of the production team every night, before midnight, via email. Every report should contain:
 - The date and time of the rehearsal.
 - Who attended, including a note of being late, absent, or excused.
 - What was worked on at rehearsal.
 - Any questions or comments that arose during the rehearsal, broken down by department.
 - The upcoming rehearsal schedule.
 - Your contact information.
- Keep in mind that you may need to schedule meetings with the director or designers during the day in order to gather information or explain a note in one of your rehearsal reports.
- Ensure that all paperwork is kept up-to-date.
- Maintain the no cell phone/iPod policy
 - Collect them if they bring them to rehearsals
 - Once into technical rehearsals, also disallow all laptop usage.

Rehearsal Period – Weekly:

- Schedule and run all production meetings.
 - Create an order to address each production member's questions or concerns.
 - Ensure that you arrive early enough to set a table and enough chairs for everybody who will be attending.

- Take notes of everything that is said and agreed to at the production meeting.
- Ensure that after the meeting a production report is sent out via email.

First Rehearsal:

- The first rehearsal is usually a read through of the entire play.
- Arrive early to set up the room with a number of chairs around one or more tables.
- During the first rehearsal distribute the following:
 - Scripts
 - Contracts
 - Personal information forms
 - This form, to be filled out by the actors and returned to you, must include any allergies or medical conditions and emergency contact information. This information must be kept strictly confidential.
 - Actor bio forms (to be given to Publicity person)
 - A production calendar
 - A contact list

Regular Rehearsals:

- Prior to rehearsal, complete the following.
 - Set up a table for yourself and the director.
 - Position any furniture needed for the rehearsal
 - Pull out any props that will be used.
 - Turn on work lights.
- Actors need to be present and warmed up before rehearsal begins.
- Call actors that are not present no later than five minutes until rehearsal.
- Write down all blocking.
- Write down everything the director says during rehearsal.
- Ensure that actors are given a five-minute break after eighty-five minutes of work.
- When an actor is off book, you should have an assistant “on book.”
- Anticipate all special effects (sound cues, light cues, scene changes, etc.) by saying them aloud. Ex. blackout...lights up
- Work with the properties master to ensure rehearsal props.
- Ensure that actors take proper care of rehearsal costumes and that they are returned to you for storage every night.
- Discuss the policy for visitors with the director.
- Record and enforce the following fines. The record of the fines and money collected must be given to the department secretary.
- The set fines are:
 - Open toed shoes \$0.25
 - No script \$1.00
 - No pencil \$0.10
 - Not returning a pencil \$1.00
 - Missed fitting \$2.00
 - Late :
 - \$0.20 per minute (for rehearsals)

- \$1.00 per minute (for technical rehearsals and performances)
- If an actor is late, move their call time forward by ten minutes.
 - Repeat this process each time the actor is late.
- If an actor is injured, use the following procedures.
 - Turn rehearsal over to an assistant.
 - If the injury is serious, call 911.
 - Assess whether or not the actor needs to go to the emergency room.
 - Assess whether or not an ambulance will be required.
 - If the actor must go to the emergency room, determine who can go with them and take their personal information form. Typically, an assistant should suffice.
 - Use proper protection to sanitize and disinfect the area of any bodily fluid.
 - Fill out an accident report form.
- After rehearsal, ensure that the following occurs.
 - Actors know the date of the next rehearsal and its location.
 - All lights are turned off.
 - All doors are closed.

Special Rehearsals:

- If the director wants a closed rehearsal, only the director, stage management team, and actors in the scene are allowed at the rehearsal.
 - Clearly post on the door to knock and then wait to be let in.
- Inform the department of when crew watch will occur.
 - All members of the technical crew should be informed of crew watch in advance.

Tech Week – Preparation:

- Create and post a sign-in sheet.
- Prior to tech week, do the following.
 - Speak to the sound engineer about headset placement and a god microphone.
 - Speak to the master electrician about backstage running lights.
 - Speak to the properties master about placement of property tables.
 - Speak to the costume designer and wardrobe supervisor about quick-change areas.
- Meet with the entire run crew to discuss the following.
 - Their duties, headset behavior, promptness and professional attitude.
- Work with the director, your assistants, the running crew, and actors to work through each scene shift.
 - You must create proper documentation for each scene shift.
 - Ensure that both you and your assistants have spike tape available.

Tech Week – Paper Tech:

- Paper Tech occurs in place of the final production meeting.
- At this meeting do the following:
 - Place all of the show's cues into your prompt book.
 - Receive cue sheets from each designer.

- Create a master cue sheet.

Tech Week – Rehearsals:

- The Tech Week rehearsal schedule needs to be discussed at a production meeting several weeks prior to the actual tech week.
- The Saturday and Sunday of tech week are always scheduled for two rehearsals.
 - After the Saturday and Sunday technical rehearsals, discuss the need for a second rehearsal that day with the designers and director.
 - If there are two rehearsals in one day, enforce the break between these rehearsals.
- Ensure that all actors and running crew arrive on time.
- Before the first technical rehearsal begins, discuss the following with the entire company:
 - Courtesy, silence, cooperation, wandering, the sign-in sheet, and call time changes
- Ensure that the backstage monitors are working properly.
- Most technical rehearsals are run as follows:
 - The play is run from beginning to end as a normal run-through, while you call cues.
 - If a cue needs to be fixed, call out, “Hold, Please” or “Stop, Please”
 - Then that cue is done again and again until it is corrected.
 - Talk through any difficult sequences before performing them.
 - Skip sections of the play with no cues. This is a cue-to-cue rehearsal.
- Be prepared to make corrections to your prompt book.
- After each technical rehearsal meet with the director, designers, and run crew. Discuss issues and how they will be addressed.

Dress Rehearsals:

- Ensure that all actors and running crew arrive on time.
- Give warning calls at regular intervals before the start of the show. These are: “30 'til house,” “20 'til house,” “10 'til house,” “house open” and “30 'til places,” “20 'til places,” “10 'til places,” “5 'til places,” and “places.”
- During intermission call: “5 'til places,” and “places.”
- Most dress rehearsals are run as follows:
 - The play is run from beginning to end as a normal run-through, while you call cues.
 - If a quick change is done incorrectly repeat the sequence until the problem has been solved.
 - Dress rehearsals run under performance conditions.
- After each dress rehearsal meet with the director, designers, and run crew. Discuss issues and how they will be addressed.

Calling:

- Articulate and enunciate.
- Do not choose similar prefixes to each cue (“Light” and “Loft”)
- Reserve the word “go” for actual cue execution.
- Talk through difficult sequences with your crew.

- Call a “Warning” one page ahead of the cue in question.
- Call a “Standby” anywhere from a few lines to a paragraph or two ahead of the cue.
- Example of a cuing call: “Warning Lights 40, and Sound 2... Standby Lights 40 and Sound 2... Lights Standing By... Sound Standing By... Lights 40 GO... Sound 2 GO”
- Ensure that headset chatter is kept to a minimum.
- Test all headsets prior to house opening.
- If a headset fails, use the red signal button to perform simple communication.
 - One long signals means no and three short signals means yes.
 - When time allows, see that the faulty headset is fixed.

Prompt Script:

- Ensure that you have placed the latest cue adjustments into your prompt book.
- Always write clearly in your prompt script.
- Have all emergency procedures and speeches placed in your prompt book.
- Have any and all forms that you may need.

Performance – Daily:

- Send out a performance report to every actor and member of the production team every night, before midnight, via email. Every report should contain:
 - The date and time of the performance.
 - Who attended, including a note of being late, absent, or excused.
 - The house count (obtained from the house manager).
 - Any problems encountered or repairs (that are needed or that have been done)
 - Any accidents or injuries to cast, crew, or audience (details are your friend)
 - Any additional notes
 - The upcoming schedule.
 - Your contact information.
- Check the following day to ensure that each problem addressed in the rehearsal report has been taken care of.
- Create a checklist for the show.

Performance – Preshow:

- At the crew and cast call times, check the sign-in sheet and call anybody who is not on time.
- Actors must check their props prior to house opening.
- The board operators must check their equipment as soon as they arrive. This includes checking the following.
 - Dimmers, sound equipment, spotlights and headsets.
- Ensure that any last-minute maintenance needed is performed quickly.
- Sweep and mop the stage every night.
- Perform a blackout check with the light board operator.
- The house manager will check in with you before opening house. After house is open all work must be done silently backstage.

Intermission:

- Remain in close contact with the house manager.
- Do not wander from your position.

Post-show:

- Ensure that all actors remove their costumes before leaving the backstage area.
- After the audience has left, reset the show.
- Ensure that you receive the house count from the house manager.
- Before you leave the theatre, turn off all lights and close all doors to the space.

Photo Call:

- Photo call takes place on the first Sunday performance of the show.
- Announce this date as early as possible.
- Anybody is able to take photos during photo call.
- After speaking to the director, designers, and publicist, create a photo call list.
- On the night of the photo call, post the photo call list on the callboard.
- Photos may be “cheated” to achieve a better aesthetic.

Disasters:

- The following is a brief description of what should happen in a few emergencies.
- In the case of a fire, do the following.
 - Never mention the word “fire”.
 - Immediately get on a god microphone and get the audience out of the theatre.
 - Bring up the house lights.
 - Ensure that house management is opening the doors to let the audience out.
 - If the fire is unmanageable with fire extinguishers, call the local fire department.
 - Ensure that no doors to the space remain open after leaving.
 - Count heads to ensure that everyone has safely exited the theatre.
 - An example fire speech: “Ladies and gentlemen, we have a problem backstage. We do not think that it is serious, but for your safety and our piece of mind, we would like to clear the theatre at this time. Staff members will be at the exits to assist you and we will resume the performance as soon as we can. Thank you.”
- If an actor or crew member is injure, do the following,
 - Assess the actors or crewmembers injuries.
 - If they must go to the emergency room, check to see if anyone can take their place for the remainder of the performance.
 - If the injury is major, to a major member of the production, or in the middle of the individual doing something onstage, immediately stop the show and bring up house and work lights.
 - Call 911.
 - An example medical emergency speech: “Ladies and gentlemen, we have a problem backstage. If there is a doctor in the house, could you please

report to the lobby immediately? We are going to pause for just a few minutes. Please remain in your seats and we will resume the performance as soon as possible. Thank you.”

- If a power outage occurs, do the following.
 - If you are able, bring up the work and house lights and continue the performance.
 - If the entire building's power goes down, you need to stop the show immediately and keep the audience in their seats until the difficulty can be sorted out.
 - A member of the faculty or staff will quickly check the building's main circuit breakers to determine if the problem is specific to the building or if it is a campus-wide difficulty.
 - Wait for the power to return for ten to fifteen minutes before canceling the performance.
 - An example power outage speech: “Ladies and gentlemen, we have a problem backstage. We are going to pause for just a few minutes while we work it out. Please remain in your seats and we will resume the performance as soon as possible. Thank you.”
 - An example of a general emergency speech: “Ladies and gentlemen, we have a problem backstage. We are going to pause for just a few minutes while we work it out. Please remain in your seats and we will resume the performance as soon as possible. Thank you.”

Post-Production / Strike:

- Strike is limited to two hours.
- Strike follows the final performance of the production.
- Ensure that all theatre majors and everybody who took part in the production attend strike.
- Make a note of who is not present at strike and give these names to the technical theatre faculty member.
- Ensure that everyone involved with strike sits in the audience, after removing their costume, until they are instructed to perform a specific duty.
- After a student finishes their specific duty they must return to sit in the audience.
- After strike, take down all information relating to your show from the callboard.

Stage Manager

All students participating in a show must fill out this form. A separate form must be used for each position held. When complete, return this form to the theatre department head.

Please write clearly and legibly.

Name:

Phone Number:

Email:

Production:

Role:

Please check all that apply to you:

I am in the THEA 104 class.

I am in the Opera Workshop class.

I am in an Independent study class. The class name is _____

I am a BFA Tech major.

I am a BFA Performance major.

I am a volunteer.

By signing this form, I assert that I have not only read and understand the above contract, but I also agree to follow and abide by it. I also understand that I will be held accountable for my actions with repercussions ranging from failing the THEA 104 and Opera Workshop classes to being prohibited from participating in the next show and that my role in the production may be terminated in case of extreme misconduct.

Name (print):

Signature:

Date: _____