



Theatre Virtual Learning

Theatre Design & Production & Advanced Theatre Design & Production Stage Management

April 28



Lesson: Stage Management

Objective/Learning Target: The student will understand the duties of a stage manager.

Stage Management

Warm Up:

Make a list of things you know a stage manager does



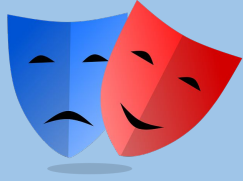
Stage Management

T-Chart

Name: Date:

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Lesson Steps:
The following slides will share duties of a stage manager. As you are reading through the slides, keep a t-chart. On one side list the duties you would enjoy/be good at and on the other side list the duties you would least enjoy or would require to improve skills in order to fulfill.

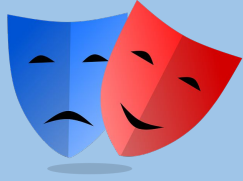


Stage manager duties

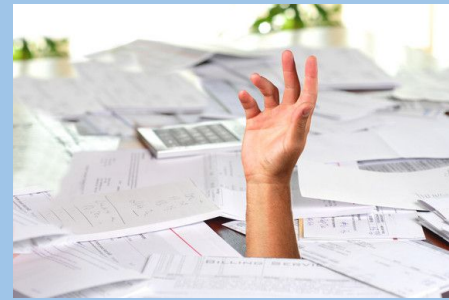
Keep in mind different theatres will have different duties that a stage manager will have to accomplish, but many duties are universal.

If the theatre is Equity (union), there are many rules the stage manager must adhere to. For the following slides, we will assume the theatre is an Equity theatre.

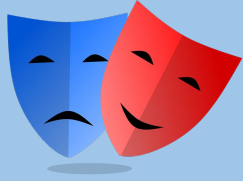




Stage manager duties before the production



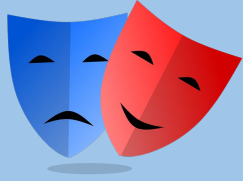
- Conduct auditions with director, coordinating audition forms.
- Review all Union rules regarding productions
- Create a contact sheet that includes the name, position, email, and phone number of all cast and crew members.
- Have an emergency contact form filled out for each person that not only includes an emergency person to call, but any allergies they may have.
- Make a checklist of things to do for the 1st rehearsal including things like contact sheet, emergency sheet, sign-in sheets, room signs, birthday list, scene breakdowns, daily call sheets, etc.
- Create a rehearsal schedule with the director that includes all deadlines and performances.
- Get the ground plan and dimensions of the performance space.



Stage manager duties before the production, cont.

- Tape out the ground plan, to scale, in the rehearsal space and spike furniture spots.
- Break down rehearsal into daily rehearsal calls with date, time, who is called, what scenes will be rehearsed and if it is long day, when meal breaks will be.
- Figure out what special needs will be for the production (such as knee pads, tumbling mats, music stands...).
- Communicate with director and design team about the production vision and goals.
- Prepare the stage manager kit.
- Prepare the rehearsal script.
- Get scripts prepared for the cast.



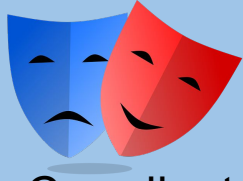


Stage manager duties during the rehearsal process



- Attend all rehearsals
- Distribute rehearsal calls to cast and crew.
- Open and prepare the rehearsal space for all rehearsals (includes sweeping and mopping the stage, pre-setting furniture and props, etc)
- Collect all forms such as Emergency Contact Forms from cast and crew
- For Equity, call the breaks according to Equity contracts (5 minutes after 55 minutes of rehearsal/10 minutes after 80 minutes of rehearsal and a meal break if rehearsal is more than 5 hours.
- Record blocking
- Make notes of any changes
- Create prop needs list, prop tracking list, costume list and quick changes.

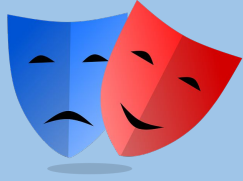




Stage manager duties during the rehearsal process

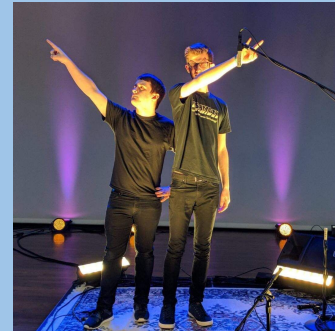
- Coordinate communications with design team members
- Send rehearsal reports that include rehearsal time, who was called, what work was completed, late arrivals or absences, illnesses or injuries, and notes for each technical department that includes additions and alterations.
- Assist prop crew and coordinate rehearsal props as well as maintain a master props list.
- Organize backstage areas for rehearsals and performances coordinating with the technical director.
- Chair production meetings.
- Develop preset lists and running order lists.

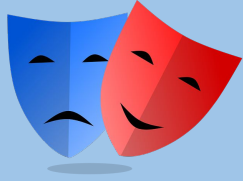




Stage manager duties during the rehearsal process

- Put all technical cues, warnings and stand-bys in production book before the first tech rehearsal.
- Make sure all communication between cast and crews are established for costume fittings, makeup notes, program proofing, etc.
- Coordinate scene change rehearsals, technical and dress rehearsals in cooperation with director and production team members.
- Supervise work of technicians, stage hands, and board operators.
- Take notes when actors are off book and prompt them.

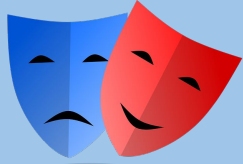




Stage manager duties during the rehearsal process

- Manage the production callboard with sign in sheets, announcements and information.
- Organize and supervise special rehearsals (stage fights, dance rehearsal, special effects...)
- Monitor actors' attendance
- Clean up after all rehearsals and performances (including returning props and furniture to storage and backstage custodial duties which can mean cleaning up after actors if they left items (anything they leave should be taken by the stage manager and actors should be directed to clean up after themselves in the future.)
- Close and lock the rehearsal space after all rehearsals and performances, including turning off lights, closing and locking all doors.

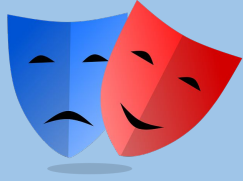




Stage manager duties during the technical process

- Lead rehearsals of show, stopping to insert design/technical elements)
- Record the position of all cues
- Create the calling script with all cue information
- Create preset lists and run sheets for backstage crew
- Find solutions to potential safety issues (glow tape, cover corners...)
- Continue sending rehearsal reports
- Manage backstage crew
- Organize backstage traffic
- Call cues

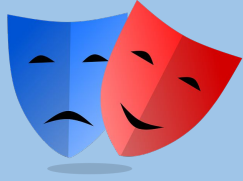




Stage manager duties during the performances



- Do pre-show calls (how many minutes to curtain)
- Coordinate with house about when to open house and begin performance
- Call all cues (automated scenery, lights, sounds, projection, orchestra, actors)
- Make any necessary updates to call script, preset lists, run sheets...
- Send performance reports that includes any information about late arrivals/absences, illnesses/injuries, run time, audience reaction, issues with scenery, lights, sound, props, costumes, dropped lines/missed cues/errors in show run.

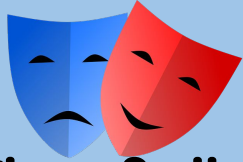


Stage manager duties during the performances

Advice for the day:

- If the producer asks for the help from the cast in non-acting chores (cleaning dressing rooms, selling tickets...) don't give a non-cooperative cast member a five minute lecture on responsibilities. It is your job to make sure cast members know what the director and producer expect of them. Post a daily roster. Hand out written memos. Phone to remind them. Explain it. Do not, however, lose your temper with a cast member for any reason at all.



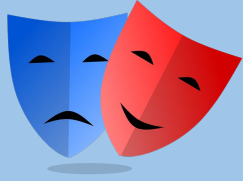


Practice:

The following slide will present a problem stage managers could encounter.

Write out what you would do if you were stage managing a show and this occurred.





The situation



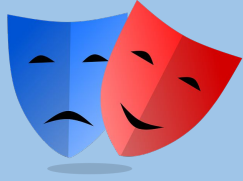
Set construction is running behind schedule.

The technical director complains that the scene designer has no concept of design. He complains that the designer is overburdening the shop with a ridiculous amount of work.

The scene designer complains that the technical director has ruined more scenery than a termite on a showboat. Inefficient methods are used in the shop and one set piece has not been in rehearsals for two nights because it has not been repaired.

The stage manager's main concern is to have the set ready for the rehearsal the next day.

What would you do as stage manager?



Answer:

The stage manager must be tactful in all situations.

You cannot place blame on one or the other not only because it will only add to the fuel, you could also burn bridges for yourself in the future because you never know who you may have to work with again.

Cool them off separately. Commiserate with both. Commiserate means to show understanding for their frustration, but not taking sides. You do not want it to look like you are talking about someone behind their back, either.

Tell them what a great job they have been doing. Praise any strong point they have. Overlook any weaknesses they have. Sympathize with the problems, pep them up and send them back to work.

The scenery is more likely to get finished in a positive atmosphere.

