

# STAGE MANAGEMENT WORKSHOP

- Workshop Overview
- Stage Management Overview
- Production Hierarchy and the Stage Manager
- Role and Qualities of a Good Stage Manager
- The Stage Manager's "Bag of Tricks"
- Theatre Etiquette
- Stage Management Duties
  - Pre-production
  - Rehearsal
  - Tech Week
  - Run
  - Post Show
- Script Analysis and Stage Shorthand
- The Prompt Script
- The Assistant Stage Manager
- Headset Etiquette
- Forms
- Case Studies & Problem Solving
- Wrap Up and Q & A

## **Participants will take home:**

Comprehensive stage management checklist of duties covering all production stages  
Sample of stage management forms

# STAGE MANAGEMENT THROUGH HISTORY

Very little is known about the evolution of the stage manager though the title is thought to have come into relatively common use in England in the 18th century. Before that time, the director(s) and actors of a company would have taken care of all show details themselves. As theatre became more involved, it became necessary to employ stage hands and eventually someone from whom those stage hands took cues. This became the case during Shakespeare's time.

Maud Gill is generally credited as having been the first female stage manager, who took over the post at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre in 1917. She left a fascinating and entertaining account of her experiences in her autobiography See the Players. She was told that a woman ought not to be put in charge of stagehands because "working men" would not take orders from her, but she decided that, since mothers had been keeping order in the home since the beginning of time, the way to go about it was to treat them as a mother would treat her family. It worked.

## STAGE MANAGEMENT IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY

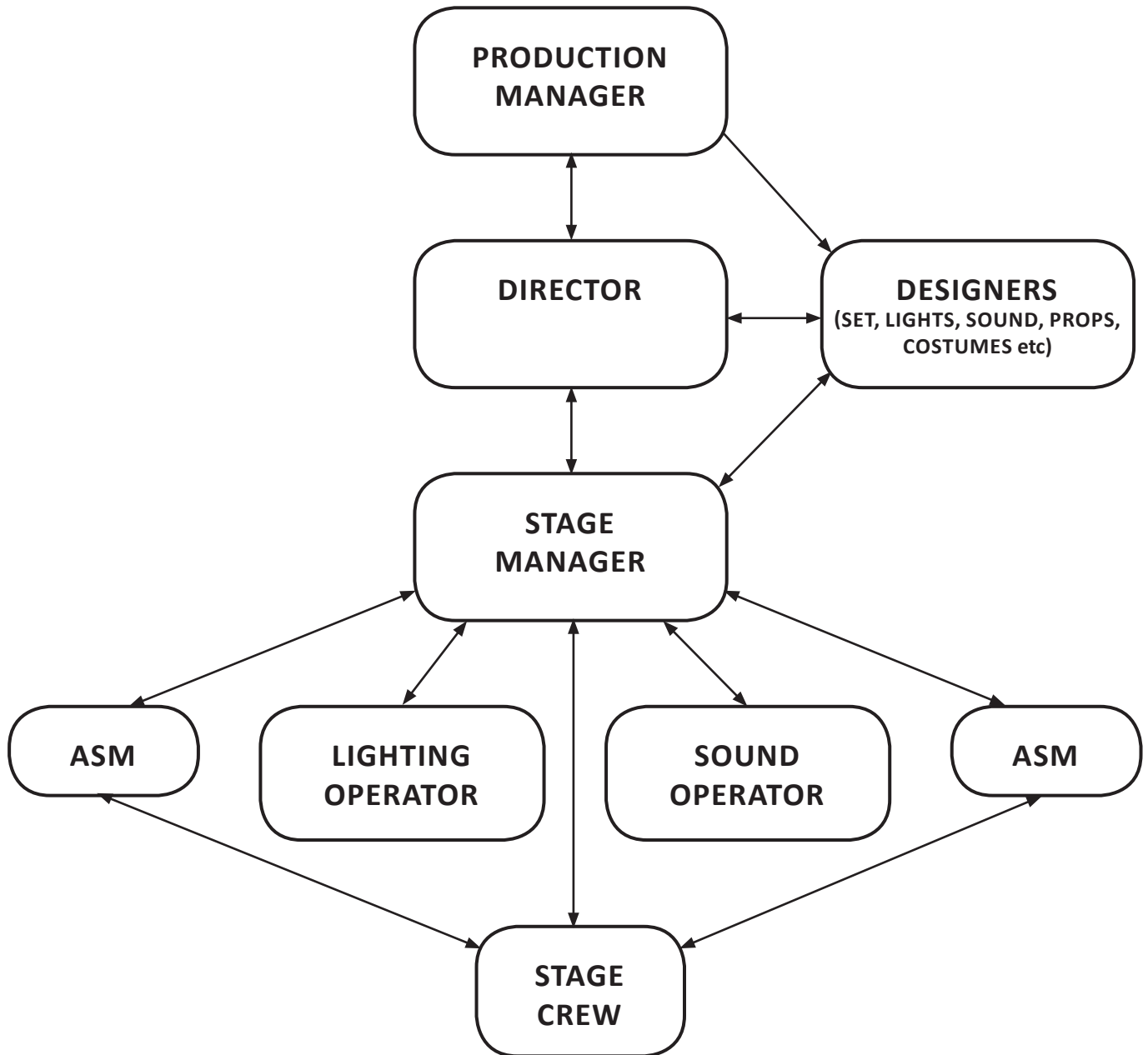
There are still many, many "old school" Stage Managers. Tried and true methods work for a reason. However, there is also much to be said for innovation.

Word processing packages, spreadsheets, Google Docs™, email, and other electronic methods are worth investigating to see if these techniques might add to the smooth managing and running of a show.

Spend a little time on the Internet: [www.controlbooth.com](http://www.controlbooth.com) and [www.smnetwork.org](http://www.smnetwork.org) are both good places to go to find out what works for other Stage Managers, what products are available etc.

The bottom line is still: use whatever works for you and discard the rest.

# PRODUCTION HIERARCHY



PREPARED BY: Wendy Wagner, 2012. Community Theatre Production Hierarchy

# THE ROLE OF THE STAGE MANAGER

- Serves as a conduit for information by continually distributing show information between all departments. Trees **will** perish.
- Documents the technical and artistic details of the production into the prompt script.
- Prompts actors during rehearsals unless there is an assistant stage manager or other continuity person available.
- Co-ordinates the scheduling of actors' time.
- Gives call prior to each performance.
- Calls technical cues during the run of the show.
- Maintains the **Director's Vision** and gives show notes in the absence of the Director.
- Gives technical show notes to crew and actors when necessary.
- Ensures that necessary rehearsal items are assembled (unless there is a production props person).
- Ensures that safe and clean conditions exist in the rehearsal hall, backstage and onstage.
- Documents the action of all performances in show reports.
- Preserves cast and crew morale.

# QUALITIES OF A GOOD STAGE MANAGER

- Assumes responsibility.
- Level-headed and even-tempered.
- Organized and efficient.
- Thinks ahead and anticipates the needs of the director and actors.
- Considerate and sensitive.
- Punctual and dependable.
- Keeps mouth shut, quietly listens with eyes and ears open.
- Sense of humour.

# STAGE MANAGEMENT “BAG of TRICKS”

Suggested list of supplies to be kept at all times in the SM Desk, Rehearsal Hall or Green Room.

<b>General</b>		
prompt script	blank paper	spike tape
erasers	lined paper	Glo-tape
pencils	hole reinforcers	masking tape
pencil sharpener	tacks	scotch tape
highlighters	straight pins	duct tape
scissors	safety pins	gaffer tape
clipboard	paper clips	flashlights
stapler/staples	hand sanitizer	Work light
labels	kleenex	batteries
rehearsal calendar	Post-it notes	ruler
stopwatch/timer	dividers/tabs	tape measure
Glue stick	coloured ‘flags’	elastics
WD-40	rags	extension cord
<b>First Aid Kit</b>		
Aspirin/advil	heat/ice packs	peroxide
bandaids	Polysporin	scissors
antihistamine	Tensor bandages	tweezers
needle/thread	throat lozenges	
<b>Other</b>		
water jug	cups	garbage pail

# THEATRE ETIQUETTE

- Be on time for your rehearsal and show calls. Be ready to work at the time scheduled.
- Do not talk loudly or carry on backstage.
- Do not drink anything but water backstage and in the auditorium.
- Clean up after yourself in all areas of the theatre.
- If you have to leave the rehearsal for **any** reason, tell the Stage Manager.
- Do not cross in front of the production table during rehearsal.
- Do not interrupt the Stage Manager while s/he is talking to the director or the designers.
- Do not take food or coffee onto the stage unless it is called for in the play.
- Do not talk to crew members or performers backstage during rehearsals or performances unless it is about the business of the production.
- Sign in on the call board upon arrival during final rehearsals and run of the show.
- Do not drink alcohol before a rehearsal or performance. Save the celebrations for after the show.
- Performers should show up for technical rehearsals in neutral-coloured clothing: never wear white.
- After the performance, change out of costume and make-up before greeting the audience. Enter the lobby from backstage, not through the auditorium.

# STAGE MANAGER'S RESPONSIBILITIES & CHECKLIST

## A/ PRE-PRODUCTION

### Read Script:

- Pleasure read
- Script analysis

### Assemble Prompt Script:

The prompt script is the Stage Manager's tool - the formal record of the production - sometimes nicknamed "The Bible". This valuable document should **always** be kept in a secure place: either with the SM or left in the booth during the run. The prompt script should be well-organized, detailed and neat in order for it to work for the SM and for others during the production process.

- Insert script
- Personnel contact lists
- Dividers for scenes/acts
- Dividers for lists and plots
- French Scene breakdown (entrance/exit of new character)
- Legend for blocking notation
- Marking sound and light cues (in pencil!)

### Prepare Forms and insert into prompt script:

- Daily Rehearsal Sheet
- Scene Timing Sheet
- Properties Pre-set
- Costumes Sheet
- Show Reports
- Sign-in Sheet

### Prepare Lists:

- Cast List
- Crew List
- Character/Scene breakdown (preliminary)
- Properties List



**Prepare Plots and insert into prompt script:**

- Lighting (Lx) Breakdown
- Sound (Sx) Breakdown
- Costume Breakdown (with preliminary 'quick change' info)
- Scene Change Breakdown
- Special Effects (Fx) Breakdown
- Prop/Costume Preset Plot

**Other items:**

- Theatre floor plans
- Set Design drawings
- Set Design floor plans
- Costume Sketches
- Other?

**Assemble Supplies:**

- Stage Management Supplies
- Valuables box

**First Production Meeting (usually organized by Producer):**

- Expectations of SM
- Copy of Script to SM and ASMs
- Scripts for designers and crew (who distributes?)
- Cast Scripts
- Cast/Crew Lists (who compiles?)
- Floor plan/Maquette
- Lock-up procedures
- Biographies/Photos (when needed and to whom do they go?)
- Wardrobe fitting requirements and schedule
- Confirm Character/Scene breakdown
- Date/Time/Location for first rehearsal
- Rehearsal Schedule (who prepares?)

### **First Production Meeting (cont.):**

- Finalize Master Production Schedule (rehearsals, set load-in, sound & light load-in, costume parade, publicity photos, level setting, Q-2-Q, tech rehearsals, dress rehearsals etc.)
- Script changes
- Rehearsal props/furnishings
- Prompting style
- Date actors "off book"
- Lx and Sx cues called during rehearsal?
- Next meeting?

### **Prepare Schedules and insert into prompt script:**

- Master production calendar (usually prepared by Producer and/or Director)
- First Day Schedule
- Weekly Rehearsal Schedule (fittings, meetings, photos etc)
- Performance Schedule

### **Auditions (usually scheduled by Director and/or Producer):**

- Confirm audition space, date, time
- Audition procedure (group or individual?)
- Who notifies auditioners?
- Greet auditioners
- Assist with the organization and running of auditions

### **Rehearsal Hall:**

- Tape out floor plan of set (usually done by set designer)
- Set out production table and chairs
- Props table
- Maquette, Drawings for show & tell
- Rack for rehearsal costumes
- Set up rehearsal props/furniture
- Sound system (if necessary)
- Coffee area
- Cleanliness
- Garbage pails
- Boxes or storage for props

### Rehearsal Hall (cont.)

- First Aid Kit
- Emergency Exits/procedures
- Rehearsal Hall policies (no smoking, dry indoor shoes, clean up after yourself etc)
- Lock-up procedures

### Prepare information packages for cast and crew:

- Script
- Rehearsal Schedule
- Master Production Calendar
- Cast/Crew List
- Call cast (date, time, location of first rehearsal) < Director usually makes this call.

\*\*Go over the script and your lists time and time again! It is **essential** that you are confident and knowledgeable at the first rehearsal and in subsequent weeks.

## **B/ REHEARSALS**

During this stage, the SM's attention should be given in the following order: Director, Actors, Producer. The design team and heads of technical departments are your concern only when it comes to passing on information that comes out of rehearsals or meetings which affects them.

**The Director:** You are there to make the Director's job easier and to serve his/her vision of the show. Always be sensitive to his/her needs and take continual notes of your Director's questions, statements, comments, changes, dreams, hairbrained ideas... Help your Director to organize his time and pay attention to good use of an actor's time (let Director know if you think that actor is done for the evening). You are there to be responsible for the technical aspects of the production allowing the Director to focus on the artistic side. Remember - you are **not** the Director. However, it is up to you to understand the reasons for for the direction so that you can assist the actors after the opening of the show.

Keep in mind that in professional theatre the Director **leaves** after opening night and it is up to the SM to maintain the Director's vision and the integrity of the show.

**The Actors:** Listen to them actively and compassionately. Be aware of their needs both professional (their preferred method for prompts, how they like their props set, problems with costumes etc) and personal (are they sick, did they have a bad day etc). Do not attempt to direct them because you might confuse them and it is not your job. If they seek your advice, keep within the Director's vision. Treat your cast members with the respect they deserve. Be tactful, supportive and caring.

**The Producer:** This person is your link to the rest of the crew. It is essential that you maintain clear communication with the Producer and that information flows in both directions. You should pass on all "political problems" to him/her without emotion or taking sides. Let them do their job.

**The Stage Manager in rehearsal:** You, the SM, can best serve the play by keeping the broadest and most objective view of the production and the people involved. Do not make "executive decisions". You are there to gather information and to pass that information through the correct channels be it the Director, Producer, and/or Designers. Make continuous notes of problems and changes and always keep a personal "to-do list". Stay tranquil and serene even when it is chaos around you. If you **have** to lose your cool, **do it in private!** Remember, you have to be seen as "the calm in the eye of the storm..."

## **B1/ FIRST REHEARSAL or READ THROUGH**

The SM helps with the flow of rehearsal by always being prepared, keeping everyone on schedule, and thinking ahead. The SM maintains rehearsal discipline with diplomacy and firmness - always use the word "please" before calling for quiet and learn to develop lung capacity and **projection** in the case of large, noisy casts.

- Meet cast and introductions
- Double-check accuracy of names and contact info
- Ask for alternate telephone numbers in case of emergency
- Ask actors to check in and out with SM or ASM
- Remind actors that it is their responsibility to check rehearsal calendar
- Tour theatre (for new members)
- Distribute information packages (rehearsal schedule, master calendar, contact lists)
- Distribute scripts
- Discuss rehearsal schedule and note any absences, conflicts, special issues
- Explanation of floor plan/set design/maquette
- Director's notes
- Script changes
- Prompting style
- Breaks
- Program requirements (deadline for bios, photos)
- Bring first day goodies (if desired)
- Commence read through and time it

## **B2/GENERAL REHEARSAL RESPONSIBILITIES** (some of these duties may be delegated to ASM)

- Checking attendance and calling actors when late.
- Blocking notes using short-hand and small diagrams where necessary.
- Calling sound cues (“ding dong”, “ring, ring”, “knock, knock”, “bang” etc)
- Calling lighting cues (“blackout”, “lights up”, “lightning flash” etc)
- Daily recording and distribution of rehearsal notes. These notes are **vital** for the necessary communication between departments to happen effectively. Pass along information and changes in clear, concise wording and with diplomacy.
- Scene, scene change and quick change timings.
- Pre-set and travel patterns of props, furniture and costumes.
- Spiking of set pieces and actors’ marks.
- Documenting script changes.
- Being conscious of best use of actors’ time. Ex. If you notice that the actor’s scenes are over, ask the Director if that person may be released for the evening.
- Daily and weekly rehearsal calls and/or changes to the schedule (in consultation with the Director).
- Solving problems and keeping the rehearsal running smoothly and on time.

## **C/ TECH WEEK** (or when rehearsals move to the auditorium)

The Tech Week is the busiest, most creative and most stressful time for the SM. This is a very sensitive time for the production, and you must stay even closer to your Director, cast and crew. At this stage of the production, line prompting should no longer be necessary.

The overall schedule should effectively use stage time that is divided thusly:

**Actor Time:** No technical elements. Director and cast work on play without tech constraints. Allows actors to get use to the stage.

**Tech Time:** Allows for lighting and sound level sets and touch-ups.

**Final Time:** Includes Q2Q, Tech and Dress Rehearsals.

## **C1/ SM's prep work before allowing company on set:** (done with ASMs and stage crew)

- Organize transportation of all materials (props, furnishings etc) from rehearsal hall to auditorium. Use rehearsal pieces if performance pieces aren't complete.
- Ensure that Tech Crew/Tech Director has completed load-in.
- Spike furniture and audience sight lines.
- Distribute preliminary backstage running cues (assuming ASMs have not already done this on their own).
- Create scene change boards (what, where, when, who).
- Create costume change boards (what, where, when, actor, dresser)
- Ensure that all lists, plots, pre-sets and cue sheets are accurate and up-to-date.
- Remind everyone of emergency procedures and policies.
- Retain responsibilities in front of stage (calling cues, giving tech notes, liaison with FOH etc.).
- Delegate backstage duties to ASMs (prop and set entrances and exits, scene changes, quick costume changes etc.).

### **On stage safety check:**

- Platforms and risers firmly in place.
- Staircases above 3' high have handrails in place.
- Glo-tape where absolutely necessary. (handrails, corners of furniture, edge of stage)

## **C2/ ASMs prep work:** (done with SM and stage crew)

- Make sure wings are clean.
- Safety check.
- Tape down carpet for crossovers and pacing.
- Check operation of all work, flash and “blue” lights.
- Tape cables (if not already done by tech crew).
- Glo-tape where applicable but **be frugal** - the set shouldn't look like an airport runway!
- First aid kit.
- Sewing Kit and/or safety pins.
- Broom, mop, dust pan.
- Props tables (mapped out and assign props to particular places).
- Headsets
- ASMs prompt books.
- Costume change areas.
- Water and cups.
- Kleenex
- Chairs
- Garbage pail

## **Set Up Green Room (or delegate to green room personnel):**

- Clean and cheerful.
- Provide food and beverages during performances.

## **C3/ First rehearsal on set:**

- Acquaint cast with set (special features, doors, windows, operation of moving pieces)
- Show cast backstage and quick change areas
- Collect valuables in box and lock away. Even better - ask the cast to leave their valuables at home! Valuables are returned at end of rehearsal or show.

## **C4/ Prep for remainder of Tech Week:**

- Top of show and intermission pre-sets (pre-show music, curtain warmer)
- Post sign-in sheet.
- Remind cast not to eat or drink in costume.
- Smoking should be done outside before or after the show.



- Delegate duties and go over procedures with ASMs
- Liaise with FOH regarding emergency procedures, curtain time, timing of each act, holding of show due to weather or other interruption.
- Check all headsets. Return batteries to charger when not in use.
- Call meeting with running crew to discuss show policies and headset etiquette. It is the SM's responsibility to keep headset chatter to a minimum.

**Ensure cue sheet lists are accurate and up-to-date:**

- Props
- Costumes
- Scene Changes
- Lights
- Sound
- Special Effects

**C5/ Level Set:**

- Record light cues, cue number, effect (DS area, special etc), count (how long cue lasts), operation (how quickly the cue occurs - Xfade, snap black etc)
- Record sound cues (as above).
- Rewrite cues neatly.
- Write in stand-bys.

**C6/ Costume Parade:**

- Ensure the cast are on time.
- Record changes from director and designer (this may be delegated to ASM or costume design assistant).
- Note any issues with lights ("Oh no, the red light makes this green costume turn brown!")

**C7/ Scene Change Rehearsal:**

- Call required cast and crew members.
- Ensure that all props and set pieces are ready.
- Run scene changes with lights on.
- Run scene changes with show lighting.
- Time scene changes. They should all be under 30 seconds max.

## D/ Cue-to-Cue (Q2Q):

The SM usually moves to the booth as of this rehearsal. This is when all technical elements of the show come together (often for the first time, though it's possible that you may have had rudimentary sound effects or general lighting before now). The emphasis is on the **transition** from one "state" to the next and includes the actors' participation. The Q2Q is for the Stage Manager and the crew to work out the specific timings and details of how the show is going to be executed technically. Cue sequences may be repeated several times until correct. This is also the time for the actors to become used to entering and exiting in blackout.

- Acquaint actors with spots and specials. Spike these for the actors.
- Explain Q2Q procedure with cast and crew before beginning.
- Commence Q2Q.

**Running the Q2Q:** For every cue, the SM should give a standby approximately 10-15 seconds in advance of when the cue should happen. Actor standbys should be given with at minimum a one-page warning (2 pages is better if the actors on stage skip dialogue!). For complex cues or cues given in rapid sequence, standby may be given earlier to allow the operator added time to prepare.

Example:

SM: Standby Light cues 10, 11, 12. Sound cue 5. Scene change 3 stage right.

LX: Standing by Lights 10 through 12.

SX: Standing by Sound 5.

ASM: Standing by Scene change 3 stage right.

**(actors' dialogue)**

SM: Lights 10... GO

Lights 11 and Sound 5... GO.

Lights 12... GO.

Scene Change 3... GO.

The SM will call the cues for the show until the rehearsal bogs down technically. The SM stops the action and asks the cast to wait while the tech details are worked out and then the cast will be asked to repeat the action until the cues are running smoothly.

The rehearsal continues until a point is reached where there are no cues for several pages (be aware of long running cues or quick changes that may be happening backstage - these still count as "cues in progress"). The SM will ask the cast to stop and a new starting point, positions of the actors and new line will be announced usually a few lines before the next standby. The SM will ask the cast to continue with the action and will resume calling cues until the next set of problems, when another halt will be called until the problem is solved.

This is usually a long and tedious rehearsal from the actors' point of view. Continue to be polite, thanking them for their patience. Above all, remain calm and efficient and remember to keep things moving as much as possible.

It is **strongly advised** that the SM prepare the prompt script ahead of time with start and stop tabs so that no time is wasted finding the next spot to continue.

After the rehearsal:

- Get tech notes from the Director.
- Give and/or communicate Director's notes to tech crew.
- Give SM notes to tech crew and cast.
- Thank everyone for their patience and contributions.
- Remind cast and crew of call times.
- Readjust cues and standbys in the prompt book as necessary.

### **E/ Technical Rehearsal (first dress):**

This is the rehearsal where (hopefully) everything comes together - scene changes, lights, sound, special effects, costumes etc. Make checklists for everything!

No line prompting should be needed. Actors take the entrance cues from ASMs. ASMs get used to dealing with the backstage flow. The SM deals with calling the show and the ASMs take full responsibility for the actors and their 'stuff'.

Stops in the action are called by the SM only if there is a technical issue. The Director needs to be reminded that this is a rehearsal primarily for the crew with every effort made to have a flawless rehearsal.

This process can be stop/start or sometimes a straight run-thru, in which technical effects and acting are further integrated to smooth out any glitches and re-establish the pace of the production. Adjustments in all areas may need to be made.

### **F/ Final Dress Rehearsal/Preview:**

Proceed as if it was a full public performance. No stops in the action unless a dire emergency occurs. Full costume, make-up, props etc. Treat these rehearsals as actual performances.

## **G/ PERFORMANCE RUN**

**90 minutes prior to curtain time:** (or sooner depending upon requirements of the show)

- Check attendance and call late cast/crew members.
- Lamp Check (Lighting operator will do this and check in with SM when done).
- Sound Check (Sound operator will do this and check in with SM when done).
- Headset and paging check.
- Stage swept and/or mopped.
- Synchronize watches with ASMs and FOH.

**60 minutes prior to curtain time:**

- Check attendance and call any remaining latecomers.
- On stage presets (props, costumes, furniture).
- Backstage presets (props, costumes, furniture).
- Cast told to check stage and props/costumes.
- Give actors and/or crew any notes from previous show but **only** if there was a major issue.

**30 minutes prior to curtain time:**

- Give 1/2 hr. call to cast and crew.
- Curtain warmer up. (LX preset)
- Preshow music up. (SX preset)
- Final check on stage.
- Inform cast and crew that "stage is closed".

**20 minutes prior to curtain time:**

- House doors open. (FOH does this)

**15 minutes prior to curtain time:**

- Give 15 minute call to cast and crew.
- Collect valuables.

**10 minutes prior to curtain time:**

- Check FOH to ensure audience is flowing well; no issues that might delay the start time.
- Crew on headset.

**5 minutes prior to curtain time:**

- Give 5 minute call to cast and crew.
- Head to booth. Crew to positions.
- Check that comm lines are open. All crew check in with SM.

**3 minutes prior to curtain time:**

- Call “beginners” to get actors to their positions.

**Curtain time:**

- House doors close.
- “Beginners Please Standby”.
- Crew standbys.
- Call opening set of cues and start stop watch....

**During show:**

- Maintain Director’s vision.
- Call cues.
- Record timings of scenes and acts. (see show report)
- Record any problems that occur. (see show report)
- Be aware of cast and crew morale and intercede when necessary.

**Intermission:**

- Give 15 minute warning to cast and crew.
- Reset on stage and backstage for next act if necessary.
- Give 5 minute call to cast and crew.
- Head to booth.
- “Beginners Please Standby”.
- Crew on headsets check in.
- Crew standbys and away you go again...

**Post show:**

- Give call time for following day.
- Reset for beginning of show.
- Valuables returned.
- Clean up and lock up.

## **H/ STRIKE**

- Ensure that booth, stage and backstage areas are clean and all items have been put away.
- Headsets should be stored in the booth with their batteries in the charger.
- Producer (or in some cases the SM) is responsible for co-ordinating a duty roster.
- Make sure that the facility is clean and tidy for the next production.

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Sheridan College Technical Production Handbook; York University Production Manual; Stage Management Without Tears, Ron Davies; The Back Stage Guide to Stage Management, Thomas A. Kelly; Stage Management, Lawrence Stern.

Edited and adapted for Community Theatre use by Wendy Wagner, Kanata, 2012.

# SCRIPT ANALYSIS

Read the script. If you enjoy it, consider becoming the Stage Manager. If you don't enjoy it then it might be best to wait until a better, more compelling script comes along because spending up to three months of time working a show you don't enjoy is a real chore.

If you enjoy the script, read it a second time. However, this time you will want to make notes so have a pen and some paper handy (or use your laptop or tablet).

Read the text with an eye for the following items (it may be necessary to read the script several times):

- lighting cues - Has the playwright mentioned the time of day? Is it an interior or exterior scene? Is there a light source mentioned in the set description (wall sconce, window, glowing tv screen)?
- sound cues - Does the telephone ring? Is there a knock at the door? Can we hear birds or a rainstorm?
- set design - Are there any moving parts to the set? How many doors (entrances/exits) are there?
- costumes - Are the actors wearing the same costumes for the entire show or are there changes to be made? How much time is there between changes?
- properties/furnishings - Make lists of all props and furniture needed for the play. Be aware that this list will change once the director starts the rehearsal process but at least you have some place to start.
- special effects - Does the play call for haze? Does someone have to disappear? Does something have to appear to explode?
- special considerations - Does anything have to "fly"? Is someone using a wheelchair?
- actors' entrances and exits (French Scene)

## How to "French Scene" a script:

- Start by using a Character Scene Breakdown chart for each character.
- Note on which page the actor enters and whether that entrance takes place near the **Top**, **Middle** or **Bottom** of the page.
- Note on which page the actor exits and note **T**, **M**, or **B**.

**Example:** (use the Character Scene Breakdown chart)

Actor: Wendy Wagner          Role: Stella May

Page 2M - enters (ENT)

Page 8B - exits (EX)

Page 27T - enters

Page 53T - exits

# STAGE SHORTHAND

<b>USR</b>	<b>UC</b>	<b>USL</b>
<b>SR</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>SL</b>
<b>DSR</b>	<b>DC</b>	<b>DSL</b>

## AUDIENCE

SR = Stage Right

U = Up

D = Down

SL = Stage Left

C = Centre Stage

X = Cross (ie: XSL = Cross to Stage Left)

ENT = Entrance

EX = Exit

LX = Lights

SX = Sound

SFX = Special Effect

It is helpful, when making blocking notes, to use the above shorthand or something similar that makes sense to you and your stage management team.



# THE ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER

## Qualities of a good ASM:

- Diligence
- Tact
- Punctuality
- Reliability

Does the Stage Manager need more than one ASM? That depends on the production and its needs. If the show is a large cast musical or there are multiple entrances, exits, moving set pieces etc then you'll need at least two ASMs. The need for extra ASMs also depends upon whether the Stage Manager is calling the show from the wings or from the booth.

Remember, that if the SM delegates certain areas of responsibility to an ASM, this does not mean that the SM is relinquishing full authority for that area. Be sure to communicate with your SM constantly.

## Some duties that may be assigned to the ASM during the rehearsal period:

- Check attendance and call actors when late.
- Blocking notes using short-hand and small diagrams where necessary.
- Call sound cues ("ding dong", "ring, ring", "knock, knock", "bang" etc)
- Scene, scene change and quick change timings.
- Pre-set and travel patterns of props, furniture and costumes.
- Document script changes.
- Collect and return cast valuables.

## Duties during performance:

- Sweep and/or mop stage prior to each show.
- Keep wings clean, tidy and in order.
- Respond to SM warnings, standbys and cues.
- Communicate any issues to SM.
- Assist stage crew with scene and props changes.
- Assist dressers and/or actors with costume changes.
- Hand props to actors or catch them from the actor as s/he goes by.
- Maintain backstage morale.

# HEADSET ETIQUETTE

If you are on headset, there is a correct method of responding to calls. Whenever possible, the Stage Manager will give a warning (or stand-by) on a cue. You respond by saying “standing by lights 12”, “standing by sound 24”, or “standing by scene change stage left” depending, of course, on what you are doing.

If you don’t know what you are doing, tell the Stage Manager NOW. S/he will want to start arranging for a contingency plan or for your funeral, whichever comes first...

After a stand-by cue, you usually have just enough time to flex your fingers and place them on the switch, fader, rope, or set piece.

The Stage Manager will then say, for example, “lights 25...GO”, On the word “GO”, run your cue. Do it immediately, even if you think the Stage Manager is wrong. It is better for one person to make a mistake than for everyone to be out of sync. Besides, the Stage Manager is probably right!

If it doesn’t disturb your concentration, you may respond to the cue when the cue is completed. The response can be “lights 25 complete”, or simply “complete” or “gone”.

If the cues are coming thick and fast, reduce your responses to standbys to one word (ie “lights”, “sound”) to clear the air for more important communication.

These are the only things you should say on headset. When a warning or standby has been given to someone else, do not say a word. Your chatter may hinder someone from hearing their cue and you will then have two people planning your demise.

The rules are very simple:

- Listen for your cue
- Respond
- Keep your mouth shut

# REFERENCE BOOKS

## Stage Management

CAEA & PACT. Canadian Theatre Agreement. Toronto: Canadian Actors' Equity Association and the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres, 1993.

Carter, Paul. Backstage Forms. New York: Broadway Press, 1990.

Davies, Ron, for Theatre Ontario. Stage Management Without Tears. Toronto: Theatre Ontario, 1977.

Kelly, Thomas A. The Backstage Guide to Stage Management: 3rd Edition. New York: Watson-Guption Publications, 2009.

Stern, Lawrence. Stage Management. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1992.

# PRODUCTION CONTACT SHEET

**NAME OF PRODUCTION:**

**PERFORMANCE DATES:**

	POSITION	NAME	PHONE	E-MAIL
<b>MANAGEMENT</b>	Director			
	Assistant Director			
	Producer			
	Assistant Producer			
	Stage Manager			
	Assistant SM			
	Assistant SM			
<b>DESIGNERS</b>	Set			
	Lighting			
	Sound			
	Costumes			
	Properties			
	Furnishings			
<b>PRODUCTION PERSONNEL</b>	Construction			
	Set Painting			
	Set Décor			
	Seamstress			
	Dresser			
	Make Up			
	Hair Styling			
	Continuity			
Green Room				
House Manager				

# ACTOR CONTACT SHEET

**NAME OF PRODUCTION:**

**PERFORMANCE DATES:**

	POSITION	NAME	PHONE	E-MAIL
<b>MANAGEMENT</b>	Director			
	Assistant Director			
	Producer			
	Assistant Producer			
	Stage Manager			
	Assistant SM			
	Assistant SM			
<b>ACTORS</b>				





# COSTUME BREAKDOWN

PRODUCTION:

PAGE \_\_\_\_ OF \_\_\_\_

DIRECTOR:

PERFORMANCE DATES:

COSTUME DESIGNER:

ACTOR:

CHARACTER:

SCENE NO.	COSTUME	HAT	JEWELRY	ACCESSORIES	SHOES	OUTERWEAR





# REHEARSAL NOTES

**PRODUCTION:**

**DIRECTOR:**

**DATE:**

<b>START TIME:</b>	<b>END TIME:</b>
<b>REHEARSAL DETAINED BY:</b>	
<b>PERSONNEL LATE OR ABSENT:</b>	
<b>SCENES COVERED:</b>	<b>RUN THROUGH: ACT 1 ACT 2 ACT 3</b>
<b>ACTORS:</b>	
<b>SOUND:</b>	<b>LIGHTS:</b>
<b>COSTUMES:</b>	<b>PROPERTIES:</b>
<b>SET:</b>	
<b>OTHER:</b>	





# SHOW REPORT

**PRODUCTION:**

**DIRECTOR:**

**DATE:**

TIMING	ACT 1	INT.	ACT 2	INT.	ACT 3	TOTALS
UP						
DOWN						
TOTAL						

<b>ACTORS</b>	<b>SET</b>
<b>LIGHTS</b>	<b>SOUND</b>
<b>COSTUMES</b>	<b>PROPS</b>
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	

# DAILY CHECKLIST

**PRODUCTION:**

**DIRECTOR:**

**DATE:**

<b>DIRECTOR</b>	<b>ACTORS</b>	<b>SET</b>
<b>LIGHTS</b>	<b>SOUND</b>	<b>COSTUMES</b>
<b>PROPERTIES</b>	<b>STAGE MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>OTHER</b>

# DAILY REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

**PRODUCTION:**

**DIRECTOR:**

**DATE:**

**REHEARSAL**

**REQUIRED PERSONNEL**

**OTHER (COSTUME FITTINGS, PHOTOS/PUBLICITY, MEETINGS etc.)**

# CHARACTER SCENE BREAKDOWN

**PRODUCTION:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DIRECTOR:** \_\_\_\_\_

**DATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

**PAGE** \_\_\_\_\_ **OF** \_\_\_\_\_

<b>ACTOR:</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25			
	<b>ROLE:</b>	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50		
		<b>ACTOR:</b>	51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	75	
			<b>ROLE:</b>	76	77	78	79	80	81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	