

Guidelines for Stage Managers



The following is a guide to the duties and responsibilities of a Stage Manager. The guide is not definitive, and although the running of a production generally follows the same format, each production is different.

The Stage Manager should always be aware of last minute changes and technical problems that can arise throughout the production and which will need to be addressed quickly and efficiently.

Stage Managers should attend rehearsals on a regular basis, and particularly the rehearsals during the final weeks leading up to the start of the production, in order to get a good understanding of the staging and format of the production.

DURING REHEARSALS

- Arrange the rehearsal room with the stage set and props as far as possible.
- Note in your script when actors are required to be called stage side (usually half a page before required is a good guide).
- Make notes in your script as to which side actors are required to make their entry onto the stage.
- Make notes in your script of any relevant stage directions and actor cue-ins.
- Make a list of props used by actors as part of their costumes, props to be kept on the props table, on which side stage props are to be kept, and props to be used as the stage set.
- Liaise with directors regarding the technical requirements for the production.
- Liaise with the ASM and stage crew throughout rehearsals to establish where production problems and issues with props or the set may arise.

DURING DRESS REHEARSALS

- Liaise with the director and theatre technician.
- Follow your script to ensure stage directions, actors' calls and cue-ins are correct.
- Liaise with the ASM and stage crew to ensure props are correct and in their right places.
- Liaise with the ASM and stage crew to ensure the scene changes are completed quickly, efficiently and safely.

NOTE : After the dress rehearsals it is the Stage Manager who has responsibility for ensuring the smooth running of the production.

STAGE CREW

- Evenly distribute the stage duties between the stage crew.
- Supply each member of the stage crew with written instructions as to their individual duties and responsibilities throughout the performances and at the end of the production.
- Ensure the stage crew know where the props are, either on the props table, on the set or on which side of the stage.

BEFORE EACH PERFORMANCE

- Check the stage set and on-stage props as per the props list and set design.
- Check the set is secure and safe.
- Complete a check of the props table, as per the props list, to ensure all props are in place and stored neatly and safely.
- Check with all the actors that they have any props, as per the props list, that are required as part of their costumes.
- Check that all off stage props, as per the props list, are on their correct side of the stage.
- Half an hour before the performance check the stage curtains are closed (if used), and that the back stage lights and dock lights are off.
- Check with the theatre technician half an hour before the performance that everything is ready back stage, and confirm that the back stage is ready to allow the audience into the auditorium.
- Confirm with the stage crew that they are aware of their duties, and know where the props are.
- Check the monitor, upstairs microphone and theatre technician call microphone is switched on and working.
- Give a ten minute warning to the actors.
- Give a five minute warning to the actors and call down the beginners to their places.
- When the theatre technician confirms the front of house all-clear, confirm the production is ready to start.

DURING THE PERFORMANCE

- Follow the script and be ready to react to any changes.
- Ensure actors are called stage side at the appropriate time, and are on the correct side of the stage for their entrances.
- Prepare and get ready actors' props in time for them to go on stage.
- Ensure actors go on stage with their correct props.
- Liaise with the ASM and stage crew to ensure scene changes are completed quickly, efficiently and safely.
- Ensure the props table and the props are kept neat and tidy.
- Keep the dock area clear and safe.
- Liaise with the theatre technician as required.

AFTER THE SHOW

- Switch on the backstage and dock lights.
- Reset the stage as per the set design.
- Ensure all props that are required in different places are placed on the correct side of the stage as per the props list.
- Check the props table as per the props list.
- Check that the actors have the correct props that form part of their costumes as per the props list.
- Switch off the monitor, upstairs microphone and theatre technician's microphone.
- Ensure the dock area is left clean and tidy.
- Liaise with the director and theatre technician for any problems with the production.

AT THE END OF THE PRODUCTION

- Clear the stage set of props.
- Direct the stage crew to assist in clearing all the props to the props table for collection as required and ensure they are stored neatly and tidily.
- Ensure actors have personal props returned (if ownership is known).
- Assist with clearing the set as required.
- Ensure the dock area is left clear, clean and tidy.
- Thank the ASM and stage crew for their help and support.
- Thank the theatre technician for their help and support.

Have fun!