



# LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

*Preparing people to lead extraordinary lives*

## DEPARTMENT OF FINE AND PERFORMING ARTS

### Production Staff Job Descriptions

#### Stage Manager

The Stage Manager (SM) is responsible for guiding the production process, rehearsals, and performances. The SM serves as a liaison between all members of cast, crew, and production staff.

THIS LIST OF RESPONSIBILITIES IS NOT EXHAUSTIVE. It should be used as a guideline of the responsibilities of this position on any production. If a question arises about the breakdown of responsibility, one should seek the advice of their Mentor or the Managing Director of the Department.

**Because the role of the Stage Manager is a very large one, added here is some additional information to aid the SM in his or her task.**

Stage managers are helpful people. They have to be. Their job description includes words like “eye of the hurricane”, and “safe port in a storm.” They are the center of everything. They are the communication link between everybody and everybody else. This puts them in a position of uniquely intense pressure.

#### **Communication: The Central Issue**

Throughout the show, from concept to close, the Stage Manager must be in communication with the cast, the shops, the Producers, and the Director. One of the SM’s primary responsibilities is to relay the Director’s thoughts to everybody else. If the Director suddenly decides that an actor should be reading a book during a particular scene, it is up to the SM to ask him all the questions that the prop people will ask: What kind of a book? Hard cover or soft? What color? Any particular title? How big? How thick? Where does the actor get it from? Does that mean we need a bookshelf? And so on. Some of these questions may be initially dismissed as unnecessary, but it is surprising how much details begin to matter once it is too late to change them. It’s up to the Stage Manager to find out these details ahead of time, before the Props Master shows up with a small red paperback and finds out the Director really wanted a thick, black scholarly text. If the Props Master is making a second (or third) trip to storage, muttering under her breath, then the Stage Manager hasn’t done his job. An experienced Stage Manager knows that any change that happens during a rehearsal affects somebody who is not there, and it is up to the SM to let that person know. The most important examples are the times when scenery, props, or costumes will be stressed or abused by some kind of action. These include (but are not limited to) fights breaking out, liquids being spilled or thrown, objects being broken, pies in the face, actors having to crawl, run, climb, grab, hide, fall, collapse, or die. If someone stands up in the house during a final dress rehearsal and says: “What do you mean she’s going to bleed on that dress?” then the SM hasn’t done his job. It’s the Stage Manager’s job to eliminate surprises.

*Besides personal one-on-one communication, the SM should create and maintain several other avenues of communication:*

#### **The Contact Sheet**

This is a list of everyone related to the show: cast, designers, crew, and anyone else who may need to be contacted about the show. It should include work and home phone numbers, fax numbers, email addresses, and any other way to contact that person, including cell-phone numbers and pagers if they exist. It should also include pertinent phone numbers at the theatre, such as backstage, the production office, or the box office. Don’t forget cab companies, public transportation information lines, and restaurants that deliver are a pretty good idea too.

The Stage Manager’s name should be in bold. Cast and crew should know that, if they have a crisis, they should call 911, and immediately thereafter, the stage manager. Everyone involved with the show should get one. Update

them as things change. A wallet card, or pocket version of this sheet should be distributed as well. This card should contain the most important information, such as SM and Assistant Stage Manager (ASM) phone numbers and production/tech dates. These cards may be kept with crew and actors in case of emergency.

### **The Call Board**

The second major communication thing that the SM should take care of is the callboard. This is a centrally located bulletin board that contains information that the cast and crew should know. This might include (but is not limited to):

- Cast / Staff List: This is a well formatted list of people involved with your production.
- Sign-In Sheet: This is a checklist with each person's name on it with a space for each night of technical rehearsal or performance. The cast and crew should be trained to sign in as soon as they get to the theatre. This is especially important for large casts.
- Rehearsal Schedule: From the prompt book.
- Today's Calls: This is a list showing what is happening today, where it is happening, and who should be there.
- Next Day's Calls: Same thing, but for tomorrow.
- Reviews: Either all of them or perhaps just the good ones.
- Actor / Scene Breakdown.
- Rules and Regulations: Find out what the appropriate rules and regulations are in the theatre. Professional shows are required to post union regulations as well so make sure you are in compliance.
- The Poster.
- Basically, anything that the cast and crew need to know should be on the callboard.
- This does not preclude spoken announcements. In fact, it is always best to give people information more than once. Announce it, and then post it.

The creation of a show can begin anywhere from three weeks (or less) to three years (or more) before opening night. The production cycle breaks down into four major blocks: preproduction, production, the run, and closing: and there are different schedule needs for each.

### **Safety Responsibilities:**

- Knows locations of all telephones, emergency exits, and fire extinguishers in case of an emergency.
- Knows all emergency procedures.
- Carries and stocks a Stage Manager's kit with first aid supplies and any other amenities useful for a smooth rehearsal.
- Does not post contact information in public locations such as the callboard.
- Is aware of any prevailing medical conditions in the cast.

### **Pre-Production:**

- Meets with Managing Director and discusses goals and expectations.
- Obtains production team contact information from Managing Director.
- Obtains scripts.
- Establishes copier key code.
- Prepares SM Binder with tabs.
- Makes Distribution List.
- Discusses expectations with ASMs.
- Attends weekly Stage Management meetings with the Managing Director, Stage Management Advisor, and all other student Stage Managers.
- Reads and studies the play.
- Discusses production, relationship, and process with Director.
- Distributes scripts to production team.
- Drafts Actor / Scene Breakdown.
- Attends and facilitates all production meetings and takes thorough notes to be distributed to Director, designers, production staff, Managing Director, and Department Chair no later than **5:00pm** the following day.
- Distributes and collects bio information, which is promptly turned in to the box office.
- Facilitates auditions.

- Assists the Director at auditions.
- Generates a rehearsal schedule presents copies to cast, crew, production team, Managing Director, Department office and Department Chair.
- Creates a contact sheet once the show is cast and distributes it to **everyone** connected with the show and the Department Chair, Department Office, Stage Management Advisor, and Managing Director.
- Generates a daily rehearsal report outlining the day's schedule, events, and any new information that may be provided to the production team.
- Coordinates all actor calls, including rehearsals, costume fittings, photo calls, etc. with Designers, Director, Managing Director, photographers, and Costume Shop Staff.
- Prepares and updates Callboard when necessary.
- Tapes out ground plan on stage or in rehearsal space as soon as it is available.
- Prepares blocking pages.
- Prepares preliminary costume, sound, props, and special effects plots, and shift plot.
- Assembles and maintains the prompt book. This includes all pre-production information, schedules, script, stage business, cue sheets, daily reports, and any materials necessary for the actual technical and artistic operation of this unique production.
- Obtains design renderings from Scenic, Costume, and Lighting Designer.
- Works with ASMs to prepare rehearsal needs.

#### **Rehearsal Period:**

- Delegates to and supervises the work and progress of ASMs.
- Creates conflict calendar with actor information.
- Creates comprehensive contact sheet.
- Distributes scripts, contact sheets, Actor / Scene Breakdowns, Wallet Cards, Company information, bio forms, etc. to actors.
- Distributes, collects, and maintains emergency contact forms.
- Posts daily rehearsal calls after each rehearsal for the next day. Calls should be posted on the Callboard, in the rehearsal report, on Calendarwiz and on Dial-A-Rehearsal voicemail every day.
- Creates and distributes a Daily Rehearsal Report that includes: Actor calls, any changes, additions, or deletions to running script, props, costumes, and technical demands. The day to make any of these changes is one week before Tech. This must be distributed to the production team.
- Places and spikes furniture, rugs, etc., as established by the Director and Scenic Designer.
- Attends all rehearsals, arriving early to set up; records all blocking, takes notes, and assists the Director however needed, and cleans up after rehearsal.
- Opens dressing rooms and any spaces needed by company for rehearsal.
- Keeps accurate record of actors' attendance and timeliness.
- Contacts absent actors to determine reason for absence and fills in for them at rehearsal.
- Prompts actors, gives line and blocking notes.
- Locks up all rehearsal spaces every night. Ensures that rehearsal spaces are returned to pre-rehearsal state, powers off lights and equipment, and replaces ghost light on stage.
- Facilitates pick-up notes and requests from Director, actors, and designers to appropriate shops no later than **10:00am** the next day.
- Obtains rehearsal props and costumes from the appropriate shops and supervise their storage during the rehearsal period. This may necessitate communication with designers.
- Returns all rehearsal props and costumes to shops after 1<sup>st</sup> dress, or the day after the show costumes and props arrive.
- Contacts crew for 1<sup>st</sup> crew rehearsal.
- Write, publish, and distribute tech week schedule to everyone involved in the production. The Director and Managing Director should approve the schedule before distribution.
- Discusses every detail of the Tech Schedule during the last production meeting prior to Tech Week and clarifies any misunderstandings.
- Organizes and runs Paper Tech in preparation for Tech Week. This should include Designers, Light Board Op, Sound Board Op, Master Electrician, Director, and Technical Director.

**Tech/Performance Period:**

- Distributes crew packets containing company information, production information, and updated running sheets.
- Prepares the space for technical rehearsals including but not limited to placing running lights, carpeting cables, spiking set pieces, glow taping stairs, corners, edges, and setting up clear-comm.
- Organizes and supervises all crews during Tech, Dress, and runs of the show.
- This includes monitoring attendance and timeliness.
- Runs all technical rehearsals working with the Director and Designers to establish the placement and execution of all cues during the show.
- Generates a Run List for all crew members including any specialized duties.
- Runs scene shift Rehearsals if necessary.
- Checks all areas of production before ½ hour of each performance. This includes lights, sets, props, sounds, costumes, house, and actors.
- Contacts anyone who is late for crew call.
- Call all times (1/2 hour, 15 minutes, 2 places) and all technical and actor cues during the performance.
- Gives Intermission calls (10 minutes, 5 minutes, and places) based on communication from House Manager.
- Coordinate with the House Manager the opening and closing of the theatre and the curtain speech.
- Takes notes of any problems, unfinished details, painting touch-ups and communicate these to the proper crew personnel or designer.
- Is ultimately responsible that stage, cast, and crew are ready for each show.
- Calls cues during the run of the show.
- Takes Performance Notes (times, complications, etc.) and distributes them to the production team.
- Maintains the performance of the actors in the absence of the Director.
- Organizes smooth and efficient execution of Photocall.

**Post Performance Period:**

- Attends and assists with the organization of Strike with the Technical Director.
- Strikes all personal effects and ensures that any space used by company is returned to pre-production state.
- Attends Post-Mortem and gives report.

**Sage Wisdom From Last Year:**

- Communicate. Breathe. Remember the importance of the team model.
- Ask for help if you need it.
- Think ahead for any potential problems.
- Stay on top of deadlines, delegate, communication, patience—everyone is learning in the Studio.
- Be organized, try to keep people happy because then they work the best, ask for feedback from actors/crew/designers to check on morale, ask for advice/help if you need it.
- Flex like a reed in the wind!!!
- Know how to manage time wisely-don't let the paperwork get you down.
- Understand your relationship with the director and their expectations.
- If you've never called a show, listen in the booth with another SM. I am proud of calling the show successfully. During this process I was so intimidated by tech weekend and I realized you just need patience and the faith that it will come together.