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The Stage Manager: 
The one calm in the sea of chaos that is the Theatre.

Pre-Production: Start at LEAST a month before the first rehearsal – to give you ample time

The script
- Create a prompt script from a clean version of the script – (Available in 317)
  - One-Sided for Script on one side and a Blank page opposing this.
  - Place into a 1” Binder for Straight Plays, and a 2” for Musicals.
    - With Musicals – Merge the Libretto & Vocal Score
    - NEVER: use the actor two-to-one page copy, it will make it harder to read and follow in the future, you will thank yourself for – recopying the script in this way.
  - Create Tabs for: Set, Props, Lights, Costume, Rehearsal Notes, Actor Notes, Etc.
  - Go through and place Tabs for different scenes/songs
  - Choose which side you would like your text on. Right or Left.
    - The Blank Page will become your blocking notation. – You can add a Mini or small ground plan of the set (Make sure to put in different sets if necessary) To this blank page to help notate Blocking once the design is “finalized” before blocking rehearsals.
Meeting with the Director: Set up a meeting before any of the rehearsals with a list of specific questions that you have from doing pre-production work. Start making that list now so you can be as prepared as possible.

**First Reading**
- Read the script once through to enjoy, this will give you the opportunity to see the piece as a whole and gain an understanding of the author’s intent.

**Second Reading = The Start of the Paperwork Process**
*All forms should be shared with the Director if she/he has not created one already. Important Note: keeping everyone on the same page is a part of the SM’s Job – Use GoogleDocs OR a Dropbox Shared Folder (How-To) (Link)*

- **Create a Character Breakdown:** *this basic scene breakdown will be used for all of your cue sheets*
  1. Notate Act/Scene with PG numbers
     - Ask the Director if they want a French scene breakdown which would break it down into entrances/exits
  2. Place the character entrances and exits on this Grid
- **Create a Props List:** *Check to see if the Director has a list created already.*
  1. Create a list of props Noting What the prop is, notes about it, and who uses the prop
    - There is a form the Prop Shop Wants, Then a Props List SM for run notes and etc.
  1. There will need to be a prop check-in/check-out sheet to ensure everything is put away every night and locked up.
- **Create a basic Scenery List**
  - Notate obvious scene changes and set pieces
    - remember the designer can change what is written, so this is a loose outline of paperwork to come
- **Create a Sound Cue Sheet:** *Check to see if the Director has a list created already*
  - Note all Sound Cues in Script
- **Create a Quickchange Cue Sheet:** *If there are any quick changes in the script*
  - This is important to keep note of so you can time how long these will be
  - Note in your script with a sticky note (or highlighter/pencil) specific Light & Sound cues (as Lights Up/Down or bird caw/cannon fire)
  - You will be responsible for speaking these cues in rehearsals

**Scheduling:** *You have to keep everyone on the same page.*
- **Create a Schedule**
- Start with a rough outline of basic call times for the entire process, including rehearsals and performances.
  - Makes sure to notate a clear off-Book Time.
- Use the Callboard in the greenroom and place Schedules, Contact Info, character entrances/exits, and other valuable information to the cast/crew. Keep this updated.
• Costume Fittings- Either you or the Assistant Director will have to make sure that everyone gets to their fittings on time, and signs up for them when they are requested. Decide who is going to be in charge of this and make sure this person talks to the shop to check up on fittings.

Technology: *The Modern SM's best friend.*
• A Website Callboard can be handy if you have people that are not in Murphy every day, especially with a large cast. This can be a simple google website that can have all the paperwork and schedule loaded straight onto it from Google Documents.
• Google Documents – An easy way to keep everyone informed with information that is always up to date on the internet, you can set security settings for all of this on the site. No one has to have a gmail account if they don’t want to.
• Dropbox.com is a handy way to have a folder that can be shared among the production staff, keeping documents updated.
• Word and Excel are things you must be well versed in, as paperwork is the backbone of Stage Management. You will want paperwork coming out of your ears when tech comes around.
• When you get the contact Sheets figured out, make groups for e-mails “Production Staff”, “Cast”, “Crew”, etc. So that it is not hard for you to send mass e-mails out quickly.

Production Meetings: *Where you learn what is going to happen.*
• Take copious Notes, and distribute them via e-mail to everyone who should get the rehearsal reports– This is Starting the Rehearsal Report Process.

Supplies and Equipment: *How you are going to keep everything going smoothly.*
• **SM Kit**
  o This can be a box or tackle box with any of the following: Sharpies, Highlighters, Hand Sanitizer, Pencils, erasers, Cough Drops, Rubber Bands, Tape (Spike/Glow), Band Aids (& Other simple first aid Supplies), etc. This should include any of the things you might need in rehearsals and is different with each production.
  o Always have extra pencils and erasers.
• **Extra Scripts**
  o Two-sided scripts for actors who forget. It happens be nice to them.

Rehearsal Room: *Where the Magic Begins to happen.*
• **Scheduling**
  o If the Director needs you to schedule rehearsals with room 317.
• **Taping out the Floor**
  o Receive a groundplan from the T.D. if need be the T.D. will help you learn the best way to tape out a rehearsal room.
  o You will need assistance from the AD or an ASM to do this, it takes at least two people.
  o Take the time to measure out key points on the groundplan, and measure them out with a scale rule – Then you can plot out points and connect the dots.
• **Rehearsal Props** (Note this is the AD’s Job – but check with them to make sure they are going to do this)
  o If there is not an AD, or you have been asked to do this, set up a time with the T.D. to go into the Prop Shop and learn how to check out props.

**Rehearsals: When the Actors Come into the Process**
- The different types of Rehearsals Build on top of one another – when you get to a new step in the process, the previous one is a part of it.
- You are expected to be at ALL rehearsals.
- Don't forget to pick up your keys in 317

**Rehearsal Reports**
- Must be done daily and sent out.

**The First Rehearsal**
*Things you Need to do – Prep should be done during the week prior*
- **Opening Statement- Expectations Placed by SM for time together**
  o This can include what the procedure is for lateness – To Call/Text 5 minutes before rehearsal for lateness. The SM/AD/ASM will call if it is 3 minutes past call time to check on actor/crew member to insure they are coming. (Do NOT be rude about this, life happens)
- **A Wallet Card**
  o A business sized card with important info for Director, AD, SM, ASM, Costume Shop.
  o This includes e-mails and phone numbers. Check with director and people you want to have on the card for what information they want on the card.
- **The Contact Info**
  o Finalize Contact Information. Either by sending a contact sheet out with an e-mail or using Google Documents, so people can edit their own information.
- **Release Forms/Actor Information Forms**
  o Everyone is required to sign a release form and fill out an information form
    - The AD might get these, so check with them before you make the copies.
- **Designer Presentations**
  o Check with Director/Designers who is going to be at the first rehearsal and make sure there is ample seating for everyone and tables if needed.
- **Sign-in Sheet (if Cast is 8+)**
  o Start this the first rehearsal to set up the standard for the rest of rehearsals.
- **Rehearsal Reports**
  o Are started here, send them to the people required on the Form.
- **SM Prep**
  o You should be in the rehearsal room 30 minutes previous to start time AT LEAST. To make sure everything is set up the way it needs to be, so there are no late starts.

**Table work Rehearsals: Getting inside the mind of the characters.**
Set up enough tables and chairs for everyone that is going to be there, AD, SM, Director, Actors, and anyone else.

**Blocking/Staging Rehearsals: The Paperwork Saga Continues**

- Always have a Computer with all your paperwork on it OR Have Paper Copies of everything you will need to update. (Props/Set Shift Notes/Costume Notes/ETC)
- You are expected to start/end rehearsals on time, setting breaks (Following Break Times), and helping the process move along in a timely manner.
  - Check with the Director beforehand what kind of breaks they would like to follow.
  - Typical: 1 Hour Rehearsal = 5 Minute Break, 1.5 Hours of Rehearsal = 10 Minute Break
  - You call the times of the rehearsals out so everyone knows when to start back up, It is typical to do 5 minute warnings for 10-15 minute breaks: “10 Minutes to end of break”
- You must take current and clear Blocking Notation, Everyone needs to be able to read it quickly and clearly. (Have a good eraser Directors like to change their mind)
- If there are specific Light/Sound Cues you should call these out and/or have a CD track with the effects needed.

**Off Book Rehearsals: Staying “On Book”**

- Explain how you want Line Calls to work.
  - They must say “Line” - You will start saying the line until they start speaking, tell them to interrupt you so they can move on with the scene.
    - Do Not Just give them two words and then wait for them to remember, help them out.
    - Ask the Director if she/he wants you to interrupt for train-wrecks onstage.
- Take notes as to what each actor Called for/Paraphrased/Etc to help them with the memorizing process.
  - Line Notes

**Run/Stumble Through: Full Runs – As much as possible**

- Continue staying on Book for the Actors, enlist help if you have a lot of set/prop/sound shifts/cues. Also keep writing them notes for memorization help – They can slip here and not keep integrity to the playwright.
- Start Timing the Scenes/Acts so that you can start to have approximate run times for the Crew Cue Sheets

**In-Space Rehearsals: Encountering the Set.**

- You will be in charge of running all the Scene Changes – Enlist Help If needed.
  - This is a good time to test out your cue sheets, by either having the cast assist you and use the cue sheets, or use them yourself – Correcting mistakes and adding things to the cue sheet that are missing.
    - *Don't just do what you know is supposed to happen- This will help you with Tech and having finished cue sheets*
• You need to set up the Props on tables/set pieces, so the Actors can get used to where things will be.
  o **DO Follow the Cue Sheets as mentioned before. This is vital to a smooth Tech.**
• Have a Safety Walk-through with the Actors to have them get familiar with the workings of the set and where they will get their props, and what they can use as a crossover to move around backstage.

**Technical Rehearsals When it starts to come together**

*Check with the Director on How they want these rehearsals to run – Remember Tech is your time to get it right – Politely remind them of this, and ask that there are not stops for actor notes unless it is absolutely needed.*

**Adding Cues to your Prompt Script** *This can be done as you are in the rehearsal process – DO NOT however assign numbers or letters to anything until Paper Tech (Or you have the cue sheets from the designers)*

**Paper Tech:** *Cue placement and your time to ask questions.*

• When you get to paper tech, the rough cue placement of set shifts/lights/sound should be in place. Always ask your designers for cue sheets at least a few days before the tech, do not wait until paper tech.
  o You will be talking through the specific placements of things, ASK for clarification, as you will need to understand the timing and the feel that the Designers and Director are going for. You can lead this meeting, as you are the one person that is going to be coordinating all the technical aspects.
• This is another time where you will be updating paperwork. Check with the Designers that have given you cue sheets if they are updating the paperwork, or if you need to do it.
  o **Prop Cue Sheet, Lighting Cue Sheet, Sound Cue Sheet, Set/Fly Cue Sheet, Mic Track Sheet**
• This is usually done Noon the Day of Final Run-Through.
  o Check with your Director, Lighting Designer, Set Designer, Sound Designer (If Applicable), Technical Director, Assistant Director, and Assistant Stage Manager to figure out if that works, and check with 317 for room use.
    ▪ **Do this a week or more before the FRT (Final-Run-Through)**

**Final Run-Through/Crew View: Meeting The Crew.** *This is their only opportunity to see the show.*

• There is a specific GO Time that is established on the Main Calender – Check this date before making your calendars.
• Make sure to Contact the Crew-Heads before FRT, The TD has all of their information.
• It is suggested that you call the actors and crew ½ Hour before this so that the actors can warm up/introductions. So there is no waiting when it is time to start.
• Do introductions of the cast and Crew, Tell the crew what is going to happen, and ask the Director if they want to say anything before the start of the Run.
• Start ON TIME
Pre-Dry Tech: Prepping your paperwork and Call Script for the First Tech.

- Go through your script placing all your Standby's for your Cues – This is vital as it will help you get everyone prepared for the cues, instead of surprising them and not having it go well. *IF you need assistance doing this check with the TD.*
  - Typical Calling Sequence.
    - Warning (2 Minutes before cue)
    - Standby (30 Seconds before cue)
    - GO (The exact Moment the cue needs to happen)
  - *You might have to figure in time for operator slowness, You will learn this as tech progresses.*
- Create a Check-List for yourself of everything you need to do pre-during-post show.
- Make sure you are familiar with using the monitors in the SM Console – This applies to the CPT, if there is any question, ask the Stage Manager or TD.
- Learn how to use the COM, the interface in the CPT is more complicated, and you can ask the Stage Manager or TD how to use it all.
  - In the Inge, Ask the Inge TD how it all works.
- If you need Cue Lights for shifts, Run them before Tech, so the Crew can get used to the idea of Standing by with the Light ON, and then GO with the light turning OFF.
  - There are 3 Switches on the SM console in the CPT that make this easy, if you need to learn how to use these talk to the SM or the TD.
- All paperwork for Crew MUST be done previous to starting, don't be making copies at Call time.
- Move all your Callboard information to the Bottom of the Stairs in the Green Room.
- Check the locations of all the fire extinguishers and familiarize yourself with emergency procedures – Do this with the TD.

Dry Tech: Doing it all Right with the Crew.

- *Note: Never Say “GO” unless you mean it, refer to it as the “G”-“O”*
- START using a Sign-in Sheet (If you haven’t already) – Now you get to add the Crew – This goes on the Show Callboard at the bottom of the stairs.
- Call-times
  - If the show is complicated Set-Wise Call them First, You can stagger the calls for crew so that there is time for Training. If it is not overly complicated Call Everyone with time to Train.
  - Typical:
    - 6:00 – Props/Set (Training)
    - 6:30 – Sound/Lights (Training)
    - 7:00 – GO
- If you need quick-Change Rehearsal, Call the Actors at 7, have them meet in the costume shop with the Crew and work over the changes – This will make First Dress Smoother.
  - Check with the crew-Head if this is necessary.
- Start On Time.
  - This is the time for the crew to learn what they are doing without the actors, if you need to do things more than once, Do it now. If you have to do it with the cast it makes everyone anxious.
• Call it the way you would – With a Standby – Some space and then GO, don't just tell the crew to “Do It”
  o Ask if the Lighting Designer wants people to be light models.

**Wet Tech** This is the Stage Managers Opportunity to get the calling worded right and correct including standbys and warnings. Do not Feel as if you need to rush.

- This can be a Cue-to-Cue Rehearsal if needed, This is useful if there are several pages between Cues to speed Things up. Check with the Director.
- Have A Meeting with Everyone to Explain Expectations.
  o Define the Meaning of a “Hold” - Something that can be heard by all, that STOPS all action.
  o Tell them you will skip if you are doing a cue-to-cue, and explain you will tell them when/where to go next. Leave yourself time to call the stand-bys.
- Do “House Open 30 minutes to Top of show” /“15 Minutes to top of Show” etc Calls – to Warn actors of start time so they can be ready. Do this again at Intermission
  o It is good to do them at the same time every rehearsal and performance so you can add to the air of prep and calm. Always do them in 5 minute increments.
  o The Places Call should come @ 3 minutes till – unless they need more time.
- Call times
  o 6:00 Set/Props – For Set up (Can be whatever is Necessary)
    ▪ If a Musical, Call Sound Here.
  o 6:30 Sound/Lights/Actors – For Set Up/Warming up
  o 6:45 Prop Check for the Actors
  o 7:00 GO

**Dress Rehearsals**

- Call Times (Adjust accordingly to different GO times)
  o 5:15 Costumes (If there are a lot of costumes make this earlier)
  o 5:30 Actors (For at least 1st Dress, if needed rest of the run)
  o 6:00 Set/Props (Musical = Sound is Called Here)
  o 6:15 Lights/Sound
  o 6:30 “Open the House” (It's good to start this early for timing)
  o 7:00 GO
- Don't Stop Unless it is necessary – Politely Remind Designers that we need to move on if they could please just take the note and fix it later, You don't want to be in the Theatre until 3AM...
- The Photographer is generally called on the First and Final Dress. Check with the Office and Note this on the Schedule.
- You are in charge of doing a Lighting Channel Check at the end of each night, Check with the Lighting Crew head to make sure the Operator is Trained to do this.
  o You might want to use Cell-Phones to do this so you don't have to drag a Com Everywhere.
  o You must check every light, and notate in the Rehearsal Report what is burned out/Burned through on gell.

**Performances** Where it all comes to be something we like to call “art”
What the SM does now

- You are the center of Calm, practice some mediation if you are outwardly nervous, it'll make everyone else nervous. - This is should be a given for the whole process.
  - Don't Create Panic.
- Do double check on work done by crew they will forget to do things, epically for set up.
  - NOT PEASTERING THEM is important, it helps you stay calm and then they feel a sense of pride in their work.
- Calling the show – Is your duty now, call it well for you are creating art.
- The House Managers come into the picture now, use your radio and give them conformation when they can open house, and warning times along with the cast. (if you need help learning how a radio works ask the TD before Tech's are over)
  - If they need to hold house, ask how long and keep checking in on the audience for conformation of GO.
  - Go meet your house managers before the shows, it'll make it more pleasnt.
- Check with the Director if they want a pick-up rehearsal. If so – Check how they want this to be run.
- Be Clear on Call times- It never hurts to send another e-mail out with the schedule.

Strike When it comes to an end.

- Create a Strike-Announcement
  - Closed-Toe Shoes
  - Putting away costumes, cleaning up things before coming upstairs.
  - Asking what they can do next – Never stop working.
  - They must stay till the end for Final Check In.

Final Check –in Must be done at the end of ALL strikes, everyone must attend – You cannot release anyone unless the TD says its okay. - At the end you must note who did not stay.

Post Production Looking back at it all.

Set up a meeting with the director to find out things to improve, what you did well. Always be growing as an artist, a stage manager is complex.