

**PRODUCTION GUIDELINES**

**California State University, Dominguez Hills**

**Department of Theatre and Dance**

**Fall 2018**

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## THE STAGE MANAGERS' GENERAL DUTIES

**The Stage Manager is the director's most important associate. It is a job with enormous responsibility and requires someone who is dedicated, organized and has the ability to lead. Below is a simple outline of the Stage Manager's duties, but anyone taking on this responsibility must also read the Stage Manager's Handbook and attend a one-on-one meeting with the Production Manager.**

- Assist the directors with their auditions (orchestrate movement of actors, filling out of forms, reading parts with actors, etc.)
- Assist in the effort to find assistant stage managers, lighting and sound operators, running crew, and all personnel for the production.
- Organize the activities of all Assistant Stage Managers (an ASM may perform some or many of the Stage Manager's duties).
- Function as the center of communications between actors, directors, crew, advisors, and the supervisor.
- Make sure that actors know their call times. Prepare the production schedule.
- Control the production board (call board) and post all necessary information (e.g. notes from rehearsals)
- Attend all production meetings.
- Prepare a contact sheet.
- Prepare a prompt script (3 ring binder with stage manager's notation for blocking, plots to assist directors and designers)
- Organize the rehearsals (taping out the rehearsal floor, maintaining quiet and order at rehearsal, record blocking in Stage Manager's notation, clearing all sets pieces at the end of rehearsal and setting it up prior to the beginning time for rehearsal)
- Prompt actors clearly (respond onto to their call of "line" and say their next four or five words out loudly enough for them to hear); do not allow other actors to prompt each other;
- Control security of the theatre building - check all theatre doors before leaving. Contact the shop foreman about safety guidelines for rehearsals.
- Make a sign in poster for all dress rehearsals and performances
- Make Calls: Give each actor 1/2 hour, 15 min and 5 minute calls, and call the show on headsets

What makes a good stage manager? Willingness to assume responsibility, keeping cool, being quiet and observant, having the ability to anticipate, being considerate and courteous, having a sense of humor, being organized and efficient, being punctual and dependable, using managerial skills.

**NOTE: Consult our Stage Manager's Handbook on the website for a full description of the Stage Manager's Duties.**

## GENERAL DUTIES OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR

**The Assistant Director aids the Director in all directorial duties and may be asked to run or assist in running rehearsals. Below is a more detailed list of the ASD's duties.**

- Meet with Director to get a feeling of the direction and concept of the show
- Obtain a script
- Read script at least 3 times. Once for basic understanding, 2<sup>nd</sup> for relationships, and 3<sup>rd</sup> for theme and/or message
- Write out any questions you might have for the director based on your reading and your previous discussion with him or her
- Research any details of the play's time period, characters or culture that you may be unfamiliar with. Keep a file of all of this research that you can bring with you to rehearsal.
- Attend auditions and assist if the director requests it.
- Attend all rehearsals that the director requests
- Attend all Production Meetings that the director requests

At rehearsal you may be asked to:

- Run lines with actors
- Review the blocking of a scene
- Block a scene or fix blocking
- Over-see a run-through

Note: An assistant director may give suggestions for actors to the director, but should never give those suggestions to the actors or designers without the approval of the director. This assures that there is no confusion of concept or direction.

## GENERAL DUTIES OF THE LIGHTING DESIGNER

- Read the script
- Meet with the director and get a feeling of what the vision is for the show. Find out when Production meetings are and make sure that you attend all production meetings.
- Read the script a 2<sup>nd</sup> time and make a note of any lighting changes or looks as indicated by the script
- Make a list (or cue sheet) indicating where the lighting change occurs and what page it occurs on as well as what the change might be if known (ie. Blackout, a light shift, etc.)
- Decide with the director when you should attend a rehearsal
- Attend rehearsal and sit with the director. Have a conversation about what and when lights change as well as make note of what areas are used on the stage. Bring your own ideas as well and use your script to notate this discussion and any new light cues that you were not aware of before
- Based on all of this new information create a light plot. This will include position of instruments as well intended gel colors and if any special effects will be used such as gobos.
- Get final approval on this plot from the director and TD
- After getting final approval, schedule a time with crew to focus all the lamps and place all the gels and, if needed, other effects.
- Finalize your lights cue sheet at paper tech, where you should sit with the stage manager and/or director and TD and get information on every cue that will be played during the performance and in the order they will appear. Your list will include the following information: The number of the cue, the page the cue appears on, the line or action that cue is signaled by, the look that will occur (this may sometimes also include the instruments involved in creating this look).
- Schedule a time with the TD to set your light cues.
- Preferably with your light board operator, set the cues on the board.
- Once set, run through the cues and make sure they are correct.
- Attend the first tech rehearsal and make adjustments as needed to your cues with the directors assistance
- Attend the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tech rehearsal and be sure that the director is happy with each look and that nothing else needs to be changed or added
- During tech week keep the lines of communication open with the director and TD to make sure that you are not needed for further changes or additions.

## **GENERAL DUTIES OF THE LIGHTING SET UP CREW**

- Read the script
- Contact Production Manager and Technical Director to find out when lighting is scheduled to be hung and focused. Write down the calls so you know when to report.
- Be prepared when you come to a lighting call with an 8" adjustable wrench and a pair of gloves.
- The set up crew is responsible for hanging, circuiting, coloring and focusing the light plot that is provided by the Lighting Designer. This phase of the production usually takes place during the 2 weeks prior to technical rehearsal. It is important to realize that production is a process and things have to happen in a certain order. This means that there will be very little work in the first 4 weeks but in the last 3 weeks there will be a lot of work to complete. You will have to adjust your schedule.
- Report to each Lighting call on time and stay till the end.

## **GENERAL DUTIES OF THE LIGHT BOARD OPERATOR**

- Read the script
- Meet with the lighting designer and get a feeling for how complex the show will be and about how many lighting cues there will be
- Before you set cues with the designer, meet and go over the finalized cue sheet and discuss the possible challenges of each.
- Attend a rehearsal with your cue sheet and get a feeling for when these cues will occur in the show
- Set the cues with the designer
- Attend tech week and run all cues making adjustments as needed and noting these on your cue sheet. Be aware that most light cues will be called by the Stage Manager, but you should have a good feeling for when cues occur as well so that any mistakes can be covered.
- Arrive 1 hour at least before each opening each night and run through the lighting cues to make sure that there are no errors or problems. Make sure you also check pre-set and blackout.
- Run the show every evening during performance

## **GENERAL DUTIES OF THE SET CONSTRUCTION CREW**

- Read the script
- Take and pass the Safety Test before doing any work in the shop or on stage.
- Contact the Scene Shop Foreman to set up a work schedule and show up for those times on time.
- Follow the workshop dress code: NO dangling jewelry; NO open-toe shoes; Tie-up long hair.
- Follow the shop safety rules at all time.
- Bring your own eye and ear protections, along with a set of work apparel.
- The Set Construction Crew is responsible for reading and executing Foreman's work order base on the set design or any other tasks (i.e. Set Painting...)
- The Set Construction Crew will operate various hand and power tools under the supervision of the Scene Shop Foreman.
- The Set Construction Crew should be able to endure a certain degree of physical activities (i.e. Weight Lifting...).
- The Set Construction Crew will clean after their own working area(s) as well as the Scene Shop at the end of each day

## **GENERAL DUTIES OF THE COSTUME SHOP CREW**

**The costume shop is an exciting and creative part of the theatre department. We provide costumes, wigs and make up for all of the productions here at CSUDH. As a member of the costume shop crew you will:**

- Read the script
- Help the designer breakdown the script for costume purposes
- Become part of the design process by aiding in character analysis
- Contribute ideas toward costume, hair and make up design decisions
- Help pull costumes from our stock or rental warehouses off campus
- Help with shopping for modern or vintage garments
- Participate in costume fittings with actors
- Work on altering the costumes as needed....this can include sewing, dying, painting etc.
- Organize the costume racks and prepare for dress rehearsals
- Watch dress rehearsals with designer and take notes
- Help with striking the costumes after the show is over

When we are not working on a show, we will continue to organize the costume shop and storage.



## GENERAL DUTIES OF THE COSTUME RUNNING CREW

**The costume running crew is an important and integral part of the theatre dept. at CSUDH. Duties include:**

- Read the script
- Provide the costumes and wigs for the productions,
- Aid the actors with dressing, make-up and wig application
- Maintain the costumes during the run of the show
- Aid in quick changes during performances
- Be available for any costume, hair or wig emergencies during the performances.
- Wear **all black** including socks and flat, silent, close-toed shoes. This means no colored hair accessories or jewelry.
- Immediately upon arrival, sign in with stage manager. At call time, you are working...not eating or changing into your clothes.
- Proceed to dressing room assignment and begin costume check-in. Actors should be reminded to do hair and make-up 1<sup>st</sup>. This will give ample time to check costumes in before doling out to actors.
- Be available to aide actors prior to curtain. This may include dressing, make-up, hair or wig assistance. If not needed, stay in dressing room and be available.
- During run of show stay in dressing room and be available for quick changes. Reading or do some other quiet activity is allowed, but no talking or listening to music. Follow along with the show and be ready for quick changes.
- After the show, be ready for actors to check their costumes in. Make sure that all items are hung properly on the right type of hangars. Make sure to see every piece that is being checked in. If any item is missing, the actors are not released to go until they find the missing item. If they leave, and have not checked in all of their costumes, please inform the stage manager before you leave.
- If there are rips, stains, or damage to any of the costumes during the run, fix what you can before leaving. If you can't fix it or there are missing items, call Carin (562) 547-9276.
- After all actors have been checked in, straighten up the dressing room & throw away all trash (save safety pins).
- Have actors place dirty clothes in laundry basket. Separate into dark and light loads and start one load immediately. Wait to put it in dryer and start 2<sup>nd</sup> load.
- Check out with the stage manager before leaving. Don't walk out alone. Walk with someone or call an escort at 243-3639 (campus police).
- If on early laundry duty, come in at 5:30 and finish laundry. Hang everything up and steam if needed. Return to dressing room before actors arrive at 6:30pm.
- After the last performance on Sunday, take the costumes upstairs to the shop and hang them on the racks.
- Show up 5-10 minutes before your call times listed below. Call times are 6:00 for evening shows, and 12:30 pm for matinees

**This is just an example:**

MacBeth dates and call times:

Mon. 10/18	6:00pm	1 <sup>st</sup> dress
Tues. 10/19	6:00pm	2 <sup>nd</sup> dress
Wed. 10/20	6:00pm	3 <sup>rd</sup> dress
Thurs. 10/21	6:00pm	4 <sup>th</sup> dress
Fri. 10/22	6:00pm	Opening night
Sat. 10/23	6:00pm	Performance
Fri. 10/29	6:00pm	Performance
Sat. 10/30	6:00pm	Performance
Sun. 10/31	12:30pm	Closing night - strike

## **GENERAL DUTIES OF THE PUBLICITY CREW AND HOUSE MANAGER**

- Read the script in order to be familiar with the show so that you can answer questions from people who might be interested in attending.
- Assist in the creation of all flyers, postcards, posters or visual material for either the auditions or the actual show.
- Assist in the writing of all Press Releases through the Division Coordinator and contacting local newspapers so a story can come out about the play as soon as it is cast.
- Calling local radio stations or newspapers to request reviewers to come opening weekend.
- Assist with printing some flyers with press releases on the back, and distributing them to instructors before hand.
- Organize Scene or monologue performances from the shows done outside or in classes;
- Take materials over to the Newspaper regularly and talk with student editors about upcoming shows
- Get lists of all the clubs and organizations on campus and call the advisors personally.
- Arrange with teachers to have cast members come to their class to inform them about the show and possibly perform segments;
- Work with Associated Students on including our Publicity with theirs
- Maintaining our sandwich boards and bulletin boards (behind glass in Loker maintained through ASI, as well as Loker Literature racks)
- Approach specific faculty members to bring their whole class to a show (including a written assignment, or extra credit, and chance to meet with actors afterwards?)
- Make large banners with ASI and placing them on the railings around campus
- Visit our own classes (e.g. THE100, 160, 355, etc.) to make periodic announcements about relevant themes in the upcoming show and making sure that our faculty is requiring majors and minors in their classes to write a response to the show
- Get all theatre majors and minors to come on opening night (identify who they are, using posters, announcements, etc.)
- Solicit Mailing lists from other local arts organizations
- Distribute flyers with press releases on the back to Student Housing, and in the parking lots, cafeteria, and other areas where students congregate.
- Set up box office locations in the student union a week before the play opens, and manning it with 346 students who have read the play or seen a rehearsal, or our Box Office Person, so they can generate some enthusiasm about the play.
- Assist in the creation and printing of the Program.

## **GENERAL DUTIES OF THE HOUSE MANAGER**

- Be Responsible for Front of House operations during the run of a production.
- Sign up ushers for each performance to staff lobby.
- Instruct ushers on seating chart so that they can help patrons find their seats.
- Make sure ushers are stationed at each door from lobby to theatre and have programs to distribute.
- Open lobby doors and begin seating audience approximately ½ hour before performance. This will be done after you get a “ go “ from the Stage Manger.
- Purchase a head of time supplies to provide concessions during intermission. Soda and coffee are usually provided and a donation jar is available.
- Station ushers at the end of the Production to prevent audience from going on stage. Direct them to the stage door to meet the cast.

## GENERAL DUTIES OF THE PROP MASTER

**A prop is an object used on stage by actors for use in the story line or plot of a theatrical production. The Prop Master/ Mistress is in charge of designing, buying, or building all props for the show. They are also responsible for providing rehearsal props for the cast.**

- Meet with director. Get a feel for the direction of the show and the concept.
- Obtain a script and Read through script for understanding
- Read through a 2<sup>nd</sup> time making notes of all props that may be needed
- Read through a 3<sup>rd</sup> time, double checking your list and making any additions
- Present this list to your director and make any additions that he or she requests
- Obtain a copy of the actor's personal props list from the Stage Manager
- Research your complete list and create a picture file of the needed props and your research
- Present all research and picture material to your director 4 weeks before opening night and receive approval
- Create a set of rehearsal props for rehearsal at least 4 weeks before opening and give these to the Stage Manager. Rehearsal props are close approximations of the actual prop (e.g. a cutout block of wood to serve for the gun, an old broken lap top to serve for the actual new one for the show, a tennis ball for the apple, etc.); you can gather these from storage or assemble yourself just so that actors have an item to work with;
  - NOTE: Actors do not normally provide props in professional theatre except for rare special circumstances; do not ask actors to bring in props for you.
- Begin purchasing and/or building all needed props at 4 weeks before opening
- Have all props purchased and built by 2 weeks before opening.
- Present all personal props and general props to director for approval at 2 weeks before opening
- Create a prop table for all props
- Create a sign-in sheet for all general props and a separate sign-in for all personal props\*
- Check out all props at beginning of Dress Rehearsal
- Check all props the day before opening to make sure that nothing needs to be replaced or repaired
- Check all props back in at the end of first weekend run and repair, replenish and replace as needed.
- Check all props back out for 2<sup>nd</sup> weekend run.
- Check all props back in at Close and Strike.
- Return all props to Prop Room and throw out anything that cannot be reused, as well as repair anything that needs repairing.
- Add new props to master prop list.

\*Personal props are typically kept with the actors costume and checked out once at the beginning of dress-rehearsal and then checked in at closing. General props should be checked in at the end of each run weekend and then inspected for wear.

## **GENERAL DUTIES OF THE AUDIO DESIGN/SETUP CREW**

- Read the script
- Contact Director and meet with them to discuss the general frame work and “sound” the production will have noting anything really special that may require extra effort to mix or acquire.
- Attended all Production Meetings.
- Read the script again noting where it calls for sound cues and any place you think sound would be called for. Make a list of the cues.
- Meet again with the director to discuss the cues you have identified and perhaps add more.
- Begin to gather recorded music for the production, sound effects and record audio if necessary.
- Prepare a CD for the director to listen to music and effects you have gathered. Decide in collaboration with the director which specific music and effects will be used in the production for which cues.
- Produce the Sound track for the show. Cues for the show in order of use on a CD documented so the Sound operator can find the information.
- Attend and set cues at the cue set Rehearsal
- Attend and be ready to adjust and change cues at the Tech Rehearsal with Cast.
- Attend all dress rehearsals to adjust cues and levels as needed.

## **GENERAL DUTIES OF THE SOUND BOARD OPERATOR**

- Read the script
- Meet with the Sound Designer and get a feeling for how complex the show will be and about how many sound cues there will be.
- Before you set cues with the designer, meet and go over the finalized cue sheet and discuss the possible challenges of each.
- Attend a run through rehearsal with your cue sheet and get a feeling for when these cues will occur in the show
- Set the cues with the designer at Cue Set Rehearsal
- Attend tech week and run all cues making adjustments as needed and noting these on your cue sheet. Be aware that most light cues will be called by the Stage Manager, but you should have a good feeling for when cues occur as well so that any mistakes can be covered.
- Arrive 1 hour at least before each opening each night and run through the lighting cues to make sure that there are no errors or problems. Make sure you also check pre-set and blackout.
- Run the show every evening during performance

## **GENERAL DUTIES OF ACTORS AND MAKEUP CREW**

**Actors are one part of the production team and carry the responsibility of being the main storytellers to the audience. A good actor understands that it takes a entire team of directors, designers, stage managers, and crew to make a show successful; and, the actor must have utmost respect for EVERYONE involved in the production process.**

**The general duties of actors within the theatre department at CSUDH have three main components: 1) The audition; 2) The rehearsal process; and 3) The run of the show and strike.**

### **THE AUDITION:**

- Read the entire script at least 2 weeks prior to your audition.
- Identify a character or characters that you connect with, but be prepared to accept and perform to the best of your ability, any role the director casts you in.
- Prepare 2 contrasting monologues that are each 1-2 minutes in length and memorized. One should be comedic and the other dramatic. The director may choose to only see one of them for the actual audition, but always be prepared to perform both.
- Bring at least one headshot with you to the audition, with your performance resume stapled neatly to the back.
- Arrive to your audition at least 15 minutes early and sign in with audition assistants. Pick up sides for the character you may be interested in (if available), and gain a sense of when you may be seen by the director.
- Be prepared to wait, and be courteous to other performers also preparing for their audition for the director.
- After your audition, thank the director for his or her time.

### **THE REHEARSAL PROCESS:**

- If you cast in a show, read the play at least 3 times. Once for a basic understanding of the world of the play and the given circumstances the playwright has created; 2<sup>nd</sup> for overall relationships, and the relationships your character has with other characters; and 3<sup>rd</sup>, to understand the playwrights theme's and how your character fits within those themes.
- Come to the first table read with a printed script, sharpened pencils, and be prepared to read the play as an ensemble. Before, during, or after the table read, the director may choose to discuss his or her overall vision for the production; be prepared to take thorough notes, and ask good questions about the play or your character when appropriate.
- When you are given a rehearsal schedule, place it in an important place where it will not be lost or misplaced. Highlight the dates and times that you are called.
- On days or evenings that you are scheduled to rehearse, arrive early. You will stand out if you are not just on time.



- Come prepared. Have your script, sharpened pencils, and be ready to work. Rehearsal is a place to try out your actor homework.
- Avoid being late or absent at all costs. If you are going to be late or absent for a rehearsal, **contact the stage manager at least 1 hour prior to your rehearsal call time**, so that this information may be communicated to the director.
- Warm up your voice and body prior to each rehearsal.
- Develop focus. Good work requires concentration. Eliminate anything that could become a distraction from your goal.
- Avoid complaints. Complaining about anything is simply a waste of time and never a solution to a problem.
- Never miss an entrance. Don't expect the stage manager to come after you. Be in place, ready to enter on your cue.
- Seek Direction, but don't demand it. Avoid getting frustrated if you don't get enough personal attention. Make notes of all directions you receive, because the same note should never be given twice. Listen carefully to notes the director gives others; they may help you as well.
- Learn all lines by your "off-book" deadlines, designated by the director. Don't paraphrase, delete, or add words to the script. Learn to be as word perfect as possible.
- Be on time for all of your costume calls for measurements and fittings!
- **Purchase a small makeup kit.** If you want to learn how to become a pro, invest in your own makeup that can be purchased inexpensively from any local makeup supply store. Makeup kits are sold for actors of all skin shades, tones, and colors.

### **THE RUN OF THE SHOW AND STRIKE:**

- Once the show goes into technical and dress rehearsals, you are now in the home stretch. Your energy, focus, ability to take direction, and respect for others, are vital for a successful opening.
- Sign in for each dress rehearsal and performance to let your stage manager know you are present and accounted for.
- Again, be on time for all designated calls and alert your stage manager immediately if you are going to be late.
- Have respect for your costume and your props. Never eat or drink in costume backstage and hang up your costume at the end of each dress rehearsal and performance. The props crew will do their best, but it is your responsibility as an actor to double check to make sure your props are where they need to be, prior to the start of each performance.
- Warm up your voice and body and do your best to run your lines with other actors before the show. Also, walk through your blocking whenever possible.
- Listen carefully for all announcements and last minute instructions from your stage manager.
- Although you should make every effort to learn how to apply your own makeup, a makeup crew person will assist you for some shows. Have your personal makeup kit out and ready for the crew person to work with you. Your face should always be thoroughly cleaned prior to each makeup application. The department may provide

some makeup, but again, you should have your own kit and be proficient on how to use it effectively.

- For each performance, have fun and trust that all of your hard work will pay off.
- After the performance begins, stay in tune with where you need to be and **NEVER miss and entrance.**
- At the conclusion of the final performance, be prepared to stick around and assist with the strike of the set, costumes, and props. Listen carefully for instructions from the technical director, shop foreman, and stage manager as they will ultimately be in charge of the strike.

### **GENERAL DUTIES FOR MAKEUP CREW**

- Read the script. Have a general understanding of all of the characters, including their age, social status, ethnicity, etc....
- Attend as many production meetings as possible.
- Attend as many rehearsals as possible to understand the director's vision.
- Meet and work closely with the costume designer to discuss her overall artistic vision for the characters in the show.
- Discuss the use of wigs, hair-pieces, and other specialty makeup with the costume designer.
- Be on time for all crew calls and immediately alert the stage manager if you will be late.
- Apply makeup to actors that have their own makeup kits, and supplement department makeup for any actors that do not.
- Assist with the strike of all department owned makeup and costumes.

**APPENDICES**

Example of Stage Manager’s Notes (to be sent to all staff):

In the Next Room or The Vibrator Play  
 Performance Report #  
 DATE

<b>Location:</b>			
<b>Schedule:</b>			
<b>General:</b>			
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Brief description of what the audience was like and an overview of technical notes.</li> <li>2. AMENDMENTS:           <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. SCENIC:</li> <li>b. LIGHTING:</li> <li>c. PROJECTION:</li> <li>d. SOUND:</li> <li>e. MISC:</li> </ol> </li> </ol>			
<b>Timings:</b>			
House Open	Top of Show	End of Show	Total Length
<b>House Count:</b>			
<b>House Size:</b>			
<b>Talkback Count:</b>			
<b>Director:</b>			
1. Nothing today.			
<b>Scenic:</b>			
1. Nothing today.			
<b>Video:</b>			
1. Nothing today.			
<b>Lighting:</b>			
1. Nothing today			
<b>Costume:</b>			
1. Nothing today.			
<b>Sound:</b>			
1. Nothing today			
<b>Other Technical Notes:</b>			

1. Nothing today.

**Administration/Producer:**

1. Nothing today.

**Injuries/Replacements:**

· n/a