

MBU Theatre Handbook: Production Team & Stage Crew

Director

The director is expected to adhere to the following standards:

- *Communicate*. This is the most important elements of a directorial position. You must be available by text or email for questions from your cast, production team, and/or faculty advisor. You must respond to all emails/texts within one business day.
- Build your production team. This team must be pre-approved by your faculty advisor before an offer is made to each member. Some production team positions will be filled at the discretion of the theatre faculty.
- Create a rehearsal calendar. This should include all rehearsal times as well as what will be rehearsed that particular day. You should also include off-book dates, load-in, strike, paint days, and anything else you believe necessary for the actors to know.
- Create a production team calendar. In collaboration with your stage manager create a calendar reflecting design due dates, costume parade, load-in, strike, cue to cue, tech day, production team meetings, and sitzprobe.
- Organize auditions. Decide what you would like to hear from your actors (one-minute monologue, 16 bars of a musical theatre piece, etc.) Choose the sides you would like to read and any songs you would like to hear for callbacks. Organize callbacks so that you begin with the most amount of people and end with the least. Communication all this information to your stage manager so that he/she can make any copies necessary for you.
- Organize all rehearsals to use your time wisely. Respect your cast members' time and they will respect yours! Come to rehearsal prepared and let cast members go when you can. On the flip side, don't feel pressure to let them go if you need them! Theatre is a team effort!
- Attend strike.

Assistant Director

The assistant director is expected to adhere to the following standards:

- Attend all rehearsals and production team meetings.
- Every director has different needs and expectations from their assistant director. Arrange a time before the process begins to meet with your director to address any concerns that you may have and to learn their expectations from you.
- Attend strike. The stage manager will hand out assignments at some point during the production.

Stage Manager

See stage manager handbook.

Lighting Designer

The lighting designer is expected to adhere to the following standards:

- Attend all production team meetings. Have the script read before the initial production team meeting and be ready to contribute to the conversation. Remember that your design must fit into the overall design of the production, so be ready to make adjustments as the process unfolds.
- Attend at least three rehearsals throughout the process. Arrange the best rehearsals for you to attend with the director and the stage manager.
- Attend the first read thru to obtain your calendar and contact sheet. Bring a binder to hold all of these materials. Plan to stay for the read thru. It is important that all crew members have a firm grasp of the plot, flow, and technical demands of the production.
- Light hangs will be discussed and arranged with the director and stage manager, but it is your job to be sure to obtain these dates. The first production team meeting is a good time to ask!
- Schedule a time to discuss cues with the stage manager.
- If you are also the light board operator you are expected to arrive two hours before curtain to run your cues and make any last-minute adjustments.
- Attend strike. The stage manager will hand out assignments at some point during the production.

Sound Designer

- Attend all production team meetings. Have the script read before the initial production team meeting and be ready to contribute to the conversation. Remember that your design must fit into the overall design of the production, so be ready to make adjustments as the process unfolds.
- Attend at least three rehearsals throughout the process. Arrange the best rehearsals for you to attend with the director and the stage manager.
- Attend the first read thru to obtain your calendar and contact sheet. Bring a binder to hold all of these materials. Plan to stay for the read thru. It is important that all crew members have a firm grasp of the plot, flow, and technical demands of the production.
- You are responsible for sound effects, pre and post-show music, and microphone plots. If you are also the sound board operator you are expected to arrive two hours before curtain to change batteries in the microphones, run your cues, make any adjustments and run sound check.
- You are *in charge* of sound check. Have a microphone so that the actors can hear you. Don't be afraid to tell people to be quiet, ask the actor to speak their lines correctly, or call for actors backstage who have not done their sound check.
- Attend strike. The stage manager will hand out assignments at some point during the production.

Costume Designer

The costume designer is expected to adhere to the following standards:

- Attend all production team meetings. Have the script read before the initial production team meeting and be ready to contribute to the conversation. Remember that your design must fit into the overall design of the production, so be ready to make adjustments as the process unfolds.
- Attend at least three rehearsals throughout the process. Arrange the best rehearsals for you to attend with the director and the stage manager.
- Attend the first read thru to obtain your calendar and contact sheet. Bring a binder to hold all of these materials. Plan to stay for the read thru. It is important that all crew members have a firm grasp of the plot, flow, and technical demands of the production. You may also wish to measure the cast during this time as it is the first time they will all be together in the same room.
- Discuss the method in which you plan to share your designs with the director (sketches, fabric swatches, Pinterest boards, Amazon shopping carts). Make sure that the director approves of your method and that it is accessible to the design team as much as possible.
- Designs, fittings, and costume parades will be discussed and arranged with the director and stage manager, but it is your job to be sure to obtain these dates. The first production team meeting is a good time to ask!
- You are responsible for hair and make-up as well. Many students are capable of doing this on their own, but you will need to guide them toward the style that you would like. You may want to set up a workshop for the students who do not or make a pre-show schedule for yourself and the actors if you need to do hair and make-up. Delegate as much as possible since you *will* have costume emergencies that you will need to deal with pre-show.
- Make sure you have a sewing kit, first aid kit, feminine products, hair products, etc. in the green rooms. MBU theatre will reimburse you for any items you need to buy if you have it pre-approved in the fine arts office.
- There will be rips/tears/stains during the run of the show. Have all "costume malfunctions" corrected before arriving at the theatre the next evening.
- Arrive two hours before curtain during dress/tech week and performances. Sign the call board and check the green rooms before the actors begin to arrive.
- Manage all quick changes and remain backstage for the entirety of the performance.
- Be available for strike. Manage the cleaning of the green rooms, laundry, and the safe return of all costumes to storage. Sign out with stage manager before leaving.

Assistant Stage Manager

The assistant stage manager is the stage manager's hands and feet. The stage manager is responsible for the smooth operation of the entire production- the ASM's job is to make sure that the stage manager has all the necessary tools to do the job well.

The ASM is expected to adhere to the following standards:

- Attend the first read thru to obtain your script, calendar, and contact sheet. Bring a binder to hold all of these materials. Plan to stay for the read thru. It is important that all crew members have a firm grasp of the plot, flow, and technical demands of the production.
- Attend all called crew meetings.
- Attend rehearsals as you are called by the stage manager. This may change from production to production or from week to week, so if you are thinking of picking up a shift at work, going to a party, etc., make sure to check in with your stage manager first.
- Attend all rehearsals from two weeks before dress/tech week. The only person who should know more about this production than you is the stage manager.
- You will be on headset during dress/tech and the run of the show. You may not miss any dress/tech rehearsals or performances. You must remain on headset as much as possible and let the stage manager know when you are going off headset and when you are back on.
- Create your own pre-show checklist with input from the stage manager and any necessary production team members or actors.
- Arrive two hours before curtain during dress/tech week and performances. Sign the call board and begin your pre-show checklist.
- Double check props/set pieces/costume pre-sets/etc. on your side of the stage before each run.
- Be on headset for the final 30 minutes before curtain.
- Assist with scene changes, costume changes, curtain, etc. Keep your side of the stage running smoothly. Deal with any crises as they arise. You are empowered to make decisions!
- Remain for strike. The stage manager will hand out assignments at some point during the production.

Property Master

The props master is expected to adhere to the following standards:

- Attend the first read thru to obtain your script, calendar, and contact sheet. Bring a binder to hold all of these materials. Plan to stay for the read thru. It is important that all crew members have a firm grasp of the plot, flow, and technical demands of the production.
- Make your own list of props based on your reading of the script. Send this list to the stage manager as soon as possible for revisions and additions.
- The needs of the production may change throughout the rehearsal process. Check your email for rehearsal reports from the stage manager for any adjustments that need to be made to your list.
- Research the time period before you begin pulling props. Other helpful bits of research are: socioeconomic level of the characters, descriptions of the props in the script, past production photos.
- When pulling props from storage be sure to check with the prop closet manager to learn the inventory system.

- When buying props always have individual items over \$25 and entire purchases totaling more than \$100 pre-approved through the fine arts office.
- The prop table should be set up during load in. All props should be available from that point on. Keeping checking rehearsal reports for any updates.
- Attend strike. You will be responsible for the cataloging of all props as they are returned to storage, including any new props.

Spotlight Operator

The spotlight operator is expected to adhere to the following standards:

- Attend the first read thru to obtain your script, calendar, and contact sheet. Bring a binder to hold all of these materials. Plan to stay for the read thru. It is important that all crew members have a firm grasp of the plot, flow, and technical demands of the production.
- Attend the first full run-thru rehearsal. This rehearsal will be long and, at times, arduous, but it is important that you begin to see the overall blocking structure so that when the stage manager or lighting designer gives you your cues you will understand the direction. If the show is not completely run it is your job to make sure you see the rest of the show- check with the stage manager to ask when you can come in.
- Attend the final run-thru before tech week. This run-thru should look considerably smoother and give you a better idea of the flow of the production.
- Attend one crew meeting with the stage manager to obtain cues. The stage manager or director will send an email with the time/date/location of this meeting.
- Attend all tech/dress rehearsals. Arrive at all dress/tech rehearsals 45 minutes before curtain. Sign into the call board (located in the hallway next to the green rooms), test your spot.
- Report any spotlight malfunctions to the stage manager.
- Remain for strike. The stage manager will hand out assignments at some point during the production.

10 Commandments for Spotlight Operators:

- Know how to operate the spotlight
- Always turn your headset off when moving it
- Never let the performer's head get out of your light
- When in a body spot, keep all of their body parts in the light
- Listen carefully for your cues
- Run the spotlight full heat unless otherwise directed
- Keep your light out of the audience unless otherwise directed
- All adjustments should be slow and smooth
- *Never* change adjustments on another person's spotlight
- Don't make excuses for mistakes, learn from them