

Stage Management Handbook

for The UTEP Dept. of Theatre & Dance

By
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Revisions and Addendums by the
UTEP Department of Theatre & Dance's
Stage Management Students.

1st Edition
Spring 2018



Introduction

a testimony by the author and a welcoming from Carolyn

Here at the UTEP Department of Theatre and Dance, a stage manager has a level of independency that is bested only by our responsibility. While not the captain of the ship, we do have our hands on the steering wheel throughout the entire production process. It is us who guide the ship through a bold, exciting, sometimes tumultuous journey. As a stage manager, you will grow over the course of several productions. Your duties will test your critical thinking, communication, organization, and problem-solving skills. You will be a part of the theatrical process from auditions to closing night, something no other member of the production can achieve; you will grow to know a show, its cast and crew, and the very motivation by which they all operate; and, finally, you will be the driving force behind the show's success. Throughout the process, you will be at the frontline of collaboration, ensuring that the entire team of artists can work together to accomplish one vision, set out by the director. With each production, you will hone your skills, develop your confidence, and become adaptable to a given show. By the end of your tenure here at UTEP, you'll have been given some of the most valuable tools to utilize in the professional world, as well as the higher academic world.

This manual, commissioned by your advisor for your benefit, will provide a rundown of who you'll be working with and what you'll accomplish throughout a production. It has been created not to teach you, but rather to act as a reference when you absolutely need it. Throughout your tenure here at UTEP, you might find yourself in need of advice. Whether it be paperwork or problem solutions, this guidebook intends to provide a basic overview of what you can do in a given situation. That being said, all the lessons, comments, and testimonies featured in this handbook reflect the knowledge all stage management students have absorbed from our amazing advisor. Formalities aside, the department is happy to have you and exciting to see your work. Enjoy your time here and be sure to value the education opportunity you've been given.

All the best,
Herman.

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Part 1: Knowing Our Department

An overview of our faculty, departments, and facilities.

Faculty

The following list details all faculty members you will interact with during a production.

Essential Faculty Members

Cristina Goletti

Department Chair/ Dance Professor
cgoletti@utep.edu
915-747-

Lisa Smith,

Director of Dance
lisas@utep.edu
915-747-6509

Adriana Dominguez,

Director of Theatre
adrianad@utep.edu
915-747-6213

Maria Placencia,

Admin Services Coordinator
mgplacencia@utep.edu
915-747-5438

Performance Faculty

Acting professors who often operate as directors, dialect coaches, and sometimes actors.

Rebecca Rivas,

Acting/Directing
rrivas2@utep.edu
915-747-5231

Jay Stratton,

Acting/Directing
jastratton@utep.edu
915-747-8424

Kim McKean,

Acting/Directing
kamckean@utep.edu
915-747-5603

Greg Beam,

Acting/Directing
gbeam@utep.edu

Dance

Professors and choreographers.

Lisa Smith,

Director of Dance
lisas@utep.edu
915-747-6509

Myron Nadel,

Dance/ Choreographer
915-747-7017
mnadel@utep.edu

Leanne Rinelli,

Dance/ Choreographer
lminelli@utep.edu

Sandra Paola Lopez Ramirez,

Dance/ Choreographer
splopezramirez@utep.edu
915-747-8230

Tech

Professors and shop managers.

Scenery:

Ross Fleming,
Head of Scenic Design
rfleming@utep.edu
915-747-7852

Tim Green,
Scene Shop Manager
sgreen@utep.edu
915-747-7850

Stage Management:

Carolyn Cubit-Tsutsui,
Theatre Tech Advisor
cacubittsutsui@utep.edu
(o): 915-747-8026 (c): 915-328-7486

Costuming:

Crystal G. Herman,
Head of Costuming
gherman2@utep.edu
915-747-7853

Nicole Read,
Costume Shop Manager
patriciap@utep.edu
915-747-6341

Lighting and Sound:

Hideaki Tsutsui
Head of Lighting, Sound, & Projections
htsutsui2@utep.edu
915-747-7851

Sub-Departments

Here is a list of all sub-departments and their duties for both academia and production.

Stage Management

Head of Stage Management:
Carolyn Tsutsui
The Stage Management department oversees all duties regarding stage management and often assists with other elements of production.

Lighting, Sound, & Projections

Head of Lighting, Sound, & Projections:
Hideaki Tsutsui
Working the closest with our department, The Lighting Department oversees all technical elements pertaining to lighting, sound, and projections. Many of our stage management students have worked in the lighting shop.

Scenery & Props

Head of Scenery: Ross Fleming
The Scenery & Props department oversees the design, build, and strike of all sets for all productions.

Costuming

Head of Costuming: Crystal Herman
The Costume Department oversees all costume, makeup, and hair elements of a production.

Performance

Performance majors make up the bulk of cast members and oftentimes run crew for practicum hours.

Audience Development & House Management

Director: Adriana Dominguez

Audience Development oversees all publicity related duties for the department whereas House Management oversees the successful box office/house management duties of all productions.

Dance

Director: Lisa Smith

Dancers comprise all cast members for our annual dance show/ capstones and occasional work as run crew members for performance hours credit.

Office Staff

Admin Services Coordinator:

Maria Placencia

Office staff oversee a myriad of tasks for our department. For stage managers, the office is a primary resource for paperwork.

Facilities

Venues

There are four performance venues in our department.

The Wise Family Theatre

The mainstage production venue, seats roughly 250 people, utilized for 4 productions within a season.

Studio Theatre

The black-box style theatre, utilized for two productions of a season as well as the Chican@ and Mable summer productions.

Lab Theatre

The small, intimate basement theatre utilized for student driven projects.

Dance Studio (D452)

The small, intimate performance space utilized for dance capstones.

Box Office

Oversees all publicity/house management duties, including ticket sales, program and poster disbursement, and publicity events.

Rehearsal Spaces

An additional space used for rehearsal in some cases when the venues are booked.

M404

A smaller version of the Dance Studio, used for intimate rehearsals outside of mainstage productions.

Shops

All shops operate on an afternoon, weekly basis, contain student workers and individual shop managers.

Scene Shop

Supervisor: Tim Green

Oversee the build and teardown of sets and props.

Costume Shop

Supervisor: Nicole Read

Oversee the build and teardown of costumes.

Lighting and Sound Shop

Supervisor: Hideaki Tsutsui

Oversee all lighting, sound, and projection duties.

Part 2: Knowing Our Policies

There are a few policies set in stone for stage managers to follow, among them being office use, rehearsal space maintenance, and emergency procedures.

Office Use

The office is somewhat open to stage management, so long as it's space is respected and appreciation is given to Maria and her staff.

Paperwork

Stage managers may use the office copier for show-related paperwork, per Maria's approval. When using the copier, be sure to replace paper once you've finished your duties, clean up the space, and thank Maria on the way out.

Keys

In some cases, stage management might need to gain access to the office and retrieve the master key. Once the key has been checked out, it is up to the stage manager to keep constant eyes on the keys location. If used for rehearsals, stage management should report its whereabouts and return in the rehearsal report. Stage Management keys can be signed out via Carolyn. If lost, they cost \$50.00 per key to replace.

Theatre/Facility Guidelines

The theatre is yours when you are on a show. It is important for you to own the space, treat it like your home, and keep it neat and tidy. Feel free to sweep the space daily to ensure nothing will get in the way of rehearsals/runs. Keep its maintenance documented in your reports and include all space maintenance notes in your rehearsal rules.

Backstage

Keep backstage organized, clean, and (in case of rehearsals and performances) quiet. Be mindful of trash and disposable water bottles backstage. When in production, the SM team will organize backstage in a manner that suits the show in accordance to your ASMs organizational styles.

In House

There should be no food or drink allowed in the house. Only bottled water is accepted. If you see any member of production break this rule, kindly note it the first time, then enforce it all times after. Voms are sometimes utilized during break for food consumption. This is fine so long as no mess is left. It is important that you follow this rule as well, leading by example. Apart from that, clean up all trash/mess leftover at the end of every rehearsal before locking up.

Locking Up

Locking up the space nightly entails turning off all lights, putting out a ghost light, and ensuring that the following exits are locked before exiting: House Right and House Left Doors, Costume Shop Door, Stage Right and Stage Left doors, Vom Right and Vom Left Doors. During the production, you'll be given a set of keys that allow you to lock and unlock these doors when necessary. It is imperative that you keep track of these keys, lest they be taken away from the department.

Emergencies

Initial protocol: First thing's first: NEVER PLAY DOCTOR. When injury occurs, ascertain the severity of the injury. *Can the show go on? If so... Do we need to hold? If so... **get the house manager involved and decide how to deal with audience.*** If there is any doubt, follow emergency procedure. When there's an emergency, first contact campus police (915) 747-5611, then call 911 if the emergency is dire enough. The Stage Manager is to remain at the scene of the incident, use an ASM and House Management to assist them in documenting the incident.

First Aid Kits/Minor Injuries: Each space should have a standard first aid kit. During the first rehearsal, be sure to ascertain the location/stock of an emergency kit. These will cover minor scrapes and cuts only. Whenever stage management has utilized something from the first aid kit, it is imperative they document the procedure/items used in the rehearsal/performance report.

If a serious injury occurs during a performance that will render the show unable to continue, inform the crew to suspend all stage elements, bring the house lights to full, and make an announcement similar to this: "We have experienced a technical difficulty backstage. Please remain in your seats. Thank you." The house manager needs to stay outside to help with audience. If the incident happens onstage, the house manager needs to deal with the audience while stage management oversees the incident.

In all cases, if there's a faculty member present in the building, GET THEM.

In the event of a fire alarm, stage management is responsible for actors and crew, while house managers are responsible for audience. The ASMs can be used to help both parties.

Plans and Protocol

For additional emergency resources, the following information has been obtained per UTEP's Emergency Protocol and Planning Handbook and UTEP's Action Guide

Fire and Evacuation

In the Event of a Fire: Pull the Fire Alarm and Call 911

If you see smoke or flames: Use CARE:

- **Contain** the fire by closing all doors as you leave
- **Activate** the nearest Fire Alarm pull station (Pull stations are located near all building exits)
- **Report** the fire by dialing 911
- **Evacuate** or extinguish (In most cases, it is best to Evacuate)

Use a **Fire Extinguisher** only if:

- You have been trained
- You have your back to an unobstructed exit
- You have a fully charged and proper type unit for the fire you are fighting
- The fire is contained, and you have reported the fire by **Fire Alarm** or **911** activation
- Everyone else has left the area
- There is little smoke or flames

Never fight a fire if:

- You lack a safe way to escape should your efforts fail
- It has left its source of origin
- You are unsure of the type of extinguisher you need or have

Building Evacuation: You should familiarize yourself with the evacuation routes posted in all campus buildings. If an evacuation order is issued for your building, or if it were necessary to evacuate due to an emergency, fully cooperate with Safety and Security/emergency personnel and:

- Take only keys, wallets and essential belongings with you
- If possible wear weather appropriate clothing
- If you are the last one to exit your room close, and lock doors
- Leave the building immediately
- Do not investigate the source of the emergency
- Walk, don't run, to the nearest exit
- Use stairs, not elevators
- Assist people with special needs
- If there is no immediate danger, persons with disability/mobility limitations should shelter in place and call Campus Police at 915-747-5611 to report location and number of people needing assistance
- If there is imminent danger and evacuation cannot be delayed, the person with a disability should be carried or helped from the building in the best and fastest manner (the person with the disability is the best authority as to how to be moved out of the building)
- If you are unable to evacuate, call Campus Police at 915-747-5611 and report your location
- As you make your way out, encourage those you encounter to exit as well
- Follow instructions of the Campus Police or other identified emergency personnel
- Wait for instructions before returning to your building after an evacuation

Medical Emergency

If someone is injured or becomes severely ill:

- Stay Calm
- Dial **911** and explain the type of emergency, the location, condition, and number of victims
- Let the dispatcher know of any safety hazards - chemical spill, fire, fumes, etc.
- Do not hang up unless told to do so by the dispatcher
- Do not move the victim unless there is danger of further injury if s/he is not moved
- Render first-aid or CPR only if you have been trained
- Do not leave the injured person except to summon help
- Comfort the victim until emergency medical services arrive
- Have someone stand outside the building to flag down the ambulance and/or Campus Police when they reach the vicinity

Utility Failure and Natural Disasters

Utility Failures: These may include electrical outages, plumbing failure/flooding, gas leaks, steam line breaks, ventilation problems, elevator failures, etc. UTEP's Facilities Services has procedures and personnel to deal with utility failures. For your personal safety, in the event of a utility failure:

- Remain calm
- Immediately notify Campus Police at 915-747-5611
- If the building must be evacuated, follow the instructions on [Building Evacuation](#)
- Unplug all electrical equipment (including computers) and turn off light switches
- Use a flashlight: Do not light candles or use other kinds of flames for lighting

Floods: Minor or area flooding on campus could occur as a result of a water main break, loss of power to sump pumps, or major multiple rainstorms. Campus Police monitors the National Weather Service and other emergency advisory systems to stay abreast of weather and alert related conditions and will provide instructions should they be necessary. For imminent or actual flooding, and only if you can safely do so:

- Secure vital equipment, records, and other important documents
- If present in your area, report all hazardous materials (chemical, biological, and/or radioactive) to Campus Police at 915-747-5611 or to Environmental Health and Safety at 915-747-7124
- Move to higher, safer ground
- Shut off all electrical equipment
- If in a lab, secure all laboratory experiments
- Do not attempt to drive or walk through flooded areas
- Wait for further instructions on immediate action from Safety and Security
- If the building must be evacuated, follow the instructions on Building Evacuation
- Do not return to your building if you have been evacuated by flooding until you have been instructed to do so by Campus Police
- If you are assisting with flood cleanup, report immediately to Environmental Health and Safety any oil, chemical, or radioactive materials suspected of mixing with flood waters

Active Shooters

Active shooter situations are unpredictable and evolve **quickly**. Typically, the immediate deployment of law enforcement is required to stop the shooting and mitigate harm to victims. An individual must use his/her own discretion during an active shooter event as to whether you choose to run to safety or remain in place. However, best practices for surviving an active shooter event are listed below. If an Active Shooter is reported on the campus, CALL 911 (Police, Fire & Ambulance) immediately when it is safe to do so.

Survival Awareness and Preparation: Take time to understand your surroundings and environment before an emergency occurs. Ask yourself, “What if?” questions and develop a plan. Make a decision, trusting your instincts, to take action to protect yourself to survive the situation.

- **Get Out:** Can I safely escape?
- **Call Out:** Is it safe to call 911? (Police, Fire & Ambulance)
- **Hide Out:** Is there a good place to hide?
- **Spread Out:** Do we have a plan in place?
- **Take Out:** Will you take out the shooter?

Get Out: If you can and you deem it safe, get out and get to a safe place. You will have to rely partially on instinct. Leave belongings behind, take your cell phone with you. Do not allow others to enter the building or facility.

Call Out: Call 911 (Police, Fire & Ambulance) when it is safe to do so. Don't assume someone else has called 911 (Police, Fire & Ambulance).

Hide Out: Find a place to hide and block/ barricade the door. Remain quiet and silence your cell phone or pager.

Spread Out: Remain calm and keep others focused on survival. Do not huddle together. Quickly develop a plan of action in the event the shooter enters.

Take Out: As a last resort, and only when your life is in imminent danger, attempt to incapacitate the shooter by throwing items (backpacks, books, etc.), or act as a team, make a plan, and all must be committed.

Protecting Yourself- Secure Immediate Area: Find a room that locks if you can. If possible, close and lock the outside door to the room. Block the door with furniture or other heavy objects. Close the blinds, turn off the lights, remain quiet, silence cell phones, spread out away from other individuals, and move behind available cover. Stay away from doors or windows, and do not peek out to see what may be happening. Make a plan with others in the room about what you will do if the shooter enters. Do whatever is necessary to survive the situation. Find protection behind furniture if possible. If possible and safe to do so, report the location of the assailant. Develop a plan, make a total commitment to action and act as a team with others.

If Inside When Shooting Occurs: Lock and barricade the door. Do not stand by doors or windows. Do not peek or raise your head in an effort to see what may be happening. Spread out and take cover. Wait and listen for directions from the police.

If The Active Shooter Is Nearby: Lock and barricade the door. Turn off the lights. Silence your cell phone or pager. Hide behind large items (i.e., cabinets, desks). Quickly develop a plan, act as a team and all must be committed. Remain calm and keep others focused on survival Information to provide to law enforcement or 911 Operator. If safe to do so, call 911. Do not assume that someone else has reported the incident. Be persistent; phones may be jammed. Calmly identify yourself and give your location (building name and room number, floor number, etc.) Remain calm and answer the police dispatcher's questions. Location of the active shooter. Number of shooter(s) if more than one. Physical description of the shooter(s). Number and type of weapons held by the shooter(s).

Students, Faculty, & Staff: If gunshots are heard within a campus building, close and lock or barricade the room doors and turn off the lights. Stay calm inside a safe area. Stay in the locked/barricaded room until informed by the Police that it is safe to come out of the area.

When Police Arrive: Remain calm and follow the officer's instructions. Put down any items in your hands (i.e., bags, backpacks, jackets, etc.). Immediately raise your hands and spread your fingers. Do not run at them or make sudden movements. The priority of the first responders will be to identify the shooter. Do not scream, yell, point, or wave your arms. Do not hold anything in your hands that could be mistaken for a weapon. When it is safe to do so, you will be given instructions as to how to safely exit your location.

Actions After Reports of Shots Fired: Initiate LOCKDOWN procedures. If safe to do so, Call 911. If outside on the campus grounds, find cover to protect yourself. Do not stop, RUN and keep in motion and away from the area. Move quickly to the nearest shelter (building).

Working with Minors

Department shows will sometimes require working with children under 18 years of age – *Christmas Carol* included. When working with minors, there are a few policies to keep in mind.

Child Wrangler: All shows with minors MUST have a child wrangler. The duties of the child wrangler are to keep watch over the children throughout the production, be familiar with each child's emergency contact info in the event that a parent needs to be called, and sign-in and sign-out the children only AFTER their parent/guardian has picked them up. A Child Wrangler exists to ensure the safety of minors in a production. In many cases, stage management students have assumed this role, however, this is not policy. If a cast is comprised of both male and female children, consider having two child wranglers who can then be present in the dressing rooms.

Release Forms: Children have their own release forms that need to be signed by their guardian/parent before they are integrated into the rehearsal space. Said forms are available upon request via Carolyn.

Compliance and Background Checks: Every single crew person who comes in contact with a minor on a show will have to complete this. You must compile a list of every crew/cast member and send it to Carolyn, who will give you further information on this.

Part 3: Knowing Your Team

There are many people involved with a production, with each having a specific job description/set of duties. Here is a basic rundown.

Stage Manager

That's you! While there are many things a stage manager does, all their job duties stem from a meticulous sense of detail-oriented organization. The Backstage Guide to Stage Management provides a definition that near perfectly captures the essence our job:

“Stage Managers are responsible and adaptable commutators who have the ability to handle and coordinate diverse groups of artistic personalities with **tactful discipline** and a **sense of humor**. They establish a creative environment by combining the ability to prioritize and anticipate and solve problems, with **calm sensitivity** and **grace under pressure**. Their ability to do the above stems from organizational ability, acquired technical knowledge, familiarity with union requirements, and an **inspirational personality** that creates **positive energy**.”

Director/Choreographer

The captain of the ship. The director/choreographer controls the artistic direction for a production, the casting process, and the overall rehearsal structure. A stage manager's collaboration with the director solidifies the production's process!

Cast

Actors or dancers assigned to a production. A stage manager's relationship with cast members is critical to a smooth rehearsal. A stage manager needs to establish respect from the cast while also remaining on friendly terms to keep moral positive.

Designers

The backbones of all technical elements of the show. Designers and the stage manager's relationship depends on the stage manager's ability to absorb all design requirements and translate, document, and eventually apply them to the production.

Scenery

The scenic designer and the stage manager work together through establishing a clear performance space. The scenic designer's ground plan will need to be taped/spiked and utilized for blocking whereas scenic transitions become the responsibility of the technical director with aid from the Assistant Stage Manager during performances.

Lighting

The lighting designer and the stage manager work together mostly in the technical process. Beforehand, the stage manager will assist the light designer by clarifying all questions regarding blocking, whereas the lighting designer will provide a detailed cue list and clarify cue times during the technical process.

Sound

Much like lighting, sound works with stage management far more in the later parts of the process. That being said, in some cases, sound might be brought in earlier in the rehearsal process should elements such as sound cues, practical scoring, etc. be needed to complete blocking. Stage management has their own rehearsal speaker stored in the booth.

Projections

Projections and the stage manager work together from the beginning. The stage manager needs to keep the director conscious of projection elements throughout the blocking portion of rehearsals, whereas projections need to provide a detailed set of projections cues during the tech process.

In many cases, Projections, Lighting, and Sound work with the stage manager at once given the fact that they are all monitored by one advisor in our department. That being said, each element is unique and needs to be treated individually.

Costuming

Costuming and the stage manager work closely from day one, with the stage manager being go between for actors and costumers. A stage manager needs to schedule fittings/measurements, keep an updated dramatis personae for costumes, and assist them with noting quick-changes via their Actor/Scene breakdown.

Hair & Makeup

In our department, hair and makeup is often an extension of costumes. In few cases, such as blood rigs, hair and makeup will require their own specific duties from the stage manager.

Props

Props and stage management work closely early on, with both clarifying props usage and storage. Once the props master has provided stage management with rehearsal/performance props, it is up to the stage manager to maintain its well-being.

Publicity & House Management

There are several people to bear in mind when considering publicity and house management.

Adriana

Adriana Dominguez is head of box office, director of audience development, the current director of theatre, and a whole bunch of other stuff. It is imperative to keep her due dates and requests in mind. She is excessively busy and needs Stage Management to fulfill their duties for her on time and as thoroughly as possible. This is especially true in keeping a calendar with due dates for bios, programs, comp sheets, publicity information, headshots, and interviews. Keeping in consistent contact with Adriana is very beneficial to the success of a production.

Box Office Staff

Adriana's box office staff will often be charged with duties such as building the program, supplying posters, and redeeming comp sheets. It is important for stage managers to establish a healthy relationship with these individuals in order to ensure all duties for publicity are enacted properly.

House Managers & Ushers

House managers and ushers ensure the stability of in-house patrons. Keeping in contact with them during production ensures the smooth run of a show and the service-satisfaction of our patrons. More information on dealing with house managers is detailed in Part 4.

Crews

Crews report to you, the technical director, master electrician, and your assistant stage managers. That being said, once the show is up, you'll be taking the lead for all crew members. It is imperative that you utilize crew members in an organized, methodical approach.

Run Crew

The stage hands in charge of scene transitions and set upkeep.

Wardrobe Crew

The crew in charge of dressing the cast, applying makeup, helping with quick-changes, and doing laundry.

Board Ops and Follow Spot Operators

Those in the booth or on the catwalks in charge of following the stage managers cues. Board Ops include Lighting, Projections, and Sound.

Part 4: Putting it All Together

Now that you have been familiarized with our faculty, policies, and your team, let's take a look at the production process.

Pre-Production

Meeting with Your Stage Management Team

It is imperative to meet with your stage management team prior to anything else in the production. During this meeting you will establish the chain of communication between all of you, note any potential schedule conflicts, allow them to voice their pre-production concerns and ask you questions, and establish rehearsal and production meeting duties. This meeting will help solidify you as a team before production.

Meeting with Your Director/Choreographer(s):

First thing's first: READ THE PLAY. This is an initial planning and discussion meeting consisting of what the director expects of the Stage Manager. It is also a chance to ascertain early production problems for which you can plan ahead. The best way to guarantee a successful first meeting is to come equipped with lots of questions. *The Backstage Guide to Stage Management* has a list of questions that come in handy for this. Here are a few pertinent ones for our department:

- When does the director want the first production meeting?
- When does the director want auditions?
- How soon does the director expect to start blocking?
- Does the director want you to call places and formally begin each rehearsal and scene?
- What rehearsal props and furniture does the director need, and at what point?
- Does the director want blocking noted from the outset or will there be a period of improvisation, or organic blocking?
- Does the director wish you to call a reminder ten or fifteen minutes before a scheduled break?
- What policy would the director like to establish regarding visitors at rehearsals?
- How would the director like to structure the basic rehearsal schedule and how should you break up the script—by scene, page number, act? (You'll eventually devise an actors' scene breakdown detailing, the acts and scenes, and which actors appear in them.)
- When does the director expect actors to be off-book?
- Would the director like to establish guidelines for prompting actors with their lines?
- How much does the director want you to prod them and stick to the scheduled work for the day? (This is a delicate and very important point that should be agreed upon in advance, because there should be no sign of quarrel or disagreement between the director and stage manager in front of the cast.)
- Establish a time when the two of you can talk privately outside of rehearsals, so you can continue working on the same page.
- Politely make it clear that the director needs to send any actors with scheduling problems to you even if they have gotten permission from the director.

Note: When meeting with Choreographers – especially in the case of capstones, be sure to ask for their concept statements (written for designers’ purposes).

Pre-Production Paperwork

Script Alterations: Go over and mark any known alterations or additions with the director in order to arrive at a script which is accurate enough to become the basis for a prompt book. This might not always be able to happen entirely in pre-production, but it’s a good thing to go over nonetheless so that you are at liberty to complete other paperwork needed from the text.

Production Calendar(s): Establish a firm first day of rehearsal if the current one set won’t suffice. After that, be sure to list all rehearsal, performances, production meetings, publicity events, hang for lights, tech schedules, etc. From there, consider establishing a set of two additional calendars: one with only information pertaining to actors, the other with only information pertaining your production team.

Script Analysis: A script analysis is essential for production as it allows you to foresee many production issues before your first production meeting. When establishing a script analysis, analyze the script for technical elements (scenery, props, costumes, lights, sounds, special effects and other requirements). Read the script **several times** and develop a master list which contains all of the technical elements.

Character/Scene Breakdown: This document notes when an actor is on/off stage during the entire production. While much of the document will be affected by blocking, it is good to have a solid first draft of the document before rehearsal to help prepare you for blocking.

Initial Props List: This document notes all props called for based on the text. It will be updated and revised as the production develops and will eventually used for you to base your props tracking list.

Email Set-Up

There is no official way to go about creating your show email. Some stage managers prefer to use their professional email, others prefer to create one specifically for the show. In either case, it’s important to remain consistent in your emails and ensure that your ASMs either have access to the show’s email, and that they’re CC’d on everything you send regarding stage management work. If creating a show email, be sure to include the title (or an approximation thereof) in the address itself.

Auditions

Pre-Auditions

Audition Notice: Post Audition notices and sign-up sheets for auditions. Be sure to include:

- Name of play
- Author
- Director
- Dates, Times, and Place of Auditions
- What actors need to prepare for audition
- Other pertinent information (nudity, adult language, special skills needed)

In several cases, this document might have been completed prior to your involvement. If it has not been completed, be sure to work with the director when building it.

Audition Forms: Prepare forms for the audition with the director's particular needs in mind. Every audition form is different from the last, so do be sure to ascertain what will be needed for each production's auditions BEFORE you draft your own form. **Be sure to include a section in which actors may list their schedules.**

Information Sheet: Prepare this document with a complete list of characters, general synopsis of the play, rehearsal and performance times, and any specifics noted by the director. This document should not be longer than one page.

Release Forms: Photo release forms as well as forms pertaining to minor involvement in productions (such as Christmas Carol) need to be prepared for the show. The department has official standard forms that are available upon request from Carolyn.

Execution

Prior Meetings: Be sure to meet with your director before auditions are held to find out how they wish auditions to be handled.

Set Up: Arrive one hour ahead of starting time, arrange chairs for actors waiting to read, arrange table for picking up audition forms, arrange table/chairs for director and provide any items the director may request, turn on all lights needed, see that main doors are unlocked and that signs are posted with indicate the location of auditions. The SM table can be found in the house left Ross Pod.

During: During the auditions, perform any jobs that the director may request (taking notes, calling names, collecting forms, reading a part, etc.).

Closing: After auditions, return the area to its normal condition, put out the "ghost-light" if necessary, turn off all other lights, lock all doors, put up a sign indicating the next audition or callback date/time/location on the call board and check in with the director. Put table away.

Callbacks

Type and post (if the director requests) the callback list. Be sure to be polite and thank everyone who auditioned. Callback requirements are similar to that of auditions. Be sure to speak with your director regarding callback requirements so that you may prepare any sides or additional scripts for callbacks.

Production Meetings

Set Up

Be sure to create a meeting agenda at least three days prior to the meeting. Production meeting time is predetermined by Carolyn before the beginning of the semester. They always take place in the basement lab. Many times, the room might have discarded paper/additional material. Be sure to clear the table of anything extra so that there's a solid surface to work with. Apart from that, arrive at least 15 minutes early to set up, plug in your computer (if necessary) and arrange the chairs. Print out enough agenda so that every person present at the meeting can have one.

Execution

Follow the agenda. Conduct the meeting in a calm and organized manner. Take thorough notes, have your ASM take notes, and compare them after the meeting. Many times, the meeting will get off track in the middle of conversations. It is your job to get back on track. Be sure that each department has voiced all their questions/concerns before moving on. Don't be afraid to ask questions/ have designers/director clarify a note they've just mentioned. Be sure not to interrupt. If you keep on schedule, allow everyone a chance to speak, and keep good notes, you'll be fine.

Rehearsals

The First Rehearsal

At UTEP most of our first rehearsals are our first read-throughs. Here are some tips and guidelines for you to follow in order to have a successful run.

Preparation: The following should be done before first rehearsal:

- Prepare and make copies of the rehearsal schedule. Copy sufficient numbers for the entire production team and actors. You may wish to have several extra copies in case someone loses their copy. Post one on the show's callboard.
- Ensure that you've gone over the department's rehearsal rules document.
- Prepare and copy the Actors Contact Sheets: Using the actors audition sheets, prepare a contact sheet for all the actors. The contact sheet should include: Actor's name, character name, phone number, email address, and emergency contact. Other contact information that can be gathered: cell phone number, work phone number, pager number.
- Prepare release forms, available from Adriana when requested.
- Invite the designers and publicity team to the first rehearsal.
- In the event that actors have not picked up scripts from the office, prepare copies of the script. Be sure to have enough for all cast and crew present.
- Place the rehearsal schedule, rehearsal rules, release forms, and a copy of the script into a folder (packet). Have enough packets to give to all actors and crew present.
- Ask the director how they want the rehearsal space set up.
- Be sure to check out the specific rehearsal room with Maria.
- Draft a schedule sheet for the actors to fill out (EVEN IF THEY FILLED OUT ONE DURING AUDITIONS)

Execution: Arrive at least thirty minutes before the rehearsal call time. Bring the packets you will distribute, sharp pencils, scratch paper, and erasers for the table. Prepare the space according to the director's instructions and assure that the following general actions are taken:

- Unlock rehearsal room/theatre doors (if locked).
- Turn on lights and turn off "ghost light" (put it out of the way) if necessary.
- Double check the floor area for any obstacles or dirt.
- Set up a table (or more, depending on the cast size) and sufficient chairs.
- Check in all actors on call and phone-call those who don't show by five minutes before rehearsal.

When it is time for rehearsal to begin, it is up to you to start. Your introduction should look something like this:

- Warmly welcome everyone and introduce yourself and the Assistant Stage Manager(s).
- Remind all actors that they are not to leave without checking out with either the Stage Manager or ASM.
- Hand out the packets.
- Introduce the director, assistant director, designers, or whoever needs to be introduced.
- Turn the rehearsal over to the director.

After the First Rehearsal: Prepare the Master Contact Sheet. Be sure to include the contact information for all of the actors and the production staff.

Scheduling

After the first rehearsal, the stage manager should consult the director and establish a plan of attack for the next week's rehearsal. From there, the two can pin down specific times during each rehearsal and draft two documents. Both schedules are not set in stone. In a perfect world they won't change, and rehearsal will go entirely according to the schedule. However, this doesn't always happen.

Weekly Schedules: Detail who's called each day and the general plan for the days rehearsal.

Daily Schedules: Detail specific call times for each day as well as scheduled breaks.

Ensure the production team has access to these schedules in the event they want to attend rehearsal.

Table Work

Table work is a process very similar to the first read-through, only with a more refined, specific focus. For stage managers, the table work process is a great time to become even more familiar with the obligations of the text. The set-up is the same as before, unless otherwise specified by the director.

Blocking

Blocking is the process when the director positions and details the actors' movement across the stage. It is essential to take note of actors' blocking for tech purposes (i.e. lighting cues, props tracking, etc.) This does not apply to dance; however, the stage manager needs to be familiar with the piece regardless.

The Blocking Page: Simplify and reduce the ground plan for the director to use in blocking the actors. This mini-Ground plan should be small enough to fit twice on a vertical 3 ½" by 11" sheet of paper, one copy occupying the top half of the piece of paper and one copy occupying the bottom half. Duplicate enough of these double-decker mini-plans to accompany each page of text in the script. Then duplicate even more, just to be safe. You will need different double-decker plans for each different ground plan. On the other side, have enough space to dictate blocking notes for each page of the text. Some people prefer lines, while others prefer straight boxes. It is up to you!

The Blocking Process: Blocking is one of the most difficult moments of the rehearsal process. Be sure to come prepared with more than one pencil, a good eraser, and a light hand. Take notes quickly, thoroughly, and legibly. Use short-hand that is understandable. In some cases, you might be able to take blocking notes digitally.

Line Notes

Line notes are dictated once the “off-book” date has been set. Line notes are usually taken by an ASM and note paraphrasing, jumped lines, missed lines, etc. ASMs should use a special line note script. They stay on-book and notate errors. When the error becomes repetitive, the ASM gives the note either on paper or verbally.

Rehearsal Reports

Rehearsal reports note any and all pertinent information from rehearsal in a concise, organized manner. They need to be sent out no later than 9:00am the morning after rehearsal. When emailing, consider pasting the rehearsal report in the text of the email as well as attaching a PDF. Finally, *rehearsal reports are sent to the production team/advisors and not the cast.*

Safety

Be sure that the rehearsal space is safe every day before rehearsal. Be sure to sweep the floor and pick up or note any hazardous objects, such as screws and wood. There are emergency kits located around each rehearsal space. For emergency protocol, refer back to Part 2’s “Emergencies” section.

Fight Call

Productions with any violent elements need to have scheduled fight calls before each rehearsal to ensure the safety of the scenes with violence. Setting up these scenes usually includes laying down mats for actors’ safety and running the scene at half speed initially. Mats can be found behind the masking on the offstage left wall. Be sure to clean them before use.

Dance Rehearsals

Dance rehearsals are very different than play rehearsals. Based on the rehearsal schedule for our dance department, stage management does not attend the bulk of dance rehearsals. During auditions, be sure to speak with the choreographer about delegating one of their students as a production assistant so that they have someone to take notes and run sound during regular rehearsals. Stage management won’t be needed until designer runs and, eventually evening rehearsals in the theatre. HOWEVER, SMs should check in once in a while. If we have a guest artist, SMs might want to attend as many rehearsals as possible seeing that the time period might be short.

Tech

Tech week, as you’ll come to know, is the stressful, challenging process of putting the entire show together. It is important to be vigilant throughout the process so that it goes as smoothly as possible. Stay focused, calm, and display a positive attitude. Everyone working on the show is under some form of duress during tech week as this is the very first time we’re putting all these elements together. You need to be the level head among the group to ensure everything gets done in a timely fashion.

Scheduling

First thing's first, talk to Carolyn about a potential schedule. Then, a few weeks before you go into tech, it is important to approve the tech schedule with your production team. Bringing it up at a production meeting can highlight some of the scheduling issues you had not foreseen as well as provide context as to how much time each department think an individual tech day might take.

Moving into the Space

Hang/Focus and Load In occur outside the SM department. However, in the case of dance, you move into the actual performance venue late in the rehearsal. Since dance rehearses in 452, they're not familiar with the space. Roughly a week before tech, the production will move rehearsals from the afternoon to the evenings and hold spacing rehearsals.

Dress Parade

Though rare, every now and then, costumes will request a dress parade to occur before crew watch. This is mostly the case for period pieces, such as *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Crew Watch

Crew Watch is first stage of tech week. The process involves the performers running the entire show without stops before the crew. This is the only time for the run-crew to watch the show – so it is imperative that performers attend and that all crew personnel are present.

Paper Tech

Paper Tech typically occurs the day of dry-tech an hour or two before rehearsal, though sometimes there's a whole rehearsal committed to it. This is where you'll build your prompt book, writing in all cues, asking the designers for clarification if needed. The director is not required to attend paper-tech but can if you choose to invite them. NOTE: If a show has a lot of moving set pieces, paper tech will need to occur 24-48 hours before Dry Tech with the TD and Director both being present.

Dry Tech

Dry tech is a rehearsal without actors where the lighting, sound, and set designers run a cue-to-cue with the director noting potential issues. The process can vary in length depending on the technical elements of the show. It is customary for crew to serve as bodies onstage for designers at this time. Dance does not have a dry tech as they are crucial for lighting.

Tech with Actors

Tech with actors is usually very similar to dry tech, going cue-to-cue noting looks and transitions. Costumes have still yet to be added. Sometimes, this process is long, other times the process is short enough to welcome tech runs. Here are a few notes to keep in mind:

- Assemble all crews and heads and go over method of presetting and beginning the production, assign duties not already delegated by department head instructions, call for the preset for Act I, practice preset if there are no difficulties, and, finally, ready the stage to start the rehearsal
- Make a final check of the stage to determine if all is ready and call places for Act I. (Eventually this will be the duty of your ASM.)

Tech with Actors (cont'd):

- Begin the rehearsal and call technical cues per the instructions from the individual designers and/or technical director.
- Be prepared to stop the entire rehearsal at any moment and go back when required. Announce these stops loudly and clearly and indicate, by line, exactly where the action is to pick up.
- The Stage Manager's attention must be on the operation of the production from a technical point of view. Other matters, such as getting actors on stage for entrances, prompting, solving minor backstage dilemmas, etc., are assumed by the Assistant Stage Managers at this time.
- When a very complex or difficult cue or scene shift is to be attempted for the first time, it will probably need to be walked through in full light and carefully explained before the initial attempt. If set changes are a big deal (such as Christmas Carol) then there needs to be time scheduled specifically for this.
- When a cue or scene shift does not go correctly, IT MUST BE DONE AGAIN. It must be repeated and practiced until it runs smoothly. That is what a technical rehearsal is for.
- After the first tech rehearsal, consult with the director, designers, and technical director for notes, and distribute these notes after all departments are secured and cleanup has been checked. Follow standard lockup procedures.
- Before second tech, be sure to have drafted a check list for all crew.

Dress Rehearsals

Dress Rehearsals are the final product of the show before opening. Ideally, they'll run as smoothly as a performance. Here is a breakdown of the dress rehearsal process, as well as a few tips for a successful dress rehearsal.

- Quick changes will cause some pauses during first rehearsal. If quick changes are often in the production, consider a separate rehearsal to practice these elements.
- Verify with the director and the staff member in charge of makeup design as to exactly which dress rehearsals will be with makeup. Notify actors and put crew on call accordingly (sometimes the first dress rehearsal is without makeup).
- See that all actors are familiar with procedures for finding their costumes (right of hang tag), and post/distribute detailed call sheets which specify times for makeup/dressing, and GO. Since dress rehearsals will likely have some holds, it's a good idea to schedule them before the actual GO of the show.
- Have assistant Stage Manager(s) check attendance of all technicians and actors. Anyone not present by five minutes after the call must be called or gone after. By ten minutes after the call time, the Stage Manager must know the attendance status of all individuals.
- All crewmembers shall report to their department on arrival and begin pre-set work. The Stage Manager must verify that all operations are proceeding as required.
- When each department completes its pre-show work, they shall notify the Stage Manager.
- All departments shall be ready by 30 minutes before GO so that house can open.

Dress Rehearsals (cont'd):

- Call the 30-minute till house opens warning, followed by warnings in 10-minute increments. Announce that the stage is “closed” once house is “open.” From there, call 30, 20, 10, and 5 minutes until places. (Schedule your places call 2 minutes before GO.) Finally, call places and start the run. This process shall be repeated during performances.
- Run without stops (unless requested by the director, designer, or technical director); attempt to maintain performance conditions.
- Limit intermissions and scene changes to performance durations.
- Assistant Stage Manager(s) should administer cleanup and dismissal (after approval by the Stage Manager), and the Stage Manager should take care of lockup after the note session.
- Make sure that all personal valuables are returned, and that no costume or prop items are left after the note session.
- If any dress rehearsal is to have an invited audience, notify all crews and actors, and follow standard performance conditions. **INVITED DRESSES NEED TO BE DECIDED AT LEAST 2 WEEKS BEFORE AND APPROVED BY ADRIANA.**

First Dress

The first dress is the rough one. The SM remains in the rehearsal space (not in the booth). Quick-changes might result in a hold, costume pieces might slow the actors down, etc. During this time, it is important for you to maintain consistent communication with your ASM(s).

Second Dress

Second dress for our department usually runs much like first dress, but with less holds. In some cases, make-up might not be added until now. By now, the SM might be moved into the booth.

Final Dress

For many shows for our department, final dress has an invited audience. This means little-to-no holds. By now, the show should run in performance condition. The SM will call the show from the booth.

Photo Call

Photo call is utilized for designers to document their work.. Photo call typically takes place the afternoon of a Saturday performance and operates on a reverse cue-to-cue basis, ensuring the show is preset for that night. This isn't set in stone however. For example, during a production of *Christmas Carol*, photo call was scheduled after a double matinee as the date of the performance fell outside of the regular academic calendar. Set photo-call as you would set other elements on a production calendar: with deadlines for phot lists Call times vary based on the photo list. To create the photo list, contact designers and have them send a list of cues they wish to take photos of. Be sure that you set your photo-list due date at a minimum of 48 hours before the scheduled photo call so that you can make a master list.

Performances

Performances operate on a similar basis as dress rehearsal. However, there are a few additional factors to be taken into consideration:

- No cast or crewmembers are to be in the house, and technical staff are to be kept at a minimum (the technical staff will have to remain in the house through the last dress rehearsal but will not be present other than as patrons during regular paid performances).
- All technical equipment and materials must be removed from the auditorium area, and the appearance must be clean.
- GO is fixed and not subject to change due to actors or crews not being prepared. The only valid reason for delay is failure of the audience to be in their seats (a decision made by the house manager.)
- There are to be no stops, regardless of errors or problems with the exception of safety issues.
- Call times for performances are usually an hour before GO for technical crews (unless more time is needed for preparation by half-hour before GO), and an hour and a half for actors (unless more time is required for makeup). Call times may not be identical for all involved with the production and thus should be posted by departments when they differ. The Stage Manager should verify all times with the technical staff and should constantly re-check for possible changes. Do NOT keep running crew around when they are not needed; call them a little later if necessary.
- Crew members and actors must sign in and go immediately to their assigned areas to prepare for the production; complete check-out for missing individuals must be completed, all prep work must proceed on schedule, and must be constantly checked by the Assistant Stage Manager.
- Verify all pre-sets with scenery, sound, props, lighting, and costume departments and make a final check of the stage before issuing the 30-minute call and notifying the house manager that the house may open.
- Make a final stage check. Check with all crews by headset, contact the house manager to determine audience conditions and probable holds, etc.
- Give the 5-minute call. AFTER verifying that all personnel are ready, call places (usually 2 minutes before GO).
- When signal from house manager is received, start the play. From this point on, it's the Stage Manager's show and all decisions must come from them with NO other "chiefs" giving instructions which countermand the Stage Manager's directions.
- Take all scheduled intermission breaks, and see that anytime the house lights are dimmed up for the audience to move about standard intermission procedures are followed. See that intermission changes are completed. Warn all cast and crew at 10 minutes, 5 minutes, and then call places. Again, the House Manager will signal to the Stage Manager when the audience is in and ready; then start the next act.
- At the end of the curtain call, allow ample time for the audience to exit the house before turning on work lights. DO NOT LEAVE THE BOOTH until the audience has exited.
- After the work lights are up see that all departments finalize their post-show duties.

House Management is the line of communication between the patrons and the production. It is your responsibility to stay in touch so that productions can begin promptly. House will open after Stage Management has given the GO to the house manager. The SM will check in with the House Manager before starting the show, ensuring all patrons are in the space. At intermission, the SM gives the call times to the house manager, who'll survey the theatre in order to avoid holds.

Lighting and Sound have their own pre-show checklist similar to that of a deck chiefs. While not responsible, the Stage Manager should have a copy of the checklist on hand so that they can confirm when all items on the list have been finished.

Performance Reports are almost identical to rehearsal reports. Included in the performance report is when the production started, stopped, intermission, was any one late, and any notes for each department. Does something need to be repaired before then next performance, or does the production need more consumables? Performance reports should be distributed by 9:00 am the following morning.

Evening Performances

Evening performances typically start at 7:30 unless otherwise stated. Performances are usually on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. Wednesday performances will be added for Studio shows. Some Saturday performances will be canceled due to UTEP football.

Sunday Matinees

Sunday matinees start at 2:30. In many cases, a Sunday matinee will be the final show for a production.

Student Matinees

Student matinees are reserved for school-friendly productions. Studio shows seldom have student matinees, whereas most wise productions have student matinees. Student matinee's take place early in the morning, with GO being 9:30 or 10:00 am depending on the show.

Multiple Performance Days

In some production cases, such as that of *A Christmas Carol*, there might be two performances in one day. In these cases, Act 1 preset needs to be timed in order to fully assess the change-over.

Strike

Who goes where and does what?

The final requirement of all shows is strike, the process of removing all technical elements of a show. At our department, strike enlists the help of all performers (including dancers!). Be sure that all performers are out of costume when helping. In order to have a smooth strike, stage management will assign performers to specific departments. Crew members shall retain the department they reported to during the show unless one department needs more people.

Lighting & Sound

Will strike the boards, move lights/speakers into the space they're needed in, pick up cable, and disassemble booms.

Costumes

Will strike all make-up and costume elements from the dressing rooms and clean the dressing rooms.

Scenery and Props

Will strike props and all scenic elements. Depending on the show, this might include the set itself.

Stage Management

Will strike all necessary equipment utilized throughout the process (Callboards, binders, run sheets, signage, etc.) and assist all other departments in striking.

Front of House

Will strike any additional chairs, programs, and other box-office related stuff.

Safety

In order to have a safe strike, all those present need to have closed shoes and durable **pants**.

Final Moments with a Show

Sappy as it may sound, the stage manager should take a few moments at the end of a production and simply take it in. Stay in the space, look around, breath. This moment is the cathartic “we made it” feeling for many of us. It represents a bittersweet sense of accomplishment. It’s the last time the stage manager will be part of this particular production. Value it.

Capstones

Dance Capstones, senior dance performances that occur annually in the Spring in room 452, are a great spring board for new stage managers. They operate on a smaller scale than any other shows, provide a set of unique rehearsal rules in their own right, and require collaboration between the SM and the lighting supervisor.

The Lighting Supervisor:

The Lighting Supervisor (LS) oversees the selection of lighting designers (the show will have many), assists with programming, and in general acts as a guide for all designers in the process. The SM will assist the supervisor with communication between choreographers and designers.

Dance Showings:

In Capstones, there are no production meetings and there are no open rehearsals save for dance showings. Dance showings entail the choreographers performing their pieces for the lighting designers to take notes and plan their cues. Dancers must schedule a mandatory of three showings before tech. Within this time, choreographers are required to send piece descriptions to the SM, the LS, and the designers. They should also provide all their technical elements (music, props, etc. 452 has its own sound set) The SM is there for communication only!

Tech:

Capstone Tech operates on a similar basis to the regular dance tech. During tech, designers must turn in their cue sheets. There might be a limit of cues each designer is allowed as determined by the LS. If this is the case, be sure to check that the cues either meet the required number, or are set up as follow cues. Once you have all cue sheets, make a master cue sheet for you to follow along while calling the show.

Calling the Show:

Whoever calls the show must also act as bored op. In many cases, this falls entirely on the SM. However, designers are allowed to call their pieces, if their request is cleared by both the SM and the LS.

Student Projects

The department hosts a variety of student-driven projects throughout the year. In many cases, a student might walk up to you and ask for your help. While the experience is good, be sure to clear these assignments with Carolyn FIRST. When working on student projects, try to handle the production as you would any other – bearing in mind that the elements are far more minimalist (i.e. there might be no scene designer, minimal props, etc.)

Closing

Final advice from the author.

While all the information listed above can be quite intimidating on the onset of production, it all comes together so long as you time manage yourself, double and triple check your work, and ask lots and lots of questions. The time you'll spend at UTEP as a stage manager is an ever-evolving learning process that does allow for trial and error. Don't be afraid of entering production because you're worried about making a mistake. Mistakes happen. You'll learn from them and move on. In all cases, you can always ask Carolyn for advice. She's here for that. When in doubt, go to her office and let her guide you through an issue. Be sure to go into a production with a positive attitude, a strong work ethic, and a willingness to learn. You'll start small, learning from senior stage managers before getting your feet wet. However, you'll quickly learn the ropes and eventually be running your own production team. The points and tips listed above are a reference, not a law. Something you'll learn is that each stage manager is different. You'll pick up tips here and there which will eventually form your own style. We all operate our rehearsals differently, but still with a firm attention to detail and strong organization. We were all in your shoes once. We understand the difficulties of having all this information initially thrown at you. Don't worry. It's all actually quite fun. Now that you've entered our department, please take note of that final bit of advice. We're in theatre. We make plays. We play. While we take our jobs very seriously, the sense of magic should not leave you. By holding onto that sense.