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STAGE MANAGING FOR COLLEGE THEATRE

By

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A THESIS

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ABSTRACT

STAGE MANAGING FOR COLLEGE THEATRE

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Marijean Elizabeth Levering

Stage managers at the college and university level often begin with little knowledge of the job involved and do not know whom to ask for help. Available stage management manuals discuss professional—mostly union—theatre and do not address problems associated with educational theatre. This thesis sets down a comprehensive method of stage managing that addresses the concerns and appropriate procedures of working in theatre at the college or university level.

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1997

To my husband for his love, support and unending patience.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis would never be as coherent and comprehensive without the assistance of my graduate committee:

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Dr. Dixie Durr
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Special thanks to my many families, Edwards, Levering and Bachor, who understood that I would return phone calls in a month or so. And to my mother who always encouraged me to work as hard as I could, but also reminded me to stop and enjoy the world when possible.

Much love to Carrie who listened even when she did not understand.

Finally, many thanks to my husband, Wayne, who put up with me while I was doing this, and to my friends at Michigan State who had more faith in me than I ever did.

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Introduction

This book was written for the express purpose of helping the person with little or no stage management experience who is working on a college or university production. Stage managers at this level too often begin with little knowledge of the job involved and do not know whom to ask for help. Available stage management manuals address professional—mostly union—theatre and do not address problems associated with educational theatre. If some of the suggestions or tasks seem obvious or overly simplified to some readers, please understand that it is necessary to assume that a reader might have minimal understanding of the stage, so none of the diverse areas of stage management could be ignored as "too obvious." Although some of these methods are transferable to other areas of stage management, this book is not attempting to cover any other milieu.

In developing this particular system of stage management, the author drew upon five years of stage managing at Loyola University in Chicago and Michigan State University, the knowledge of other stage managers with whom she has worked and most of the stage management books available in English. It is hoped that this book will make a difficult job both rewarding and more manageable.

Marijean Elizabeth Levering
April 1, 1997

Chapter 1
The Role of the Stage Manager at the College and University Level

The role of the Stage Manager is difficult to define in any area of stage management whether at the level of the college or university or in the professional world. The stage manager is not a director, designer or actor, but must understand the roles of the people who work in each of these areas. In its most basic form, the stage manager's job is to do whatever it takes to make the show happen. This most often involves taking over the organizational work of the show, thus freeing up everyone else to concentrate on the creative aspects of their work. The stage manager is an organizer, problem solver, trouble shooter, counselor, disciplinarian and substitute mom or dad. Lawrence Stern puts it best when he says that, "regardless of specific duties, the stage manager is the individual who accepts the responsibility for the smooth running of rehearsals and performances, on stage and backstage" (4). And Francis Reid's idea of "providing shoulder(s) for director. (designers) and cast to cry on" is also very accurate (30).

The following is an abbreviated summary of the responsibilities of the Stage Manager:

Before Auditions: The Stage Manager meets with the director and discusses what the director needs for auditions and how rehearsals will run once the show has been

cast. Next, the Stage Manager creates and posts all show related information, including the audition announcements, makes copies of all audition materials and reserves all spaces needed for auditions and rehearsals.

During Auditions: The Stage Manager sets up the audition space and runs auditions. This involves handing out audition forms, passing out audition materials, answering questions about the show and sending the actors into the audition space when the directing staff is ready. Once the auditions are over, the Stage Manager will type and post the cast list.

Post Auditions, Pre-Rehearsal: In accordance with the director's and the show's needs, the Stage Manager pulls furniture and props for rehearsals, helps the director determine a rehearsal schedule, types the schedule, posts it, calls and runs all the production meetings (discussed in Chapter 4), types and copies any material for the show that needs to be posted or distributed and makes scripts available to the cast. At this time, the Stage Manager also begins creating the prompt book.

Rehearsals: The Stage Manager sets up the rehearsal space for all rehearsals. It is the Stage Manager's responsibility to call rehearsals to order, call breaks, telephone late people, arrange such appointments as costume fittings with the actors, take down any directoral notes relating to design matters, deliver these notes to the appropriate designer and step in for missing actors. During the rehearsal process, the Stage Manager is also responsible for taking down blocking and maintaining the prompt book.

Before Technical Rehearsals: The Stage Manager meets with the director, designers and technical director to determine the technical and dress rehearsal schedules and then meets with the lighting and sound designers to obtain the cues that will be called

during the running of the show.

Technical and Dress Rehearsals: The Stage Manager organizes all crew members, trains or make sure someone else is training them, makes sure they are performing their duties, calls all cues and records all cues accurately in the prompt book.

Performances: The Stage Manager runs each performance, calling cues and ensuring that the director's vision of the show is maintained.

In addition to these duties, and throughout this process, the stage manager is also a student, and must fulfill his or her obligations to the academic world. This includes maintaining a satisfactory grade point average, attending as many classes as possible, turning in all work in a timely fashion and guarding his or her health. Despite the large time commitment of a stage manager (35-40 hours a week), a student still wants to graduate on time.

The following are some general do's and don'ts of stage Management to help guide you in your future work:

1) DO ask a lot of questions until you are satisfied that you understand what is happening or what is required of you.

2) DO be early for everything.

3) DO keep the director and designers informed of anything that has the potential to affect their work.

4) DO take problems to the director or your advisor if you do not know how to solve them.

5) DO try to maintain a professional and friendly work environment.

6) DO keep your opinions about the show, the blocking and any other creative

aspect to yourself unless directly asked.

7) DO be flexible. Your job is one that is constantly changing.

8) DO get your homework done. You are a student!

9) DON'T blame anyone else for your mistakes on the job. Take responsibility for them and plan how you can fix them.

10) DON'T speak negatively about the show on which you are working or anyone involved with it.

11) DON'T gossip about the show or share privileged information about it even after it is over.

12) DON'T show anger, frustration, impatience or yell out of anger.

13) DON'T get involved with the politics of the show or department. Your first loyalty is to the show itself, so avoid choosing sides.

14) DON'T air problems or disputes in front of any group. Take the individual aside to discuss the situation.

15) DON'T do anything that could possibly undermine the director's authority. Even if he or she is doing something inappropriate, the situation can usually be fixed quietly and privately.

16) DON'T neglect your health. This is a stressful job and you need to stay well.

17) DO take pride in your job!

This list is not inclusive, but these are important rules that govern any show on which a stage manager works. Now that the stage manager's role has been discussed, let us take a quick glance at the roles of some of the other people involved. **Figure 1** is a simplified organization chart for a production done at the college or university level. Keep

in mind that not all of these positions are present on every production.

The **Director** provides the creative vision for the show and blocks the movements of the actors. The Director also makes the final decisions about design choices to keep the various complex elements of the show unified.

The **Assistant Director** takes notes, blocks small sections of the show, replaces missing actors and runs rehearsals when the director cannot be present.

The **Choreographer** determines all dance aspects of the show and teaches the choreography to the dancers.

The **Dance Captain** learns all choreography for the purposes of training replacements and understudies and maintaining the original choreography.

The **Musical Director** determines all musical elements, both instrumental and vocal. The Music Director usually conducts the orchestra.

The **Designers** create the costumes, lights, sets, props, sound or special effects.

The **Assistant Designers** help the designers in various ways including research, rendering, drafting, and creative input.

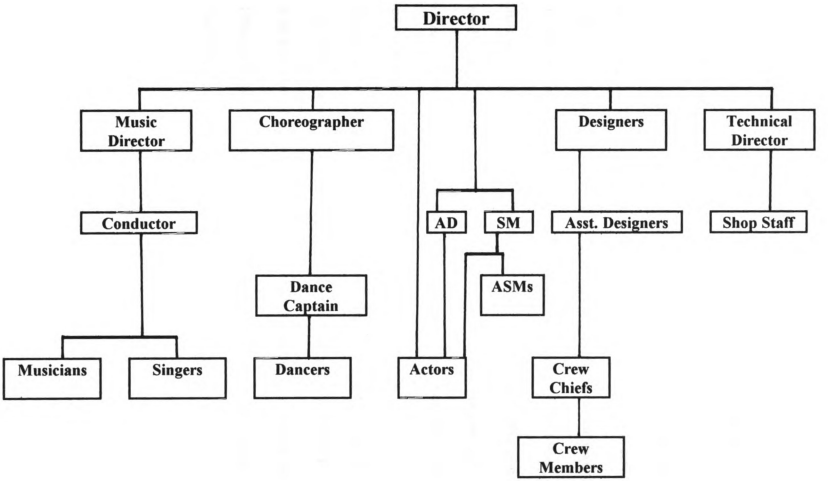
The **Assistant Stage Managers** share in most stage management tasks. During performances, they supervise all backstage work.

The **Actors, Singers** and **Dancers** are often one and the same at this level. They will perform the show.

The **Musicians** provide musical accompaniment, usually from an offstage area.

The **Crew Chiefs** help organize an individual crew such as costumes or set. The crew chief supervises his or her crew, is held responsible for all crew jobs and may allocate tasks to individual crew members.

Figure 1: Organization Chart



The **Crew Members** perform the technical jobs of the show such as moving sets or running a light board. They are at the bottom of the chart, but if it were not for them, the curtain would never open and the lights would never come up on Act I.

Particularly in the college setting, several of these jobs may be performed by a single person. Actors may also be crew chiefs or assistant designers while other crew chiefs may be the actual designers. One person is often both stage manager and assistant director. The director of the show may also be the choreographer or music director. For a student, doubling jobs is an excellent way to gain experience, but be careful that people do not volunteer for something when they will not have time to do it. At this level, any of these positions can be filled by students or faculty. When students are in these positions, you may need to help them learn what tasks are part of their job. Remember, college and university theatre is both a learning and a teaching experience. You must play your part as an educator in these situations.

This has been an overview of what the stage manager is expected to do. Now let us take an in depth look at what the stage manager does in each phase of the production process. Checklists have been provided at the end of each chapter. If a chapter discusses a phase of the production process that you have already covered, you may want to skim the checklist to make sure you have completed all the necessary tasks.

Chapter 2
The Pre-Audition Period:
What to Do When You Have Been Picked to Do a Show

Once you have been selected for or have accepted the position of stage manager on a show, you should immediately make an appointment to talk with the director. You may want to invite the director out for coffee. This is a nice gesture and the less formal space will help you relax if you are nervous. Wherever the meeting occurs, make sure you are at least five minutes early to this meeting. The director's impression of you starts from this moment. Wear something nice. You do not need to wear a suit, but something along the lines of "business casual" will do. At the very least, do not wear jeans. Come armed with a note pad, pencil and some questions. Have the questions written down so you do not have to worry about forgetting them.

The director may understand why you arranged this meeting or may ask you what you wanted to discuss. You asked for this meeting because you want to know a few things. How does the director like to work? Will the director block large sections of the show or will he or she work a few pages at a time, letting the actors determine the initial blocking? Does he or she like to include a lot of improvisation, physical exercises or acting games? What is the director's vision for the show or what does he or she think the show is trying to say? These are the more general questions that tell you in what direction

the director is taking the show and how it is going to get there.

Now ask the questions that apply more immediately to your position. What does the director need from you? Is there a script available for you at this time? If not, when? Ask any other questions about your position at this time.

The director will probably have a few questions for you such as what year you are in school, if theatre is your major and what you know about the play. You may also be asked why you want to work on this show or why you want to stage manage. Have an answer ready, but be honest. It is okay to say that you were interested in stage managing and this was the simplest show (small cast, one set) available. Maybe you love the author or the show. Maybe you respected the director's style and wanted a chance to work more closely with him or her on a show. Any of these answers help the director understand why you chose this show (or were chosen for it) and how committed you will be to your job.

If you have never stage managed before, say so, but you should also say that you are excited to be working on the show and with this particular director. Also, tell the director that if you are failing to do something or doing something incorrectly, he or she should tell you immediately so that you can correct the problem. You are learning and may not realize that something needs to be done. This lets the director know that you are serious and do want to do a good job. It will also cover your bases. If you did something out of ignorance, you can say that you did not know and that you trusted the director to inform you if you failed to perform your duties well. This means you must be open to correction and advice and take any admonishment without getting angry. If you do not agree with the director, it is okay to say so, but you must provide a sensible reason or better solution. The director must always believe that you are both approachable and

willing to adapt.

Your next questions deal with auditions. How does the director want to run them? When? Where? What time? Will there be a sign-up sheet with times or will all the actors show up at one time? What do the actors need to prepare? Prepared monologues or scenes will need to be made available to the actors (see Chapter 3). Do you need to find a way to make these materials available? For singing auditions, is it necessary that music from the show be available? If music from the show is not required, how many bars of music need to be prepared for the audition? Will the actors need to wear a particular kind of clothing or shoes? Does everyone need to attend an acting audition or can people just attend a dance or vocal audition? Will dance or vocal auditions be at separate times and will people be individually invited to these? Will there be a separate combat audition? What will be required for these? You may also need to consult the choreographer and music director about audition needs.

Now, move on to rehearsals. Is there a rehearsal schedule? Can the two of you set one if it does not already exist? Where will rehearsals be held? What times? How soon will you need to bring in rehearsal props? How soon will the actors need to have their lines memorized? At rehearsal, will you call breaks or will the director? How often? Does the director have a policy about open or closed rehearsals? Usually, visitors are allowed at an open rehearsal, but not at a closed rehearsal. If there are any delicate scenes in the play, such as a nude scene, how will these moments be dealt with in rehearsal? What does the director need most from you during the rehearsal period?

Lastly, give the director the numbers at which you can be reached and thank him or her for the chance to talk.

Next, meet with the technical director. Ask the technical director for a tour of the theatre(s) and storage spaces (such as prop storage or costume storage) that the department uses if you are unfamiliar with any of them. Ask the technical director what is expected of a stage manager in this department and where you should go to get supplies you will need, particularly a first aid kit, spike tape, gaffer's tape, flashlights and glow tape. These are all supplies most often provided by the technical director. When you are touring the theatre spaces, note bathrooms, exits, available drinking water and ask to be shown the location of all fire extinguishers and any other fire safety devices associated with the theatre. Find out where props can be stored in a secure place. Note how close dressing rooms, booths and bathrooms are located to the stage. This may affect quick changes or technical details later. Is there a sound monitor system that allows the green room and dressing rooms to hear the stage? How does it work?

While touring these spaces, start looking for potential problems. Inspect the space from which you will call the show. Are there sight line problems? Will you be able to see most or all of the stage from where you will be sitting? If not, can you move somewhere else? Can actors easily cross form one side of backstage to another? Are there structural parts to the stage that could be dangerous, such as steep steps, seams in the floor, sudden drops or low overhangs? Can these areas be glow-taped, roped off or padded? Ask the technical director what he or she likes and dislikes about the space. This will also alert you to potential problems. Ask the technical director where you can obtain keys to all the spaces in which you will work and as many storage spaces as possible. Often, you will be the only person present that will have keys when something breaks and needs to be repaired or replaced. This will save a lot of time in the long run. Pay close attention to

everything the technical director tells you because it is valuable information that will greatly affect your job. The technical director will also be a good source of stage management information if you have questions in the future.

Once you have talked to the technical director, arrange a meeting with the department chairperson to discuss emergency procedures. Where should people be taken in case of an emergency and who should be called to take them there, 911 or campus security? Who should go with them? You? Your assistant? The director? Who should be notified and how can you obtain their phone numbers? Are there any forms that need to be completed when an injury occurs, even if it is not serious? Where can you get copies of these forms? If you were not able to get some sort of first aid kit from the technical director, ask the chairperson about obtaining one. You need something small that will travel to the different spaces in which you will work, and Band-Aids alone are not enough. Minimum requirements include burn cream, antiseptic wipes, anti-bacterial/first-aid cream, gauze, medical tape and cold packs. Ask if you can give out over-the-counter medications such as aspirin or allergy medications. Some schools will not allow this, so make sure you ask. It is mostly a matter of liability, so do not be surprised if you are told not to give any kind of medication to your cast and crew.

Also, ask about obtaining office supplies and how you can get reimbursed for expenditures related to the show. If the technical director was unable to provide you with keys, ask the chairperson. Normally, stage managers are expected to open and lock rehearsal and performance spaces, storage cabinets and some equipment such as the light board. You also need keys to costume, set, prop, sound and electrics storage so that you can pull rehearsal props and furniture and to replace anything damaged during the show.

If the department is unwilling to lend out these keys, ask for the phone number of someone who lives close to the theatre who can come over in an emergency and let you into these spaces. To pull rehearsal props and furniture, the technical director can open the storage spaces for you. Last of all, ask what the chairperson expects of you. This will help you flesh out the parameters of the job. Thank the chairperson for his or her time before you leave.

Guard the keys you obtain with your life and be careful about making sure everything is locked when not being used. Do not lend the keys out to anyone other than student designers and do not abuse the privilege of having keys. This is not the time to outfit a costume party, furnish your apartment or borrow a prop for a scene on which you are working. If you want anything for yourself, ask the people in charge of those areas (technical director, costume shop supervisor or whoever is in charge). If they say no, respect their decision.

Next, meet with any designers and support staff such as the costume shop supervisor and department secretaries. Say hello to them, introduce yourself as the stage manager of the show on which you are working and give them your phone number(s) in case they have any questions for you or need to refer someone else to you. You are doing this to put a face to your name and to make yourself appear approachable. Get their office hours, phone numbers and any other information that will help you track them down when you need them. You will be in constant contact with these people, relaying messages and questions between them and the director and informing them of changes that affect their work. Ask them what they will need from you. They will appreciate being asked and you will have a better idea of what will be required of you.

Last of all, obtain a copy of the script. Read it with a notepad next to you. Start a rough **prop list**. A prop list records what props are used in the show, who handles them, and when. To start a prop list, note the prop, who handles it and the page on which it first appears. Keep a separate sheet on which you start a list of potential problems such as quick changes, dangerous props and effects. Also note special requirements such as costumes that need to be built to allow a large range of movement or allow for falls and tumbles. Furniture may also need to built to withstand the stress of being walked or jumped on. Write down all of these instances. During your first production meeting (discussed in Chapter 4), you can discuss these special requirements with the designers.

Once you have finished reading the script, go back and do a **character breakdown**. A character breakdown is a diagram of what character is involved in what scene (see **Figure 2**). If you are working with a play broken down into French Scenes, simply note the act, the scene and the characters involved. A "French Scene" begins when any character enters or leaves and ends with the same action. Thus, a French Scene could be quite short. In this case, directors will often rehearse using the French Scenes, i.e. "We will rehearse Act II scenes 4 and 5." If the play is not already broken into French Scenes, you may want to break the script down yourself. If you have a maid who constantly comes in and out to serve something to the same people, you may not want to start a new scene on her every entrance or exit. Character breakdowns become a quick reference for both you and the cast. When the director says that you will rehearse only Act III scene 2, you will be able to quickly tell the cast who is in it. Some shows do not lend themselves to French Scenes, particularly small shows. Judge each on a case by case basis.

Figure 2: Character Breakdown (*Macbeth*)

Macbeth Character Breakdown

I:i (The Heath) Witch 1 Witch 2 Witch 3 **I:ii (A Camp)** Duncan Malcolm Donalbain Lennox Attendants Captain **I:iii (The Heath)** Witch 1 Witch 2 Witch 3 Macbeth Banquo Ross Angus **I:iv (The Palace)** Duncan Lennox Malcolm Donalbain Attendants Macbeth Banquo Ross Angus	**Etc.**

Checklist: The Pre-Audition Period

You have

- ☐ Talked to the director to get show, rehearsal and audition information and information about what is expected from you
- ☐ Talked to the technical director about the touring the rehearsal, stage and storage spaces.
- ☐ Obtained keys to everything possible.
- ☐ Talked to the director about emergency procedures and what is expected of you.
- ☐ Obtained a first aid kit.
- ☐ Obtained a copy of the script.
- ☐ Created a list of possible problems and special requirements to be brought up at the first production meeting.
- ☐ Broken the script down into French Scenes if necessary.
- ☐ Created a character breakdown.

Chapter 3
Auditions

The first thing you need to do to get ready for auditions is to talk to the director (discussed in Chapter 2). Once you know the details about the auditions, you need to make certain arrangements. First of all, reserve the rooms required for auditions with the department secretary. When reserving these rooms, discuss a few things with the department secretary. If this audition is a dance audition, is the floor suitable for dancing? A dance floor is wood sometimes covered with a black mat-like surface. Concrete, linoleum, and stone are unacceptable surfaces because they can be both dangerous (slick) and lack proper spring, which can easily cause shin splints and damage to the dancer's joints. You may need to use a different room than the one originally requested by the director. If the department does not have an appropriate dance floor, the school gymnasium or sports center should have a dance room that can be reserved, but the department secretary will need to take care of these reservations as soon as possible.

Let the director know about the change and why it was done. If you are having a singing audition, ask the department secretary if a piano is present in the room. If there is no piano in the room, arrange with the technical director to have one moved into the space. Inquire when it was last tuned. You may need to arrange with the technical

director or department secretary to have the piano tuned before auditions. Also ask if a cassette player will be needed. If you need any platforms or large furniture for auditions, you can also ask the technical director to have these moved into the space. You can move any smaller furniture yourself. Once the audition spaces and furniture are cleared away, find a way to make scripts available.

Even if auditions will consist of **cold readings** (an unprepared reading from the script) or no materials are required from the script, make a few copies of the script available for people who are unfamiliar with the show. If there are prepared readings, you may want to make several copies of just those scenes to be available in addition to the full script. If songs from the show need to be learned, have copies of the sheet music available and possibly cassette tapes. If the department has its own library, have the librarians take care of lending out the scripts. If not, a department secretary can be asked to do this.

Once these arrangements have been made, you can create an **audition notice** and post it. Ask the department secretary where the **call board** is located and where audition notices need to be posted. The call board is a bulletin board on which all show information is posted. Make sure you give a copy of the notice to the department secretary. Audition notices need the name of the show, when and where the auditions will be held, what needs to be prepared and what needs to be worn. Near the bottom of the notice, tell people how to obtain audition materials and who to call for information. If there are any peculiar audition requirements for certain characters such as doing a nude scene or knowing how to juggle burning torches, put this information on the audition notice. If actors must sign up for particular times, post a sheet with times below your audition notice. **Figures 3 and 4** are two examples of possible audition announcements.

Figure 3: Audition Notice (Version 1)

ATTENTION!

Auditions for *Cats*

Singing auditions will take place on
Sept. 3 and 4
from 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
in Rm 324 Henslowe Building
(sign up below)
Please prepare 16 bars of a selection from the show.
A pianist will be provided.

group dance auditions will be held on
Sept. 4
from 6 p.m.-10 p.m.
in Rm 8 of the Phys Ed building
(no sign up necessary, arrive at 6 p.m.)
Wear leotards and tights or appropriate dance wear to the dance auditions.
Bring jazz shoes if you have them.

Scripts and musical scores can be obtained from the Theatre Department secretary in room 124 of the Henslowe Building.
Call Marijean at 555-1212 if you have any questions.

Figure 4: Audition Notice (Version 2)

ATTENTION!

Auditions for
Angels in America
Part I

Sept. 5-7
6 p.m.-10 p.m.
in the John Smith Theatre

Auditions will consist of cold readings from the show. Please sign up below for an audition time.

Anyone auditioning for the role of Prior must be aware that the role requires full frontal nudity. This will not be required at the audition.

Please wear business/office attire to the audition.
Scripts can be obtained from the Theatre Department secretary in Rm 124 of the Henslowe Building.
Call Marijean at 555-1212 if you have any questions.

Along with an audition announcement, you may want to include a sheet that has a synopsis of the play and a list of the characters with a brief description of each one.

Next, obtain or create **audition forms**. If the department has forms it typically uses, a department secretary will be able to get them to you. If not, create your own. All audition forms need the following information: name, age (important, particularly if someone is a minor), phone number, address, height, weight, eye color, hair color, what they are wearing that day, roles for which they are auditioning, roles they will accept, do they sing?, what is their range?, do they dance?, what forms?, previous training, previous roles or experience, special skills and a section at the bottom for notes. See **Figure 5**. Depending on department policy, you may need to have a question that asks whether or not the person auditioning is a theatre major, a currently enrolled student or faculty/staff. Some departments may choose to give leading roles only to majors. Other departments may only want students. Still others may have an open audition policy.

Have the director approve the form **before** you make copies. Once your audition form is approved, make enough copies for auditions. Ask your director if you are not sure how many you should make. Whatever number you are told, make ten extra. Next, get a dozen sharpened pencils with erasers (from the department, if possible). If the department does not have pencils, pens will do. If you are doing group dance auditions, get adhesive name tags or squares of white paper and a marker. You will be writing large numbers on these to help the directing staff identify people. If you are using the squares of paper, talk to the costume shop supervisor about getting pins. Safety pins are preferred, but straight pins will suffice. In addition to these materials, get a few paper clips, a small stapler and a box of Kleenex to have with you at auditions. Ask the director how he or she would like

Figure 5: Audition Form

Name:_____ **Height:**_____

Age:_____ **Weight:**_____

Phone Number(s):_____ **Eye Color:**_____

_____ **Hair Color:**_____

Address:_____

What are you wearing today?_____

Roles auditioning for:_____**Will you accept any?**____

Do you sing?_____ **What is your range?**_____

Do you dance?____**What type of dance?**_____

Do you have any conflicts on evenings (6 p.m.-11 p.m.) or all day on weekends?

_____

_____

What kind of training have you had that relates to theatre (acting, vocal, dance, etc.)?_____

_____

_____

_____

Previous Roles/Experience (pick examples indicative of your abilities):

_____

_____

_____

_____

Special Skills (i.e. gymnastics, juggling, fire-eating, etc.):

_____

_____

(please do not write below this line)

Notes:

the audition space arranged.

Finally, if assistants have been assigned to you or have volunteered, call them! You will need their help. Make arrangements with them to meet you on audition day. Remember, you will need them to show up early to help you set up. Actors start showing up roughly a half an hour before auditions. Thus, you will need to be there at least 45 minutes ahead of time so that you can be ready to greet them when they arrive. You can split the audition time between two assistants if you have them, but you will need to be there the entire time.

Before you go to the audition space, you will need to take down the audition sign-up sheet and make copies of it for everyone in charge of auditions. Keep the original for yourself. When you get there, you will need to organize a waiting area, whether this is a room, hallway or the green room. Have a table or a desk for yourself with a sign that says "Auditions for (name of show) Here!" Have the audition forms and pencils ready.

Mini-Checklist: Are you ready for auditions?

You have

- ☐ Talked to the director and checked on audition information.
- ☐ Reserved rooms.
- ☐ Arranged for a piano or other large set pieces.
- ☐ Created and posted audition notices.
- ☐ Created or obtained audition forms and made enough copies of them.
- ☐ At least 12 pens or sharpened pencils.
- ☐ Made arrangements with your assistants.

When you arrive at the audition area, show your assistants how to set up the audition space and have them sweep the floor if possible. Clear all extraneous furniture from the audition area. If the director has given no specific instructions, leave a single chair nearby if the actors are auditioning singly or three chairs or a chair and a bench if two or more actors will appear at one time. The directing staff needs a long table facing the audition area. Make sure there are several feet between the table and the audition area (a distance of at least ten feet is recommended, but may not be possible). You may need to put a line of spike tape on the floor that the actors need to stand behind. This allows the director to get a sense of the stage presence of the actor. The closer an actor gets to the director's personal space, the more difficult it is for the director to make a judgment about the actor's abilities. Make sure all available lighting is used. A dim rehearsal space is counter-productive.

Once the audition space and waiting area are ready, make sure you know where the nearest drinking fountain, bathrooms and pay phones are located. If you are not sure, send an assistant to find these things. Now you are ready for the actors. You will spend the rest of auditions trying to keep everyone calm and traffic moving smoothly.

Everyone should be greeted with a smile and a pleasant attitude. Ask their names as they arrive and check off their names on the sign-up sheet to show that they are present. This system allows you to keep track of who is present so that you may send in a person as soon as possible. Hand them an audition form and a pencil. Answer any questions they might have. Have them turn in the audition forms as they are completed. If they have a headshot and a resume (a standard audition requirement in the professional world), paper clip or staple them to the audition form. When the directing staff is ready for people,

place the number "1" in an upper right corner of the first audition form. You will continue to number sequentially according to the order in which people audition, not in the order that they arrive.

When an actor is sent into an audition, put a line through the name on the sign-up sheet to indicate that the actor has completed the audition. Always tell the actor what to do when entering the audition space. In some cases, you or an assistant will escort the actor into the space, announce him or her and hand the audition form to the director or some other designated person. If so, ask how to pronounce his or her name right before you enter. In other auditions, the actors will be told to go in and give the audition form to the director and announce themselves. You may also need to tell them where to stand or what the director looks like if several people are in the room.

Do your best to keep things running smoothly. Try to give people the original time for which they signed up. They should have preference over walk-ins. Feel free to let people go in early or send in walk-ins to fill lulls in the auditions. If a person is unready or looks exceptionally nervous, offer to let them wait a few minutes and send in the next person on the list, a walk-in or someone else who is ready to audition. No, this would not happen in the professional world. Actors would have to go in when called. This is an educational environment, not the professional world. If five minutes will allow an actor to pull themselves together and give a better audition, let them have it. The experience will be a better one for everyone involved. You may want to occasionally ask the director if a five minute break is needed.

In cases where the audition consists of cold readings, the director may decide what the actor reads. It may also be up to you. If you have to pass out the cold readings, ask

the actors if they would like to read for any particular character, or if they have prepared a particular scene. Try to give actors their preferences, because they will do better in the long run. If they have no preference, try to give them a reading that suits their strengths if you know them. Some actors are better at romantic leads and others at character parts.

When you are using cold readings, you will commonly be asked the following questions by people unfamiliar with the play: What happened right before this scene? What kind of character is this? What am I trying to do in this scene? Keep a copy of the script on hand to answer these questions and others.

Singing auditions are seldom "cold" because only a limited number of people can sight-read music. The music director normally arranges for a pianist unless the department already has a pianist it uses for auditions or classes. People auditioning will either need to announce which selection from the show they are performing or hand their sheet music to the pianist and indicate where the pianist should begin and end playing. It is okay for them to ask to hear the first two bars to hear the tempo.

Dance auditions are most often done in groups. Use the tags you got earlier to identify the people auditioning. The number you give the dancer should match the number on his or her audition form. If no other auditions have occurred before this point, make sure you note the number on the audition form. The size of the numbers on the tags is directly related to how far away the directing staff is from the dancers. The farther away, the bigger the number. Since the directing staff does not know all the names, they can call out numbers to have particular dancers do whatever is needed. Expect this audition to be the first time you need to used your first aid kit, particularly if the people auditioning are dancing in bare feet.

For some shows, you will have a night of **Callbacks**. Callbacks are still part of the audition process. At callbacks, the director has narrowed down the field of possible candidates and would like to see only these people to try them out in specific roles. You will post a notice that says "Callbacks for (name of show)" at the top, followed by "The following people are called back on (Date and Time) in (Place). Just because you are not called back does not mean you are not cast, please check the cast list when it is posted." After this, you will list the names of the people the director requested. Callbacks allow the director to hear people read other scenes or characters, and to see different combinations of people. Since the actors are the focal point of the stage, their physical characteristics and personalities have to work together.

Once the auditions are over, the staff will sit down and cast the show. This may be done anywhere and is sometimes done at a person's home or a restaurant so that people can eat, drink and relax. It will help if you provide everyone with a **preliminary casting sheet** which is a blank form with three columns. The first column has the character name, the second has the actor playing the role and the third has the understudy or second choice. It can look something like **Figure 6**.

Figure 6: Preliminary Casting Sheet

Character:	Actor Playing Role:	Understudy/Second Choice:
King Lear		
Cordelia		

Etc.

Keep your copy blank until final decisions are made. Remember that it is not your job to

cast the show and you must never offer suggestions unless asked directly. If you did not witness auditions, you will have little input and should say you cannot offer suggestions because you have no audition on which to base them. Never push your opinions or champion one actor over another. That is the director's job, not yours.

If you have worked with an actor before and he or she is considered a problem actor, i.e. refuses to memorize lines on time, ignores direction, is always late or causes other problems, you may want to share this information. Do not share second-hand information, even from a trusted source. If you are seriously concerned about a particular actor, tell the director whom he or she should talk to about the actor in question. Be wary of doing this because you do not want to give anyone a bad reputation that may not be deserved. You should only express concern when you truly believe an actor will be a severe hindrance to the production. Even then, you should always remind the director that he or she knows best and should use his or her own judgment. You also need to respect this yourself.

Directors will make casting mistakes; this is a fact of life. Never interfere with these choices, no matter what you think of them. Directors must always be allowed to make their decisions without dissent. Once a choice has been made, follow it and do not complain. Many decisions you believe to be mistakes will be worked out in time or may actually turn out to be brilliant casting choices. The creative process is not a straight road and directors need to be able to try several choices before they can find the most effective one. Your job is to be supportive and make the job of the director a little easier. Allow them their choices and mistakes as you would like to be allowed your own. The smooth running of the show is your task, anything outside of that realm is both none of your

business and not your responsibility until your help is asked or desperately needed. Always remember this because it will make your job both easier and more pleasant. Your director will appreciate the professional and non-judgmental atmosphere you provide and you can let the mistakes that are out of your control happen without becoming stressed over them.

Once the **cast list** has been decided, repeat it back to the director one last time to double check, then ask for the audition forms so that you can get the correct spelling of cast members' names and their phone numbers. Discuss when the cast list should be posted, usually the next morning by 9 or 9:30 a.m. Once that has been decided, ask if the director needs anything else from you. If not, go type the cast list. If you can save this on a computer disk, do. Even at this point, the cast list can change.

The cast list will take much the same form as the preliminary casting sheet and will look like **Figure 7**. At this time you may also want to post a first rehearsal announcement which would look something like **Figure 8**. Include the date, time and place and any special instruction such as "bring tap shoes." You also need to include information on where to obtain scripts. Whatever you do, do not discuss the cast list with anyone before it is posted. Why? First of all, this is privileged information that you have no right to discuss. Second, it is possible to get a 7 a.m. phone call from the director asking you to go into the department and take down the cast list and change a name. What do you think would have happened if you had told the person who was taken off the list that he or she had been cast? The actor would have been angry and you would have broken faith with the department and the director. This is not the way to get future work or even maintain your present job. Do not do this! Your word and your ability to keep

information to yourself are both integral to your position. Do not blemish your job, your name or your reputation.

Figure 7: Cast List

King Lear Cast List

Please initial next to your name to indicate acceptance.

Character:	Actor:	Understudy:
King Lear	Michael Murray	Joe Smith
Cordelia	Jane Doe	Mary Smith

Etc.

"Thank you to all who auditioned. It was a difficult decision and I was much impressed by the talent that turned out for the auditions.

Director

Figure 8: First Rehearsal Announcement

Attention!

The first rehearsal for *King Lear*
will be held in the John Smith Theatre
Sept. 8
7 p.m.-10 p.m.

Scripts are available in the theatre department library, rm 234. Please call Marijean at 555-1212 with any questions.

Checklist: Auditions

You have

- ☐ Posted all audition information.
- ☐ Completed all necessary preparations for auditions (see pre-audition checklist).
- ☐ Created a preliminary casting sheet.
- ☐ Created and posted a cast list.
- ☐ Created and posted an announcement for the first rehearsal.

Chapter 4
The Post-Audition, Pre-Rehearsal Period

The Call Board: Auditions are over. The cast list is typed. Your next job is to post the cast list and set up the **call board**. The call board is a bulletin board that is designated to hold all posted show information. People look to call boards to see audition information, call-back lists, cast lists, rehearsal schedules and any other notices about the show. You need to have a specific section of the call board set aside for your show. The Theatre Department will normally have a bulletin board set aside for this purpose. If it does not, ask a department secretary if there is one you can use. He or she will help you get what you need.

Once you have a bulletin board, post a sign with the show's name in big letters. Sometimes a department secretary will do this for you, but do not expect it. Ask nicely, but always let the secretary know you can do it if he or she is too busy. Divide the board into sections, or section off just your postings to make sure that your information is clearly designated as belonging to your show. Spike tape or crepe paper are sufficient to mark the boundaries of your section. Post the cast list, any notes, rehearsal information and anything else relevant to the show including cartoons, reviews or letters. Keep this information updated.

Making Scripts Available: If the scripts still have to be ordered, they are usually ordered by one of the following people in the department: a business manager, a business secretary or a department secretary. These people deal with ordering the scripts because they are familiar with the royalty requirements. The stage manager should not order scripts, but may be asked to keep track of them so that they can be returned to the department once the show has closed. Musical scripts must be rented and cannot be defaced in any way, thus special care has to be taken that they are returned. If scripts have to be returned, ask the person distributing the scripts to number them and record who got which script. Find out when the scripts are supposed to arrive so that you can make sure they go to the person who is supposed to distribute them.

Once the cast list has been posted, cast members will want to get a copy of the script. Talk to the director about this. If your first rehearsal will be a day or two after the cast list is posted, you can pass out the scripts at the first rehearsal. Post a sign that says "Scripts will be distributed at the first rehearsal." If it is more than a day or two, use the same method you used for making materials available for auditions. You can either have the department library or a department secretary pass out scripts. If the department library keeps irregular hours, ask a secretary to hold onto the scripts. Whoever is handing out the scripts should have a contact sheet so that he or she has a list of the people who could need the script. Use the contact sheet and not the cast list because the more comprehensive contact sheet includes people like assistants who will also need a copy of the script.

If you are working with a new, non-published script or with material not covered by copyright laws, you may be asked to make copies for everyone. Check with the

business manager or secretary to make sure the materials are either no longer covered under copyright protection or that the department has permission from the copyright holder to make the copies. It is illegal to make copies of materials still covered under copyright protection without permission from the publisher or the author. Once you are sure that you can make copies, make arrangements with the department secretary to use the copy machine for a few hours to make as many scripts as are necessary. Make an extra copy because somebody will always forget a script during rehearsals. Remember to post a sign on the call board that tells everyone how to get a script or, at the very least, when they will be available.

The Contact Sheet: A **contact sheet** is one of the most important documents you will create. It is a phone list that allows all of the members of the production to contact each other. It is your first priority after posting the cast list. Using the phone numbers from the audition forms, other department phone lists and school phone books, you should be able to compile a list. Any other numbers can be obtained from the department secretary. Every cast member's school number and work number (if applicable) should be included. The same is true for student members of the production staff. Faculty members may only want their office numbers listed. This is fine. Always respect their privacy. Other faculty members may let you include their home number. As the stage manager, you will need everyone's home numbers, even if they are not listed on the contact sheet. If a faculty member is reluctant about giving you a home number, explain that the number will not be listed on the contact sheet or given to anyone else other than the director.

On the contact sheet, the actors are listed first, then the production staff followed

by other important numbers such as the campus ride service and the theatre department shops. The final number should always be campus security in bold numbers. **Figures 9** and **10** show two possible formats. **Figure 9** uses a table format and **Figure 10** creates columns by tabbing over a specific number of spaces. The second kind can be created on a typewriter if you do not have access to a computer. If you are working with a dance concert, a revue or a series of one acts, you may want to list the pieces that the actors are in under "Character." The show can be abbreviated with one or two letters.

Figure 9: Contact Sheet (Version 1)

ANGELS IN AMERICA

Contact Sheet

CAST MEMBER:	CHARACTER:	PHONE NUMBER:
	Belize/Mr. Lies	
	Sr. Ella Chapter, Ethel Rosenberg	
	Hannah Pitt	
	Louis Ironson	
	Harper Pitt	
	Rabbi, Dr. Henry, Martin	
	Roy Cohn/Prior 2	
	Joe Pitt/Prior 1/Eskimo	
	Angel/Voice/Emily/Bronx Woman	
	Prior Walter/Man in Park	
PRODUCTION STAFF:		
	Director	
	Asst. Director	
	Stage Manager	
	Asst. Stage Manager	
	Set Designer	
	Lighting Designer	
	Costume Designer	
	Sound Designer	
Green Room	**Call if you will be late!**	
EMERGENCY	**EMERGENCY**	

Figure 10: Contact Sheet (Version 2)

Veronica's Room
Contact Sheet

Cast Member:	**Character:**	**Phone Number:**
Sarah Miller	**Girl**	**000-0000**
Tom Secord	**Man**	**111-1111**
Trisha Ellis	**Woman**	**222-2222**
William Roberts	**Young Man**	**333-3333**

Production Staff:

Director
Asst. Director
Stage Manager
Lighting and Set Designer
Costume Designer
Theatre Dept. Office
Costume Shop
Scene Shop

In Case of Emergency, call 911

The Rehearsal Schedule: It is up to the director to decide what will be rehearsed on what day, but most departments have a typical rehearsal schedule, such as Monday through Friday, 6 p.m.-10 p.m. or 7 p.m.-11 p.m. Talk to the director and let him or her decide what days and times rehearsals will be held. Discuss whether a read-through will be held at the first rehearsal. A read-through is a rehearsal at which everyone sits or stands and reads through the script. It will also be a chance for you to time acts and scenes to get a rough estimate of the running time of the show.

Once the director has decided whether or not there will be a read-through, the probable schedule for rehearsals will need to be determined. Some directors prefer a weekly schedule that is distributed on the Friday before, while other directors will schedule the entire rehearsal and production process. You will also want to discuss whether the director will block in small units or scenes or whole acts at a time. The director may work from your French Scene breakdown. The French Scene method allows the director to work with smaller groups of actors and for some plays, this is the most time-conserving method. Other plays such as ***Noises Off*** require that all members of the cast be present.

If you have an inexperienced director who is unsure how to plan rehearsals, recommend David Albert's book, ***Rehearsal Management for Directors***. It has simple, practical advice for planning a schedule. At this time, you should ask if the designers should be invited to the first rehearsal to be introduced to the cast and to show models or renderings of their work. If they should, talk to them or put a note inviting them to the rehearsal in their boxes in the office.

Once you have a schedule, type it up. No matter what format you use, the schedule will need to include the name of the show and the words "Rehearsal Schedule" at the top of the page. You need the date, what is to be rehearsed, where the rehearsal will be and who will be needed (if that varies from night to night). It is a good idea to include the following statements: "This rehearsal schedule is subject to change." "Call if you will be late" and "If you have any conflicts or questions, please call the Stage Manager at 555-1212." These items are the same for any kind of schedule passed out to the cast or crew.

Your phone number should always be included on the schedule and on almost any

piece of paper that you distribute. It helps emphasize that: 1) They need to let you know if there is a problem. and 2) You are always available to answer questions. Once you have typed the schedule, make sure you make enough copies for the actors, the production staff and people such as the costume shop supervisor and the technical director. **Figure 11** is a cast schedule, and **Figure 12** is a crew schedule.

Figure 11: Cast Schedule (Weekly)

Company

Rehearsal Schedule

SUBJECT TO CHANGE

All rehearsals are in room 34 of the IM Circle Building unless otherwise noted.
If you are an understudy, you are called whenever that character is called.

Date and Time:	What:	Who:
M Jan. 6: 7 p.m.-11 p.m.	Act I:1 pp. 1-13	ALL
T Jan. 7: 7 p.m.-11 p.m.	Act I:2 pp. 13-29 review Act I:1-2 up to pg. 30	ALL
W Jan. 8: 7 p.m.-11 p.m.	Act I:2-4 pp. 26-34	
Th Jan. 9: 7 p.m.-11 p.m.	Act I:4 pp. 34-40 Drive a Person Crazy Have I Got a Girl Someone is Waiting	
F Jan. 10: 7 p.m.-11 p.m.	review all done to date: Act I:1-4	ALL

If you have any problems, please call the stage manager at 555-1212.

Figure 12: Crew Schedule

ANGELS IN AMERICA

CREW REHEARSAL SCHEDULE

Date:	Time:	What:	Notes:
M Oct. 28	7 p.m.-11 p.m.	Run through	rm 12 please see one rehearsal this Monday-Thursday
T Oct. 29	7 p.m.-11 p.m.	Run through	rm 12
W Oct. 30	7 p.m.-11 p.m.	Run through	rm 12
Th Oct. 31	7 p.m.-11 p.m.	Run through	rm 12
F Nov. 1	6 p.m.-11 p.m.	Spacing Rehearsal	Wharton Center All crews but costume
Sa Nov. 2	9 a.m.-noon 1 p.m.-5 p.m. 6:30 p.m.-11 p.m.	First Tech	Wharton Center All crews but costume
S Nov. 3	6:30 p.m.-11 p.m.	First Dress	Costume Crew at 6 All crews at 6:30
M Nov. 4	6:30 p.m.-11:30 p.m.	Second Dress	All Crews
T Nov. 5	6:30 p.m.-11:30 p.m.	Third Dress	All Crews
W Nov. 6	6:30 p.m.-11:30 p.m.	Fourth Dress	All Crews
Th Nov. 7	6:30 p.m.-11:30 p.m.	Performance at 8 p.m.	All Crews
F Nov. 8	6:30 p.m.-11:30 p.m.	Performance at 8 p.m.	All Crews
Sa Nov. 9	6:30 p.m.-11:30 p.m.	Performance at 8 p.m.	All Crews
S Nov. 10	12:30 p.m.-6:30 p.m.	Performance at 2 p.m. Panel Discussion After	All Crews
Th Nov. 14	6:30 p.m.-11:30 p.m.	Performance at 8 p.m.	All Crews
F Nov. 15	6:30 p.m.-11:30 p.m.	Performance at 8 p.m.	All Crews
Sa Nov. 16	6:30 p.m.-?	Performance at 8 p.m. Strike following	All Crews

Any Questions? Please call the stage manager at 555-1212.

Obtain Forms and Make Copies: Before the first rehearsal you need to determine if there are any hand-outs you need to have for the first rehearsal. These include rehearsal schedules, contact sheets, liability release forms (check with the

department secretary—these forms release the department from any responsibility for injuries incurred on a show), accident (injury) reports, any standard information sheets the department may want distributed and anything the director wants given to the actors. The director may distribute articles and pictures relevant to the show. Make sure you have enough copies of everything for the cast and production staff and that they are ready for the first rehearsal.

Reserve Rooms for Rehearsals: Talk to the director to see if he or she has a preference in rehearsal space, but you may need to take whatever is available. You may have done this earlier when you reserved rooms for auditions. If not, take a rehearsal schedule to the department secretary in charge of reserving rooms. The department secretary will know what rooms are typically used for rehearsals. In some cases, this is the theatre space itself. If it is not the theatre, you hopefully will be able to use a rehearsal space that is big enough to accommodate the dimensions of the stage. Sometimes these spaces are being used for a production that opens before yours. In this case, you will need to use alternative spaces until the regular space becomes available.

Once again, the department secretary can give you most of the information you need about these spaces and can also reserve the rooms for you. Leave a copy of the schedule with the secretary and remind him or her that you will need to get into the room a half an hour before the listed rehearsal time. If the space is normally kept locked, ask for a key so that you can unlock the room for rehearsals. You will then also be responsible for re-locking the room.

Most rehearsal spaces have tables, chairs and other furniture, but you will need to make sure of two things when reserving a space. If you are doing a show with live music,

you will need a piano or keyboard. You will either need to chose a space with a piano or talk to the technical director about moving a piano into the space. A keyboard is a simple solution if space is tight and it is too difficult to move a piano, but the keyboard will need to be locked up at the end of each rehearsal.

If you are dealing with a show that involves dancing, a wooden floor is necessary. Concrete, tile, stone and linoleum floors are dangerous and rough on dancers' knees, shins and ankles. If you do not have appropriate rehearsal space, there is usually a dance room somewhere on campus. This may be a room used for physical education classes or an aerobics room in the gymnasium. The chairperson of the department and the department secretary can usually arrange for the use of such a space, but it should be done as early as possible. It may affect the rehearsal schedule if you have to work around classes. You will also need to ask if you can tape out the floor plan on the floor. **Spike tape** is about wide as clear tape and comes in several colors. It is specifically designed to be peel easily off of any surface, but is still very sturdy. Other people can still dance on the floor and can be removed easily when you are done rehearsing in the space. You may need to show someone that spike tape does peel off the floor easily to convince him or her to allow you to use it. If you still cannot tape the floor, use chairs, books or some sort of markers to designate the edges of the stage. Also, if you are using a space outside of the department, make sure you are particularly careful to keep it clean. If you do not, the department may not be able to use the space in the future.

No matter what space you are working in, you will need a prop box with a lock for storing props, the first aid kit and your prompt book. If the room does not have one, talk to the technical director about having a prop box moved to the space.

Production Meetings: Production meetings allow the director, the designers, the stage manager and the technical staff to share ideas, ask questions and report on the progress in their respective areas. In general, production meetings are held every one to two weeks and last from roughly a half an hour to an hour and a half. The more complicated the show, the more often the meetings may need to be held. Your director, the technical director and possibly department policy will help you determine how often the meetings need to be held.

Once you have been selected to work on a show, meet with the director and find out if a preliminary production meeting has been held with all of the designers. The director may have met with the designers individually, but it is very important to get everyone together so that everyone is on the same page and so that everyone feels included. Although they may not attend, also invite the technical director, costume shop supervisor and any other technical staff necessary to the show. For a musical, this will include the music director and possibly the choreographer and a vocal coach. These people may choose not to attend the first production meeting, but they should always be invited. Check with the department chair to see if he or she would like to be invited. If the department chair is coming, always let your director know. You do not want to cause any unnecessary stress on the director. If you have a student director or any student designers, find out if they have faculty advisors that need to be notified about production meetings. This may be the student's job, but you should always double check. If you have a supervisor, it is your job to notify him or her about the meeting.

To call a production meeting, talk to your director. The director needs to be the first person you talk to about setting a production meeting because no meeting can be held

without him or her. The director can give you possible times for the meeting. Next, you need to find a time when everyone can meet. In some departments, there are times when no classes are scheduled so that faculty meetings can be held. Find out from the department secretary if there is such a time. In addition, ask the secretary if there is a department meeting room or classroom that you may be able to reserve for the production meeting. Do not reserve the room yet.

Put a note in everyone's box or leave a message for them either by phone or with the department secretary telling them that you would like to call a production meeting, and you need a schedule of availability left in your box for the dates or weeks you are considering for the production meeting. If there is a department meeting time available, let everyone know that you would like to call the meeting at that time if possible. If any of the people that should be invited are "guests," i.e. a guest director or a guest designer and are not on faculty, or only stop into the department sporadically, call and leave a message at their home asking for their schedules.

Once you have received all the schedules, find a time when everyone can meet. If all but one can meet at a certain time, talk to the individual to see if they can rearrange their schedule to meet at the chosen time. It may not be possible since that person may be teaching or attending class. Talk to the director, he or she may determine that the meeting can proceed without that person and a separate meeting can be held with the director and the individual. If not, another time needs to be found when everyone can meet. Now you can reserve a meeting room with the department secretary and put a note in everyone's box telling them when and where the meeting will be held.

The First Full Production Meeting: The director, all of the designers and you

should be at this meeting (if possible). Several meetings may already have taken place between the director and some of the designers, particularly the set designer. Not all of this information will be new to everyone at the first full production meeting, but the director needs to make sure everyone is brought up to speed. It is your job to keep the minutes (take notes) of the production meeting. These notes should by typed or printed neatly and kept in the back of the prompt book. You may need to post these or put copies in everyone's boxes. Ask your director or supervisor who needs to have copies of them. In some schools, the stage manager runs the production meetings, but in most cases, particularly if the stage manager is inexperienced, the director will run the meetings. Either way, the director will run the first meeting.

To start, everyone will be introduced to each other. Then the director will discuss his or her ideas about the show and possibly his or her "vision" or "metaphor" for the show. A vision or a metaphor will help to guide the directing process and the designs submitted for the show. This could mean that the director feels that the characters in the play are imprisoned in some way and therefore is working from a jail metaphor. The jail metaphor gives the set designer the idea of a set using metal bars and chain link fencing and causes the costume designer to suggest dressing all of the characters in the same type or color of clothing.

Once the director is done, the brainstorming will begin. The designers will ask questions to clarify what the director said and what the director needs (windows, carpets, doors, levels and so forth). This is the time for you to bring up your list of requirements and complicated effects. Designers may offer suggestions at this time or deal with the problems at a later meeting. Individual designers may set up meetings with the director to

show preliminary designs. Set a date and time for the next meeting while you have everyone there. Depending on how far away the first rehearsal is, you may be able to wait two weeks while the designers work and show ideas to the director. You will need a set design and floor plan before the first rehearsal. The director cannot block a show until a set design exists. Let the set designer know you need a floor plan so that you can tape the floor (discussed later in this chapter).

Subsequent meetings will give the designers a chance to show or tell each other what they are doing so that the show is a coherent whole. This means that the costumes, sets, lights and props look like they belong to the same world created on the stage. Without this, costumes would blend into the set and the lights could be gelled for a rock concert while the stage would be set for a dark tragedy. These meetings also allow everyone to talk about logistical questions. These questions range from estimating the time set changes will take, to double-checking the props and costume pieces that are required, to discussing the problems from your list and possible solutions for them. As rehearsals progress, you will have more questions about how things look and work to be brought up at these meetings.

Find Rehearsal Props: Rehearsal props are both hand-held props, such as cups or luggage, and furniture-type props. Thus, you need to inspect the rehearsal room(s) to see what kind of furniture is available. Remember that you need at least one long table for the director and yourself and chairs for the directing and stage management staff and seating for the cast. You also need an approximation of the furniture called for in the floor plan. You can get a floor plan (blueprints) from the set designer or technical director. The floor plan is also called a "set plan" or a "ground plan." You will need a

copy of this to pull furniture, tape the set (discussed later in this chapter) and to show the director. The director often asks to see the set plan during rehearsals to help determine blocking.

Once you have determined what furniture you need for the room, take that list, your preliminary prop list and your assistants to the department storage spaces. If you do not have keys, make arrangements with the technical director to open storage rooms for you. If you do not have assistants, arrange with the technical director to borrow one or two members of the scene shop staff to help you move furniture. If the scene shop is not staffed, ask the technical director if he or she knows of anyone you can ask to help you. As you pull items, keep a detailed list which will be copied and given to the technical director or whatever person is in charge of the particular type of storage space from which you pulled the items. This will be useful if the set designer planned on using one of the pieces you have pulled for the show and cannot find it in storage. The technical director will know that you have already pulled the object and can tell the set designer where to find it. Once you are done pulling items, turn off the lights and lock the doors of the storage areas.

For hand-held props, you do not need to have assistants, but you will need some crates or boxes in which to carry the props. You should pull items that approximate the items called for in the script. Use non-breakable items whenever possible. Plastic or metal cups are always preferable to glass. Expect props to be dropped. Actors can hurt themselves on anything, so look out for sharp edges on all items you pull from storage. Some **gaffer's tape** (ask the technical director for some) will usually soften an edge and can be peeled off later. Gaffer's tape is wider than spike tape and used most often to tape

things down and on electrical connections. Although items you pull may not have to look like the actual prop used in the show, if you can get close to the weight and shape, the actors will be very grateful. If the object looks nothing like the actual prop, such as substituting a cheese grater for a cowbell, write what it is on a piece of spike tape and stick it onto the rehearsal prop. When you do start using props in rehearsals, walk the actors through the props that they cannot identify on sight so that they know what to expect.

When pulling props, consider not just how breakable it is, but also if the object is expensive or rare. Try not to pull props the designer might want. Also, when there is an option, take the beat-up props or the unmatched china so that the props that look good or are in good working condition stay that way. Actors always want to work with the actual prop and if they have to eat something on stage, they will want the food as soon as possible. The actors want to be prepared but the designer wants the props intact for the show and does not want to spend the already meager budget on food or cigarettes for four weeks of rehearsal. The designer is right, but if some prop is exceedingly strange or complicated, the actors should get it as soon as possible.

Once again, give a list of items you have pulled to the technical director and the props designer. Make sure your list is sufficiently detailed. " 6 china plates" is not as accurate as "6 china dinner plates (white with blue rim)." If the designer is looking for the china plates with the blue rims, he or she will appreciate the detail.

Keep the prop storage rooms clean. These areas tend to be cluttered, but if a shelf is labeled "vases," you should return the vase you picked up to that space. The technical director will appreciate this. When you are done, turn off the lights and lock the door.

Take the hand props to the rehearsal space and lock them in the prop box, then turn off the lights and lock the rehearsal room.

Taping or Painting the Set: "Taping" or "painting" the set means that you are taping or painting the ground plan on the floor of the rehearsal space. If you are painting, you will need a minimum of two colors, a brush with a long handle (a piece of broom handle taped to the handle of the brush will work) and something with which you can make straight lines (a piece of scrap lumber). If you are taping the set, you must use spike tape. Spike tape is about as wide as Scotch tape, comes in rolls and is made in several colors. Most other kinds of tape will be impossible to peel up later and should not be used. You can get all of these supplies from the technical director who will also be able to tell you whether you need to tape or paint. On carpet or classroom floors, you will normally tape the floor. If you will actually be working on the stage floor, painting the floor plan saves the scene shop crew the time it would take to peel up the tape before they could paint the floor. In addition to several colors of tape or paint, you will need blueprints of the floor plan (as many as there are sets, if there is more than one set for the show), an **architect's scale ruler**, a 25' or 50' tape measure (50' is recommended and is also available from the technical director), a pencil and an assistant. An architect's scale ruler allows you to convert feet into inches and vice versa. The technical director can lend you one and show you how to use it. You can also purchase one cheaply at an art supply store. If you have an assistant, ask the technical director if you can borrow a chalk line. A chalk line is a tear-shaped metal tool roughly the size of your hand, filled with colored chalk and contains a string coiled inside. When the string is pulled out, it is covered with the chalk. When the string is stretched tightly along the floor and then snapped, it will

leave a straight line of colored chalk that you can follow. If you make a mistake, it is easy enough to rub out the line and start over. Marking the set takes from one to four hours depending on the complexity of the set and how many people are helping you. It is possible to tape a set by yourself, but it will take longer.

To begin, clear the floor of the space in which you will be working. You may need to sweep, mop or vacuum before you began laying out the set. The blue prints will have a key that tells in what scale the plans are drawn. Find that same scale on your architect's ruler and use that side to measure distances. If you are not working on the stage itself, use your scale ruler to determine the widest dimensions of the stage. This may influence what part of a rehearsal room you use as the stage area. Remember that you need to leave enough room downstage of the set for the director and a table. Once you know where you are going to start, begin by laying down a Center Line to divide the stage in half. This line may be marked on your plans. Make sure this line is at a right angle to the walls of the room.

If the Center Line is not marked on your set plan, you can find it in one of two ways. If the front of your stage is a straight line, measure the front of the stage on your plans and divide in half. If the front of the stage is 30', the Center Line will be at 15'. On the floor of the room, measure a 30' line and mark it. Make sure you leave enough space between the front of the stage and the wall to lay out the entire set. Now, find the 15' mark and lay down a line at a right angle to the front of the stage. If the front of your stage is a curve, use the Plaster Line to find the Center Line. The Plaster Line (also called the Curtain Line) is an imaginary line that runs between the upstage edges of the proscenium arch. Since this provides a straight line from which you can measure the

Center Line, either draw the Plaster Line on your plans or lay down a chalk line or the tape measure on the stage, find the center point and mark it. If the set starts at the Plaster Line, mark the Plaster Line in tape or paint. If you are using the forestage area (the part of the stage that is downstage of the Plaster Line—also called the apron), you do not need to mark the Plaster line, but you can leave a chalk mark on the floor to use in measuring. Now take your tape measure and lay a line in tape or paint that begins at the center point you measured and goes straight upstage for the Center Line. If the forestage area is used as part of the set, measure the distance along the Center Line from the Plaster Line to the edge of the stage on your plans, then continue the Center Line you have already started along that distance to the front edge of the stage.

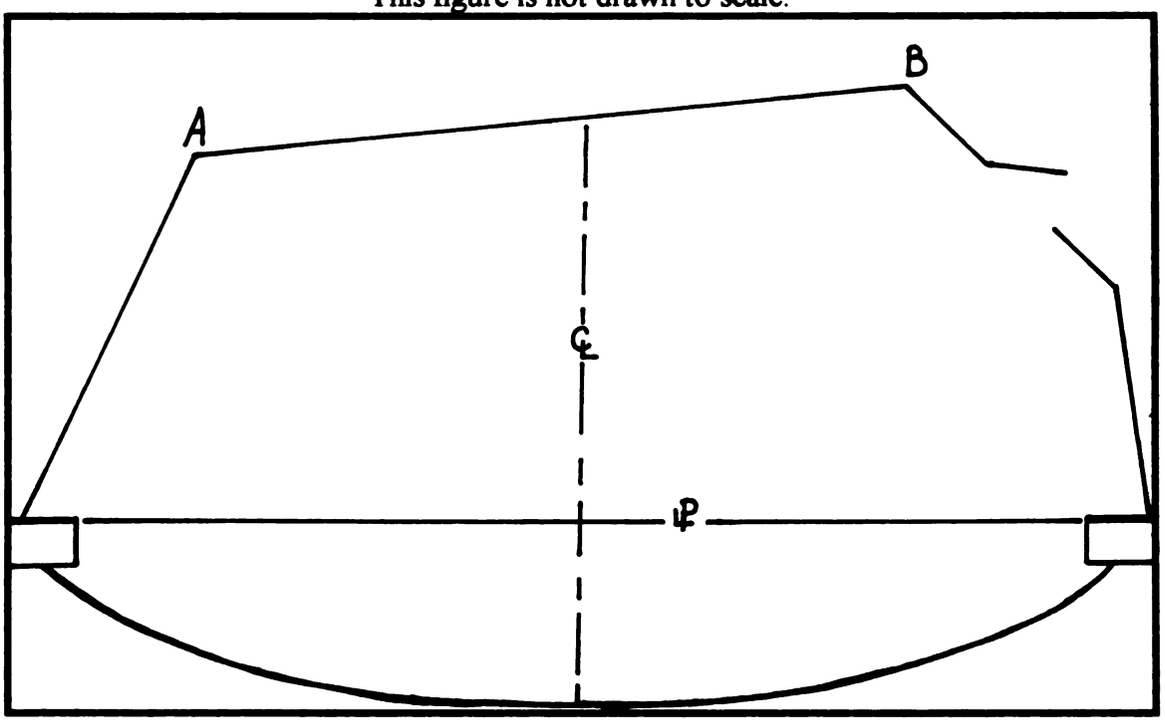
Figure 13 is a sample floor plan with the Plaster Line and Center Line marked. The following discussion refers to this figure. Since it only takes two points to make a line, you need to find points "A" and "B" to mark the back wall of the set. On the plans, draw a line straight down from point A at a right angle to the Plaster Line. Measure the distance between this line and the Center Line on your plans. Let us say it is equal to 14'. Now measure up from the Plaster Line along the line you drew to point A. Let us say this distance is 10'. Go over to the stage area, measure 14' along the Plaster Line from the Center Line toward stage right, then straight up 10' to mark point A. Repeat the same procedure to find point B. Now you can lay a chalk line connecting point A and point B and mark your back wall. Plot points to create the rest of your set.

If there is more than one set for the show, mark one set in a single color and the other set(s) in a sufficiently contrasting color, such as marking Act I in blue tape and Act II in yellow tape. Accuracy is important in marking the set. Directors will constantly ask

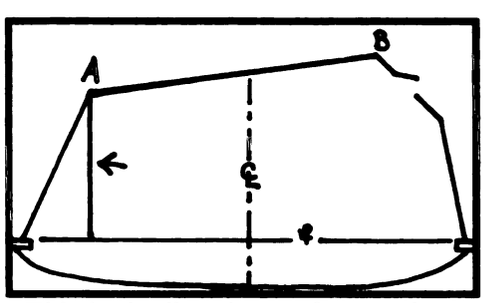
you if the floor plan is correct or how many feet they have between things on the stage.

Figure 13: Sample Floor Plan

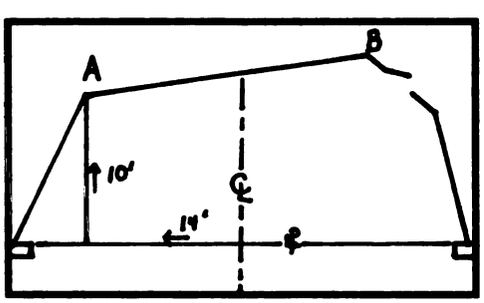
This figure is not drawn to scale.



Key:
Solid Line marked "PL" is the Plaster Line
Dashed Line Marked "CL" is the Center Line



This is the line drawn from point A to the Plaster Line.



These are the measurements along the Plaster Line and the line you drew.

They need to be able to see how many people can be placed in a space or exactly where platforms join. Actors get accustomed to certain traffic patterns. If your markings are incorrect by more than an inch or two, you may confuse the actors once they get onto the set. It only takes a few extra minutes to be careful. If you have platforms or steps, it is helpful to mark the height in inches from above and below the stage level. Anything at stage level is 0", above stage level is + 6" and below stage level is - 6". This also helps the actors because a platform that is +6" step up is not the same as a platform that is a +12" step up. You should also place spike marks (little x's of spike tape or paint) where the legs of the furniture can be placed so that your rehearsal furniture is close to where the actual show furniture will be placed. When you are done, erase all chalk marks, pick up any extraneous pieces of tape that are not part of ground plan, turn off the lights and lock the space.

Gather Supplies: Ask your supervisor or the department secretary if you can use their supplies such as notepads, pencils and staples. If not, they may reimburse you for your purchases. Anything the department purchases should be returned to the department or turned over to the next stage manager when your show is over.

The following supplies are absolutely necessary:

- ☐ A good two- or three-inch, hardcover binder with pockets
- ☐ Dividers for the binder (at least five)
- ☐ Several sharp number 2 pencils with erasers
- ☐ Clear tape
- ☐ A small, durable flashlight with batteries
- ☐ Extra batteries for the flashlight
- ☐ Several colors of spike tape

- ☐ Gaffer's tape (black, white and brown)
- ☐ A pair of scissors
- ☐ A stop watch (you may be able to borrow one from the technical director)
- ☐ A manual or battery operated pencil sharpener
- ☐ Several pens
- ☐ A large eraser
- ☐ A 6" ruler
- ☐ Sticky notes (several sizes)
- ☐ Your first aid kit (see Chapter 2 for contents)
- ☐ A small stapler and extra staples
- ☐ Glow Tape (glows in the dark and is used to mark edges and corners)
- ☐ Paper Clips
- ☐ Rubber bands
- ☐ Portable 3-hole punch
- ☐ Safety pins
- ☐ Facial tissue

Not absolutely necessary, but highly recommended:

- ☐ Aspirin and ibuprofen
- ☐ Cold and allergy medicine (tablet form)
- ☐ Cough drops
- ☐ Breath mints
- ☐ A Swiss army knife, multi-plier or something that has several blades, tweezers, a bottle opener, a flat head and a Phillips head screwdriver and pliers
- ☐ A needle and black and white thread
- ☐ Hair pins
- ☐ A black, felt tip marker
- ☐ A glue stick
- ☐ Nail clippers and a nail file
- ☐ Something to tie hair back with (unisex)
- ☐ A clip board

You need access to the following:

- ☐ A hammer
- ☐ Nails
- ☐ Extension cords
- ☐ A Crescent wrench
- ☐ Pliers
- ☐ A Screwdriver

Feel free to add to this list as you see fit.

The Prompt Book: The final thing you need to do before rehearsals start is put the prompt book together. This is one of your most important jobs as a stage manager, so a separate chapter has been set aside for this subject.

Check List: The Post-Audition, Pre-Rehearsal Period

You have

- ☐ Created a call board area and posted appropriate information there.
- ☐ Created a contact sheet.
- ☐ Created a rehearsal schedule.
- ☐ Obtained any departmental form or director's handouts.
- ☐ Made copies of everything necessary for the cast and production staff.
- ☐ Reserved rooms for rehearsal.
- ☐ Had a piano and/or a prop box moved to the rehearsal space if necessary.
- ☐ Called a production meeting.
- ☐ Pulled props (both furniture and hand held).
- ☐ Taped/painted the ground plan of the set.
- ☐ Gathered the supplies you will need.

Chapter 5
The Prompt Book

The prompt book is a complete written record of the show. It is also a historical document because it records the blocking, the props and set pieces used and the placement of all cues. It also records the essence of the show in both its intent and execution. A prompt book should allow someone else with minimal knowledge of the show to use the prompt book to reproduce it. Thus, your job is to act as the play's recorder. The prompt book is the sole responsibility of the stage manager. It is often called the "bible" of the show, but it is also your phone book, daily planner, cheat sheet and the cause of your bad back. At the very least, your prompt book needs to contain the following:

⇒ A contact sheet

⇒ A rehearsal schedule

⇒ A script with blocking notation

⇒ A prop list

⇒ Any cue sheets necessary to the immediate running of the show

⇒ Notes from production meetings

⇒ Rehearsal and performance reports

In addition, you may include design information, copies of renderings, research

information relevant to the show and cue sheets you use mainly for reference (i.e. a list of lighting positions or detailed costume lists). It is important to do necessary paperwork, but not to get overwhelmed in the details. The costume staff needs a detailed list of every item that goes on an actor's body and when. The costume designer should provide this for them. It is nice if you have a copy, but not integral to your immediate task of running the show. On the other hand, a list of costume quick changes is integral to the running of the show. Your prompt book would need to contain a copy of the list and the changes would need to be notated in your script.

Putting Together the Prompt Book: First, you need a sturdy, 3-ring, 2"-3" binder with pockets and binder dividers with tabs, at least five. These are not optional. The binder protects its contents and the dividers keep the mass of information organized for quick reference. While you are putting this together, you will need access to a three-hole punch.

On the tab of the first divider, write "Contact Sheet." This section is only for the contact sheet and related information. When you need a number, you need it quickly. This is the most used section of your prompt book and when you need a number in an emergency situation, you do not want to be fumbling for it. Your hands will remember to flip to the first section of your prompt book even when your mind does not. Old contact sheets can be stored in this section, but the most recent contact sheet should always be on top. Stage managers save everything for reference because you never know when you might need something. You may also want to make a check-in list for the cast. All this consists of is a grid with the names of the actors listed in the first column and several columns after it to check them into rehearsals and possibly for performances. You may

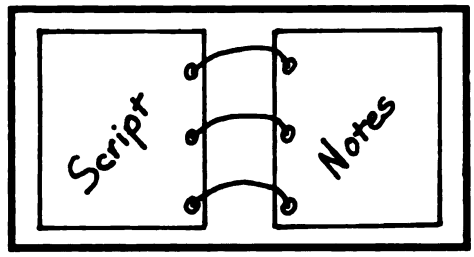
want to use a sign-in sheet for technical rehearsals and performances so that you do not have to chase down people to check them in.

On the tab of the second section, write "Schedules." This section is solely for your schedules with the most recent one on top. Keep a character breakdown in this section. That way, if you are rehearsing Act I scene 2 of a show, you can see who is in that act and scene. The cast will always ask you what will be rehearsed, when and in what order, even if they have a schedule of their own. Always be quick with an answer.

On the tab of the third section, write "Script." Stage managers are almost always forced to make a copy of the script. First, a double-sided page of script is useless because it cannot be pasted onto an eight and a half by eleven sheet of paper, which is what you use for the script in a prompt book. Second, actors' playscripts are too small for your purposes. You will need big, clear printing with lots of white space for notes. This usually involves enlarging on a copier. Using an eight and a half by eleven sheet of paper allows you plenty of room for your notes and cues. If you are lucky enough to be working with a single-sided, double-spaced, eight and a half by eleven script, you will not have to do anything other than punch holes. You will also need a page for notes. The top half of this page should have a rough scale drawing of the floor plan of the set. You can try reducing the blueprints on a copier, but a free-hand drawing is probably easier. If the ground plan was produced on a computer, you can ask the set designer to print out a reduced copy for you. Leave the bottom half of the page blank.

A prompt script is normally set up so that there is a page of script faced by a page for notes (see **Figure 14**). If you are right-handed, the notes page should be on the right.

Figure 14: Prompt Script Set Up



If you are left-handed, it should be on the left. Always try to find the most time-conserving method. Just because every prompt book since Dionysus has been set up a certain way does not mean that it will work for you. If this prompt book set up does not work for you, try something else.

If you have an eight and a half by eleven, one-sided, single page of script, you may want to copy your notes page with the floor plan on the back side to conserve paper. If you had to copy a script, remember you only want one page of script for every facing page of notes. If you copied two pages of script onto a single sheet of paper, cut the sheet in half and use rubber cement or a glue stick to mount a single page of script to the back side of a notes page (since it provides a white background). Do not try to conserve paper by copying two pages and putting them into your notebook as in **Figure 15**. This would involve turning your prompt book every time you needed to write a note. In addition, your notes in the text become too confusing because of the density of words on the page. If you have to paste on a page of script, your prompt script will look like **Figure 16**. This leaves plenty of space on the script page for notes and cues. The bulk of your blocking notation should be taken on the notes page to keep the script from getting cluttered and

confusing. How to take blocking is described in Chapter 7.

Figure 15: Incorrect Prompt Script Set Up

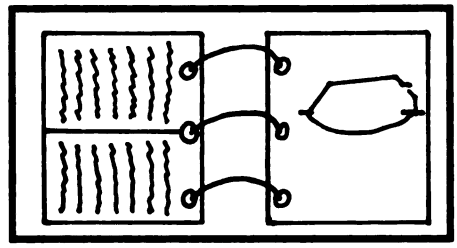
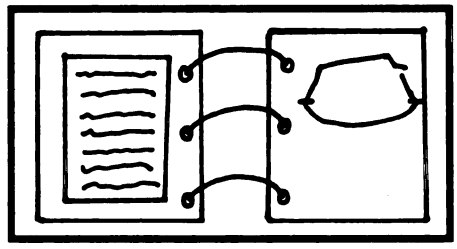


Figure 16: Cut and Paste Script Set Up



On the tab of the fourth section, write, "Props/Costumes/Cues." This section contains prop lists, cue sheets and costume information. You should now type your preliminary prop list. Try to save this list on a computer disk. Make sure you include any costume pieces that need to be preset on the stage or carried on by the actors. The costume shop will still make these costume items, but they will be handled by the members of the prop crew, and they need to have these items on the prop list. Put the date on the prop list each time it is revised. It will be updated constantly and you need to know which

is the most recent. Once you have a typed copy of the list, make a copy for the person building (making) the props and the director. This first list will change a lot and you are responsible for keeping the list updated and relaying all changes to the person in charge of props.

Figure 17 shows an effective way to set up a prop list. It allows you to keep track of where the props are coming from, who handles them and any special notes. You may need to add a column for page number so that the designer knows on what page the prop first appears. The notes as to who handles the prop and where the prop enters the stage will help you when you are starting technical rehearsals. Tables will be set up in the offstage areas to hold the props and this list will let you know where you will need tables and what will go on each table. The notes column alerts the people building the props to any special needs or the crew to something they need to do. The type of notes you will list typically answer the following questions: Will bottles be opened? Is food going to be eaten or can it be glued to a plate? Does the phone need to ring? Does the radio need to play? Anything that will affect the way the prop works or its color, shape or size needs to be written down. Does the crew need to wash something before every performance? Do they need to take the prop from the actor as he or she walks offstage? You will add to this list as rehearsals progress.

You will also include cue sheets in this section. Cue sheets are roughly the same whether they are for sound, lights, flies or running crew. They list the cue number, how long it takes to run the cue, the action performed on the cue, a description of what that cue does, cue line or action and notes. You will not be able to fill in all of these columns at once, but you will want to start rough cue sheets for sound and running crew. You

should mark cues in the outside margin of your script page. Light cues are marked "LQ," sound cues "SQ," fly cues can be marked "FQ" and special effects do not need to be abbreviated. Follow these cues by a description: "LQ black out," "SQ thunder," or "FQ scrim out." Later on, these descriptions will be replaced with numbers (Samples provided in Chapter 8).

Figure 17: Sample Prop List

The Show
prop list (revised 4/25)

Prop:	Location:	Who Handles?	Notes:
eyeglasses	UR	George	costumes
grapes in a bowl	UL	Marsha	edible, wash before show
picture	preset-dresser		pic of young woman

Key:
UR = Up Right
UL = Up Left

For set changes, you will need to keep a running list of all changes the crew will need to perform during the show. This list may be as simple as a diagram of how the stage should be preset at the top of the show or may be a complex list of the movement of scenery and props by the crew from scene to scene in the show. To note these movements in the script, write what happens on a brightly colored sticky note and place it in the inside margin of your script page. Prop movements performed by the crew that do not happen with a big set change can be noted the same way, but you may want to note them on a different colored sticky note. The sticky note will alert you to perform the noted task for

the actors during rehearsals

Costume quick change lists have the page number, who the change involves, where it happens and a description of the costume change as shown in **Figure 18** below.

Figure 18: Sample Costume Quick Change List

The Show
Quick Change List

Page:	Who:	Where:	Description:
25	Juliet	UR	pink dress to night gown

On the final tab, write "Notes and Reports." In the front part of this section, put all of your production meeting notes and any information about the show distributed by the director. After that, insert a stack of rehearsal reports. You will need one for every rehearsal that you have. You should always be detailed in your rehearsal reports. This section will also contain performance reports. These are much like rehearsal reports but address the specific needs of performances. All of these things are for reference and may be used to settle a dispute as to when and if something was said or decided. They also track the creative progress of the show.

Rehearsal reports allow you to keep track of the notes you take about design and show related information. The subdivisions help you organize your notes into areas which will allow everyone else that may see your reports to find the section relevant to their jobs. **Figure 19** shows a sample rehearsal report. The larger areas tend to have more information and you can always write on the back.

Figure 19: Sample Rehearsal Report

REHEARSAL REPORT

SHOW: Company **DATE:** 1/27

WHERE: rm 34 IMC **TIME:** 7:02 – 10:16

LATE/ABSENT:
Sarah Myers – absent (strep)
John Williams – late 5 min (parking)

REHEARSED:
7:02 – 7:20 vocal warm-ups
7:20 – 8:47 rehearsed Act I
8:47 – 8:55 break
8:55 – 10:16 worked Act II

PROPS:
What kind of set dressing is on the counter?

COSTUMES:
How does April's dress button?

Fittings for 1/28:
Melissa G. 10:30

SET: /

LIGHTS AND SOUND: /

PROBLEMS: /

INJURIES /

MISC.:
Sarah out 'til Friday

SM TO DO:
Fix Prop List
Type Crew Schedule

Finally, tape a 3X5 card onto one of the pockets with the department address and phone number. If the prompt book is lost, this may help to return it.

The prompt book is the single most important source of information about the show. From its notes, charts and diagrams, someone should be able to virtually duplicate the show. If there is a secure place to lock up your prompt book in the rehearsal space, you should leave it there. That way, you cut down on your chances of losing the prompt book (a catastrophe) or damaging it. It is also heavy and cumbersome to lug from place to place. The final reason for leaving it in the rehearsal space is the adage, "the show must go on." If anything happens to you, the prompt book will still be accessible.

Check List: The Prompt Book

You have

- ☐ A binder and binder dividers.
- ☐ A section for contact sheets.
- ☐ A section for rehearsal schedules.
- ☐ A section for the script with a single page of script and a facing page for notes.
- ☐ A section for prop lists, cue sheets and costume information.
- ☐ A section for production meeting notes, show notes and rehearsal and performance reports.

Chapter 6
Rehearsals

For the First Rehearsal: Get to the rehearsal space a minimum of a half an hour ahead of time. Unlock all necessary doors (particularly bathrooms) and turn on the lights. Adjust the heat if you can. Keep in mind that stage lights tend to heat the stage once they have been on for a while. If you are doing a read-through for the first rehearsal, set up chairs for the cast and production staff around a table. If there are too many people to fit around a table comfortably, put couches and chairs in a rough circle and have a small table for the director, assistant director and yourself. You can probably do without table space if room is really limited.

Set out your handouts, liability release forms and other paperwork. Keep in mind that anything akin to an agreement or legal document should be signed in pen. If you have anyone in your cast who is seventeen, check with your department chairperson to see if that person needs a parent's signature. Have your extra pens and pencils handy because people will ask to borrow them.

Once you are set up and if you still have time, straighten up the rehearsal space. You will spend a lot of time in this space, so you might as well take the time to keep it clean. If the floor can be swept, sweep it. If you do not have a broom in the space, get

one from the scene shop or ask the department if one can be borrowed from custodial services on campus. Before blocking starts in the rehearsal space, you must always sweep the playing area (the stage area, or the area that represents the stage). Acting is very physical, and no actor appreciates sitting or lying on a dirty floor. You may also need to mop occasionally to pick up fine dust. Keeping the playing area clean and free of hazards (pins, nails and the like) is your responsibility. It only takes a few minutes and your assistants can help you.

Piece of Advice: Always share the tasks you give to your assistant stage managers (ASMs), particularly the menial ones. They will not grumble as much if they know that you also sweep, sharpen pencils and run errands. It also sets the precedent that everyone helps when needed.

If you are going to start blocking at the first rehearsal, sweep the playing area and then set up the furniture. Gym mats stacked next to each other work well for beds and cubes can double as tables, ottomans and various other kinds of furniture. Props will probably not be needed for another week, so do not set them up. Set up a table for the director, assistant director (AD), yourself and possibly one for the ASMs.

Check everyone in as they arrive and have an ASM call anyone who is more than five minutes late. Once everyone is assembled, the director will introduce him or herself and talk about his or her directing style and the play. The designers will be introduced next and they will talk about their particular areas and show models or renderings. When it is your turn to introduce yourself and your ASMs, tell the cast that all of you are there to help them and that if any of your ASMs ask them a question or tell them to do something, the ASM is acting under your direction. Then proceed.

First, pass out the contact sheet, point out the number to call if they will be late and your phone number(s). Emphasize that they are welcome to call you at anytime. It is very important that the cast understands that you are approachable and they should ask you questions if they do not understand. Ask if any phone numbers are wrong or if any names are misspelled. Next, pass out any paper work or forms that need to be signed. If anything does need to be returned to you, tell the cast that they may not leave at the end of the rehearsal until you have gotten all of the forms. You can use the cast check-in list to check if you have all of them. Ask anyone that has schedule conflicts to alert both you and the director before they leave the rehearsal that evening.

Last, pass out any information that the director wants the cast to have and let the director explain anything that is not clear. If you have any other information or directions, this is the time to talk about them. This information can include how to get complimentary tickets, directions to the costume shop or an explanation of the taped set. (Act One is laid out in blue tape and Act Two is laid out in yellow tape.) When you are done, tell everyone that you are really excited to be working on the show and reiterate that if they have any questions or problems that they should come to you immediately.

After everyone has been introduced, designs shown, the play discussed and business cleared away, you are ready to get started. If you are doing a read-through, you may be expected to do two things: 1) Time each act and 2) Read all the stage directions in the script. This does not include emotional notation, "screaming," "softly," or blocking, "Sarah crosses SR." It does include sound effects, descriptions and notes.

If the director starts blocking, be prepared to take notes. Do not wait to start taking blocking notes. Some directors will tell you not to take notes because blocking will

change drastically over the next few rehearsals. Although this is true, you will inevitably be asked at the next rehearsal when an actor previously crossed to the couch, so start taking notes. Always use pencil and have a non-abrasive eraser ready (blocking is discussed in Chapter 7).

Fill out your rehearsal report as the rehearsal progresses. You should note who was late or absent, start and stop times, what was done, and any notes to the designers from either the director or yourself. At the end of the rehearsal, announce the rehearsal times and what will be rehearsed the next day. Set the room or stage for class or for set work if necessary. Ask the director if he or she has any notes for you or if you need to do anything before the next rehearsal. Write these things down on the rehearsal report. Turn off the lights and lock all appropriate doors. Take the rehearsal report with you. When you get home, make sure the report is legible and write all appropriate notes or call the designers if it is not too late. Office numbers connected to a Voice Mail system or an answering machine are normally safe to call at any time. Take care of your list of things to do or make sure you leave a note of things to do the next day.

Piece of Advice: Lists of things to do are your friends! They will help you organize your time and will help you remember all of the small but important things you need to do. If the director asks you to do something before the next rehearsal, it must get done. At the very least, you need to try to get it done. That way, you can explain that you left two messages, a note, dropped by the shop looking for the person and you should have an answer by the next day.

It may be required that you make copies of your rehearsal reports for all designers and departments (scene shop and costume shop) or that you post the report on the call

board the next day. If you have to pass out copies to the designers and shops, you do not need to write them notes or call because the questions or notes are already on your rehearsal report. You still should check with the designers to get an answer to a question or to clarify a note.

Running Rehearsals: Most rehearsals will run much like the first one. You will get in earlier than the start time, unlock, set up, clean and prepare your materials. Check in people as they arrive and clear up any individual business such as signing up people for costume fittings and publicity appointments or answering questions. Save general business until everyone has arrived. Send an ASM to call anyone who is late and start rehearsal by calling it to order. This may be asking everyone to get in place for warm-ups or the start of the Act. Some directors like to start out rehearsals with a group physical and vocal warm-ups. When you are working with a show that involves singing or dancing, warm-ups are strongly recommended. Physical and vocal warm-ups will prevent people from straining their bodies and voices.

Hendrik Baker recommends that when dealing with dance or dancers, it may be necessary to have a box of powdered resin somewhere offstage (164). Some dancers rub their bare feet or their shoes in the resin because they believe it will help them get a better grip on the floor. This is a personal choice and not a necessity, so you should ask the choreographer if you should have resin for the dancers.

During the rehearsal, you need to take blocking notes, call out all sound and light cues that influence the actors such as phone rings or black outs. You and your ASMs are responsible for all prop and set moves the actors do not do. The actors may choose to help you, but this is not required. If you do need more help than just your ASMs, ask for

it. Most actors are happy to lend a hand.

Closing Down: At the end of the evening, lock up the props and the prompt book, put the furniture away, restore the space to its pre-rehearsal state, take down any notes, discuss any show business with your ASMs that will affect them, turn off the lights, lock up the rehearsal space and head home to take care of your notes. When you are done with your notes, get some homework done!

Rehearsals when the Actors Are Off Book: Once the actors are **off book**, you will need to either have yourself or an ASM **on book**. Off book means that the actors have memorized their lines and no longer need to walk around with the script (book) in their hands. Thus, someone needs to be on book, meaning that someone on the stage management staff is following along in the script and is ready to feed the actors a line if needed.

The director will decide when the actors are to be off book and for what portion of the play. Usually, actors are only asked to be off book for one act at a time. If the date or dates for being off book were decided early enough, they would be listed in the rehearsal schedule. If not, an announcement needs to be made as soon as the dates are known. If anyone is absent from the rehearsal at which this announcement is made, they should be called that night or the next day.

The first day the actors are supposed to be off book, explain at the start of the rehearsal that when they need to be prompted, they need to call out "line!" They are not to snap their fingers, swear or clap at you. You should also not prompt after a long pause unless you believe that the actor does not realize it is his or her line. The person on book needs to give the first few words of the line in a loud, clear voice. This should not be a

line reading. In other words, the prompter does not need to "act" the line.

Once the actors have been off book for a day or two, you can start taking line notes. Just because an actor can remember the gist of the line does not mean that the line is being said accurately. To aid the actor in making corrections, you take line notes to point out what was not said properly or what was missed. **Figure 20** is a sample of what a line note looks like before and after it is filled out. You can fit four of these on an eight and a half by eleven sheet of paper. A sheet of these has been provided in the appendix for you to use.

Figure 20: A Blank Line Note and Completed Line Note

LINE NOTES

Actor/Character_____

Page____ Line_____

____Called for Line	____Paraphrased
____Dropped line	____Pronunciation error
____Dropped word(s)	____Jumped somebody else's line
____Changed word to_____	____Late cue
____Added_____	____Business/blocking missed
____Inverted lines or words	____Need to enunciate

CHECK YOUR SCRIPT!

LINE NOTES

Actor/Character Romeo

Page Act III line 79 Line good Capulet, which name I tender (as dearly)

____Called for Line	____Paraphrased
____Dropped line	____Pronunciation error
_✓_Dropped word(s)	____Jumped somebody else's line
____Changed word to_____	____Late cue
____Added_____	____Business/blocking missed
____Inverted lines or words	____Need to enunciate

CHECK YOUR SCRIPT!

If an actor is consistently changing a word, tell him or her what the proper word is and what word he or she is saying. Paraphrasing—an approximation— is not acceptable. If the author had wanted it that way, it would have been written that way. Occasionally, the set design, costumes or time period may require that a few words or lines are changed or cut. Note these in your script in pencil and give lines and line notes according to the changes.

If an actor repeatedly misses or changes something that is a cue line for someone else or a vital piece of information for the play, talk directly to the actor to explain why the recurring mistake is a problem. If that does not work, ask the director to talk to the actor. You can also use the line note forms to give actors notes that they are not following their blocking.

Special Circumstances: Certain rehearsals require intimate, sensitive or dangerous activity, and you must do your best to make the actors feel as comfortable as possible. Sensitive issues include actors having to undress or be nude on stage, romantic or sexual activity, long and extremely emotional outbursts or specific settings requiring an abnormally tense atmosphere, all of which require special concentration. Dangerous situations include most stage combat, and situations where people are picked up, dropped, thrown or perform physically demanding feats such as the Bottle Dance in ***Fiddler on the Roof***.

The director may already have a plan for dealing with the situations in rehearsal. For a nude or semi-nude scene, the actor seldom needs to start rehearsing the scene from the beginning of rehearsals, but it should become part of the rehearsal roughly the week before technical rehearsals start. At this point in the rehearsal, the actor is familiar and

comfortable with the other actors and will probably feel less shy with them. Alberts' book on rehearsal management recommends doing the nude scene as a separate, private rehearsal (68). This means that the minimal number of people are present and no one is allowed to interrupt the rehearsal. An actor normally works down to nothing. At one rehearsal, the outer layers of clothing come off (such as a jacket or shirt). At the next, pants may come off, and a few rehearsals later the actor will work down to underwear or to being nude.

At the first rehearsal that a person is nude, it may be an upsetting experience for him or her. The actor may need some time to recover and be alone. Be supportive. If the actor leaves the room looking upset, send a close friend after them. If you do not know of any close friends in the cast, go after the actor yourself. Do not act overly concerned as that is more likely to upset the actor or make him or her think that he or she is supposed to be upset. Ask if the actor is okay, needs a glass of water, a five minute break.

Never let anyone say or do anything to the actor who is nude or semi-naked that could make the person feel uncomfortable. This is unacceptable. The actor may joke about the situation to relieve tension, but you must be very careful to maintain a comfortable environment. These people need to be able to work together and trust each other in very uncomfortable situations. If you think there is a major problem developing between the people in the scene or if you are hearing a lot of angry comments about the scene, talk to the director privately about this. The director may not realize or may want to deal with it in his or her own way. You may want to tell the actor to bring a bathrobe to put on quickly after the scene is over.

If the director is thinking of saving this scene for technical rehearsals, try to

persuade him or her otherwise. If this were saved for technical rehearsals, the actor would be surrounded by unfamiliar crew people in a wide open space. Let the actor get comfortable in the smaller setting of the rehearsal so that the additional people are not a shock.

For intimate and otherwise sensitive situations, you do not need to do much other than be supportive and watch out for actors feeling a lot of strain. Always have a box of facial tissue and offer a shoulder to cry on if someone is upset.

When something dangerous is being done for the first time, stop everything else to work on that activity. The action should be rehearsed slowly and if somebody is being picked up, falling or being thrown, put gym mats out on the floor beforehand. As the actors become more comfortable, the mats can be removed. All combat should be rehearsed in slow motion until the actors are very familiar with every move. As they become more comfortable, the speed can slowly be increased until the fight is up to show speed. Pay close attention to the fights to watch for potential problems or injuries. You can normally tell if actors are having a particularly difficult time with the scene by the expression on their faces. If they look really uncomfortable, talk to the actors involved in that part of the scene to see if the problem can be fixed. You can also stop the fight immediately if you see anything wrong, but you need to know the fight well enough to stop it at a safe place. At this time, the actors should come up with a line of dialogue that is in keeping with the play, but does not sound close to another line said in that scene. This line is to alert the other actors that something is wrong. The actor may have lost his or her place or may be injured. If the line alerts the other person to the problem, it can normally be worked around without stopping the flow of the scene or alerting the

audience.

In general, sensitive situations can be dealt with by paying attention, making sure the actors are as comfortable and safe as the situation allows and making sure the rehearsal environment is supportive.

Keeping Designers Updated: Pay close attention to blocking, changes made in character portrayal and anything else that may cause changes in set, props and costumes. You normally do not need to worry about lights until a week before technical rehearsals unless the director has a specific request for the designer. The kind of things you are looking for include the following:

Costumes:

⇒ Physical activity that needs to allow for movement or padding that needs to protect body parts

⇒ Pockets or purses in which to hide or store objects

⇒ Quick changes or business that requires one costume to be worn underneath another costume

⇒ Will anything be spilled on a costume?

⇒ Will there be stage blood?

⇒ Does the costume department need to create scars on anyone?

⇒ Does any character have missing eyes, teeth or limbs?

⇒ You may need to ask for description of the costume from the designer because the character describes the clothing during the show, or you may need to let the designer know the specific needs demanded by the script.

⇒ The location of buttons or zippers on a costume piece. Sometimes these are an important part of the script.

⇒ Is anyone wearing unfamiliar clothing and thus needs to have a rehearsal costume piece such as heeled shoes, hats, corsets or heavy skirts?

⇒ Any quick changes should be noted and relayed to the designer.

Props:

⇒ Do glasses or bottles need to have liquid in them?

⇒ Will that liquid be drunk or spilled on anything?

⇒ Will there be food?

⇒ Will it be eaten?

⇒ Will any paper product be torn or crumpled?

⇒ Do pens actually need ink? (Ink can leak and stain a costume.)

⇒ Will there be any open flame on stage?

⇒ Will any electrical equipment (lamps, radios, etc.) need to be practical? (Being practical means that it actually works, such as a lamp lighting up.)

⇒ Does a prop need to be light enough to be carried?

⇒ Strong enough to be stood upon?

⇒ Sturdy enough to be roughly handled? (dropped or thrown)

⇒ Will it be broken as part of the show?

⇒ Is the prop used to hit an actor?

Set:

⇒ Can the platform bear the weight of the number of people on it?

⇒ Is any furniture being used in a way not in keeping with its normal usage? In other words, chairs are meant for sitting, not standing or throwing. If somebody is jumping or standing on a piece of furniture, the furniture will either need to be reinforced or a different piece pulled.

⇒ Is anyone standing on a piece of furniture in tap shoes?

⇒ If people are dancing on platforms, particularly tap dancing, you may need to deaden the sound in some way. (i.e. putting egg crate foam on the under side of the platform).

⇒ Does the furniture piece need to be in a particular period style?

The director will also give you notes for designers along these lines or making certain specifications that are needed for the blocking.

Holding Production Meetings: You need to schedule these regularly. At the end of each meeting, you should always set the time for next meeting. Bring questions with you to ask the designers and discuss any possible problems that affect their areas. If you are running the meeting, let the director ask any questions he or she has first. Then ask the designers one by one for an update and any questions or problems they may have. Ask your questions when the particular designer is done speaking because your questions might bring up other questions from other people. Before the meeting ends, ask if anyone has anything else they need to discuss. Remember to take notes at all of these meetings.

Publicity Photos: Your department may or may not do publicity photos. These are photographs to be distributed to the media that are taken early in the rehearsal process. Publicity photos normally consist of five poses indicative of the content of the play. These

poses may not be in the play, but they should tell a piece of the story. Sometimes the director arranges these shots, but if the director cannot be there, you may be required to arrange the shots yourself. You can probably pick five interesting poses. If you feel underqualified, ask the actors for ideas. Between you and the actors, you can come up with some great poses and compositions.

Diffusing and Dealing with Problems: Dealing with problems is a significant part of the stage manager's job, but the most difficult to quantify and describe. In the course of trying to maintain a good working atmosphere for the show, you will need to discipline people and to try and diffuse problems before they get out of hand. You will need to use tact, professionalism, patience and your best judgment. In general, this part of your job involves trying to get people to show up on time, learn lines, attend appointments and work with people they despise (including the director).

In general, the bulk of your problems are personnel and personality problems directly related to the actors, although you will have some of the same problems with the crew. When dealing with problems such as lateness, unexcused absences, failure to learn lines or attend appointments, ask straight forward questions and try to keep any indication of harshness or sympathy out of your voice. Be blunt, not angry. If this is a repeated problem, "Why were you late?" should be followed by "Will this happen again? Is this a problem we need to fix or can you take care of this yourself?" Do not be snide, because it only makes the actor or crew member uncooperative. In some cases, you may discover that you need to help people arrange transportation or that they just need to be 15 minutes late because of a class or a job. These are both problems with solutions, but if an actor has to be habitually late, the director should be alerted to the problem. If you make a

general announcement at rehearsal, you may be able to find a ride for the person if that is what is needed. If the actor just needs to be late, the director can rehearse a different scene at the start of rehearsal. Maybe physical and vocal warm-ups take up the first 20 minutes of rehearsal anyway and the person will just need to warm up alone. Sometimes the simplest solution is a phone call before rehearsal to remind or wake up the person.

If talking seriously about the time that was wasted due to tardiness, or pleading with the person to be on time does not work, let the director try talking to them. The director does have more authority than you do and the actors might listen to him or her instead of you. If that works, great! Besides, the director can make more effective threats and also knows how important the actor is to the cast and the show. The director may decide the actor has caused enough problems and has one more chance to get things right before being replaced. That is the director's prerogative. Unexcused absences and missed appointments are dealt with in much the same manner.

If these problems happen with a crew member, you have more authority. If crew members are working on the show for class credit, talk to their instructors. If talking to the student does not work, you may be able to affect grades or force the person to put in more crew hours working in one of the shops or on another show. Warn the crew members before you take any action. People should always be given a chance to fix a problem. This is a learning environment and you are teaching professionalism along with how to perform specific tasks.

For people who volunteered for the show, if they work hard but are always a few minutes late, let the problem drop. As long as being tardy does not interfere with anything else, you need the extra pair of hands. If you cannot deal with the lateness, bad attitude or

poor performance on the job, dismiss them. Do this privately. Explain to the crew member that warnings were given, but no satisfactory changes were made. If the person asks for one more chance, allow him or her to prove you wrong. If the other crew members ask what happened, explain that you talked to the crew member and you both decided that it would be best if the person no longer worked on the show. Give out the ex-crew member's tasks, or post a sign asking for volunteer crew members. Your ASM might have to step into these tasks.

With actors who cannot learn their lines, ask them why they are having trouble. You might find that they need to run lines with an ASM before or during rehearsal to help them. You may discover you have someone who is dyslexic. Dyslexics take longer to read and will thus take longer to memorize lines. Suggest reading their lines into a tape recorder so that they can listen to them instead of read them. Explain to the actors who are just not taking the time to memorize lines that they are hurting and insulting their fellow cast members. If you still have a major problem, talk to the director. The director talking to the person may fix the problem. If not, suggest to the director that no one on stage responds unless fed the correct line. This will frustrate the actor and hopefully motivate him or her to learn lines. Be careful, this may also make the actor more uncooperative. You may decide persistence in handing out a ream of line notes every night will bully the person into memorizing. People are sometimes dismissed from the show for not learning lines soon enough.

Be careful not to be too militant too quickly about lines. The person with 70 % of the lines in the play will take longer than everyone else to learn lines, and everyone takes at least one to two weeks to become really comfortable with their lines.

The last major problem you deal with on a regular basis is getting people to work together. In educational theatre, you are working with young people who sometimes have to learn how to deal with other people in a serious manner. This can involve anything from being rude to fellow cast members to visibly "giving attitude" to the director. Whatever the actor or crew member is doing, take the person aside, point out the behavior and ask what caused it. Some people will not realize whatever they did was inappropriate. Explain how the action was inappropriate and ask that it not be repeated. This solves most of the problems. For people who understand that what they did was inappropriate, find out the cause of the behavior. Was this a one time problem? Will the discussion you are having cause the problem to cease? Does this person need to apologize to someone, particularly the director? Does this person need to discuss this problem with someone? Is this just a personal problem that needs to be kept out of rehearsals? Do you need to bring in someone else to solve the problem? Normally, the best person to take problems to is the director who has the ultimate responsibility and authority to address them.

If you personally have any comments on the blocking or character development that you feel are absolutely necessary because what is happening on stage does not conform to what is being said or the capabilities of the stage, write a note to the director alerting him or her to the problem. Do not force the issue if the director chooses not to change the action.

You will also deal with jealousy, budding romance and other personal developments that have more place in a soap opera than in a rehearsal hall. Every case will be different. Do not take sides in these matters or try to help them along, just remind actors and crew that they are here to do a job and their personal lives need to be kept out

of the show. You may want to alert the director as to what is happening. This helps the director understand the interaction between the actors in rehearsal and on stage.

These problems can become more serious. People will share information with you because they know how complicated your job can be. People will warn you that somebody involved with your show was arrested for a serious crime, sells drugs, stalked someone or displays some sort of potentially dangerous behavior. They may also warn you about medical conditions or some sort of trauma happening in the person's life. First of all, tell the director what you were told and whether or not you were told by a reliable source. In most cases, you do not want to confront the person. Watch for any signs of the problem and leave it at that. If you were given misinformation, or the problem never shows up, only you and the director knew there could be a problem and no harm was done. If you do see signs of a problem, you can alert the director and head off a problem. These kind of situations include someone known for forcing his or her unwanted attentions on someone else, someone coming drunk to rehearsals or smuggling in alcohol to the rehearsal space or can be as simple as making sure the diabetics or hypoglycemics in the cast are fed regularly.

In most cases, you will need to let the director decide how to proceed. In some cases, these problems could include your director. If so, go to your supervisor, the department chairperson or a full time faculty member you trust. Ask if you can speak to this person in confidence, describe the problem in detail and ask for advice. This may be a problem someone else has to solve. You may feel like you are "tattling," but it is better to be safe. You have to look out for the best interests of the cast, crew and production. Your actions are preventative. With most problems, the cast and crew will never know

that anything happened. This is best, because you want to maintain a pleasant work environment. If someone is dismissed, ask the director to explain the matter to the company or how you should explain the dismissal. This helps squelch rumors and provides a unified front so that everything appears to be aboveboard.

No two situations are exactly the same. Not all of these solutions work in every case. You must use your own judgment. Mistakes happen, but as long as you did everything in a straightforward manner with the best interests of the production in mind, people will understand. This is where discussing everything with the director is very helpful. The director can give you excellent advice and then every action you take has also been approved by the person in charge of the production.

Check List: Rehearsals

You have

- ☐ Come in early to set up the space with your ASMs.
- ☐ Checked in actors, signed them up for appointments and answered questions.
- ☐ Given general announcements before rehearsal starts.
- ☐ Taken blocking.
- ☐ Charted set and prop movements and sound and light cues as much as possible.
- ☐ Called out all known cues that affect the actors.
- ☐ Moved set and prop pieces as necessary.
- ☐ Had someone stay on book when the actor are off book and taken line notes.
- ☐ Kept accurate rehearsal reports.
- ☐ Kept designers informed of all changes.

- Held regular production meetings.
- Been sensitive to the safety and comfort needs of the actors.
- Tried to head off any problems before they got out of hand.

Chapter 7
How to Take Blocking Notation

Blocking is a term that describes how the director orchestrates the movements of the actors. Your job is primarily to record this blocking but also—optionally—the emotional content of the show in parenthetical detail. For emotional content, the easiest way to notate this is by printing the emotion above the line or in the inside margin of your script page as in **Figure 21.**

Figure 21: Notating Emotions

Margin: "You lied to me." (quietly)
(angrily)
Above: "You lied to me."

To record blocking, it is suggested to use two methods simultaneously: conventional and diagram blocking. Conventional blocking involves writing down the actions of the actors in an abbreviated form (see Figures 22-24). Most stage management manuals will tell you to write down the action on the script page. For the first day of blocking, this may be an effective method if the director sits down and goes through the script page by page with the actors. In this case, you will hastily scribble down the

blocking above the line of script with a carat (^) to show where the action starts. This is fine as a quick fix, but not in the long run. You need to take the script home and transfer the blocking notes to the bottom half of the notes page. This is done to keep your script page clean, and to give you more room in which to write.

To enable you to write quicker, most stage managers use a type of short hand that uses the "Areas of the Stage" to locate the actors (see **Figures 22-23**). The stage is divided into either nine or fifteen areas. These areas help the director tell the actor where to go such as being "Center Stage," "Downstage" or "Upstage." Blocking is always given from the actors' perspective. This means that you use their right and left, also known as Stage Right and Stage Left. Upstage is the part of the stage farthest from the audience and Downstage is closest to the audience. Upstage and Downstage come from when the stage was raked (inclined) to provide better sight lines for the audience. Thus it was literally "Up" stage and "Down"stage.

Figure 22: Nine Areas of the Stage

UR	**UC**	**UL**
SR	**CS**	**SL**
DR	**DC**	**DL**

AUDIENCE

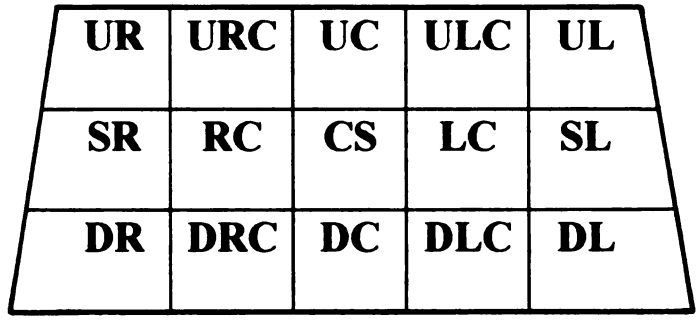
Key:

UR = Up Right **UC** = Up Center **UL** = Up Left

SR = Stage Right **CS** = Center Stage **SL** = Stage Left

DR = Down Right **DC** = Down Center **DL** = Down Left

Figure 23: Fifteen Areas of the Stage



Key:
URC = Up Right Center **ULC** = Up Left Center
RC = Right Center **LC** = Left Center
DRC = Down Right Center **DLC** = Down Left Center

In addition to using these areas of the stage, using furniture to note the location of an actor onstage is very helpful and adds to the accuracy of your blocking. Furniture normally does not move and thus provides an accurate indication of the exact location of an actor. For example somebody is "just Right of a table," "Upstage of the big rug" or "leaning on the Right side of the fireplace."

Since you are writing quickly, you abbreviate as much as possible. Certain words used repeatedly in blocking have simple, standard abbreviations as noted in **Figure 24**. In addition to these abbreviations, use the first letter or letters of a character's name instead of the full name. There are two things that can cause confusion when abbreviating a character's name. If a character's name starts with C, D, L, R or S, the first letter of the name could be confused with a stage direction. To eliminate confusion, add another letter to the character's name. If the character is Robert, the abbreviation "Rb" will clarify. If

two characters have names that begin with the same letter, add a second letter to one or both. If you have a Mike and a Mary, you may designate them "Mk" and "My." Whatever abbreviations you come to use, they should be noted in a key provided at the beginning of the script section of your prompt book and should be used consistently. Remember to include the abbreviations of the character names. **Figures 24-25** provide some basic blocking symbols and examples of conventional blocking notation.

Figure 24: Simple Abbreviations Used in Conventional Blocking Notation

In addition to using "UR," "DC" and the rest of the stage areas:

X = "Cross"

→ = To

 = Sit

 = Stand

@ = Around

 = Kneel Right Knee (actor's perspective)

 = Kneel Left Knee (actor's perspective)

 = Change

David Ionazzi recommends some other symbols (95):

 = Pick Up

 = Turn

 = Table

 = Face

 = Push

Figure 25: Some Examples of Conventional Blocking Notation

William cross Stage Left to the couch and sits.

Wx SL → couch, Ş

Sarah cross Down Center

Sr x DC

Richard cross just Right of the table.

Rd x just R of π

Sometimes, one action starts as another ends.

William stands, crosses Stage Left near the Upstage edge of the desk, then Henry crosses Left to Right of William

W↑Ş, x SL near US edge of desk, then HxL→ R of W

Does this look a little confusing? This is where blocking on a diagram comes in handy. See **Figure 28** for an example

Figure 25 gives a few examples of how to write conventional blocking. If you wrote down the blocking on the script page, it would look something like **Figure 26**. To transfer, put a number 1 in a circle where the first action on the page starts. On the bottom half of the notes page (below the picture), write a corresponding ① and write out the movement. Once that is done, erase the words on the script page, leaving the number behind. By the next action put a ② where it starts in the script and repeat the same steps as you did for ①. This helps keep your script page uncluttered (see **Figure 27** for an example of how to transfer the blocking).

Figure 26: Preliminary Blocking on a Script Page in a Prompt Book

Hamlet Act III scn iv

Queen: What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not murder me?
↑Help, Ho!
break away (U), H run after, catches

Polonius: (*behind*) What, ho! Help!
push G → floor

Hamlet: (*drawing*) How now? A rat? Dead for ducat, dead!
↑rush UR

Polonius (*behind*) O, I am slain! stumble L, fall

Queen: O me, what hast thou done?

Hamlet: Nay, I know not. Is it the King?

Queen: O, what a rash and bloody deed is this. crying, hands on face

Hamlet: A bloody deed--almost as bad, good mother,
as kill a king, and marry with his brother.

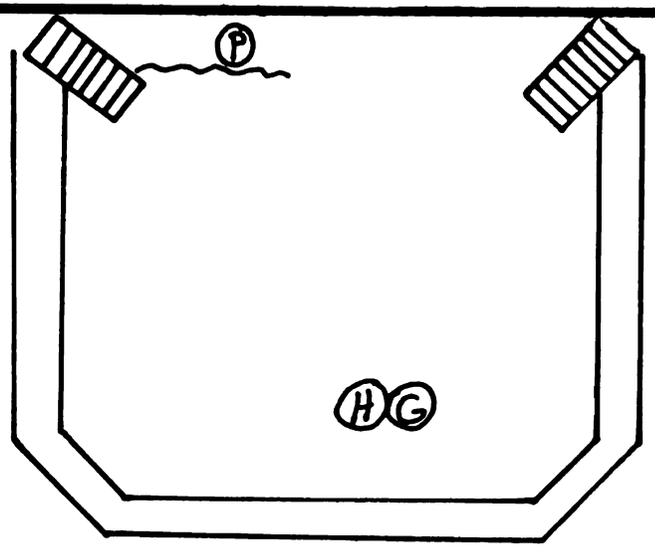


Figure 27: Transferring Blocking to the Notes Page in a Prompt Book

Hamlet Act III scn iv

Queen: What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not murder me?
①Help, Ho!

Polonius: (*behind*) What, ho! Help!

Hamlet: (*drawing*) How now? ② A rat? ③ Dead for ducat, dead!

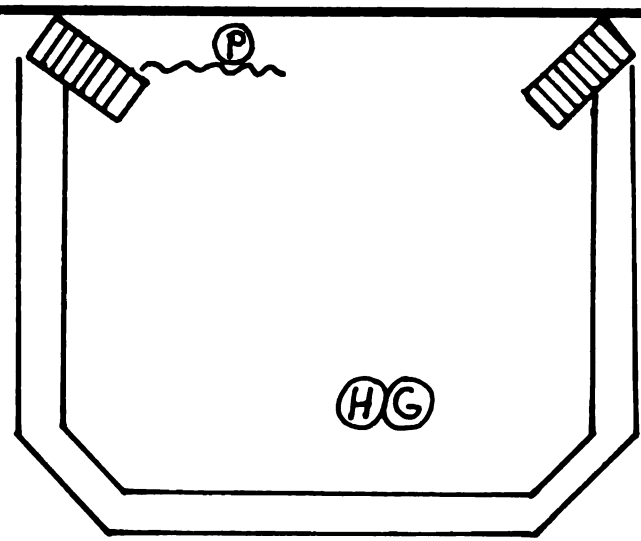
Polonius (*behind*) O, I am slain! ④

Queen: O me, what hast thou done?

Hamlet: Nay, I know not. Is it the King?

Queen: O, what a rash and bloody deed is this. (sobs into hands)

Hamlet: A bloody deed--almost as bad, good mother,
as kill a king, and marry with his brother.



① G breaks away, runs U, H runs after, catches her @ the waist
② H pushes G → floor (UL)
③ H rushes UR, sword drawn
④ P stumbles L, falls to floor

There is big advantage of keeping the blocking on the notes page other than keeping the script page clean. When the placement of an action is changed, all you have to do is erase the number on the script page and move it to where the action starts. If that moves your numbers out of place, renumber. This is easier than trying to rewrite an entire blocking note somewhere on the script page and saves you lots of time and confusion.

If you have time, you may be able to write the blocking directly onto your notes page. Just put the number in the script where the action starts, write a corresponding number on the notes page followed by the blocking. Leave space between each chunk of blocking on the notes page to make it easier to read and to give yourself space to write in additional blocking if necessary.

The final example in **Figure 25** is somewhat complicated, particularly when you are trying to write quickly. This is where the drawing of the set on the upper half of the notes page becomes very handy. You can use this drawing of the set to diagram the movement. Drawing a picture of the actor's path is quick, particularly when actors are being blocked on their feet (on the stage). The corresponding action can be written down using conventional blocking later when you have more time (see **Figures 28-29**).

Using both the conventional blocking and the diagram allows anyone with a rudimentary knowledge of blocking to understand either the diagram of the blocking or the conventional blocking below it. The diagrams of the blocking provides a flowchart of sorts. Diagrams are usually easy for the actors to understand, particularly if you are showing an actor who was not present when the blocking was created. You can point to the diagram and say, "You do this." These diagrams are also very helpful to the lighting designer who can tell from the diagram on each page what areas need to be lit and when.

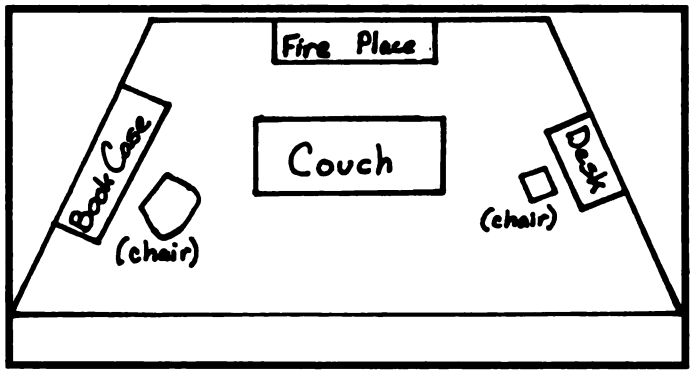
Figure 28: Diagramming the Blocking

The Action: William stands, crosses Stage Left near the Upstage edge of the desk, then Henry crosses Left to Right of William.

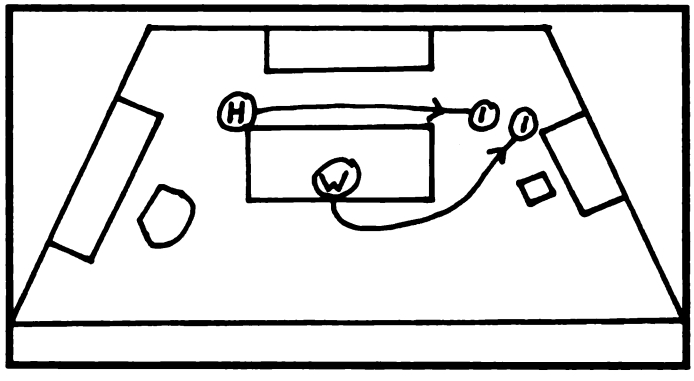
The Conventional Blocking:

W ↑, x SL near the US edge of desk, then H x L to R of W

The floor plan of the stage (labeled):



The stage with the same blocking, only diagrammed:



If you were to then have the action of William crossing Down Stage ((a) W x DC):

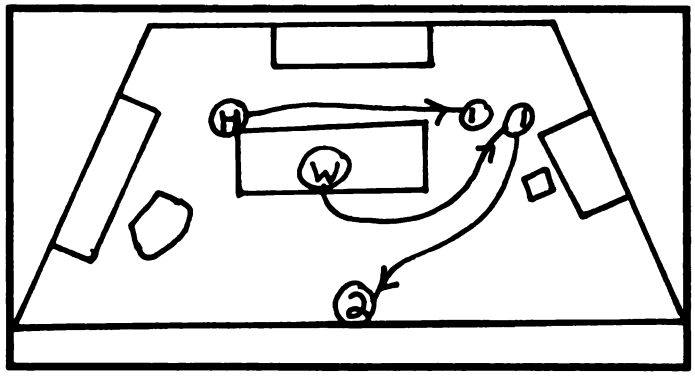


Figure 29: Sample Script Page and Notes Page in a Prompt Book

Hamlet Act III scn iv

Queen: What wilt thou do? Thou wilt not murder me?
① Help, Ho!

Polonius: (*behind*) What, ho! Help!

Hamlet: (*drawing*) How now? ② A rat? ③ Dead for ducat, dead!

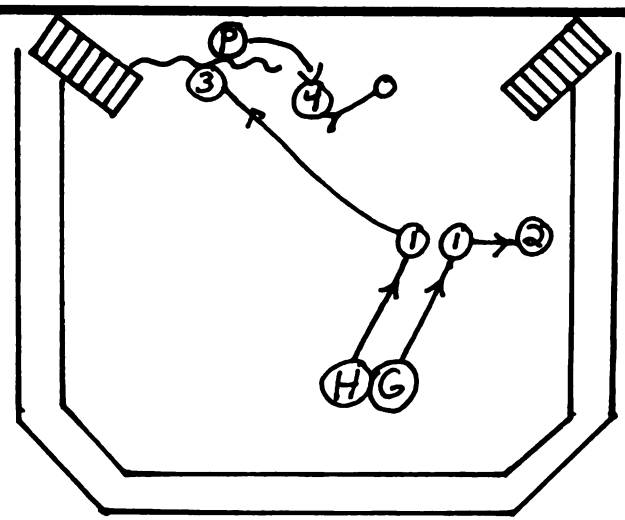
Polonius (*behind*) O, I am slain! ④

Queen: O me, what hast thou done?

Hamlet: Nay, I know not. Is it the King?

Queen: O, what a rash and bloody deed is this. (sobs into hands)

Hamlet: A bloody deed--almost as bad, good mother,
as kill a king, and marry with his brother.



① G breaks away, runs U, H runs after, catches her @ the waist
② H pushes G → floor (UL)
③ H rushes UR, sword drawn
④ P stumbles L, falls → floor

This diagram also allows you to note where everyone is located at the beginning of each script page. To do this, you place the abbreviation of the character's name in a circle at the actor's position onstage at the beginning of the page. In **Figure 29**, Polonius was hidden behind the curtain (the wavy line) at the beginning of the page. If you did not have this picture, you would have to page back through the script to try and find his last location. This is the major advantage of the diagram because conventional blocking is only used to note an action, not the placement of someone from several pages previous. Searching for someone's position at the beginning of a page can waste an incredible amount of time, and you want to do everything you can to conserve time. This way, if your director wants to start on page 12, you can tell the actors exactly where they are standing at the top of the page in a matter of seconds.

In the long run, diagramming the blocking is faster and easier than conventional blocking, particularly when actors are being directed on their feet or are changing their own movement. When you are taking blocking in haste, you seldom have the time to write coherent conventional blocking, but conventional blocking is still very important because it gives details that a drawing cannot show. A picture does not tell you whether the actor skipped, ran or crawled during a cross or that an actor shook his fist at someone before he sat down. It does not tell you if an actor was looking over her shoulder as she walked or if she crossed to someone and touched him on the shoulder. This is why both kinds of blocking work well together. Each complements the other.

As you progress through rehearsals, your blocking notes will change. Sometimes you will need to erase a whole page and start over. Other times you might just want to write what happened on a sticky note, stick it where is happened in the script and fill in the

blocking later. Remember to keep the notes page clean and to print when you are writing blocking on these pages. Cursive gets sloppy very easily, particularly when you are writing quickly. Some stage managers will only use one method of blocking, but you have seen how each kind alone has deficiencies. You will discover on your own if you need to use only one type of blocking or both. Use what works best for you.

Some Blocking Problems: Group movements and more than 10 people on stage are extremely difficult to diagram. With group movements you may want to just write out the blocking and put the number of the action on the diagram in the general vicinity of where it occurs. The three witches dancing in ***Macbeth*** may happen on a platform upstage right. Put the number of the action on the platform and write a description of it below. With more than 10 people moving on stage, draw their starting positions on the diagram, and write out the blocking below.

How to Notate with Musicals, Opera and Dance: Do not worry if you do not read music or do not understand a particular idiom of dance. It helps if you do have some understanding, so learn to read sheet music at least at an elementary level. Reading, or at least understanding, sheet music is helpful in dealing with opera since the entire piece is sung.

If you do understand sheet music, you can take blocking the same way as described earlier, the only difference being that an action may occur on a certain note or phrase, not just a spoken line. If you do not understand sheet music, but the music has words, you can still take blocking using the words. In a musical, the lines that are sung are usually centered in the script and printed in capital letters to distinguish them from lines that are spoken. Since sung lines often take more time than spoken lines, but have

more action involved, you may want to take verbal blocking in the inside margin of the script or music page.

Thomas A. Kelly, a professional stage manager, suggests in his stage management manual that when you deal with music with no words, you count out the beats (232). If you have some sense of rhythm, this will work. He suggests sets of eight beats, but some music will lend itself better to sets of six beats. Which works better? Try counting in time to the music and see whether counting to three or counting to four works better. Waltzes are always counted in threes, but fours will work for many songs. Since you have no words to guide you during instrumental music, being able to count the number of beats in the instrumental section or music will allow you to take blocking and later call cues on the beats. Kelly's method is illustrated in **Figure 30**.

Figure 30: Blocking with Music

Kelly's Method:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 start kickline

2 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 split kickline

3 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Or in threes:

1 2 3 4 5 6 E x US

2 2 3 4 5 6 E turn @ (face US)

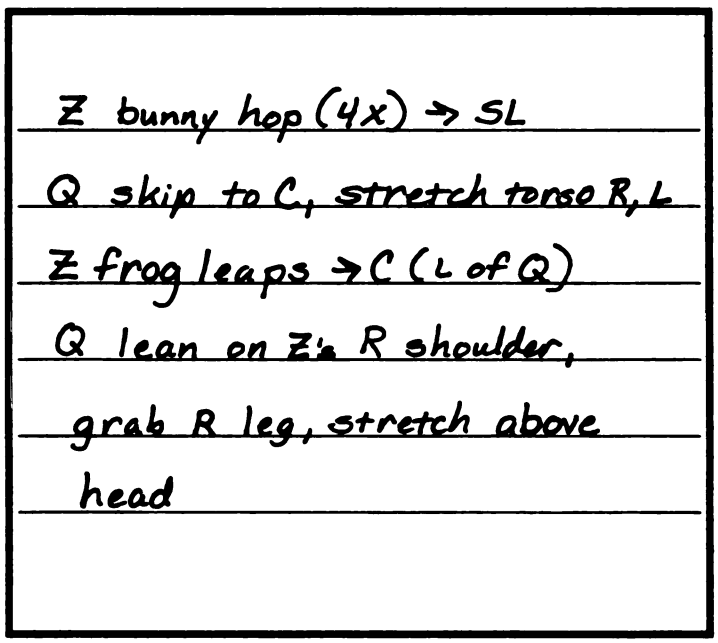
The first number of each set tells you what set it is, i.e. the first set, second set and third set. You will need to make sure that any blocking numbers are circled to prevent confusion. In the section of eights, the kickline starts on the sixth beat of the first set of eight and splits into two kicklines on the fourth beat of the second set. In the section of sixes, Esmerelda crosses upstage on the fifth beat of the first set of six and turns around on the third beat of the second set of six.

When you are working with dance, you may also need to use the beat system if the music has no words. If you have no knowledge of dance terms, listen very closely to the choreographer as he or she teaches the dance for the first time. If you sit and listen, you will hear the choreographer name a move and then either show what it is or teach it to the cast. You can write down the exact term if you are present and listening at this early rehearsal. The choreographer will have to repeat sections several times while teaching, enabling you to get most of the dance transcribed from these rehearsals. If you do not get a term for a move, you need to come up with words that identify the moves. Some simple descriptive words are turn, run, bend, arch, stretch, flex, kneel, spin, slow and fast. Sometimes you will need to come up with a term you use to describe a move such as "frog leaps" or "bunny hops." These phrases do give you an understanding of how the move looks. Your blocking may say something along the lines of "Takes sliding steps UR, then penguin walks to DR." You can also use stick figures when necessary. Sometimes a quick drawing is more effective than a paragraph of description. Leave room in your notation to make changes if necessary. As long as someone else who had to read the prompt book could guess which descriptions went with which moves, the blocking notation is still effective.

This works well with most musicals because the dance will change very little throughout the course of rehearsal. If you are working with a dance concert, or with a choreographer who constantly changes and adapts choreography, do not start taking blocking immediately. Watch every run through closely and see if you can distinguish sections to the dance. A week before technical rehearsals, use a video camera to tape a rehearsal, but only after you have gotten permission from the choreographer(s). You can

take this tape home, put it in a VCR and transcribe the movements from the tape. Unlike a rehearsal, you can stop a tape at any moment to write something down or freeze a frame to draw a stick figure. If the music has no words and Kelly's method of counting beats is too complicated for you, you can create a "script" of the dancer's movements (see **Figure 31**). As with your other scripts, leave a wide outside margin in which to write your cues. You will be able to call a show from this.

Figure 31: A Dance "Script"



There is a codified method of taking dance notation called "Labanotation." Some schools offer classes in this method. If you are seriously considering stage management as a career, you should consider taking a class in this method.

Unlike taking blocking during rehearsals, you will not be expected to remind

people where and when they need to move. Either an understudy or a dance captain will be present to learn the various parts of the dance. You still need to pay close attention because you will need to call cues from the dancers' movements.

We have covered taking blocking with a straight script (no music), with a musical script, with a score (mostly opera), and from a straight dance piece. Always remember that you are striving for clarity and accuracy in your blocking, but you must also use the method that works best for you. Every stage manager's prompt book reveals a different personal style. You will be making up some of your notation as you go along. This is fine as long as it is clear.

Check List: How to Take Blocking Notation

You have

- ☐ Set up a prompt book as described in Chapter 5, particularly the script section.
- ☐ Taken most of you blocking on the notes page, keeping the script page neat.
- ☐ Taken both visual and verbal blocking to be as comprehensive as possible.
- ☐ Used the blocking method that worked best when the standard methods were ineffective, particularly with music and dance.
- ☐ Kept the notes page updated and clear so that someone could read your work.
- ☐ Left the outside margin of the script page clear for cues.

Chapter 8
Getting Ready for Technical and Dress Rehearsals

Technical rehearsals start roughly five to six days before a show opens. They occur in the actual theatre space and consist of adding most or all of the technical elements to the production. After two or three technical rehearsals, costumes are added and "Dress" rehearsals begin. The period of technical rehearsals and dress rehearsals is called "tech week." There are several types of technical rehearsals or "techs," including dry techs, cue-to-cues and full techs.

A "dry tech" seldom has actors. The technical designers and crews run only the cues of the show (this is minus the costume designer and costume and make-up crews). The dry tech allows the crew and designers to work out some of the larger problems before the actors arrive. You may need to have someone read parts of the script if a crew member is taking cues directly from what would be occurring on stage. For a dry tech, you may also need to call some of the actors if they are an integral part of a technical element, such as flying an actor. In fact, when flying an actor or actors, you may want to have a separate two to three hour rehearsal to practice. Dry techs are recommended for most shows in which the technical crews need ample time to rehearse.

A "cue-to-cue" rehearsal involves the actors, but the entire show is not run. You

move from technical cue to technical cue, skipping those parts of the show that have no cues. During a cue-to-cue, you give actors a line that is about a minute ahead of the cue that is to be run, and then stop the actors once the cue is complete. You can run the cue again or jump to the next cue. This is a good way to rehearse a highly technical show for the first technical rehearsal with the actors.

A "full tech" involves running the whole show with all of the actors, crew members, designers and production staff and as many of the technical elements as possible. At the first full tech, some of the elements may be missing. You may not have a sound or a light cue or a set piece may be unfinished or unpainted. This is typical. As long as most of the elements are present, the rehearsal will still be very productive.

Two weeks before you are supposed to start tech week, discuss how the process will work in your production meeting. The designers will tell you how much time they think they will need. The more complex the show, the more time will need to be allotted for the rehearsals. Discuss whether a dry tech is necessary. Decide whether a cue-to-cue is needed and if the First Tech (the first full technical rehearsal) should be run as a cue-to-cue or as a full tech. Here are some guide lines to help you answer some of these questions.

A seven person, two-hour show with no set changes, 40 light cues and ten sound cues will not need a dry tech and probably will not need a cue-to-cue. A show with a three hour running time, several major set changes, 150 light cues and 30 sound cues will probably require both a dry tech and a cue-to-cue. Discuss these options with your director and designers. Find out how many cues they think they will have and set a schedule for tech week. Techs sometimes start on a Friday evening or Saturday morning

or afternoon so that they can go late without interfering with class schedules. Saturdays are useful for more complex shows because rehearsals can be scheduled for morning, afternoon and evenings. If there will not be a dry tech for the crew people, call the crews one to two hours before the actors are called so that the crews can set up the space and be familiar with the workings of the theatre. Arrange with the designers or the technical director to have the light board operator and the sound board operator trained before they arrive for tech. This will save several hours in the long run.

Once the days and types of rehearsals have been set, discuss call times for cast and crew. Find out whether actors will be doing any kind of group physical or vocal warm ups on stage. If this is a musical, music concert, or dance concert, there should be some sort of warm-up before the show. If there will be both a physical and a vocal warm-up, the actors need 45 minutes on stage. The stage must be swept and mopped and light and sound checks done before the warm-ups start. Light and sound checks give the light and sound board operators a chance to test all of the equipment to make sure it is in proper working order. After warm-ups, the stage needs to be preset for the performance. In this case, the crew call needs to be two hours before the start time, also called the "Go time." Most evening performances "Go" at 8 p.m. The house opens either a half an hour to 15 minutes before the show starts. The crew is called for 6 p.m., actors are called and warm-ups begin at 6:30 p.m. and the stage needs to be set by 7:30 p.m. If the actors are warming up on their own, crew call can be at 6:30 p.m. and the cast call at 7 p.m. A half hour call is the professional standard, but you may want a minimum call of an hour before show time to allow for late people, transportation problems and waking people up if you call and find them asleep. Some actors always get into the theatre ahead of their call time

so that they can warm up on the stage, focus themselves and do their hair and make-up. If the costuming, make-up and hairstyles of a particular show are very complicated, have the costume crew present two hours before the show to help the actors get ready. During tech week, you may find it necessary to adjust call times. Do whatever it takes to have everyone present and ready by the Go time. You can always call frequently late individuals before the group call to get them their on time.

Once you have finalized the tech week schedule, ask individual designers when you can get cues BEFORE TECHNICAL REHEARSALS START. This is an incredibly important, time-saving measure. You may already know what the set/running crew and the fly crews are doing, but double check these cues (if you have any) with the set designer to make sure they are correct. Ask the costume designer if there are any quick changes that you do not know about or if he or she needs to know where an actor enters or exit to position the costume crew for a quick change. Arrange separate times closer to tech week to meet with the sound and lighting designers.

When you meet with these designers, bring your prompt book, a ruler, several sharp pencils and an eraser. Each type of cue is numbered sequentially. Your show may have SQs 1-10 and LQs 1-55 (Remember SQ = sound cue and LQ = light cue). Some manuals suggest giving sound cues letters instead of numbers, but that could become confusing. In addition, when a cue needs to be added, you can add ".5" to a number cue, such as adding 1.5 in between 1 and 2. You cannot do this with a lettering system. You will write cues in the outside margin of your script page. You will adjust these cues several times during tech week so you will be erasing a lot. Always use pencil and do not write too hard with it, or it will be hard to erase. Some stage management manuals

suggest color coding cues by underlining each type of cue in a specific color such as red for lights and blue for sound. Colored pencils are hard to erase and the placement of cues may change even during performances. If the colors help you maintain consistency in calling the show, you may want to use them after the cues are set., otherwise, avoid the hassle.

At this time, ask what the cues do, how long they take and about when they should be called. Most cues are called off a word or action, but they may be called off of music or a stop watch. How to do this plus a visual example of how cues are written is described in Chapter 9. You need to have a basic idea of what each cue does, because you need to be able to tell if the cue has not happened. Some cues, particularly light cues are very subtle.

Once you have gotten the cues from the designers, make up cue sheets for your crew. Chapter 9 has examples of what these look like for the various technical areas. Make sure you have extra copies of blank cue sheets for your crews to use during technical rehearsals in case major revisions need to be made to the cue sheets.

Once you have a tech schedule, you can type up schedules for your cast and crew. These will look much like your earlier schedules. Crews are often required to see a rehearsal before tech, so include the days on which they can see a full rehearsal of the entire show. They only need to see one of these rehearsals. Make sure you include your home telephone number on the schedule and any other important information such as the day the crew needs to start wearing black clothes. Your crew needs to wear black clothes so that they cannot be seen moving backstage, or so that they have a uniform color on if they will be moving anything onstage. Black is the least obtrusive color. Make enough

copies of the schedule to post and distribute. If your crews are assigned from certain technical classes, give enough schedules to their instructors to distribute in class. To distribute the remaining schedules, post a sign that says "Crew Schedules Here!" and put the schedules in a manila envelope and pin it to the call board under the sign. Create sign-in sheets for the cast and crew. Sign-in sheets take on the same grid pattern as the cast check-in sheets you used during rehearsals, only there is a date at the top of each column. There is a date and a column for each day of tech and each performance. Make sure the columns are wide enough to allow people to write their initials. If the call board is outside the green room (the waiting area for the actors), you can post the sheets there. If not post them right outside the door to the theatre. Sign-in sheets save you time. Instead of checking in people, you only have to check the sign-in sheet to see if they are there. **Figure 32** is an example of a sign-in sheet.

Figure 32: Sign-In Sheet

The Show

Cast Sign-in Sheet

Please do not sign in for anyone else.

Who:	4/4	4/5	4/6	4/7	4/8	4/9	4/10	4/11	4/12	4/13
Aristophanes										
H. Ibsen										
W. Shakespeare										
George Spelvin										

Now you need to do some things to get yourself ready for tech week. First of all,

clean up your prompt book. Update your blocking, erase messy and extraneous marks, rewrite illegible words, take out unnecessary notes, forms and other papers. These papers can be set aside in a folder or an envelope and returned to the prompt book once the show is over. Make sure you have enough supplies in your kit. Is your first-aid pack getting low? Do you have enough spike, gaffer's and glow tape? Make sure you have spike and gaffer's tape in the colors of the set. Do you have all the office supplies you need? Do you have enough release forms or other paperwork that you need to distribute to the crew members?

Once you have cleaned up your prompt book, restocked your supplies and made all necessary copies, sit down with the rehearsal schedule and your class syllabi. Do you have any big papers, tests or projects coming up? Can you get some of the work done before tech week starts? If at all possible, start all of this work early. You will be both extremely busy and tired during tech week. If you can get any work done ahead of time, do it. Your non-theatre professors do not understand how much time you are spending in the theatre and probably will not accept any excuses or late work. Your theatre professors may understand, but you were given a syllabus so that you could plan your work ahead of time. At the very least, you can show a work in progress to your professor to prove you are getting work done. To be frank, the less often you ask for leniency, the more likely your professors are to give you an extension. Being prepared will help keep your stress level down during tech week and allow you to get some needed sleep. Eat healthy food and take care of yourself. Getting sick will not make this process any easier.

Pay close attention to your cue sheets during the last few rehearsals to make sure they are accurate. Double check your prop lists and go over all backstage work with your

ASMs so that they feel ready to train a crew. Discuss with them how tech will run, so they will feel prepared.

Check List: Getting Ready for Technical and Dress Rehearsals

You have

- ☐ Discussed how tech week would run and created a schedule with the director and designers.
- ☐ Made tech week schedules for your cast and crew.
- ☐ Made copies of the schedule and distributed them.
- ☐ Made sign-in sheets for the cast and crew.
- ☐ Met with the designers to put cues in your prompt book or check the cues you already had.
- ☐ Cleaned up your prompt book.
- ☐ Refilled supplies.
- ☐ Prepared your ASMs for tech.
- ☐ Reviewed your syllabi and tried to get ahead on your classwork.
- ☐ Taken care of yourself!

Chapter 9
Tech Week

Getting Started with the Crew: The most efficient way to run the technical and dress rehearsals is to have your various crews trained prior to the arrival of the actors. If it is possible, the light board operator and the sound board operator should be trained in the week prior to the first technical rehearsal, if not earlier. This gives them time to practice with the equipment if it is available and will not interfere with any building, painting, focusing and other activities that may be occurring on the stage. This will be easier for the sound board operator because the sound is less likely to interfere with most kinds of work. The stage crews should always be warned before either operator starts practicing so that they will not be startled. Loud noises and sudden changes in light, particularly a drop in the light level could be dangerous as they will surprise the crew members who could fall, drop objects or injure themselves or others with power tools. The light board operator must always give the crews enough light in which to work. If the light board operator does not need to see the subtle details of a cue, but would like to run the cues, the work lights can be left on for the stage crews. The lighting designer or the master electrician may take this opportunity to focus lights. If the director is available while either the sound board or light board operators are working and no one else is on

stage, sound or light levels should be set. These levels may change, but they will provide an acceptable starting point for the technical rehearsals.

Costume Crew: The costume crew may have a difficult time practicing some of their jobs without the actors, but they can still be prepared. They should be prepared for quick changes by knowing who is helping for a particular change, what clothes are involved and where the quick change will be occurring backstage. They should be told that no clothes should be on clothes hangers and as many buttons as possible on a shirt should be left buttoned so that an actor can pull it over his or her head and only have a button or two to fasten while moving toward the stage. Some skirts can be arranged on the floor so that the actress only has to step into the center while a dresser pulls the skirt up and fastens it. If the actress is changing from one skirt to another, two dressers can stand on chairs on either side of her, holding a skirt above her head that they can drop onto her when she holds her arms up. Quick changes can be hastened if the actor can wear some of the articles of the change underneath the previous costume. Tights, leotards and sometimes shirts are easily worn beneath a costume, thus facilitating a quick change. Be aware that these items, particularly the shirt and leotard may be soaked with perspiration if worn beneath another costume. If this is true, the actor should not wear the pieces under another costume, and the pieces should be part of the quick change. You may not know whether this will happen, but if the change follows a section of strenuous activity or dance, it is possible to assume the actor will be perspiring heavily.

If members of the costume crew are responsible for special make-up effects or difficult hair styles, ask that the designer shows them how to execute these before the dress rehearsal. The costume crew can often practice the make-up on themselves once or

twice, or practice a difficult braid on someone with long enough hair. Everyone's face and hair will affect the design differently, but a little practice will allow the crew member to work out the bigger kinks and will impress the grateful actor.

General make-up is provided by the actors, but special items such as beards or latex pieces, or special make-up such as unusual colors are provided by the costume shop. Make-up may need to be ordered by someone in the costume shop for actors who do not have their own. Basic kits are usually inexpensive.

Piece of Advice: The designers and costume shop personnel usually work down to the wire and may not have the time to train their crew until first dress. Never pressure them if this is the case, but if you foresee problems if the costume crew is not trained to do something, ask the designer or costume shop supervisor about your concerns. They may have solutions already worked out, or know about crew members' special skills. Remember not to imply either by your questions or your tone of voice that the designer or supervisor is remiss in not worrying about these problems. They know their field; respect their decisions unless you still foresee a problem. If you still believe you may have a **serious** problem, ask your director what he or she thinks. If he or she does not see it as a problem, let it drop. You have done your job. If he or she does see a problem, the director's concerns will hold more weight with the designer or supervisor. Do not get angry about this, or gloat when the designer listens to your concern voiced through the director. The director is responsible for the unity of the production. Directors take the heat for poorly staged, designed and executed plays, even when not all of the problems were of their making. Thus, their voices hold more weight.

Prop Crew: The prop crew should be called in at least an hour before the actors

arrive for a technical rehearsal, or they can work during a dry tech. They need enough time to tape out prop table(s) and create check in and check out lists. Taping out a prop table involves covering the table with butcher paper or newsprint (muslin works as well). Once it is completely covered and the covering is taped to the table, place the props for that area of the stage on the table and use masking tape to tape boxes around each item or a black magic marker to outline the item. Use the marker to label each box with the item such as "black purse," or "umbrella."

Make sure the box is specific enough to denote the item. If six different books are used as props in the show, label the box "green book" or "ledger book" so that the exact item is labeled. Taping the prop tables insures that the props can be kept in the same place every show. This allows the stage manager and the actors to immediately see if a prop is missing. If props are reset during an act break, then the labels should read "ledger book Act I" and "ledger book Act II." This way, anyone glancing at the table and seeing an empty place will realize that the ledger book does not need to be in that spot during that act of the show. Large props can be placed by the table and labeled with spike tape on the floor.

Have your assistant create a diagram of the stage for the beginning of each act with the placement of each prop and furniture piece, and the props that should be waiting backstage. Double check this diagram. This diagram allows both the stage management staff and the prop and stage crews to have something against which to compare the stage setting and prop tables. You can use a blank notes page from your prompt book because it already has a diagram of the set with most of the stage setting already on it. You can number places on this diagram to indicate where things are positioned. This diagram is

different from the check in and check out list.

This check in and check out list in **Figure 33** is left blank so that the prop crew can fill in the props and their placement from the master diagram. Why should they do this and not you? The act of filling in the list helps them familiarize themselves with what props they have and where they are located. You should double check their list for accuracy. Make sure the list remains at the theatre at the end of the show. The check list allows the crew enough time to find or replace the missing prop before the show starts. At the end of the show, it allows the crew to discover that a prop was left in a costume or dressing room. It also allows the crew to realize that a prop was either lost, stolen or went home with an actor. Always ask the actor who handled the prop where it was left. Call actors at home if they have left the theatre. Remind all actors that they must return their props to the prop tables at the end of the night. Even if they do not return the prop to the correct table, at least it is on a prop table where a member of the prop crew will be able to find it. At the end of the show, it is advisable to have the crew lock up the props in either a prop room or prop cabinets to protect them from tampering or theft.

Figure 33: Prop Check Sheet

Page __of __

Prop Check List

Show: _____

Prop	#	Location	A	A	B	B	C	C	D	D	E	E	F	F

Figure 33 con't:

Sample Entry:

Prop:	#	Location	A	A	B	B	C	C	D	D	E	E	F	F	G	G
coffee cups	5	SR prop table														

Explanation:
The "#" column lets you put the amount of a particular prop such as 5 books or 10 plates. The columns headed by letters are for checking in props at the beginning and end of the show. A prop would be checked in before the show in the first column labeled "A" and checked in after the show in the second column labeled "A." The next show would use column "B" and so forth. When the crew runs out of check in columns, they can fill out a new sheet. One of these can be made for each prop table to make the lists more efficient.

Weapons: Only the actor(s) who handles the weapon in the show, the stage management staff or the prop crew are allowed to touch the weapon. No one else under any circumstances is permitted to handle the weapon. Actors can never have someone other than those mentioned above bring a weapon to them or hold it for them. Be adamant about this. The stage management staff and the prop crew should learn how to handle the weapon with the actor. At the end of the evening, always have weapons locked in a cabinet or an office away from the other props and out of sight. This is NOT optional because it is a safety measure. Quarterstaves can be exempt from being locked up because they are impossible to hide and thus are unlikely to be used in a crime. They still should be stored out of sight. Even if a stage gun cannot fire a real bullet, if it is stolen, it could be used against someone who has no idea that the weapon is not functional. If a stage weapon is discovered missing, report it to the director. If it is not found after an extensive search, report it to campus security. You may need to report it to the police. Call the chairperson of the department if possible and let him or her know what has happened. If it

is found after you have contacted these agencies, call the agencies immediately and let them know, then call the chairperson. Expect to give your name, position, phone number and the appropriate person to contact in your department. This may be the chairperson, the department secretary or the business secretary/manager.

Fly Crew: The fly crew needs to know which lines they will be using, and how to work them. They should learn this while no one is on-stage. The appropriate warning to use when an audience is not present is "Heads up, drop (or fly) coming in." This can also be said quietly, but just loud enough to carry if the curtains are closed and the audience is talking. Somebody can always listen during a technical rehearsal to determine if the flyperson is being too loud, or anyone else for that matter. The fly crew should check the stage to make sure no one is under the batten (the pipes to which flown objects are attached) that is being lowered, or they should have an assistant stage manager watch for them. Safety in this job is paramount. Anything dropping from the flies has the ability to seriously injure or even kill someone directly below it. One person paying attention and relaying information to the fly crew can prevent this.

Every member of the fly crew should wear work gloves to prevent rope burn. This is not optional. The flyperson should never pull anything in or out so quickly as to make the flying dangerous. Smooth and easy pulling is safer and more effective than sheer speed. To keep the exact height of a moving drop or flown scenery piece consistent, it is advisable to determine its placement with the set designer in the house relaying directions to the fly crew. When the proper placement has been obtained, mark the position directly above the locking mechanism on the fly rail. The fly rail (or pin rail) is usually to one side of the backstage area where all the ropes for flying anything are located in a row. When

the single tape mark is right above the locking mechanism, the flyperson will know that the proper place has been reached and the line can be tied off or locked down. If the piece on that line has other levels at different cues, another color of spike tape (sufficiently contrasting to the first) can be used to mark that level.

Set/Running Crew: The set/running crew should have cue sheets that explain what needs to be done and at what time. If possible, have them run through any crew moves. This may need to be done in tandem with the fly and prop crews, particularly if it is a large set change that involves flying scenery and striking (removing) props. Willard F. Bellman's stage management manual suggests putting checklists on cards on strings that can be worn around a crew member's neck. Each person's individual task during a set change would be marked on a separate card that the crew members could check quickly when done, but still have their hands free for the changes (219).

Once all crews have sufficient understanding of their basic tasks, make sure they all have cue sheets and understand how they should be used. For the costume and prop crews, the cue sheets may be very limited and will look like typed notes. The costume crew will need to know when and where quick changes will occur and who they involve (See Chapter 5, **Figure 18**). Most of the time, the costume designer will let them know what costume pieces are required. The prop crew may need to know that they should be waiting by a door to hand off or receive a prop. They may need to be ready to fire a gun backstage if the one on stage does not fire (have an ASM ready to cue them for this). They may also need to provide a sound effect such as breaking glass. If the prop person cannot see, an ASM by a television monitor showing stage or the SM who does have a view of the stage should provide the cue.

The fly crew will need sheets that give a cue number, a description of what occurs during the cue, an approximate time and a column for notes see **Figure 34**.

Figure 34: Fly Cue Sheet

Page ___ of ___

Fly Cue Sheet

Show: _____

Q#:	Line:	In/Out:	Tape Color:	What it does:	Notes:

Sample Entry:

Q#:	Line:	In/Out:	Tape Color:	What it does:	Notes:
4	25	in	green	scrim in	watch out for crew

Explanation:
"Q#" stands for "cue number." You will call fly cues by a number such as "fly cue 1" (FQ 1). Each rope (line) on the fly rail is numbered or labeled in some way. Since most flown objects have an in and out position (in is on stage, out is above the stage, out of sight), fly crew will need to know whether they are bringing the line in or out. Since there are two positions, and hence two spike marks, they also need to know what color tape they are looking for. They should know what each cue does. Notes columns alerts them to any special problems or actions such as waiting for a set piece to be moved or for crew to clear out of the way.

The sound cue sheets (see **Figure 35**) should provide the cue numbers (leave enough room for additional cues and notes), a description of the sound (wind, dogs barking, screaming, etc.), the source of the sound (Tape 1, CD, reel-to-reel, live) where

the sound is found on its source (a CD band or a counter number for a tape). On a reel-to-reel, the cue number can be written on the leader tape (the white or colored tape spliced in between the sound tape). For a live effect, buttons may need to be labeled (door bell, telephone ring). Levels and fade in and fade out counts should be recorded and the approximate length of the cue should be noted. The last column should be left open for notes on the running of the cue.

Figure 35: Sound Cue Sheet:

Page ___ of ___

Sound Cue Sheet

Show: _____

Q#	Time ⇑ ⇓:	Level:	Tape/ Reel:	CD:	Band/ counter:	Description:	Notes:

Sample Entry:

Q#	Time ⇑ ⇓:	Level:	Tape/ Reel:	CD:	Band/ counter:	Description:	Notes:
12	⇑10	35	tape 5		96	soft rain	

Explanation:
The first column is standard for cue sheets. The second column indicates how long in seconds the sound should be faded up (⇑) or down (⇓). The third column indicates how loud the sound should be in the sound equipment measurements. The fourth and fifth columns where the sound is coming from. The sixth column indicates where on the sound source the cue can be found the seventh column for descriptions and the eighth for notes.

Lighting cue sheets are usually the most complex. Often, the lighting designer will provide them, or the department's technical director will have cue sheets for the equipment available. Always feel free to make up cue sheets if the ones that have been provided are not effective (see **Figure 36**). Each board is different, so you will need to make up one appropriate to the equipment. Computer boards take the guess work out of cues, but hard copies of the cues should be printed out and backup disks should be ready in case the memory is erased. This happens, so be prepared.

Figure 36: Light Cue Sheet:

Page ___ of ___

Light Cue Sheet

Show: _____

Q#	Time ⇑ ⇓:	Area:	Description:	Notes:

Sample Entry:

Q#	Time ⇑ ⇓:	Area:	Description:	Notes:
48.5	⇓0	US platform	desk lamp off	visual cue on the actor

Explanation:
The first column is standard for cue sheets. The second column indicates how long in seconds the lights should be faded up (⇑) or down (⇓). The third column indicates what area is affected by the cue and tell the operator where to look to make sure the cue is happening. The fourth and fifth columns are for descriptions and notes.

Explain to anyone receiving cues what the cueing system involves. Some cues may be verbal (Warning, Standby, GO). Others may consist of a hand gesture or a series of cue lights. Cue lights either consist of a single red light or two lights, one red, one green, that are located next to people running certain cues, normally a set crew or a fly crew. Cue lights allow people who have to use their hands freedom from dealing with a headset or an audio cue that could be missed. The stage manager can control these cue lights from wherever he or she is calling the show. If using the single red light, turning on the light is a Standby and turning it off is a GO. If using a two light system, the red light is a Standby and the green light is a GO. Run some trial cues with these people to see that they understand and are comfortable with the system. A warning is given a page ahead or one minute ahead of the actually cue and the word "Warning" is always given first. A standby is given a few lines ahead of a cue and the word "Standby" needs to be given first. The cue to "GO" is always preceded by the type of cue and number, i.e. "Light Cue 24.5 GO" (LQ 24.5 GO).

As a stage manager in an educational setting, be prepared to run sound or a light board if necessary. This is usually not a problem, but if the show is too complex for you to perform both duties, talk to the technical director about finding somebody to help you. Be ready to offer an extra hand to flip a switch or reset a light board if a change is particularly fast. If this is rehearsed, it is seldom distracting to the stage manager and is a great help to the board operator.

If possible, major set changes should be rehearsed before the actors come in unless the actors will be assisting with the change. This is not always possible but, at the very least, the stage manager should plot the move of every set piece and prop and who moves

it before the technical rehearsals. Hopefully, you have been doing this throughout rehearsals so that both you and your ASMs are familiar with the process and can train a crew quickly. This allows the running crew to be assigned quickly to tasks and makes the whole process smoother. Your plot may not work in all cases, but it provides a starting point. Have an ASM note changes. In the event that something is not done, you will know who was responsible because your plot will be up to date. The fact that someone else was supposed to perform a task does not mean that you are not responsible. It is your responsibility to double check that everything is done properly, or at the very least have an ASM check for you.

Try not to involve yourself in set changes if you are near the stage. You should be free to supervise, but if you do need to lend a hand to help the set change occur in the time allotted, limit your assistance so that you can still pay attention to what is happening on stage to watch for problems or call cues.

Starting the First Technical Rehearsal and What to Expect: Now that you and your ASMs have shown the crews how to do their various jobs and given cue sheets to everyone, you are ready to start the rehearsal. The crews are ready, the cue sheets filled in with known cues, the stage is set and the actors are arriving. Once the entire cast and crew have arrived, have everyone sit down on-stage and introduce themselves. This is a team and the cast and crew need to see who is working with them.

This is also a safety measure. If someone whom nobody recognizes is wandering around backstage, they need to be politely questioned about their business and then asked to leave. Either you or an ASM should take one other person. Never do this alone or allow an ASM to do this alone. Ask the person, "May I help you?" If they have business

with cast or crew, send them back out to the lobby and relay the message for them. If not, explain that this area is restricted to cast and crew for insurance reasons and that they must leave. In part this is true, and it also provides an implacable third party on which to place blame. You can explain that you will be fired if you break this rule. Although you cannot really be fired, the person will not know this and it is usually enough to send a backstage wanderer away. If not, keep an eye on the person and send someone to call campus security. If for any reason they do not respond quickly, continue calling and then make sure your department chairperson files a complaint. College campuses sometimes attract some unsavory people that may look wholesome. It does not matter how nice a person looks, talks or acts. They do not belong backstage. If somebody complains later that this was a boyfriend or girlfriend, explain that it is a safety measure put into place to protect them and their personal belongings. If anyone still continues to complain, tell them to see the department chairperson about the problem. This should settle the matter. You should notify the department chair that you did have a problem and someone may be making a complaint.

Never, under any circumstances, apologize for taking measures to maintain the personal security and safety of your cast and crew. This is your job.

Once introductions have been made, explain where the first aid kit is located and the locations of all safety equipment such as fire extinguishers, fire blankets and showers and how to operate them. The showers are necessary if someone is doused with a material that irritates or burns the skin. Water normally will help the victim. Make sure the harmful properties and treatment measures of any caustic substances used in the course of the show are discussed. This also makes the cast and crew aware of possible

dangers and that you are prepared to deal with them. Tell them about the department's policy (or your policy, if the department does not have one) about visitors backstage and whom they should notify if a stranger is spotted. It may be advisable to ask that cast and crew escort each other home, to cars or to public transportation. This is a chance for people to find out who can walk them home. If the campus has a dial-a-ride program, encourage them to use it and post the number next to the sign-in sheet. Explain all other applicable policies (no food or beverages backstage) and then explain how the technical rehearsal is going to be run.

Technical rehearsals are a stop and go process. To stop anything, you will call out in a loud voice "Hold, please." All actors and crew people are to stop what they are doing and wait for further instructions. When possible, you will identify what the hold is for and how long it will last, such as "Holding for Lights for five minutes." Tell the actors to stay in place, but that they can relax. When you are ready to start first check that all your crew members are in the correct cue and that they are ready if a cue will be coming up quickly. Once you are sure that they are all ready, give the actors a starting place that is early enough in the script to run the cue(s) over again with the proper cueing sequence. You will continue to run the show until it is necessary to stop again.

Saying "Hold, please." is better than saying, "Stop" since the first is a request that does not carry a connotation to the actors that they have done something wrong. If your hold is going to take twenty minutes because something has to be corrected and the actors are not needed, the director may want to take this opportunity to give notes, run a section again without technical support or call a break. These are all very useful ways to use the hold. If nothing else, the actors know they can sit down or talk **quietly** while they are

waiting. Once again, to resume, make sure all crews are in the proper cues and are prepared for their upcoming cues, then give the actors a starting place in the script. Tell them to go when you are ready.

Now that everyone understands how the process works, it is time to get started. Give everyone a "Ten minutes to places" call and walk the stage with your ASMs to make sure everything is in place and ready to go. Tell all the crew members that are to be connected to you on headset to put them on and show them how they work. Also explain that they are never to adjust their headset or their mic while their mic is "live" because it will cause earsplitting noises over the headset. Also explain that if you ever say "clear," everyone on headset is to become quiet. Headsets are for show business, not social chatting. Headset chatter can be distracting and may cause someone to miss a cue.

If you are working in a large theatre space, you will probably want to sit out in the house for the first few techs so that you can see everything that is going on and so that you can stop the show easily. You will move to a booth or backstage to call the show a night or two before you open. You will either need a desk or a music stand with a clip light (ask the technical director about this). Arrange your prompt book, pencils, eraser, ruler and a notepad. If you are working with a small space such as a studio, you may not need a headset system and you will probably spend tech in a small booth with the board operators. Otherwise, you will have the light board operator, sound board operator, spot light operators, the fly captain (head of the fly crew) and at least one of your ASMs on headset. Headsets are vital in large spaces because they allow you to communicate with spaces you have no physical access to during the show.

Calling Cues: Get settled and check to make sure that everyone is on headset.

Explain to everyone on headsets how warnings, standbys and GO's work and how they are to react to these cues. Warnings tell people to get in place and check their equipment for a cue. Standbys tell them that the cue is almost there and GO's tell them to execute the cue. When people are warned, they are to reply, "(area) warned," as in "lights warned," "sound warned" or "flies warned." Again, the reply for a standby is, "lights standing by" or "sound standing by." When you are about to call the GO, they will hear the type of cue, the number of the cue and then a pause. They must always wait for the GO. Thus, a crew member will hear, "Light Cue 82 (pause) GO."

You have the GO's already marked in the prompt script. You will fill in warnings and standbys as you go along. You should have an "X" in your script that marks the spot by which the cue must be called. Thus, you want to say "Warning LQ 22" so that you finish by the "X" placed in your script. The same is true for a standby or warning. Remember that the warning is roughly a page ahead and the standby a few lines ahead. When you call a GO, say the type of cue and the number of it first to alert the correct operator, since several people may be in standby at the same time. The pause is there so that you can hear or see what is happening on stage so that your GO happens in the right place. The pause also gives you a second to make sure everything is okay on stage and with your crew. If an actor trips and is not where he or she needs to be for the cue, you have a built in safety measure. If you call "LQ 2.5 GO" in one breath, people may not have time to tell you if something is wrong. Use your judgment, but the pause works.

Some cues are called simultaneously. In that case, they are written together and called together. Thus you will have a Warning LQ 23 and Spot Q 5, a Standby LQ 23 and Spot Q 5 and a LQ 23 and Spot Q 5 GO. **Figure 37** shows a page of script with cues

written for the top of the show with some examples of simultaneous cues. The top of the show is normally complicated and you will probably need to practice running and calling it a few times to become comfortable.

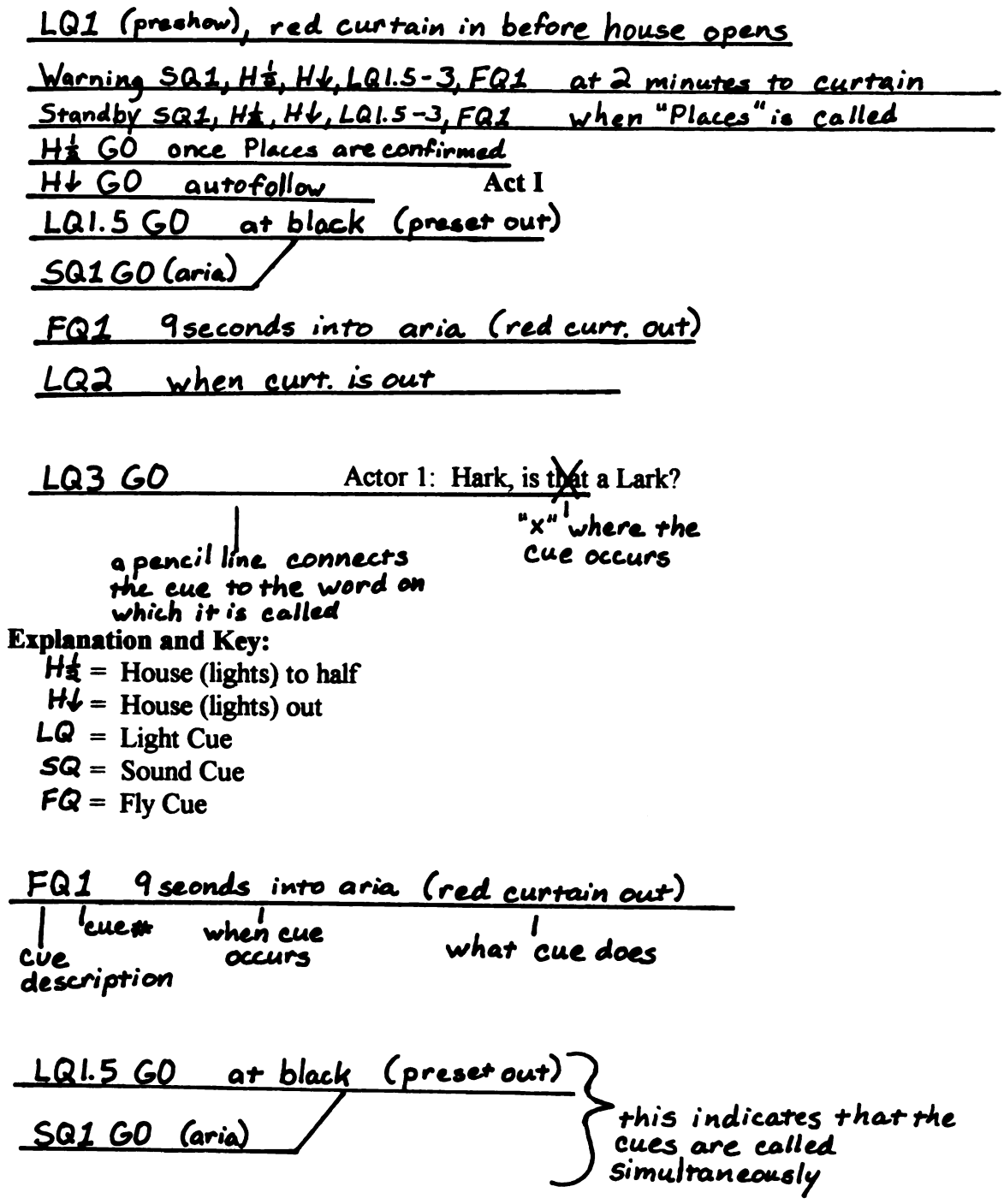
If cues are called sequentially but too quickly to call the type of cue and number, you can call the standby for the series and remind the operator that he or she will only hear the "GO's." For example. You will say "Standby Light Cues 8-12. This is a fast series after the first cue. You will hear only the GO's." The operator will reply "Lights Standing By." Then the operator will hear you say, "Light Cue 8 (pause) GO (pause) GO (pause) GO (pause) GO (pause) GO. Fast series is complete, thank you."

If you can, thank your operators when the cue is complete, particularly if they just correctly completed a complex series of cues. Politeness is always appreciated.

The examples cited cover the bulk of the cues you have to call. For situations not covered, make up an appropriate cue using the warning, standby and GO format. In some cases, you may find a warning unnecessary. Many computerized light boards only require one button to be pressed to execute a cue. In this case, nothing needs to be cued up or set up, so a warning serves no purpose. For many sound cues and all spot or special effects cues, a warning is very important. The people running cues may ask you to move your warnings earlier or later. Since they are running the cues and they know how long it takes to set them up, respect their input.

You will spend most of tech and first and second dress adjusting which word or action you use on which to call a cue. To maintain consistency with some cues, you may find it necessary to call them using a stopwatch. This happens in particular when working with recorded sound, because a stop watch will help you anticipate the cues.

Figure 37: Sample Page of Script with Cues



Example: You are using the sound of traffic on a busy street. You need to call a light cue so that it occurs with the third car horn. If you start your stop watch the instant you hear the sound cue start and stop it when you hear the third horn, you will soon learn that you hear the third horn at 45 seconds. Knowing this, you can call your Standby at 15 seconds and your GO at 41 seconds.

Calling the show is one of the most important jobs the stage manager performs because you maintain its consistency and harmony. By organizing the crews and calling the cues uniformly, you orchestrate the production. Never let anyone change a section in which something dangerous or complicated is being done by the crew without you being present. Only you know how long it will take to perform certain cues or effects safely. Safety takes precedence over look, effect or artistic unity at all times. Not all directors or designers will agree with this or see the necessity of certain safety measures. You need to protect your cast and crew from negligence that can put them in the way of harm. You do have the right to refuse to do something you think is dangerous or insist that the director sign something stating that he or she takes full responsibility for the dangerous action. Directors will resent this, but it may make them think twice about the effect or action they wanted more than the safety of the members of the show.

Remember to take breaks every hour and a half. Try not to go longer than two hours without calling a break. The actors may have had a break, but your crew needs the chance the have a break also. If you have hit roughly the four hour mark in the rehearsal, and you can tell the rehearsal is going to take at least another hour and a half, talk to the director about taking an hour dinner break. Everyone is going to need the time to eat, relax and recover. The director may want to work another 20 minutes until an upcoming

stopping point is reached such as the end of the act or scene or he or she may want to give the cast and crew the option of staying the hour and a half so that everyone can be done earlier. This is fine if everyone agrees, but you must protect your cast and crew from being worked to sheer exhaustion. Take special care of cast and crew members that have diabetes and hypoglycemia. They will need to eat on a regular basis or they can become very ill. At the very least, their concentration level will drop along with their blood sugar, and they will not work well until they have a chance to eat. You may want to tell these people to bring in snacks for an emergency boost of energy.

Dealing With Technical Difficulties: Technical rehearsals are the first opportunity to integrate all of the elements of the production with the actors, as such, it is important to deal with the technical difficulties as they arise. The actors have to expect that they will be stopped, possibly during the emotional peak of a scene. Their cooperation and patience will be much appreciated. It is best if the stage manager is the only person to stop the show. Only the stage manager knows the status of the cues, and if someone else were to call a halt, moving scenery, an upcoming blackout or a batten being flown in could spell disaster. Any designer or the director can ask to stop the show. It is important for the stage manager to determine if these requests could be better handled if the problem was fixed after the rehearsal has ended. Some examples:

Fix as soon as possible: A light cue, a follow spot cue and a sound cue happen within 10 seconds of each other and they are called off the action on the stage. The cues are not happening fast enough, and you still having trouble calling them at the correct times. Actors, crew operators and the stage manager are required along with the eyes and ears of several designers and the director. You may decide to run this again at the end of

the show, but if it is affected by a particular setting, costume or lighting setup, it is advisable to fix as it occurs.

Judgment call: The director wants to reblock a section of the play. If this section could affect scene shifts, the calling of cues or the placement of lights, it is probably advisable to stop and fix the blocking. If you can call cues without any major problems no matter what changes, you may want to ask the director to wait until the end of the evening. Do not deny the director's request. Explain that the changes could be made after the technical rehearsal, allowing the crew members to go home, eat dinner, etc. If the director still insists, stop and reblock the section.

Fix it later: Repairing anything that can be temporarily replaced without affecting the running of the show. A chair breaks. Substitute a suitable chair and continue. The other chair can be fixed later, or even during the process of the rehearsal. Somebody's make-up is not working out. Fix it later. A costume change is running three minutes longer than allowable. Hold the actor and the dressers after the rehearsal so that they can run the change repeatedly without holding anyone else up. Everyone appreciates solutions that use the least amount of time, particularly students.

A tech will take roughly double the running time of the show. The more complex it is, the longer it will take. You may need to run the same five minutes of the show over and over for an hour to get all of the technical elements to coincide with the acting. This does happen, but expect everyone to be a little frustrated by the time everything works out correctly. This may be a good time for a five-minute break. When people get frustrated, they tend to yell at whomever they think is responsible. Quite often this will be you. Stay calm. Try and listen to what is upsetting them so that you can offer a solution or

explanation. Many times, the director or designers do not care why something went wrong, they just want it fixed. If you know it can be, just tell them that it will be fixed. If you do not how the problem can be fixed, ask for possible solutions. The designers and the technical director may need to have a quick conference to figure out a solution. This might be a good time for a lunch or dinner break for the cast and crew.

Piece of Advice: Try not let anyone yell at your crew in anger. If you hear this happening or hear of this happening, immediately go to the people involved and find out what is wrong. If it is a cast member or the director, ask what is wrong and see if you can help fix the problem. If it is a designer with a member of his or her own crew, try to at least quiet the yelling. Tell the designer that the noise is disturbing to everyone, and again, ask about the problem to see if you can help. The only time yelling is really appropriate is if someone was hurt or could have been hurt due to negligence or stupidity, not if the crew member did nothing wrong or was unaware that they were responsible for doing something. It is not a crew member's fault if something was not explained or if he or she was not trained properly. Some things are common sense, but other things seem blatantly obvious to you or the designers only because you have more experience.

How to Deal with the Stress of Techs: Emotions can run high during techs. Here is some advice to get you through.

1) Try to be patient. This sets a good example and fools everyone into believing you are perfectly calm and in control. This will make everything run smoother.

2) Tempers can run high. Help the director and designers communicate with each other when they stop listening to each other. This happens! Your job is to listen to each side and try to translate so that the other side can understand. The solution to a problem

may be simple, but you may have to make it clear exactly how simple it really is.

Example: A set piece is not working out. The technical director can alter the piece to make it work. The director believes that this means going over budget, reblocking 25% of the show and hours of lost time. This is where your understanding of the show becomes important. You explain to the director that the technical director is going to take the set piece away and change it a little. You will have it back the next day and the changes will only affect two actor crosses that are easily changed. The actors are used to working without the piece anyway, so its absence will not affect the rest of rehearsal. Be a problem solver!

3) Always stay calm. You can go home and scream later (and you probably will). In the grand scheme of things, most problems and mistakes can be solved easily with a simple solution or a little practice. You crew is learning. You are working in an educational setting and it is your job to help them learn, whether that means teaching them yourself or finding someone else to do it. Screaming at someone does not help them learn and if you are patient when other people make mistakes, they are more likely to be patient when you make them.

4) Comfort the crew. Let them know they are learning and mistakes will happen. Offer advice on how to fix the problems and encourage them to ask questions. Congratulate them when they get something right or do a job well. This may be the only praise they get, so never be sparing. The crew members also have a better attitude when they know they are appreciated.

5) Only yell to be heard and to get attention. Once you have people's attention, go back to a normal speaking voice. Avoid yelling in anger. It is not professional and

seldom necessary. If you yell often, the cast and crew will learn to ignore what you are screaming at them. If you only yell when there is a serious problem, the cast and crew will pay attention to what you are saying.

What to Do Once You Have Struggled Through: When you have completed the full run, go back and run any sections that need major work, or arrange to do them first thing at the next technical rehearsal. Then ask the director if he or she would like to run anything else. After that, the director will want to give notes to the cast. Have the director and actors go into the Green Room, the lobby or some space away from the stage. Give your crew notes, ask them if they have any problems or questions. Tell them when the next rehearsal is scheduled and what will happen at that rehearsal. Thank them all for their hard work and encourage them to improve even more at the next rehearsal. Tell each member of the prop and running crew and the ASMs to go home and write down what they do for the show from the time they get in until the time they leave. At the next rehearsal, have the ASMs compile the information into a master list. A copy of this list should be posted somewhere backstage. If someone is absent, you will know exactly what jobs need to be taken over by someone else.

Now you can start procedures to close down for the night. Light crew needs to shut off all lighting equipment. Sound crew needs to turn off all sound equipment and store any equipment that needs to be put away, such as cords or microphones. All cassette tapes, CDs or reel-to-reel tapes need to be checked in and stored. Prop crew needs to wash anything that was dirtied, store any perishable food and beverages, lock up any weapons and check in all props. If anything is missing, they should tell you. They should also make arrangements to purchase or replace any low supplies. Set crew will

either need to store set pieces or reset the stage for the next rehearsal. Fly crew needs to make sure all lines are secure and may need to fly some scenery to store it until the next rehearsal. Although costumes are not yet present, when they are, costume crew will need to check in all costume pieces, store anything that needs to be stored and wash or repair as necessary. Once each group has finished closing down, they can leave.

Once you are finished with the crew, find the director and ask if he or she has any notes for you or for your crew. Write these notes down and discuss how you will fix any problems. Ask the actors if they had any problems that you need to fix. If the designers are still there, ask them if they have any notes for you. Sometimes the director, stage manager and designers assemble for a meeting after First Tech to discuss how it went and what needs to be fixed.

Last of all, tour the theatre. Make sure everything has been cleaned and put away properly. If anything has not, write a note and fix it if necessary. If the theatre has a ghost light, put it on stage or turn it on if it is a permanent stage light. A ghost light is a single light that stays on when the theatre is empty. Some people say the ghost light is to ward off ghosts, and other people say it is to keep them company. It is probably there so that no one has to stumble around a dark theatre looking for lights. Lock up everything, turn off the rest of the lights, lock the door to the theatre, take your prompt book and go home.

When you get home, eat something, take a hot shower, scream at something inanimate and try to do something for a half an hour to relax. Once you have calmed down enough to think about the show again, go through your prompt book. Incorporate any technical notes you took during the show into your cues and cue sheets. Fix the cues

that have changed and make sure the prompt script is legible. Keep a list of notes you need to give your crew.

Last of all, create a pre-show and post-show check list for yourself to use during the rest of the run. Let us say that you are working on a production of ***Hamlet***. Your pre-show check list will consist of turning off the ghost light, making sure late cast and crew members have been called, that the weapons have been given to the prop master or mistress (the prop crew chief) and that the headset system is working. You will also give your ASMs a checklist to use. They will need to check on the following:

- ⇒ The stage has been swept and mopped.
- ⇒ Sound monitors are working.
- ⇒ Television monitors are working.
- ⇒ Late cast and crew members have been called and the SM has been told how long before they arrive.
- ⇒ Fog machine is working (for the graveyard scene).
- ⇒ Gertrude's costume is preset UR.
- ⇒ All the props are checked in and in working order.
- ⇒ The stage is preset for the top of the show (props included).
- ⇒ There is enough dirt in the grave.
- ⇒ Stage blood is set UR for Polonius.
- ⇒ All weapons are in place.
- ⇒ Running lights are on backstage (Christmas lights or blue-gelled lights used to light pathways backstage).

⇒ Work lights are off and the pre-show lights are on.

You will also double check all of these items yourself. Sometimes that means physically checking them yourself or checking with someone else that these items have been done.

At the end of the evening, you perform the reverse. You make sure that everything is cleaned up, particularly the blood, that all the weapons are locked up and that the ASMs have made sure the props are checked in, the sound and television monitors are off, the fog machine is off and that nothing was missing. Then, you lock all booths, stage areas, and dressing rooms, turn on the ghost light, turn off the work lights and lock the theatre. Check lists allow you to focus not only on routine tasks but potential problem areas such as the fact that the crew forgets to check the dirt in the grave. Although you have assigned certain things to your ASMs, always double check them. The more eyes look over potential trouble spots, the less likely it is that problems will occur.

If your next technical rehearsal is not until the following day, get some homework done and get some sleep.

At the next rehearsal, help crew members establish their routine: stage swept and mopped, items checked in, systems checked and so forth. Give them any individual notes as they work and tell them all to meet you somewhere (Green Room, backstage or some other available space) at a particular time if you have any group notes. Also, make sure your ASMs are creating a master list. If you need to run over a particular section of the show, you may want to do that first, then start your run of the show. This way, you can see if that section now can be run smoothly in the flow of the show. Once you have run the show, run over any sections that are still a problem and get any notes from the director that need to be given to the crew. Assemble your crew, give the notes, discuss solution

and changes, give the time of the next rehearsal and then tell them to close down for the night. Check in with the actors and designers to see if they need anything and check in with the director one last time. Make any changes necessary in your prompt book. Go home, relax, review any notes you have and make a list of things to fix at the next rehearsal.

When you have First Dress, you may want to rehearse any complicated quick changes before starting the run. This will help keep the show moving. If you still need to cut time off of a quick change, run it after you are done running the whole show. This way, you do not make everyone wait for the quick change. The director can give notes to the cast in the Green Room and your other crews can shut down for the evening while the costume crew is practicing the quick change with the actor. Ask the director to remind the cast to tell the costume crew immediately if anything does not fit or needs to be repaired. Once the costume crew is done running the quick change(s), all of the costume pieces need to be checked in and repairs made (this may need to wait for the following day). During dress rehearsals you may need to remind the actors to hang up all of their costume pieces. It is not the costume crew's job to pick garments up from the floor or tables unless these clothes were flung off during a quick change.

At this point, you should begin trouble shooting for potential problems and ways to solve them. If you are working with a computerized light board, does the board operator have back up disks and a paper list that would allow him or her to set up the cues by hand if necessary? Can you bring the work lights up manually if the board crashes or blows a fuse? Does your sound board operator have back up tapes in case the ones that are being used break? Is there a back up manual door chime or phone ring backstage that

can be used if the electric ones break down? Does your prop crew have at least one extra of all breakables such as plates and glasses and all expendables such as food, matches, candles and lighters? Any actor who has to light anything should always have an extra lighter or matches.

Show one of your ASMs how to read your prompt book so that he or she can call the show if anything happens to you. Make sure they understand exactly what everything means and how to run the show.

If any weapons are being fired, is someone backstage with an identical weapon or a cap gun to make the noise if the actor misfires? Has the actor been instructed to pretend to fire the gun a second time to allow someone backstage to fire for them to cover the problem? Are there extra swords or an extra blade if one breaks? If you have a weapon with a collapsible blade, is there an extra one in case the blade is not working?

Finally, if you are flying someone or doing anything that has the potential to seriously injure someone, have you created a code for the actors to use to say that they are in danger? For example, in a fight, have a phrase that fits in with the dialogue, but is different enough for the actors to recognize. "Son (or Daughter) or a motherless goat!" "That really hurt," or "Now, I'm angry," all sound like part of a fight, but may have nothing to do with it. This line will be a code to fall back and circle or cut the fight short, which may have to be a spur of the moment decision if someone is injured. Someone being flown should also have a code line that is a signal to raise them up or lower them to the ground. Lowering is recommended because if a line snaps, the person is already getting closer to the stage, not farther away, and is less likely to be injured. Each case should be decided individually with the fight choreographer, rigger or designer that set up

the fight or cue.

The rest of your dress rehearsals will follow much the same pattern, but you will be giving and receiving fewer notes. You should run at least the last two dress rehearsals under show conditions. This means that the show starts at 8 p.m. and that no one stops it. All problems must be dealt with as if an audience was present. This is good for both the cast and crew. The crew spots potential problems and learns that they can be solved and the cast gains confidence in knowing that they will be able to present a polished show on Opening Night. At the end of Final Dress, talk to your crew. Congratulate them on all of their hard work and tell them their call time for the next day. The director may or may not have notes for you at this point, get any notes, close up for the night and go home.

Congratulations! You are ready to open the show.

Check List: Technical and Dress Rehearsals

You have

- ☐ Prepared the theatre and the crews before the actors arrived.
- ☐ Distributed cue sheets to all crews.
- ☐ Explained the headset system and cueing system to anyone that needed to know.
- ☐ Explained how the rehearsal will be stopped.
- ☐ Made sure your cast and crew had enough breaks and chances to eat.
- ☐ Tried to keep the rehearsal running by only fixing things that needed to be run and not things that could be fixed by slight changes at the next rehearsal.
- ☐ Given notes to your crew discussing their jobs and what was both good and bad about them.
- ☐ Trained an ASM to replace you if necessary.

- ☐ Kept the prompt book updated with all cues clearly marked.
- ☐ Tried to plan for contingencies and dangerous situations.
- ☐ Kept in close contact with the directors and designers to see what you need to change or fix.
- ☐ Run at least one show under performance conditions.

Chapter 10
Performances and Closing Down the Show

It is opening night. It may be your first, and you may be nervous. First of all, do not let your cast or crew see this. Smile a lot and act calm. Both are infectious. Say hello to everyone to assess the state they are in. Be prepared to soothe crew and cast members. The mere act of being fussed over may calm some people down. For those who have never been on stage, tell them that their nervousness will disappear once they get on stage. This may not be entirely true, but it will get them on stage. If you really do have someone in your cast that does become indisposed when nervous, have a bucket and a damp cloth backstage for them. It sounds disgusting, but it is necessary and a lot easier to clean up.

If you are still nervous, go over your check list. It will give you a place to focus your energy. You can also rehearse calling the opening sequence or go find someone else who needs to be comforted. Focusing on your job will get your nerves settled.

Before every performance, you should always collect valuables from the cast and put them in a safe place. Make sure you get these things back to the actors as soon as the show is finished.

Before you know it, it will be fifteen minutes to curtain. Make sure everyone is on headset and tell a joke or a funny story to relax everyone. This also makes you appear

calm even if your palms are sweating. Now clear your mind and focus on the show. Although you may have never called a show with an audience, you have been calling the show for several days, so do what you know. If you miscall a cue or something goes wrong, deal with it. Do not get frustrated with yourself because it will make you miss cues. Stay focused on the stage.

Some of the Problems that Occur During the Show: Here are some things that can go wrong and some solutions. In the previous chapter, back-up plans were discussed. Now focus on the situations for which you cannot plan. This mainly happens with forgotten props, torn costumes, major set collapses and injuries. This is not an inclusive list.

An actor forgets a prop that is necessary to the scene such as a murder weapon or a letter. If there is a maid or servant in the show have them bring the object on stage. The actor will realize the servant is never on stage at that point and has brought on the needed object. If that will not work, send on a person with a "registered letter" or a "telegram" with a solution. The actor can pass the letter around and say, "Read this, I just won a trip." or "Look, a letter from my aunt." You may be able to slip the prop into a "closet" a "kitchen" or something else that has a door to an offstage area, but a letter or another actor will need to tell them that it is there. If all else fails, the actor may just need to improvise out of the situation. Sometimes, you just cannot help, but if no solution comes to mind quickly, ask the other people on headset for ideas.

If costumes are ripped or stained there are several solutions. If the piece is torn and cannot be replaced quickly, either pin the tear or use gaffer's tape on the inside of the costume so that the two edges of the rip are held together. This also works on shoes with

holes. If you can use a coat, shawl, sweater or scarf to cover a ripped or stained area. Remember to have the crew fix the item after the performance. If the damage is severe, you may need to call the designer to repair or replace the piece.

If major set pieces collapse such as walls or stairs, but there are no injuries, can the actors still perform the necessary blocking? If you believe the audience is too focused on the problem to pay attention to the show, stop the show and fix the problem. If you believe you can continue, either wait until the scheduled set change or intermission or let the actors get to a stopping point and do one of two things. If the problem will take more than five minutes, throw in a 10 minute intermission. Have an ASM tell everyone backstage and find a way to tell people on stage. Have a crew member alert the house management.

If the fix is only two minutes, you can let the crew fix it in full view of the audience and let the actors ignore the crew or just stop and wait for them to finish. All theatre involves some level of suspension of disbelief. If the actors ignore the crew, the audience will ignore them also. Sometimes a crew member will have to hold up a piece of scenery for a while. If the crew member does not move, the audience will ignore him or her after a minute or two.

If there are serious injuries and the actor cannot get offstage under his or her own power, you have two options. You can allow the other actors to get the injured person offstage. Since they are right there, they have a better idea of the severity of the injury and whether they can get the person offstage. Be ready to send in an understudy and have your ASM or a crew member waiting with the first-aid kit and arrangements to get them to medical attention if necessary. Normally, going to a hospital or other health care

facility involves calling campus security who will call an ambulance. Never send this person alone because he or she may need help getting home or may need someone to make phone calls while he or she is being treated. If your ASM does not have to cover for the actor on stage, send him or her. If the ASM has to step into the part, or you do and the ASM has to cover you, send your most responsible crew member with the injured person.

If the injured person cannot move or should not be moved, warn the house management, bring the house lights up to full and announce that you are going to take a fifteen minute intermission. If possible, close the stage curtain so that people do not stand around and stare. Do not move the injured person. Direct someone to call an ambulance and you should stay next to the person, hold the person's hand and talk to him or her. You want to keep the person warm and calm. If it is a back or neck injury, do not allow anyone to move or touch the victim. You do not want to cause any irreversible damage. Carefully placing a blanket over the person should be safe enough. Have someone call the director and the department chairperson immediately to let them both know what has happened and what is being done. Ask the injured person for a phone number to call to alert parents, spouses or roommates. Make sure these people are told to what health care facility the person will be going. Make sure the person going with the victim has the number of the theatre to call to tell you what is happening.

These things seldom happen, but you should be aware of your options. Stop the show if you must, particularly if someone is in serious danger or has been severely injured. Most actors will keep going if at all possible despite sprained wrists and ankles, broken noses, toes and fingers, black eyes, stab wounds and other injuries. Have bandages,

antiseptic wipes, zippered sandwich bags of ice and wet paper towels to wash off blood backstage. Keep everyone calm and try to deal with the situation as best you can while keeping the show running if possible.

Maintaining the Show: During the run, you will also need to watch for actors changing the show. This involves changing blocking or dialogue or interfering with design elements such as changing the look of their costumes or moving set pieces around in a way that was not decided in rehearsals. If they want to change anything, have them talk to the director. Until then, they must perform it the way it was rehearsed. If actors still refuse to go back to the original staging, have the director talk to them. The director can always threaten to put in an understudy if necessary (if there is one), otherwise, there is not much that can be done. The actors on stage may solve the problem by refusing to follow the changes made by the actor. This is often more effective that either you or the director talking to the actor.

Strike: You have a brilliant run of the show and now you reach closing night. "Strike" often follows the performance or is done the next day. Strike is the dismantling of the set and restoring the stage to its non-show condition. Most departments have a policy about who must attend strike. You should inform the cast and crew who is required to be there before closing night. Volunteers are always welcome. The technical director or the scenic designer normally run strike. Your job is to make sure everybody is there and working. If you see anyone sitting around (or sneaking off), you should send them to the person in charge to be assigned a task.

In the professional world, the stage manager runs strike after planning it with the technical director. In college, the technical director or scenic designer has a better

knowledge than you do of how to take a set apart quickly and safely. They also know what is being saved, where it is going and what should be thrown away. You should make sure your booth is clean, your garbage can emptied, and any equipment that does not stay in the booth is stored for the next show. Make sure the dressing rooms are also being cleaned. When strike is over, put a copy of the program in your prompt book, take the prompt book, turn on the ghost light, turn off the work lights and lock up the theatre for the night.

The next day the theatre department office is open, return your keys, any office supplies you have remaining and the first aid kit. You may need to give them your prompt book for archival purposes, but most departments let you keep your prompt book for your portfolio. Congratulations! You did it.

Check List: Performances and Closing Down the Show

You have

- ☐ Continued to run the show in a consistent manner.
- ☐ Maintained the original version of the show by curtailing the actors changes.
- ☐ Dealt with all problems as best you could.
- ☐ Alerted the cast and crew to strike requirements.
- ☐ Fulfilled whatever strike requirements you have
- ☐ Returned keys and other department materials to the theatre department office once the show is done.

Epilogue

Stage managing is an incredibly challenging job, but also a rewarding one. It is one of the least known jobs in theatre. Stage managing does not get reviews or applause, but its satisfaction comes from knowing you have made a good show that much better by smoothly orchestrating the technical elements so that they flow along with the performance. Your praise comes from the director and actors who can count on you to be prepared for them: the stage is set, the lights are on and you are always there waiting for them. Your crew enjoys working on a show where they are appreciated and treated with respect. And although they do not know it, your audience appreciates the fact that you provide a smooth performance where the show starts when it is supposed to, the scene changes are quick and flawless, and the technical elements support what is happening on stage so that they can enjoy the performance.

If you are good at stage managing, you will never want for work either in school or in the professional world. Stage managers are a small group of people who delight in organizing small details, who live for stress and who enjoy calmly standing in the middle of a whirlwind, quietly calling cues.

Suggestions for Further Reading

Understanding that a student's time is severely limited, the following is a limited selection of the best available books.

Stage management manuals:

Ionazzi, Daniel A. **The Stage Management Handbook**. Whitehall, Va.: Betterway Publications, Inc., 1992.

Kelly, Thomas A. **The Back Stage Guide to Stage Management**. New York: Back Stage Books, 1991.

Stern, Lawrence. **Stage Management**. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1995.

Understanding the role and needs of directors:

Alberts, David. **Rehearsal Management for Directors**. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995.

Understanding the role and needs of actors:

Markus, Tom. **An Actor Behaves**. New York: Samuel French, Inc., 1992.

Technical and design elements:

Gillette, J. Michael. **Theatrical Design and Production**. 3rd ed., Mountain View, Calif.: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1997.

APPENDIX

Audition Form

Name:_____ **Height:**_____

Age:_____ **Weight:**_____

Phone Number(s):_____ **Eye Color:**_____

_____ **Hair Color:**_____

Address:_____

What are you wearing today?_____

Roles auditioning for:_____**Will you accept any?**____

Do you sing?_____ **What is your range?**_____

Do you dance?____**What type of dance?**_____

Do you have any conflicts on evenings (6 p.m.-11 p.m.) or all day on weekends?

_____

_____

What kind of training have you had that relates to theatre (acting, vocal, dance, etc.)?_____

_____

_____

_____

Previous Roles/Experience (pick examples indicative of your abilities):

_____

_____

_____

_____

Special Skills (i.e. gymnastics, juggling, fire-eating, etc.):

_____

_____

(please do not write below this line)

Notes:

Preliminary Casting Sheet

Show:_____

Character:	Actor Playing Role:	Understudy/Second Choice:

Cast List

Show:_____

Character:	Actor:	Understudy:

Please initial next to your name to indicate acceptance.

Thank you to all who auditioned.

Contact Sheet

Show:_____

CAST MEMBER:	CHARACTER:	PHONE NUMBER:
PRODUCTION STAFF:		
	Director	
	Asst. Director	
	Stage Manager	
	Asst. Stage Manager	
	Set Designer	
	Lighting Designer	
	Costume Designer	
	Sound Designer	
	Call if you will be late!	
EMERGENCY	**EMERGENCY**	

Please notify the stage manager of any conflicts immediately.

Page___of___

Prop List

Show:______________________
(revised / /)

Prop:	Location:	Who Handles?	Notes:

Page___of___

Quick Change List

Show:_____

Page:	Who:	Where:	Description:

REHEARSAL REPORT

SHOW:_____ **DATE:**_____

WHERE:_____ **TIME:**_____

LATE/ABSENT:	
REHEARSED:	
PROPS:	**COSTUMES:**
SET:	**LIGHTS AND SOUND:**
PROBLEMS:	**INJURIES**
MISC.:	**SM TO DO:**

LINE NOTES

Actor/Character____

Page____ Line____

____Called for Line ____Paraphrased
____Dropped line ____Pronunciation error
____Dropped word(s) ____Jumped somebody else's line
____Changed word to____________ ____Late cue
____Added____________________ ____Business/blocking missed
____Inverted lines or words ____Need to enunciate

CHECK YOUR SCRIPT!

LINE NOTES

Actor/Character____

Page____ Line____

____Called for Line ____Paraphrased
____Dropped line ____Pronunciation error
____Dropped word(s) ____Jumped somebody else's line
____Changed word to____________ ____Late cue
____Added____________________ ____Business/blocking missed
____Inverted lines or words ____Need to enunciate

CHECK YOUR SCRIPT!

LINE NOTES

Actor/Character____

Page____ Line____

____Called for Line ____Paraphrased
____Dropped line ____Pronunciation error
____Dropped word(s) ____Jumped somebody else's line
____Changed word to____________ ____Late cue
____Added____________________ ____Business/blocking missed
____Inverted lines or words ____Need to enunciate

CHECK YOUR SCRIPT!

LINE NOTES

Actor/Character____

Page____ Line____

____Called for Line ____Paraphrased
____Dropped line ____Pronunciation error
____Dropped word(s) ____Jumped somebody else's line
____Changed word to____________ ____Late cue
____Added____________________ ____Business/blocking missed
____Inverted lines or words ____Need to enunciate

CHECK YOUR SCRIPT!

Sign-in Sheet

Please do not sign in for anyone else.

Who:										

Page___of___

Prop Check List

Show: ______________________________

Prop:	#	Location	A	A	B	B	C	C	D	D	E	E	F	F

Page___of___

Fly Cue Sheet

Show: ________________________

Q#	Line:	In/Out:	Tape Color:	What it does:	Notes:

Page___of___

Sound Cue Sheet

Show: ______________________________

Q#	Time ⇑ ⇓:	Level:	Tape/ Reel:	CD:	Band/ counter:	Description:	Notes:

Page___of___

Light Cue Sheet

Show: ______________________________

Q#	Time ⇑⇓:	Area:	Description:	Notes:

PERFORMANCE REPORT

SHOW:_____ **DATE:**_____

THEATRE:_____ **TIME:**_____

LATE/ABSENT:
PERFORMANCE: **Running Time:** **Act I**_____ **Intermission**_____ **Act II**_____ **Intermission**_____ **Act III**_____ **Total Running Time including Intermission:**_____
PERFORMANCE AND CAST NOTES:
TECHNICAL NOTES

PROBLEMS:	**INJURIES**
MISC.:	**SM TO DO:**

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