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Exploring the Artistry of Stage Management

By
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Exploring the Artistry of Stage Management

Theatre is a collaborative art form. All productions involve many different kinds of people, coming from many different backgrounds, to create many different kinds of art. All the parts must work cohesively together to successfully make a finished product that will get a story across to the audience members who generally have paid to see that production. Among these collaborators is the stage manager, the person who is responsible for making things come together the way the director and the designers have envisioned. Stage managers are seen as the leading technician of the operation with no artistic input at all. “A stage manager has numerous responsibilities, but only one function: to make a show run smoothly throughout the process from preproduction to closing night” (Allison 9). The stage manager is the ‘hub of the wheel’ for both the production team and the company (Oberst). They must know the text and blocking of a piece just as well as the director. The show is unlikely to run smoothly or be a success if it is unsuccessfully stage managed.

I will begin by laying out the history of stage managers and defining what makes up a stage managers job. After that, I am going to explain, with supporting and counter arguments, that stage management is a subtle art form and that stage managers are necessary supporting artists in this collaborative business.
History

Stage management is often seen as a relatively new position in theatre. Throughout history there has been a person acting as the ‘stage manager’ for productions long before the actual position of stage management came about. Before the position stood alone it was the actor-manager that did the duties that a stage manager does today. The actor-manager was an actor who took charge of a company. They directed, acted, and managed everything from finances to finding a stage to perform on. While the actor-manager handled the organizational parts of a stage manager’s job he would often hire a line prompter, who would make sure the actors recited from the script in the way it was written, another aspect of the stage manager’s job. (Phillips)

In the 17th century, during Shakespeare and Moliere’s time, stage management ‘first’ came about as a specialized position even though theatre has been around for over 2500 years. There is very little recorded history about stage managers before the 17th century. All that is know is that there was always someone there to take charge and maintain order but no records remain to let us know who did the work. It was not until the 18th century that the term ‘stage manager’ was even used. This big change came with the rise of technology. As productions became more tech-heavy, more people were involved, allowing specialties to be born and refined. Scenic design, lighting design, and sound design became bigger fields that required more personnel to make things
happen. It is from this development that the stage manager of today is recognizable. Before this evolution, stage managers were more comparable to company managers, theatre managers, and line prompters.

What is a Stage Manager?

A stage manager’s job varies by production and by company. There are many similarities between jobs that do not change but even then, like Captain Barbossa says in the first Pirates movie, the duties are “more what you’d call ‘guidelines’ than actual rules”. Sometimes the following responsibilities are not required to have a good performance and sometimes they are just little extras that will make one stage manager stand out from the rest.

What makes this job fun is that the tasks of a stage manager are ever-evolving. A stage manager’s duties begin immediately after receiving a script. The first job is to read the script all the way through just to get a feel of what it might become. After a stage manager has finished the initial read through of a play it is time to read it again, this time to take notes. This is not necessarily fun, in fact it can be downright laborious, but the notes that are taken get turned into preliminary lists that make rehearsals and meetings function smoothly. “As the executor of the creative vision, the more thorough a job preparation you do the more confidence and fun you can have in commencing the journey from printed page to production reality (Kelly 36). These notes should include lists of scripted
technical aspects like “thunder on page 4” and “Mary wears a purple dress”. An example of a preliminary script analysis is in Appendix A, page 24. Another list that needs to be made is the character breakdowns so the stage manager and director know which actor is in which scene without needing to go through the script to find out. An example of a character/scene breakdown is in Appendix A, page 25. Lists like these are purely for initial groundwork. They will change constantly throughout the rehearsal process but they are perfect for referencing whenever a question is raised about what the script asks for.

After familiarizing oneself with the show it is time to meet with the director. This is the moment to figure out what he/she expects from stage management and what they expect the rehearsal schedule to look like. Two examples of rehearsal schedules are in Appendix A, pages 27 and 28. Questions about the way they expect rehearsals to run are also good at this time. When do they want rehearsal props? When are actors expected to be off book? Do they want to be strict with blocking or let the actors improvise throughout most of the process? Also, now is the time to ask about the director’s concept and what direction they are taking the show.

If a preliminary design meeting has yet to be scheduled offer to do it. Representatives of costumes, sounds, lights, and scenery should all be involved in this meeting with the director. The sooner the production team gets together to discuss what they are proposing for each of their departments the better. It is
also good for the stage manager to be present at this meeting in order to record
notes for future reference.

Scheduling production meetings is the next step for the stage manager in regards to the production team. These meetings should be weekly, and the earlier in the week the better. Weekly meetings like this keep the group informed about one another’s progress. “Production meetings are held throughout to help organize and prevent communication misunderstandings for the creative process” (Alisson 24). New questions can be raised and old issues resolved. The stage manager needs to schedule this meeting at a time that is convenient for everyone including themselves. This is a difficult task but if one department does not get to sit in on the meeting due to scheduling conflicts then not only are they being under-represented but they are not getting the complete information they need to move on with their work no matter how good a stage manager’s notes are of the minutes. All notes from these meetings should be emailed out to the production team by the end of the day ideally. An example of production meeting notes is in Appendix A, page 29.

By now the stage manager should be planning for auditions. “Stage managers should be involved as much as possible in the casting and audition process. By listening to the discussions between the casting agent and the director you will gain important insights into the show” (Kelly 54). Many companies will announce and advertise auditions for you. The stage manager’s
job at this point is to make sure there the audition space is functional. Signs posted with arrows to the restrooms, plenty of pencils and audition forms (example in Appendix A, pages 30-31), and a sign-up sheet are a good start. Also, the audition room itself needs good lighting, a table with pencils and a notepad for the director. Having a chair set on the stage and an ‘x’ marking where the auditioner should stand are good touches. The primary job for the stage manager is to keep everyone calm and organized. Gather all audition forms and head shots from the actors as they come in. When it is their turn, bring them in to meet the director and have them position themselves on the ‘x’ on stage. Efficiency in herding everyone as their turn comes and reminding the director to take breaks when necessary is an important job that will help to make this process as painless as possible. If the director needs to hold call backs to narrow the number of possible actors down further, then the stage manager will go through the same procedure as for the initial auditions to make this process simpler. Sometimes the director will want sides (specific pages of a script that portrays characters) available so they can hear what specifically each actor will bring to a character. Again, it is the stage manager’s job to make this a smooth and painless process.

Once the show has been cast it is time to start rehearsals.

The rehearsal process is a period of constant change. It is the stage manager’s job to record everything that happens during this time. Anything can happen during rehearsals that directly affects what a stage manager is recording
for that day; blocking (the movement of an actor while they are on stage)
changes and props are added and subtracted from the production, etc. Generally,
to begin this process, there will be a table reading of the script.

Table readings are a great way to get all of the newly cast actors in the
same room as the director and have everyone go over the script as they read it
aloud. This gives the initial ‘feel’ of a show, setting a tone for what the show
could be, and allowing a director a chance to see what everyone will bring to the
show before they even have the chance to work on it. Every table reading is
different. For example, ask the director how they want stage directions read.
Sometimes they want to do it themselves, sometimes they want you to do it, and
sometimes they want to skip over them altogether.

The stage manager is responsible for setting up the appointed space for a
read through. This includes a large table (or multiple table put together) that will
allow everyone to sit around, chairs for everyone invited to attend, and a mound
of paperwork. At this time it will be expected that everyone gets their contracts
signed, filled out any appropriate medical forms, and makes sure they have the
correct contact information for the stage manager. It would be unfortunate to
walk away from the first meeting and not be able to call the stage manager
because they did not have the right phone number or email written down. I
personally like to take a moment at the beginning of this first meeting to let them
input my information into their phones. If there is a rehearsal schedule made up
at this point now would be a good time to distribute a copy to everyone so they can make sure it gets into their calendar. All the information that a stage manager hands out or talks about during that first meeting should also be emailed to the cast by the next day. It is best to make sure everything is in email form as well as print that way no misunderstandings happen. Along with paperwork it is the stage manager’s job to make sure this first meeting is comfortable. The stage manager needs to know where the closest restrooms and a water fountain are located. If no water fountain is in the building than it would be in good form to bring water for the cast. This is the first formal meeting since everyone has been cast it is best to let the actors see that you are there to help. “Although the director is in charge, it is essential that the company realize that you are the stage manager and that you are pro-active in the work that you must perform” (Alisson 62). If they believe they can come to you with things than it will lead to an easier process from here on out.

Some directors like to skip the table reading altogether and just get to work. The first rehearsal is just as important as the table read. Stage management needs to show up early to set up. Again, this includes locating the nearest restrooms and water fountain. The floor also needs to be taped out to look like the ground plan. This is something that needs to be done before any actors show up. With the help of an assistant mark out all walls, doors, stairs, and platforms that would impact how an actor would move on stage with different
shades of tape. Locate furniture to represent the furniture in the show. Some things are not easy to come by - if a couch is needed but there is no couch in the rehearsal hall a couple of chairs will do. Improvise as necessary to give an accurate view of what the real set will look like. A table needs to be set up for the director and management, preferably front row and center of where the audience is located, next to each other. Make sure there is a power source near the tables in case the director needs to plug something in, like a laptop. The actors, when not on stage, will need something to sit on. Provide something.

When everyone arrives for rehearsal check in with them and see how they are doing. It is best to get a feel of how the actors are doing to prepare for how the rehearsal will go. Have the actors sign in as they come in so it is documented who arrived, who was late, and who was not available that rehearsal. Check in with the director when they show up. Get a feel on how they are doing and see if they planned any changes to the scheduled plan for that day. For the first rehearsal take a few minutes at the start to introduce the cast to space; have them walk on the set and let them ask questions about the stage. Remind them that they are expected to sign in for every rehearsal and any other spare notes you have for them. Then turn the rehearsal over to the director.

As the stage manager it is required to take notes on anything the director talks about that might be important later. If he has any questions, write it down. If he decides to change something, write it down. If any issues come up, write it
down. Stage managers must use their best judgment to decide what is important and what is not. Rule of thumb, though, when in doubt write it down. Also, when working with knowledge that there will be understudies make sure to write down any information that is pertinent to them. If the director wants Mercutio to have a particular demeanor and he tells the actor that then write it down so the understudy knows about this desire later. All of these notes and questions get recorded into the prompt book. Some of the things written will also get passed on to the production team in the form of a rehearsal report. Anything that affects anyone on the production team gets put into this report. For example, the director wants to know if two people can sit on the bench, so that gets put in for the scenic designer, or the director decides they want a practical lamp for the actress to carry on a dark stage. That information goes to both the lighting designer and the props team. An example of a rehearsal report is in Appendix A, page 32.

Any and all notes are important as rehearsals move forward. Also important during this time is to record any and all character movements as the actors block the show. This will be a reference for any actor who forgets where they need to be, any understudy who comes in, or for any replaced actors that can happen during a the run of a show. It is necessary to keep a key for the way blocking notes are taken in case anyone needs to step in for the stage manager. (It sounds extreme, but a stage manager should always be prepared to pass on
the information in case they ‘get hit by a bus’. Consider it a theatre superstition.)

Rehearsals continue until it is time to open the show. Generally the week before opening is called “tech week”. This is the time where everything either comes together or gets cut. The set is usually getting its final coats of paint, costumes are only requiring details, and management is getting antsy waiting to see how everything comes together. By this time the actors will have moved onto the stage for rehearsals if they are lucky. Blocking will be solid. Everyone is off book and your assistant is not writing as many line notes as before because the actors have all memorized their lines to a point of not needing little reminders of paraphrased lines.

For the stage manager this means scheduling a paper tech and getting together with the appropriate people to figure out where light, sound, deck, and other cues are located within the show. This information should be written legibly, in pencil, on the official prompt script. Again, provide a key so anyone could read the script and call the show accurately.

Sometimes there will be a special rehearsal just for the technicians before going into cue to cue. This is called a dry tech. It is used to teach stage hands where they are moving things before scenes. These scene shifts should be arranged prior to this rehearsal by the stage manager and the crew chief. An example of a shift plot is in Appendix A, page 33. Anything that is supposed to happen needs to be addressed at this point and recorded that way everyone has
an assigned job. If between scene 1 and 2 a house turns into a hotel then
furniture, props, etc then this needs to be recorded by who does what and when.

Having a cue to cue is occasionally the next step in the process. This is an
all day thing that is for the stage manager to run through the cues in their prompt
book cue by cue to get the timing of everything correct. Everything that was
talked about at paper tech comes together on this day. This is also the time for
the crew to make sure they know their job. A cue to cue rehearsal literally jumps
from one cue to the next in the script. If there are no internal cues then the
actors and crew will set up for the top of a scene, run it with all the technically
elements, stop, and then set up for the end of a scene. There is no need to have
the actors ‘act’ out the entire play when only the beginning and ending is
important for this rehearsal.

If a cue to cue is not had then a technical rehearsal is the next step. This is
a full run through of the show with all the technical elements in place. “As the
Stage Manager, you are the chief element in the execution and artistic
presentation of many people’s hard work. The Designers are Monet creating a
canvas on the stage and in many cases you will find that you are the brush which
completes the strokes” (Dollar). Generally, if there is a problem tech-wise, the
stage manager will have everyone hold until the problem is solved before
continuing with the rehearsal. Often any complicated issues with costumes will
be rehearsed at this time as well, like a super fast quick change or an actress
wearing a skirt with a long train.

The real time for costumes will be at the dress rehearsals. These are just normal rehearsals except now the actors are in costume and the technical issues have been mostly worked out. Dress rehearsals are the first rehearsals where everyone is fully aware of how everything has come together. Until this point only bits and pieces have been obvious. For stage managers the dress rehearsals bring two new elements to work with. First, there will generally be a photographer or journalist that has to be accommodated. These people might need the correct spelling of names of actors and characters, etc. Second, the company might decide to have a preview showing of the performance during dress rehearsals. For the stage manager that means wrangling everyone (cast and crew) into acting like it is a show night regardless of what goes wrong.

Preview nights lead straight into performance nights. Occasionally, if there is a long break between performances (like a week off) or if the performance seems to be deteriorating, the stage manager will call pick-up rehearsals to help get everybody back into the ‘show mode’. For longer runs a stage manager might need to hold understudy rehearsals to replace an actor in the show. The biggest thing facing a stage manager once a show is open is the loss of the director. They move on to a new production and leave a stage manager with the responsibility of maintaining the integrity of the performance. Directors and stage managers know that actors will sometimes get bored of their parts and they will start to
‘tweak’ the blocking or inflection of a line in order to make the show fun to perform. Sometimes they make a mistake one night that gets more laughs from the audience and they try to replicate it from then on. The stage manager has to step in and remind the actor that perhaps they should go back to the original way of doing things, the way that the director wanted things done. The last thing a stage manager has to worry about is having a clean, thorough copy of the show’s prompt book that can be left with the company.

Finally, an attitude is everything when it comes to stage managing. Having the wrong kind is a job risk. A stage manager has to be able to take command. Being respectful and trustworthy is vital. Letting people feel like they can come to you with things is important. Stage managers deal with various personalities all day long. Being able to treat everyone the way they need and want to be treated regardless of who you just interacted with is a vital skill in maintaining relationships. Unfortunately, this job is one that gets little thanks or recognition. If a stage manager strives for either they are no longer doing their job correctly. “To be unmentioned is a stage manager’s best review” (Apperson 67).

These are just the basics requirements for a stage manager. The list of things varies from production to production and company to company. Often a stage manager will go above and beyond the minimum in order to make a production come together. “And they must do all of this without appearing to be smarter than everyone else so we all think we are so good at what we do” (Gill).
The Problem/Argument/Solution

In my training I have heard from my first day of college that the stage manager has no opinion what-so-ever to offer for the productions they work on or else they get fired. I have heard that stage managers are not allowed to assist in any way on the design part of the show. I have heard that stage managers do not help out with technical issues at all.

Historically the stage manager has been seen as reactive; responding to a predetermined set of tasks as requested by the director and designers. They were not expected to contribute to the rehearsal process other than taking notes, blocking the actor’s moves, prompting and setting up for rehearsal each day. (Pallin 137)

These are rules to live by if I want to be serious as a stage manager and get professional work. I have had the opportunity to work professionally in Portland, San Francisco, and New York. It is because of this I have reason to believe that the ‘no-opinion stage manager’ is not a true standard. Over time I have noticed that select things I say or do are indeed artistic in nature and not once have I been penalized for it. In fact, on some occasions, I have been praised for my contributions.

First, the people skills required are unique. Going from one personality type to another could give a person whiplash but a stage manager needs the skill to navigate through talking with designers, actors, and technicians with ease. They can communicate schedules and needs without offense.
Stage managers are responsible and adaptable communicators who have the ability to handle and coordinate diverse groups of artistic personalities with tactful discipline and a sense of humor. They establish a creative environment by combining the ability to prioritize and anticipate and solve problems with calm sensitivity and grace under pressure. (Kelly 20)

Stage management is the job of “managing people, their ideas and their creative process” (Cambell, et al) and communication is a vital part of that. It is true that some may argue that talking to people is not an art but who are we kidding? We all know people who could do with learning how to communicate to people.

Second, as stated above, it is the stage manager’s job to maintain the integrity of a performance once the show opens and the director leaves. “The art and craft of stage managing is knowing how to work as and for the director” (Columbus). The show is a reflection on the director and as such it is vital to make sure that the end product continues being what the director expects it to be long after they are gone. A person can argue that that stage manager does not contribute personally to the art on the stage but as the person who knows the show’s details and the feel of the show better than anyone else they are the one who would be aware for when there are unwanted changes.

Third, the amount of paperwork that a stage manager must generate and pass out is endless. Being able to create forms that are readable and have all the necessary information on hand is a skill that many do not have. Plus, stage managers tend to add their own flair to keep things looking nice and organized.
Sure, this is a managerial duty and does not sound too difficult but imagine trying to find something important, like the director’s phone number on the master contact sheet, and it not being locatable because the document was not organized or readable. I recently came across a stage manager who did not break up the break times on the rehearsal reports in a readable way. If the break times needed to be recorded for union reasons the stage manager could have caused issues with the unreadable document. Another example of why good paperwork is important: if the director wants a rehearsal cane and the stage manager puts that on the rehearsal report only under costumes they could cause a problem.

Some items, like canes, are ambiguous as to whose job it is to provide them – maybe it is the responsibility of the props department and not the costume department. By only telling costumes that a cane is needed the stage manager might offend both the costume shop and the props manager.

All of these are legitimate points that people do not think about when it comes to artistry and skill but the primary reason I believe stage managers artistic is due to the cue calling. Calling the cues is the moment that can make or break a performance for the audience, and the actors, and it relies on the stage manager heavily. Cue calling is quite literally the practice of calling the cues (actors to places, lights go, sound go) to a stage hand during a performance in order to make those very things happen. The stage hand will then let an actor know to move, make the lights shift, or make a sound (like a gunshot) happen.
Since the lights, sounds, and other technical elements help the actors enforce the mood in each scene getting them correct is important. If an actor cannot start their next line without the sound of that gunshot then the stage manager needs to make sure the gunshot goes off so the actor can continue the scene.

The stage manager has an active role in contributing to the creativity of a performance. They are like a conductor of the orchestra, dictating the pace of cueing sequences and blending the changes with the flow of the action. Like with performers, the stage manager should feel they have connected with the performance and become one with the creative energy which is the essence of live theatre. (Pallin 141)

This takes timing and an understanding of what the actors do so you can get placement correct. “Having the timing to make the show’s moments work is harder to find than one might think” (Bardo). This is my second favorite part of stage managing (watching the entire process evolve is my first) and the primary reason I feel artistic at the end of the night.

Unfortunately, there are some who would argue that the act of calling cues is not artistic; that it is a purely mechanical process in which the stage manager communicates what they have been directed to a technician who then carries out the task. For example, when the lighting designer in paper tech tells the stage manager to call lights up on an actor at the end of their line, then he really means wait until the line is done and then call ‘go’. Now, it is true that a stage manager will call the cue where they are told to call it. It is also true that a stage manager will call the cue so that it makes the shift in a scene the way that
the designer wants it to shift. Sometimes this does not happen at the same time though. Sometimes where the designer thinks it should go and where they really want it to go are two different things and it is left to the stage manager to decipher where that truly is. If we carry on with this argument though it can also be determined that the actors are not artists because they are merely doing what the director and playwright has told them to do. They only walked to a certain part of the stage, or acted with a certain emotion, or fainted on a certain cue all because someone told them to do it that way. Since the actors are considered artists, and it would be downright rude to call them anything but, then it only stands to reason that stage managers are artists. Another way to think of this is that by naming “the direction given to a designer as ‘collaboration’ while naming the direction given to a stage manager as something else is just semantics” (Franklin).

Overall the stage manager needs to feel the ‘pulse’ of the performance and be able to call the show with that pulse in mind. If the pace feels slow they need to encourage the pace to be picked up. The same goes for if the pace is too fast. Touring stage managers are often responsible for focusing lights at each venue so they need to understand the artistic intention of the design team and faithfully restructure that look and at times make the call to cut certain elements when they will not fit yet still maintain the overall artistic integrity of the production. This certainly requires an ‘artistic eye’. (Griffin)

Finally, as a person working in an artistic field a stage manager has no choice but to soak up some shades of artistry. Happy mistakes occasionally occur
too. For instance, imagine being a stage manager who is running through a dress rehearsal and jumping a light cue. There is not enough time to take the lights back a cue before it is time for the next one so it is skipped altogether. When talking with the lighting designer after the run they tell you to delete the missed cue because they preferred the show the way it looked this time. This is a fantastic example of how a stage manager assists creativity by making opportunities for a new way of thinking, even if by accident.

**Why Should You Care?**

The first instinct will always be to say that no, stage managers are purely facilitators who have no artistic opinion or ability that the company cares for. In education one of the first lessons for stage managers is always that they need to keep their mouths shut when people ask for opinions – perhaps even to skate around the question altogether. The reason for this is that no one wants a stage manager who will offend the artist’s vision. On further understanding of the position a person realizes that the question of a stage manager’s artistic abilities in performing their job is less cut and dry than it appears but this takes time to learn. On my visit to the USITT (United States Institute for Theatre Technology) Conference in 2013 I spoke to a number of attendees about the art of stage managing. Some of the people I spoke to were new to the field and they believed firmly that stage management is purely a managerial position. Some were
beginning to realize that there is art is what they do, especially when it comes to
cue calling. Those that were in the field longest though this a completely silly
topic because for them the answer was obvious - of course stage managers are
artists. They believe that stage managers are an integral part of theatre and
without them the productions would be less.

Artistry is hard to define since it means different things to different
people. It is not just a talent one is born with but a skill that can be learned and
influenced by relations in an everyday life. It can be seen as “the application of
knowledge and skill in new ways to achieve a valued goal” (Seltzer 10). If we use
this definition of artistry then there is no doubt that stage managers are artists.
The trick now would be to teach this and convey this to new stage managers and
other people in the theatrical field. Whether it is through schooling or a new
tradition that starts up within the field, a precedent needs to be set that
everyone is artistic and as such needs to be treated with respect. This would also
set stage managers up for excellence if they can start asserting their art in the
subtle manner that is expected of stage managers.

Stage management is a difficult and complicated job that requires a
finesse that not everyone has. It needs someone who has the skills to talk to
varying personalities, take control, stay organized, and work in a field that is ever-
changing. Primarily, this job needs someone who can take another person’s
vision and make it happen. New people coming into the field need to have an
understanding of what this job requests from a person and they need to know how to trust their instincts when it comes to calling the cues for a show. If this is a skill, an art, that can be taught to incoming stage managers they would enter the field being more prepared than any of their predecessors. After all, “the stage manager’s artistic ability and integrity are what, ultimately, transform the show from its pieces into that magical whole” (Franklin).
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<td>39</td>
<td>Props</td>
<td>Pouf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Props</td>
<td>small hand mirror</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Props</td>
<td>Period round measuring stick measures 1/2&quot; diameter and 18&quot; length</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pro</td>
<td>Her Heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joey</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nick</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katrina</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Margaret</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kira</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tia</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are many ways to make a contact sheet. The important thing is that it is readable and information is easy to find.

Example 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Production Team</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Director</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xxx-xxxx-xxxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Email</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xxx-xxxx-xxxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Email</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asst. Stage Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>xxx-xxxx-xxxx</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Email</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Box Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cast Info</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Valmont</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Major-Domo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danceny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danceny’s Manservant and Understudy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Azolan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourvel’s Footman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marquise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volanges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cecile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosemonde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourvel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emilie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosemonde’s Maid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valmont’s Footman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUNDAY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Almost, Maine
~ July 2012 ~
Stage Manager: Joelle Wynn
Last Edited: 6/27/12
# Rehearsal Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday, July 17</th>
<th>Monday, July 18</th>
<th>Tuesday, July 19</th>
<th>Wednesday, July 20</th>
<th>Thursday, July 21</th>
<th>Friday, July 22</th>
<th>Saturday, July 23</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12:00-3:00 Her Heart</td>
<td>6:00-7:00 Pro/Int Ep&lt;br&gt;7:00-9:00 Sad and Glad&lt;br&gt;9:00-10:00 They Fell</td>
<td>6:00-8:00 Her Heart&lt;br&gt;8:00-10:00 This Hurts</td>
<td>6:00-8:00 Getting It Back&lt;br&gt;8:00-10:00 Seeing the Thing</td>
<td>6:00-8:00 Where It Went&lt;br&gt;8:00-10:00 Story of Hope</td>
<td>6:00-10:00 Run-through and Notes</td>
<td>1:00-11:00 Cue2Cue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sunday, July 24</td>
<td>Monday, July 25</td>
<td>Tuesday, July 26</td>
<td>Wednesday, July 27</td>
<td>Thursday, July 28</td>
<td>Friday, July 29</td>
<td>Saturday, July 30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:00-10:00 Cue2Cue</td>
<td>6:00- Dress Rehearsal&lt;br&gt;#1</td>
<td>6:00- Dress Rehearsal&lt;br&gt;#2</td>
<td>6:00- Performance #1</td>
<td>6:00- Performance #2</td>
<td>6:00- Performance #3</td>
<td>12:00- Performance #4&lt;br&gt;6:00- Performance #5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### The Ladies Man by Charles Morey

#### Production Meeting Notes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday, July 23, 2012</th>
<th>Next Meeting: N/A It was good working on the show with y’all 😊</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time: 3:30-3:53 pm</td>
<td>Attendance: Nic, Grace, Chloe, Joceline, David, Ryan, Sandy, Kai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absent: Scott</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Schedule
1. We will practice moving the revolve on Tuesday.
2. There will be two photo shoots on Wednesday. Time TBA.
3. Paper tech will be Friday, July 27th at 3:30 pm.
4. There is a run through on Friday, July 27th at 6:30 pm.

#### Set
1. What handles go on the windows? The Ryan will talk to the Scott on Tuesday.
3. The furniture will be losing any wheels that cause problems.
4. A blanket will be needed for the bed. Nic will go shopping Wednesday.

#### Costumes
1. Breakaway pants are coming along.
2. John, Tia, and Trevor will be in the photo shoot. Tia will be called at 5:30, John and Trevor will be called at 5:40.
3. Ruth will have a hat. It will have a long hat pin.
4. Trevor’s tailcoat is available for rehearsal along with the ladies petticoats (minus Tia’s).

#### Props
1. We are getting a second measuring tape. Kai will bring hers in as well.
2. The medicine will be colored. Probably blue.

#### Sound
1. N/A

#### Lights
1. N/A

---

Joceline Wynn  
Stage Manager  
xxx-xxx-xxxx
Audition Form

*Name: ____________________________

*Address: ____________________________
______________________________
______________________________

*Phone #: ____________________________

*E-Mail: ____________________________

*All information is for internal use and kept confidential

Height: _____ Weight: _____ Age: _____ Gender: _____
Hair color: ____________ * If cast, will you be willing to cut or dye your hair? ______

*Role Auditioning for: _____________________________________________________

Experience: (list most recent)
Play / Production Theater Group Role Date(s)
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Please list any special talents, skills, or other considerations (dancer, musician, vocalist, tech, juggling, etc.) that could benefit the production:
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Production
Show: *The Ladies Man*
Director: ________________
Stage Manager: Joceline Wynn
Rehearsals will begin Monday, June 25th at 6 pm in MNB 108. Rehearsals run Monday-Fridays; from 6-10 pm. Cue2Cue will be all day Saturday and Sunday, July 28th and 29th. Performance dates are August 1st-4th at 7:30 pm with a Saturday matinee at 1 pm on August 4th. Strike will be Sunday, August 5th at 10am. All dates and times are subject to change. There may be additional rehearsals as per the director.

Please list below any expected conflicts that you may have between June 25th and August 5th (weddings, family events, trips, concerts, etc).
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

Please use the blank calendar below to black out the times you are unavailable during the week—day & night. (Include day/evening classes, regular jobs, weekly meetings, etc . . .)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sun</th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tues</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thurs</th>
<th>Fri</th>
<th>Sat</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 am</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>1 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 pm</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>4 pm</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5 pm</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 pm</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>7 pm</td>
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<td>8 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 pm</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 pm</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Rehearsal Date: Monday, July 5, 2010

Rehearsal Report # 11

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rehearsal Start:</th>
<th>6:00 pm</th>
<th>Absent:</th>
<th>Tim (excused)</th>
<th>Late:</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rehearsal End:</td>
<td>9:33 pm</td>
<td>Break:</td>
<td>7:17-7:27 pm</td>
<td>Break:</td>
<td>8:44-8:54 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Next Rehearsal:</td>
<td>Tuesday, July 6</td>
<td>Summary</td>
<td>Worked through Part 1 today (Monday). Working through Part 2 tomorrow (Tuesday).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Schedule
1. Reminder: There is a Production meeting tomorrow (Tuesday) at 3:30. Hope to see you there!

Set
1. No notes today.

Lights
1. No notes today.

Props
1. Can we get rehearsal purses? (See Costumes #1)
2. Can we get a new, unopened bag of pretzels for rehearsal? The bag will remain unopened for rehearsals.
3. The liquor bottles should have bottle toppers so the liquid could just pour out the top.
4. David offered to bring a small cedar box to put the cigarettes in for rehearsal.

Costumes
1. Can we get rehearsal purses? (See Props #1)

Sound
2. No notes today.

Misc.
3. No notes today.

Assistant Stage Manager
Joceline Wynn
xxx-xxx-xxxx
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>What</th>
<th>On</th>
<th>Off</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prologue</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>bench</td>
<td>Melanie/Clara</td>
<td>Nic/Clara</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>snowball</td>
<td>Melanie</td>
<td>Nic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Her Heart</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>bag of slate</td>
<td>Kira</td>
<td>John</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>map</td>
<td>Kira</td>
<td>Kira</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>brochure</td>
<td>Kira</td>
<td>Kira</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad and Glad</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>moose head</td>
<td>Devin</td>
<td>Devin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SL</td>
<td>table</td>
<td>Chloe</td>
<td>Chloe</td>
<td>*1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SL</td>
<td>stool #1</td>
<td>Luke</td>
<td>Luke</td>
<td>*3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SL</td>
<td>stool #2</td>
<td>Marita</td>
<td>Marita</td>
<td>*2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>dart board</td>
<td>Melanie</td>
<td>Melanie</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>This Hurts</td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>laundry sign</td>
<td>Marita</td>
<td>Marita</td>
<td>*1st **Enter SR and place sign and exit SL with stool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>ironing board</td>
<td>Jenessa</td>
<td>Jenessa</td>
<td>*2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>shirt</td>
<td>Jenessa</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>*pre set w/ ironing board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>iron</td>
<td>Jenessa</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>*plugged into extension cord into outlet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>laundry basket</td>
<td>Katrina</td>
<td>Katrina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SR</td>
<td>2 notebooks</td>
<td>Nic</td>
<td>Nic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Ladies Man by Charles Morey
Performance Report #3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Time:</th>
<th>Intermission:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friday, August 3, 2012</td>
<td>7:42-9:50 pm</td>
<td>8:35-8:47 pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(2 hr 7 min)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>House Count:</th>
<th>Next Performance:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>Saturday, August 4, 2012 at 2:00 pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Schedule
1. There will be a photo shoot Saturday after the evening show. It should take no more than 30 minutes.
2. Strike is scheduled for Sunday, August 5th from 10 am - 2 pm.

Set
1. The DSR door knob fell off during Act 1. Ryan fixed it during intermission.

Costumes
5. No notes today.

Props
1. No notes today.

Sound
1. No notes today.

Lights
2. No notes today.

Management
1. The house was held for 10 minutes to give people a chance to make it from Salem where a fire before the bridge had delayed traffic.

Joceline Wynn
Stage Manager
xxx-xxx-xxxx
Name: Norman "Boomer" Bardo

What is your job/position?

1) Freelance Sound Designer/Engineer and TD 2) Sound Department Head: Bob Carr Performing Arts Center

How does your position relate to theatre?

Assisting the director realize his/her concept of the work, sonically suggest place and time, lend verisimilitude to the story, ensure every audience member has relatively the same sonic experience and can understand the words, ensure every cast member, musician, and crew member can hear and see those things that allow for synchronization and support of their elements.

How do you, in your position, interact with a stage manager?

As Designer, I generate paperwork for the Call Script and note the PSM's show calling if required. Also work with SM team for their communication needs. As operator, execute cues called by the PSM as I understand them from the designer.

What do you expect from them?
High degree of detailed note-taking about every facet of the show, good cue calling. Overall, making my job easier.

**What do they expect from you?**

Pay attention, follow direction, work well with others, and show up sober.

**Would you consider stage managers artistic, given what you know or think about the position and what you think ‘artistic’ means? Please explain.**

I've seen in amateur productions the SM act as an assistant director or fight captain and the such to the point that they are definitely in the traditional thought of artistic as part of the director/design team. In professional theater, the artistic sensibility is most expressed in the feel of calling a show, like a piece of music, different musicians will interpret their parts differently, so too with call scripts. Having the timing to make the show's moments work is harder to find than one might think.

Getting back to the music analogy, for just the creation to be classified as art, only the composer would be the artist. But musicians are also considered artists being artistic. The same is true of SM's. An SM 'plays' the play.
**Name:** Brandy E. DeMil

**What is your job/position?**

Production Stage Manager, Maltz Jupiter Theatre, LORT B Contract

**How does your position relate to theatre?**

I am the rehearsal and calling stage manager for three productions at a LORT producing organization

**Would you consider stage managers artistic, given what you know or think about the position and what you think ‘artistic’ means? Please explain.**

The stage manager is definitely an artistic position. It is not just "taking notes and writing things down". The most important part of a stage manager's position in a professional environment is to understand the artistic vision of the director and the design team, and figure out how to implement that. Once the show opens, it is up to the stage manager to maintain this vision throughout the run by giving notes and having an open dialogue with the actors. Even calling cues requires an artistic flair and a relationship with the lighting/ sound designer. Often a designer can tell you what they want to see, but it is up to the stage manager to figure out how to make that happen. You must have an understanding of what each cue does and why it was created.
Name: Emily Gill

What is your job/position?
Assistant Professor of Theatre, Resident Costume Designer, Props Coordinator

How does your position relate to theatre?
I teach Costume Design related courses as well as the UM General Education offering for Theatre/Arts Awareness. I also split responsibility for production requirements not immediately connected to Costume Design- which depending on the production can include Props fabrication and sourcing, projections and media design, filming and editing of video segments, poster and PR design, wigs and make-up as well as coordination and "casting" of backstage crew including ASMs. I also coordinate the portfolio review process for Design/Tech/Management majors.

How do you, in your position, interact with a stage manager?
We try to have a student stage manager's duties reflect those of an Equity Stage Manager- with room for instruction and of course there are certain elements missing because of school rules about purchasing and other student considerations- like building access policies and hours. My main interaction is through the production meeting process- informing them of agenda items and quick meetings beforehand to prevent any "on the spot" moments and best utilize time, as I would with a professional stage manager. Most of the time I ask stage managers to schedule fittings, but sometimes expediency or even less
frequently poor SM performance call for me to just message people on my own, but including the SM in communication. We also have a weird system about props because of a faculty/staff shortage, so there is a weird ambiguous definition between what I cover and what the scenic/lighting faculty member covers and it can change based on who is going shopping where and who has what in their basement. So I keep very close contact with the SM and ASM assigned to props to make sure everything is planned for and works the way it needs to. I probably spend most of my time working with this area.

What do you expect from them?

I expect my rehearsal reports by 7AM. We are in a remote area, and if I need to go shopping or handle something that will need supplies, I need to know early so I can plan my day to include the almost two hour round trip to the nearest major retail area. It also helps me prepare for the 8 AM director email flurries that one faculty director has a habit of doing during production times. His emails are more like texts or IM... If I know what is coming, I can respond more quickly and accurately. I expect a clear statement of the note or request from rehearsal with as much detail as possible. So for example, a good note is: "We would like to work with the puppets next time we work Act I Scene 5." instead of "When will Costumes finally have the puppets?" I will most likely get irremediably bitchy if I see the second. And that goes for pros as well. We can have a Southern People
Passive Aggressive Contest and I was raised by the masters, so I will both win and make you look forward to your trip to hell.

**What do they expect from you?**

I always respond to rehearsal reports with detailed replies even "thanks!" just to confirm receipt. Because of some quirks in our email system, we had a time when a student's rehearsal reports were going straight to Narnia. And she never asked why no one ever responded. So I let every new SM know my request and make sure they know if they don't hear from me by 10 AM, please put a copy in my office box. Otherwise I am paperless. This goes most of the time for pros- but it is a little different because frequently I am out of town and the timing is not as crucial because my delivery dates are already set and I don't do props. I also give student SMs the contact info for their running crew and disciplinary support. Once or twice, someone has been a problem, and the fear of Faculty intervention (see above- I am actually a very nice lady who loves puppies and the laughter of children but it helps to be a little scary) has been a good tool.

**Would you consider stage managers artistic, given what you know or think about the position and what you think ‘artistic’ means? Please explain.**

A Stage Manager is the most artistic person in the room. They have to understand and assimilate everything and make it all work together. In production meetings, they have to understand the artistic goal, but also facilitate the communication that will make that goal happen. They have to understand
the ultimate expression in order to help the team prioritize what happens when, what could be cut, what absolutely MUST get done... During rehearsals, they must understand the art of the blocking and character work in order to inform the integration of the visual and sound elements in tech week. In professional and some academic situations, they must have a sense of the production in order to maintain and cultivate it according to the director's vision- but still allow it to live and breathe as a live performance. There is a real musicianship to calling a show, even without music- which can only add complexity to the task. And they must do all of this without appearing to be smarter than everyone else so we all think we are so good at what we do! ;)
Name: Rosie Goldman

What is your job/position?

ASM/ Blue Man Schedule Coordinator at Blue Man Group, Astor Place

How does your position relate to theatre?

I am a theatrical stage manager. For Blue Man Group I oversee the show schedule of the cast and I call between 3-6 shows a week.

Would you consider stage managers artistic, given what you know or think about the position and what you think ‘artistic’ means? Please explain.

I think good stage managers need to have an artistic sense in order to call a show well and to give the performers notes in order to maintain the performance. If a stage manager did not need to be artistic - we would have been replaced by computers for calling shows. In some venues (like a rock concert tour) that is what they do - the stage manager is basically an administrator (acting more the part of a company manager) and the board ops take their own cues based on preset timings.
Name: Kevin Griffin

What is your job/position?

I am the resident lighting designer and production manager at the Annie Russell Theatre, Rollins College. I am a tenure-track faculty member at Rollins College with the department of theatre & dance. I teach courses in theatrical lighting design, technical production, intro to theatre for the non-major and specialty courses for design/tech emphasis students.

I am also a free-lance lighting designer and theatrical technician as well as a member of I.A.T.S.E. Local 631.

How does your position relate to theatre?

As a Lighting Designer I am directly involved with the creative, collaborative process of creating the visual world in which the performance takes place. As Production Manager I coordinate the design and technical teams, providing a conduit for communication between teams and team members and between the director, performers and the design/technical team. I report directly to the Artistic Director and manage all production budgets including those involving advertising, mailing, copying, office materials & supplies, equipment management and repair, transportation and over hire. I coordinate the paperwork associated with hiring guest artists, musicians, etc. In cooperation with the Artistic Director I develop the season production calendar in concert with the college's calendar.
How do you, in your position, interact with a stage manager?

As Lighting Designer I provide the SM with all of the lighting cues, there placement in the script and provide guidance as to when the cue should be called and what the overall desired effect of the lighting is for the show.

As Production Manager I provide training and logistics to the stage managers and their team. I assign/approve of student stage managers and their teams (at Rollins the SM gets to interview and choose their ASM's), I meet with the teams to discuss the basics of the job and make sure they understand their functions individually, as the SM team and as a part of the entire production team. I provide the student SM team a "cushion" by being there for them as a buffer (if/as needed) between them and faculty designers, directors and guest artists.

What do you expect from them?

The SM team needs to be extremely organized and detail oriented. They have total responsibility to make sure communication from rehearsals to the design/tech side (and vice-versa) of production is clear and on time. They are "first in and last out" at every rehearsal and show call. They set the tone of the production by staying professional, calm, pleasant and collaborative at all times. They serve the entire production and are not dictators but can provide calm and clear leadership even in a crisis. They are always ready to the notes and report info to the proper areas. They are always on time (which means 15 min. early for the call). They have fun and truly LOVE what they do! Yes, SM’s do make coffee.
What do they expect from you?

To be available to answer questions, to treat them like colleagues and not servants, to teach them and understand they are students learning and not professional stage managers with years of experience, to be a calm, cool, collected, organized colleague.

Would you consider stage managers artistic, given what you know or think about the position and what you think ‘artistic’ means? Please explain.

Yes! SM's need to feel the "pulse" of the performance and be able to call the show with that pulse in mind. If the pace feels slow they need to work to encourage the pace to be picked up. If going to fast they need to work to remind everyone to allow the moments to happen. Touring SM's often are responsible for focusing the lighting at each venue so they need to understand the artistic intention of the design team and faithfully re-structure that look and at times make the call to cut certain elements when they will not fit yet still maintain the overall artistic integrity of the production. That certainly requires and "artists eye!"
Works Cited


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