

Stage Management Lecture

So you want to be a stage manager...

First things first:

What the heck is a
stage manager?!

Stage Manager – In charge of a single production from casting (if possible) through strike. Duties include:

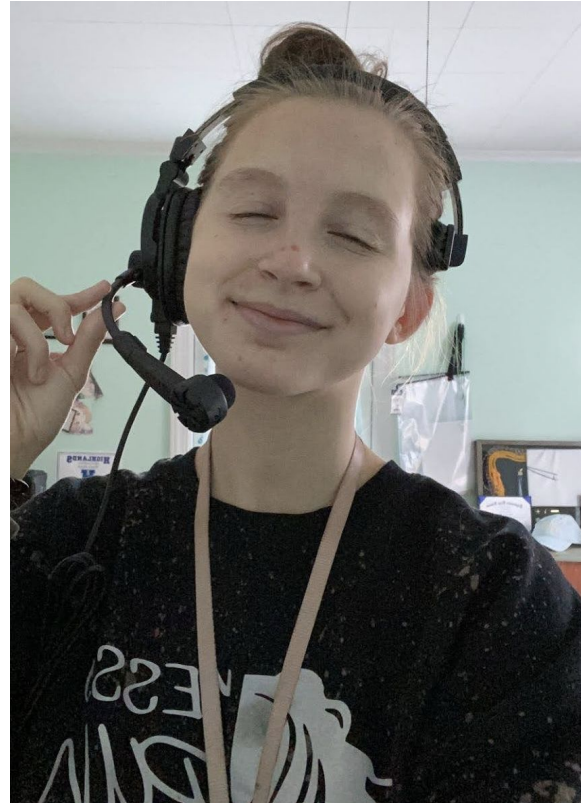
- Scheduling and running all production meetings
- Writing down blocking and notes during rehearsals.
- People and production tracking
- Creation of the Production contact sheet should include actors, designer, and crew
- Setting up email list(s) for contact (1 acting, 1 design, 1 all play)
- If needed copying of scripts or music
- Scene Breakdown, Scene Analysis, Props Tracking
- Rehearsal and performance reports
- Breaks
- Run crew assignments and cue sheets for those jobs
- With the director setting and maintain a rehearsal calendar
- Checking and re filling the SM Kit
- Preparing a clear and easy to read prompt book
- Maintaining communication
- Maintain a positive and productive rehearsal and performance space.

They also will [call the show](#) and will be in communication with all crew heads during a performance!

Good Qualities of a Stage Manager

Good Stage Managers will:

- Accept responsibility
- Keep their cool
- Keep their eyes and ears open and know when to share their opinions
- Think ahead
- Are considerate
- Keep their sense of humor
- Are organized and efficient
- Are punctual and dependable



Who's in your team?

Production Manager – This applies only to those individuals overseeing a number of productions and/or stage managers. They help mentor and supervise a crew of stage managers for the 3-8 productions in progress.

Production Assistant – A PA may come into the process late during tech week your job then becomes similar to the ASM manning the other side of the backstage area. Helping with cleaning and re-setting of the show.

Assistant Stage Manager – An ASM will assist with all stage manager duties, especially those that involve actions in the wings. This includes managing Prop tables or manning/controlling one side of the stage during production.

Next Step:
Analysis &
Preparation

What should you do with your script?

Time to read the
play it is always a
good rule of
thumb to read
at least 3 times!

- 1) for fun and to get the story
- 2) for given circumstances (this is when you begin your Scene Breakdown and Script Analysis) scenes, cues or specific set/costumes mentioned in production
- 3) Dig even deeper look for potential landmines or things that will need to be brought up in early Production meetings.

Question Examples

Meeting with a Director!

Always good to try and do this in person as soon as you have been assigned as Stage manager for a production. This helps to avoid stress and get everyone on the same page. Make sure this information is also passed down to your ASM and PA's. You will not learn everything in this meeting but make sure you cover a few basics.

Always plan for 10-15 mins after rehearsal to go over the rehearsal to discuss any changes in the rehearsal schedule for the next week, or if a new work script change.

- How do you want to organize the first day of rehearsal?
- Do you want props in rehearsal? When if possible?
- Are we changing the time period or locale of the production?
- For many plays you must ask which version or translation we are using before doing a ton of Analysis.
- Do you want me to create the master rehearsal calendar or is that something you prefer to do?
- When and how often do you want to take breaks?
- Should I warn you when we are close to a break rather than just calling a break (FYI the answer is almost always warn me the real question is how far ahead)?
- Do you wish my opinion during script discusses? Interactions with the cast or not (like line notes only)?

Now it's time for the
documents!

Contact Sheet

A contact sheet is a document that hosts the contact information of every person in the production/performance team. The SM has this on them 24/7 in case of any emergency/urgency.

Trifles Contact Sheet

Name	Role	Phone Number	WKU Email
<i>Hope Mohon (she/her)</i>	Director		Nelmarie.mohon595@topper.wku.edu
<i>Hailey Robertson (she/her)</i>	Stage Manager		Hailey.robertson794@topper.wku.edu
<i>Jill Kohr</i>	Costume Designer		Jillian.kohr249@topper.wku.edu
<i>Josh Curtsinger</i>	Set Designer		Joshua.curtsinger922@topper.wku.edu
<i>Coleton Wood</i>	Sound and Lights		Coleton.wood124@topper.wku.edu
<i>Elizabeth Garapic (she/her)</i>	Mrs. Hale		Elizabeth.garapic490@topper.wku.edu
<i>Mallory Mayo (she/her)</i>	Mrs. Peters		Mallory.mayo248@topper.wku.edu
<i>Abdallah Sher (he/him)</i>	County Attorney		Abdallah.sher817@topper.wku.edu
<i>Jacob Miller (he/him)</i>	Sheriff Peters		Jacob.miller016@topper.wku.edu
<i>Hunter Brooks</i>	Mr. Hale		Benjamin.brooks967@topper.wku.edu

Schedule

A schedule is something you collaborate with the director on. This is vital in order to get the production moving. It is the SM's responsibility to get the availability of the actors/prod team for ease of the scheduling process.

September 2019



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 NO Rehearsal DO your best to be off book for Peasant for Friday	3 7:30 Thief	4 7:30 Venus 8:15 Fisherman	5 7:30 Crows 8:00 Goose	6 7:30 Stumble Act II Run Act I	7
8	9 Work Act 1 ALL	10 Work Act 2 ALL	11 TBD	12 Designer run 7:30 meet & warm up 8:00 GO	13 Work TBD	14
15	16 Work TBD	17 Work TBD	18 Work TBD	19 RUN 7:30 ALL	20 Spacing in Russell Miller 7:30 ALL	21 Techity Tech noon-?
22 Tech run noon?	23 Costumes All in 7:30	24 All Called 7:00 pm 8:00 pm GO	25 All Called 7:00 pm 8:00 pm GO	26 Opening 8 pm GO	27 Show Kids Evening show 8 pm go	28 Evening Show 8 pm GO
29 Matinee 3:00pm GO	30 Evening Show 8 pm GO	1 Evening Show 8 pm GO STRIKE	2	3	4	5
6	7	Notes				

Prod Meeting Agenda

A meeting agenda is the schedule of the production meetings. Basically, it's the SM's blueprint of what they want to achieve in a production meeting.

Story Theatre 1 st Meeting Agenda		
By Paul Sills Director Jessica Johnson Frohling Stage Manager: Liz Walker Assistant Stage Manager: Rachael Prewitt		
Place: Deans Conference Room FAC 221	Start: 9:01 am 8/22/2019	End 9:36 am
Next Meeting	Tuesday August 27 th at 8:15 am	FAC 221
In attendance:	Director: Jessica Johnson Frohling, Set Designer: Tom Tutino, Costume Designer: Shura Pollatsek, Sound Designer: Alex Gray, Lighting Designer: Coleton Wood, Sound/Lighting Mentor: Michael Frohling	
Guests:	Carol Jordan	
General	Discuss what was decided with Scott Stroot the original director Vision from Jess What each designer sees as NEEDED for this show. Jess will talk about need for levels and a way to introduce the scenes that is different from the book being used in Winter Dance Carol joining to discuss Class T-shirts Assistant Director will be Matthew Kerman	
SM Notes:	Sm in class Jess will take type notes and check in with ASM for future meetings.	
Set	Will discuss need for levels but minimal changes in scenes due to variety of skits.	
Costumes	Many different time periods based on fairy tales chosen. Shura emailed early about wanting to reference that so more discussion needed.	
Lighting	Will their be a cyc? Scenes at all times of day	
Sound	Will want to do a variety of live and foley how does Alex feel about that?	
PR/Marketing	We only have four weeks	
Props	Not as heavy as it reads. Jess doesn't want to clutter the stage. Do we have a props person?	
Box Office	Let Ellen know I do intend to use the apron but not wander through house. Note for Lighting as well.	

Prod Meeting Notes

This is self-explanatory:

These are the notes for every single production meeting you have. It will have dates, times, attendees, who was absent, and what was discussed.

It is the SM's job to email these notes to the production team at the end of every meeting!

Date:	08/22/2019		Time Started:	9:01
			Time Ended:	9:36

Attendants:	Jessica Frohling, Tom Tutino, Shura Pollatsek, Alex Gray, Coleton Wood, Michael Frohling Guests: Carol Jordan
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General Notes:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. It was discussed that we would be keeping with the original intent of Mr. Sills and utilizing a minimalist improvisation feel to the entire production. Using bits of influence from the Campy Monty Python film and type of dry humor production to keep it fun for adults and children of eight or thirteen and up. We will hide/detract from the murder and other less savory aspects with movement, lighting, and general foolery.2. Jess mentioned three words kept coming back throughout the play food, fool, and forest.3. Images shown were of everyday objects as menacing shadows and vice versa as well as a brightly colored painting of playing hide and seek in the Devil's Garden so hiding in plain site and misdirection.
SM Notes:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. We talked about potentially creating cast t-shirts either for the season or per show, the students in the room seemed into that so maybe check with Carol Jordan about where PTK does there's and look into cost for us please and thank you?
Scenic Notes:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Tom brought in the idea of re-using his Matilda set which is a series of flats that appear to be bookshelves. Very neutral (aborigine, burgundy, forest green, and navy colored books currently) which will line some of the back, proscenium and one leg. They would allow a neutral but interesting backdrop without intruding onto the stage.2. Discussed the need for some levels and Jess needs to consider what would be most useful to the show as well as the types of furniture needed.3. Keeping with the idea that a block could be a chair, or a horse or whatever is needed.
Lighting Notes:	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. You will have a cyc to play with2. Discussed the idea of creating shadows in between pieces and at top to help with the misdirection and foolery.3. No projections, no actors in the house but will be utilizing the steps on the apron.4. Discussed potential for haze of fog and we will re address at a later meeting.

Props List

Using your analysis create a preliminary prop list. Later you will turn this into a props running list showing what prop needs to begin where so you can arrange your prop tables backstage.

Act 1	Prop		
Scene 1, Top	Breakfast Table	Preset	
	red oil cloth for table	Preset	
	4 mismatched chairs	Preset	
	red checed curtians	Preset	
	fridge	Preset	
	stove	Preset	
	debris from door	Preset	
	wheel barrow	Preset	
	alarm clock	Stage left	
Scene 1 Page 4	Bread	Preset fridge	
	Bacon	Preset fridge	
Scene 1 Page 5	Frying Pan	Preset oven	
	Lighter to light stove	SL	
	Spatula/fork	Preset oven	
Scene 1 Page 6	Charts/posters	SR	
Scene 1 Page 10	Plates	Preset oven	
	Utensils	Preset oven	
Scene 1 Page 20	Rope Halter	SR	

Blocking Key

This is a key that each SM will have for fast notation of the director's blocking. You write these in REAL TIME so you have to make it fast for YOU and YOU ONLY!

ENTER En	EXIT Ex	CROSS x	STOP —	PICK UP ↑	PUT DOWN ↓
GIVE G→	TAKE ←T	LOOK L→	SIT S↓	RISE ↑R	KNEEL ↓K
JUMP ↑J	GO UPSTAIRS ↗	GO DOWNSTAIRS ↘	PUT ON P/O	TAKE OFF T/O	CORNER ⋈
UPSTAGE OF (above) ↶	DOWNSTAGE OF (below) ↷	TO (toward) →	ON TOP OF —•	UNDERNEATH •—	BETWEEN •
TABLE π	CHAIR H	SOFA ┌┐	STOOL ⊖	WINDOW 田	DOOR ┌┐
LAMP ⊙	BED ┌┐	DRESSER ▭	BOOKSHELF ▭	TREE Y	CRADLE ⌒
ROCKER ⌒	SUITCASE ⌒	BOOK ⌒	TENT A	TV ▭	RADIO ▭
KITCHEN TABLE Kπ	COFFEE TABLE Cπ	TABLE LAMP ⊙	BEDROOM CHAIR BH	DESK ┌┐	CLOCK ⌚

Rehearsal Report

This one is similar to the Prod Meeting notes. Basically, it is everything that happened in a rehearsal. Changes that were made, who was late, who attended, props needed, etc. The SM also sends the rehearsal report to the production team via email after every rehearsal!

Rehearsal Report

Lucky Coins	
Rehearsal Report #1: Monday, March 7 th , <i>Please respond to notes by emailing StageManagement@YourPlaysEmailAddress.com</i>	
Rehearsal Location/Time: Gordon Wilson Hall Room 307 from 5 to 6 pm	
Next Rehearsal: Wednesday, March 9 th , Gordon Wilson Hall Room 307 from 5 to 6 pm	
Visitors: N/A	Absent/Late/Accident/Illness: N/A
General Notes: 1. Today was our fourth rehearsal for the scene. Actors were asked to be mostly off book by this point. SM will be on book for expected line calls. Our main focus will be to work on character dynamics.	
Work in the Room: We began rehearsal with some warm-up games to get our actors excited and moving. We discussed the role that movement will have in our character development work, and what impact these exercises will have on the final blocking/choreography. We did a few more activities to emphasize character choices where the actors were free to experiment with different styles of movement and vocal emphasis. We then ran the show twice with a few blocking and line notes in between.	
Script Changes: 1. Nothing at this time, thank you.	
Scenic: 1. Would it be possible to get a scaled ground plan so we can tape out the space by next Monday?	
Props: 1. Nothing at this time, thank you.	
Costumes: 1. Will it be possible to get a mock-up of Denny's costume in the next week or so so we can start practicing his quick changes on stage?	
Lighting: 1. Can we add a flickering light (fluorescent like) so the laundromat looks more rundown?	
Sound: 1. Nothing at this time, thank you.	
Music: 1. N/A	
Choreography: 1. N/A	
Dramaturgy: 1. Nothing at this time, thank you.	
Health/Safety/Facilities: 1. The first aid kit is out of ice packs.	
Administration/Publicity: 1. Graphic Designer: Let's talk about publicity sketches after Wednesday this week. 2. Production Manager: N/A	

Then, you keep
EVERYTHING in your
prompt book!

Now, it's time for
Tech Week!

Preparations for Tech Week

Run Sheets – props, costumes, run, spot some of these (props, run you will create others will be provided or added onto by the designers) unless it was decided during rehearsals you should come up with a first draft of the run cue sheet. Run sheets include anything that flies, drops, moves, or gets carried in that is not a prop or accessory. You should do this even if it is actor only crews as we sometimes get nervous and forget what to do and when. Post near both ASM tables backstage.

Props Tracking – Hopefully once blocking is set you begin compiling this list so you know where every hand prop comes on and goes offstage this will help you to decide which side of the stage it should begin on and allow you to tape off a table. If you are unsure check with the actor who carries it.

Spot cue run sheets – are generally created during tech with or for the operator often by the Lighting Designer.

Costume Tracking – is often compiled and created by the designer and given directly to the dressers.

Tech Week Vocab

Paper – just the lighting designer, sound designer, and you. This is a quick way of just getting cues in your book to help speed up cue to cue. You may do this one on one the week prior to tech.

Dry – is essentially a cue to cue without the actors so the designers and directors can make choices about when to have cues and if they like the look and feel of it. It is often skipped and a cue to cue with actors in place is done instead. Check with your director for preferences.

Wet – is real tech adding all the bells and whistles. Generally, with actors in place throughout. Here at WKU it generally starts with cue to cue or dry tech. This is when you learn the cueing and calling of the show and how to run it.

General Note

When directors or designers' give you a note it is not a criticism it is a note. Take the note, incorporate, and re-run as needed. They understand you are new to calling the show but telling us why it happened at the wrong time wastes time. You're doing great.

Cue Call Vocab

Standby

Typically placed ½ page prior to the cue for plays. Dance pieces tend to be in constant standby.

Operator puts finger on button to prepare for “GO” and/or run crew takes break off the line set and holds rope.

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Example: Stage Manager: “Standby Lights 53”  
Light Operator: “Lights” (you can request they give a verbal communication to ensure they are listening and ready)

## GO!

The command triggers the cue. Your verbal timing is extremely important on this one. Operator presses the “GO” button / Run crew executes move

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Example: Stage Manager: “Lights 53... GO” Light Operator pushes button

Now you are going
to fill out some SM
documents!

What will you fill out?

Do not fret or be overwhelmed!
Boots will be available to help out with any part of this activity!

1. Blocking Key
 2. Basic Script Breakdown
 3. Prop/Set change/costume change log
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