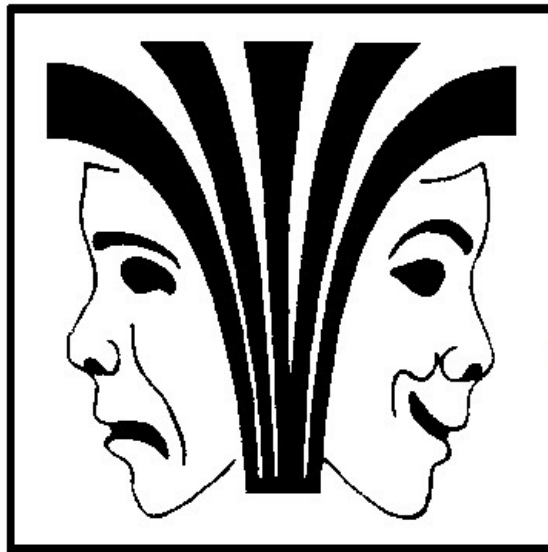


**FOUNTAIN SQUARE PLAYERS**

**STAGE MANAGER GUIDE**



**Prepared Summer 2001**

# **FOUNTAIN SQUARE PLAYERS**

## **STAGE MANAGER GUIDE**

**2001**

**Note:** I am drafting this guide after several years of not being a Stage Manager. It may need massive adjustments and corrections. I waited for Karen Conkle's input but never received any information. I am open for revisions or additions but we need to keep them general since each Director might require different tasks of a Stage Manager.

A Stage Manager (SM) position is often tailored to the needs of the director. Sometimes it will include what some people think of as being an Assistant Director and will include attending all rehearsals. Other directors have a separate SM and Asst. Director and the SM then usually attends rehearsals the week of dress rehearsals through the run of the show and sometimes attends one week prior to the dress rehearsals. The director should clarify their needs or the SM should ask before agreeing to the assignment.

What follows is for a SM who is participating for the entire process, from read through to final matinee.

### **General Duties**

- Arrive a few minutes early and open the building if key entry is required. Also remain to close and lock the rehearsal space.
- Make sure the rehearsal space is clean for actors. A quick sweeping of the floor is appropriate, especially on dress rehearsal and performance dates.
- As soon as props begin arriving, make them available for the actors by assigning them spaces, making sure they are in those spaces before each rehearsal, and collecting the props after each rehearsal.
- Organize and lead the way in changing the set during rehearsals.
- Organize and supervise the changing of the set during dress rehearsals but do not change it yourself because you may not be in a position to change the set during show dates
- Coordinate with the director to make sure sound effects are collected and rehearsal sounds are available.
- Go to set construction work to be sure you know the workings of the set. You must maintain the operating parts of the set once it is on stage and must coordinate last minute repairs.
- Coordinate with the director concerning set furniture and prepare rehearsal pieces until real pieces are available
- During dress rehearsals and shows you must manage all the coordinators to make sure things are completed. (set crew, props coordinator, costume manager, make-up coordinator, etc.?) Do not assume each of these will automatically happen.

### **Other Duties**

- Watch to be sure actors take scripts home and rescue any scripts that are left behind.
- Safety is your responsibility and you should remind actors about safety issues all the time. Be especially aware of safety issues once the production moves to the stage.
- Work with the director and set construction head to plan the move-in of the set
- Draw up an assignment list of actors and crew for Strike of the set.
- When moving to the performance space, be sure first aid kits, make-up, and other essentials (such as headsets if going to the Phoenix) are packed and in good repair and supply.
- If not actively doing something essential during rehearsal, watch the book, even if someone else is assigned to call lines. You need to be calling sound effects until the effects are ready.
- Make any appropriate set and props notes necessary.

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## **Dress Rehearsal and Show Dates**

- Keep the official clock and coordinate with the box office and house managers
- Call time to actors / Announce when the house is open, 15 minutes, 5 minutes and then call 2 minutes. Wait to give the “places” call until you are clear with the Box Office House Manager, and Tech people.
- When you call places you should allow about a minute for a response and then be ready to start calling cues and start the show. EXPECT and DEMAND people respond to your time warnings and places call. This is how you make sure they heard you and they will not be in the wrong place at the worst time.
- Usually the SM calls the show from the booth in the Capitol Arts Center and it varies where it is called from at the Phoenix. Wherever you choose, you need to make that decision on where you can have the greatest view and control.

## **Tech Dress**

The Tech Rehearsal is when all the technical details should get worked out. Prior to this the SM should consult with the director for a cue sheet that can be provided to the lights and sound designers. Once the designers have their parts ready you start coordinating with them to see that cues are marked properly and at the correct levels. You should press them so that you have at least two nights with full technical capabilities for your own rehearsal with the sound and lights and flies operators. Resist having only one night of full effects during rehearsals because if anything goes wrong there is no time left to fix it and test it so you can see how it works before show time.

## **Cues should be called in the following manner:**

About half a page before a cue, say, “Lights (or sound or props or fly, etc) Cue # \_ Stand Bye” On a marked spot in the script to make the cue accurate you then say “Lights (or sound or props or fly, etc) Cue # \_ Go” and that is when the action is supposed to happen (immediately).

You might wish to color code (in your script) your warnings and your standbys and your goes so they do not get mixed up. Colored tape or labels are good for this, as are some colored markers. Note: some colors disappear under colored lighting. Avoid colors like blue if you have to read under a blue running light.

You must wear a headset to call cues. The headset should remain on and active through the show. (Don’t turn it off during intermission). It is this writer’s opinion that you should not make comments in the headset that are not necessary for the running of the show. Every little sound is potentially a distraction for the audience or others who are supporting the actors, and might even distract an actor or someone about to provide a special effect.

## **Ultimate Control**

The SM takes over ultimate control of the production when the dress rehearsal and show times arrive. Often the Director will give a morale speech in the greenroom area and then will disappear to the front of the house. The SM is in control of the show and decides all the major decisions about starting, last minutes set problems, etc. The SM keeps a QUIET set during all these times.

## **Cast Party**

Many people consider it the Stage Manager’s responsibility to organize a cast party. This might simply mean finding a host who will make the arrangements. In other cases the SM must find out what the casts wants to do if they wish to attend a local restaurant, or do something else, and then make the reservations or other arrangements.