

Characteristics of a Good Stage Manager

A good stage manager...

- Assumes responsibility:
 - Realizes that that bulk of responsibility for the smooth running of the rehearsal process and the production run is on their shoulders.
 - Remembers that responsibilities can and should be shared with able assistants.
- Keeps their cool:
 - Never loses their temper, especially in front of their cast.
 - Maintains a professional attitude at all times: Remaining loyal to all aspects of the production and never gossiping with the cast. Remember you are privy to many discussions that are not for the cast and crew.
 - Remembers to always add "please" and "thank-you" to everything you do and say.
- Is organized, efficient, and observant:
 - Always has paperwork ready, props gathered, rehearsals and meetings organized, and always be ready for what is to happen next.
- Is dependable:
 - Always takes responsibility for the production, always is early for any call, always is ready for the unexpected, and always is ready for what is to happen next.
- Is always asked to return for another assignment:
 - Good stage managers are the life blood of the theatre and if you carry out your tasks well, with a good attitude and energy, you will always work in this business.

The job of stage manager is one of the most time consuming, difficult, and important positions in the theatre. The stage manager receives less glory than most involved in a production and often is only notices when something goes wrong. The stage manager hears all the complaints, has to deal with all the problems, and receives the blame for everything that goes wrong. Yet, with all of this, the position of the stage manager is one of the most important and rewarding in the theatre.

The stage manager begins before rehearsals and is one of the last people out of the theatre on closing night. In between those times, they become the life line, the communications hub for the entire production team and the performance ensemble. Organization is your key to success and the success of the production. What follows is a guideline for assisting you in your job of stage manager for this production. These are only guides and are not intended to be "rules" for stage managing. If you have a way of working that is more practical for you, by all means use it. Remember to refer to this manual often. It is easy to get caught up in the process without realizing that you are forgetting a responsibility.

Communicate - Talk with each and everyone involved with the production and many problems can be solved before they happen. You are the conduit between everyone else.

Mediate - Don't cause problems, solve them. Be professional and respectful at all times but be firm. Never hesitate to ask for advice from the faculty or others with experience.

Listen - Problems may not always come to you so always keep an ear to the ground for potential problems.

Be Patient - Many things and people will try your patience daily. Remember there are many artistic egos working in tandem; help to keep everyone working together.

Remember - We are all working toward the same goal; the best live theatre experience we can create. You are an integral part of this great ride.