



GRINNELL COLLEGE DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE  
**STAGE MANAGEMENT HANDBOOK**

Revised by Eliot P. Spencer  
Production Stage Manager 2003-2005

All information in this handbook pertains to all productions  
unless otherwise indicated

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## **STAGE MANAGEMENT CONTACT SHEET**

**2004-2005**

***LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCIES*.....911**

GRINNELL POLICE / FIRE / EMS

from any campus phone

### **GRINNELL COLLEGE SAFETY & SECURITY**

**ON CAMPUS: x4600 (or 0 after hours)**

**OFF CAMPUS: 641-269-4600**

### **MAGGIE IMMLER – PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER**

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**HOME: 641-269-XXXX**

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**OFFICE: x3130**

**HOME: 641-236-5569**

### **PIP GORDON – DEPARTMENT CHAIR/RESIDENT DESIGNER**

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**OFFICE: x3126**

**HOME: 641-236-7049**

### **ERIN HOWELL-GRITSCH – COSTUME STUDIO SUPERVISOR**

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**OFFICE: x3083**

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### **PAM POYNTER – ACADEMIC SUPPORT COORDINATOR**

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**OFFICE: x4262**

### **SHANNON C. HARMAN – TECHNICAL SUPPORT ASSISTANT**

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**OFFICE: x3085**

### **KAT PICKENS – BOX OFFICE MANAGER**

**E-MAIL: [PickensK@grinnell.edu](mailto:PickensK@grinnell.edu)**

**BOX OFFICE: x4444**

Dear Stage Manager,

We are pleased to welcome you to stage management in the Grinnell College Theatre Department! Whether you have participated in the performing arts for countless productions or for only a handful, stage management at Grinnell offers new and unique challenges each day. With each experience, you will improve your skills and gain increased confidence, both of which are vital to continuing in this line of work. We hope that you will look back upon your experiences in Grinnell College Theatre as stimulating and rewarding.

The purpose of this publication is to provide you with a quick resource for your work as a Stage Manager in the Grinnell College Theatre Department. You should read the following pages carefully before your work begins. Furthermore, you should keep this handbook in your prompt book throughout the rehearsal and production process. This book contains a wealth of information on the procedural technicalities that you will need to know to be able to complete your job effectively. The procedures outlined in this book apply to all productions, unless otherwise noted.

While this document is thorough, it is not all-inclusive. As you know, working in the dramatic arts requires constant application of knowledge to new situations. At times, you might encounter a situation not documented here: not all Directors work in the manner described below. It is important to remain flexible and supportive. Please know that your resources as a Stage Manager extend beyond this publication. The department is well aware of the challenges that Stage Managers face, and provides an extensive support network, including faculty and academic support personnel. The Production Stage Manager is your “front line of assistance.” Please don’t hesitate to contact the PSM at any time if you are unsure of a policy, unclear about a procedure, or simply need some advice.

Many of the procedures and policies outlined in this book apply primarily to Theatre Department mainstage productions. However, even if you are stage managing a small, student-directed Open Space production, it is important that you familiarize yourself with this book’s contents, as some elements do apply, and they will provide a good knowledge base if you move on to stage manage a larger production.

It is important for you to know that the Theatre Department is not oblivious to the work of Stage Managers. The Faculty recognizes and respects those who are willing to undertake the challenging work of stage management. We guarantee that your work will not go unnoticed or unrewarded. This is one of the many reasons why Grinnell College Theatre is so unique.

We wish you the very best, and, again, we encourage you to utilize the extensive resources that the Department provides for you along the way.

Theatre Department Faculty and Staff

## **Facility Access**

Most of your work as a Stage Manager in the department takes place in the Bucksbaum Center for the Arts (BCA), at the southwest corner of the campus. You will receive an orientation to the building from the Production Stage Manager (PSM) before the auditions for your show. If you are stage managing a mainstage production, you will receive keys to access your specific theatre facility, control booths, and any props cabinets applicable to your production.

As a Stage Manager, **you** are responsible for securing all areas relating to your production before you depart from the building at the end of each rehearsal. Check to make sure that all props cabinets are locked (with all items inside), control booth doors are locked, exterior doors and emergency exits are secured, lights are off, and the main doors are shut. Only the theatre's lobby entrance doors and doors to the Scene Shop (Flanagan) or crossover (Roberts) should remain unlocked (but closed).

### **BCA Main Office (in the Roberts lobby):**

The hours of the Main Office are **Monday through Friday, 8:00am to 5:00pm**, whenever classes are in session. Please complete all office work related to your production during normal office hours (see separate section on photocopying).

### **Entrance to the Bucksbaum Center for the Arts:**

The Security Department unlocks the Bucksbaum Center at approximately 7:00am 7 days a week whenever classes are in session. The main entrances remain unlocked until 12:00 midnight on Sunday-Thursday nights. However, on Friday-Saturday nights, the doors could be locked as early as 8:30-9:00pm and normally will be locked by 10:00pm.

The reality of the stage management lifestyle is that you might need to work late. As a Stage Manager in the department, you are entitled to extended access to the building. The easiest way to work after the building closes is to enter before the doors are locked and simply remain inside until you have completed your work. Because of obvious security concerns, Grinnell College policy prohibits propping

open of any exterior doors after the building closes, even if you leave just temporarily. Security will close all propped doors and you could be fined \$50.00 for jeopardizing the security of the facility.

In the unlikely event that you need *emergency* access to the building when it is locked:

- 1) Call the PSM. If not available...
- 2) Call the Technical Director. If not available...
- 3) Call Professor Pip Gordon. If not available...
- 4) Call Security (see next page).

## **Security Department**

The Grinnell College Safety and Security Department is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and will respond promptly anywhere on campus. Dial x4600 from any campus phone or 236-4600 from off campus to reach the dispatcher. The Security officers are very helpful and knowledgeable in many areas and are an important resource for you as a Stage Manager.

Remember, for any **LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCIES, FIRST DIAL 911 TO ACTIVATE LOCAL AUTHORITIES / EMS, THEN CALL SECURITY AFTERWARDS.**

However, Security can handle most other situations.

### **Do not hesitate to contact Security if:**

- somebody has a non-life-threatening injury/illness and needs transportation to the hospital ER or back to his/her dorm
- somebody requests an escort back to his/her dorm or vehicle
- you see unauthorized persons in any Theatre Department facilities after hours, including (but not limited to) in the Scene Shop, control booths, or on catwalks or grids (you do not have to confront the individuals yourself)
- somebody's vehicle needs a jump start
- a vehicle is blocking the loading dock
- you need building access in exceptional circumstances\*\* (see below)

\*\*If you contact Security to try to gain access to a locked building or a room within a building, be aware that you might be denied. Security officers generally are not permitted to give students access to academic buildings after hours without prior authorization. Thus, calling Security to gain access to a building/room should be a last resort. If you need to contact Security in this situation, identify yourself as a Stage Manager, explain your situation, and be willing to follow up with a Security report at a later date. NOTE: Security officers will NOT open the Main Office (or any other academic support facilities) under any circumstances because doing so could compromise the security of faculty mailboxes, printers, etc.

## **Photocopying Procedures**

As you know, stage management involves organizing large volumes of paper for distribution to the production company and for your own records. To do so, you will need access to photocopying equipment. The Theatre Department has two procedures for photocopying: a single machine in the Main Office, and a campus-wide copying service through Copy Connection, a third-party company located on Main Street next to McNally's grocery store.

### USE THE MAIN OFFICE PHOTOCOPY MACHINE FOR **SMALL JOBS ONLY** (1-25 COPIES)

- The copier in the Main Office is protected by a copy control system to prevent abuse and excessive unbilled copying. During your orientation, you will receive a code specific to your production that will give you access to the machine. **Do not distribute the code to anybody other than your assistant(s).**
- Do not attempt to copy onto transparencies without asking for assistance.
- Do not copy onto Grinnell College stationary (doing so is illegal).
- Do not insert odd-sized or rough-edged originals into the auto feeder.
- Faculty members always have priority use of the machine.
- Report any malfunctions or paper jams to the office support staff.

### USE THE COPY CONNECTION SERVICE FOR **ALL OTHER JOBS**, ESPECIALLY LARGE JOBS (25+ COPIES)

- Plan ahead! Give Copy Connection enough time realistically to complete the job (normally 1-2 days).
- Pick up an order form from the Main Office counter.
- Fill it out:
  - “Name:” – write your name
  - “Department:” – write “Academic Support / Theatre”
  - “Deliver to:” – write “Pam Poynter, Bucksbaum 162”
  - Put *your own* phone number in case the staff has any questions.
  - Write out exactly what you want done under “special instructions” – BE SPECIFIC! (examples: “40 copies of each original, 2-sided, stapled, 3-hole punched” “20 copies of each original, 1-sided, spiral-ring bind”)
- Attach (paperclip or rubber band) the originals to the form.
- Make a photocopy of the form for your records, if you wish.

• **\*\*YOU MUST OBTAIN PAM POYNTER'S SIGNATURE ON THE FORM TO AUTHORIZE THE JOB\*\***

- Put the form and originals in an inter-office campus mailer, write "Copy Connection" on it, and put it in the outgoing campus mail (on the right side of the faculty mailboxes).
- If you are short on time, you can deliver the form and originals to Copy Connection personally.
- Keep the phone number for Copy Connection handy in case you need to call to check up on the order (x3420).
- Pick up your order in the Main Office when it is ready.

Pam Poynter, the Academic Coordinator for the Bucksbaum Center for the Arts, is very helpful and knowledgeable about Theatre Department procedures. Please do not hesitate to ask her for advice or assistance.

NOTE: In the past, some stage managers, unable to gain last-minute access to the Main Office, have sent an assistant to the Forum or Burling to make copies and charge them to a personal P-Card. Please know that it is inappropriate and unethical for you to pay for copies related to Theatre Department productions out of your pocket (or to ask your assistant(s) to do so).

## **Facility Reservations – Blue Book**

If you are stage managing one of the Theatre Department mainstage productions, your facility will be pre-reserved for you for the entire rehearsal and production process. As long as your director keeps to the standard rehearsal/tech schedule, you will have priority over all other users of your theatre at all scheduled times. Thus, the information in this section applies primarily to student-directed productions, though mainstage stage managers should have an understanding of this system as well.

All public rooms in the Bucksbaum Center (that is, all of the rooms except faculty offices, practice rooms, studios, and the Main Office) are available for faculty, students, and staff to reserve for specific time frames on specific days. The master reservation book (known internally as the “Blue Book”) is located in the back hallway of the Main Office.

If you need to reserve a space, first check the Blue Book to make sure the space is available. If it is, pick up a reservation form (located next to the Blue Book) and fill it out with the specific date(s), time(s), and facility that you wish to reserve. As a student, you then must obtain the signature of a sponsoring faculty member on the form. When you are finished, put the form in the pocket of the Blue Book. You will *not* receive a confirmation of your reservation from the Main Office staff unless an existing reservation conflicts.

- **NEVER WRITE IN THE BLUE BOOK.** Only Main Office staff can write in the Blue Book.
- If you need to change or cancel a reservation, fill out another reservation form, get a faculty signature, and give it to Pam. **DO NOT MODIFY ANYTHING IN THE BLUE BOOK YOURSELF.**
- If you enter your (reserved) facility at the prescribed time and find another group using it, inform the group that you reserved the facility in advance and that they will need to leave. Be polite but firm, and call the PSM or any Theatre Department faculty member if the group puts up a fuss or refuses to leave. Many student groups (improv, a capella, etc.) are not aware that the Blue Book system exists. Encourage the group leader to meet with Pam Poynter if he or she wishes to reserve a facility formally, and thus avoid future awkward situations.

## **Support Network**

### **Production Stage Manager (Student Staff)**

The Production Stage Manager's primary responsibility is to train and prepare Stage Managers for the challenges of their position in the department, and to create a support network for Stage Managers as they work on productions. The PSM is your first line of support if you have any questions or concerns about stage managing. You will meet with the PSM for your orientation and throughout the production process and you should feel comfortable contacting him or her at any time, especially regarding issues of procedure and protocol. In addition to training and supporting Theatre Department Stage Managers, the PSM's position also includes observing technical rehearsals for all mainstage productions, functioning as a note-taker at mainstage post-show critiques, managing Stagecraft crew lists, and coordinating Theatre Student Staff hiring and training procedures. Finally, in exceptional circumstances, the PSM will serve as the Stage Manager for any production when the production's appointed Stage Manager has not yet been selected or is called away in an emergency.

### **Erik Sanning, Theatre Department Technical Director**

Erik is responsible for the safe construction and implementation of the designers' conceptions for each mainstage production. In addition, Erik oversees the Scene Shop and is responsible for the safety of all students working in Theatre Department facilities. For your purposes, Erik is "Mr. Information." Erik can answer any question about anything technical: related to the facility, set design/construction, locations, schedules, or anything else. It is imperative that you check in personally with Erik several times each week during Scene Shop hours (8am-5pm) so that you can exchange information regarding changes or updates to the technical aspects of your production. Be sure that Erik receives the nightly rehearsal notes via email. Per Theatre Department policy, you are required to report all injuries that occur during rehearsals to Erik. If Erik leaves a note on the set saying "do not step here," be sure to take it seriously and point it out to cast members. In short, **Erik is the most important link in your chain of communication** and it is vital that you stay connected with him, especially as you get closer to Tech Week. Erik's office is located in the Scene Shop between Flanagan and Roberts.

## **Theatre Department Chair and Theatre Faculty**

Because a Stage Manager serves as a conduit for information from cast members, you might need to seek out the Faculty to ask a question on behalf of a cast member who is unwilling to do so him/herself.

### **Pip Gordon, Resident Designer**

Pip serves as the resident Lighting and Scenic Designer for the Theatre Department. In addition, she supervises Theatre Student Staff and teaches classes primarily in stagecraft and design, as well as a variety of independent study courses. Pip's office is located in the Theatre Design Studio (Room 267) on the second floor of the Bucksbaum Center, above the Roberts lobby.

### **Erin Howell-Gritsch, Costume Studio Supervisor**

Erin is responsible for the safe operation of the Costume Studio and the other costuming facilities, including costume storage, dressing rooms, and the makeup room. In addition, Erin serves as the Theatre Department's Resident Costume Designer. In this capacity, she will be working with you throughout the process as she designs and constructs costumes for the performers in your production. You will need to coordinate with Erin regarding costume measuring and fitting times, as well as set-up of dressing rooms and the makeup room as you approach tech week. Make sure that Erin receives the nightly rehearsal notes via email. In addition to her aforementioned responsibilities, Erin oversees all Student Staff members working in the costuming areas. Erin's office is located in the Costume Studio in the basement of the Bucksbaum Center.

### **Pam Poynter, Academic Support Coordinator**

Pam is responsible for the operation of the Main Office and the Bucksbaum Center in general. She supervises the Main Office staff and coordinates all facility ("Blue Book") reservations for the BCA. She is very helpful and highly knowledgeable. You will meet with Pam during your orientation. You will need to consult with Pam regarding all office procedures related to your production. Be

sure to include Pam on all major mailings, such as the final tech week schedule once the production staff has approved it. Pam's desk is located at the front of the Main Office (Room 162), behind the receptionist's desk.

### **Shannon C. Harman, Technical Support Assistant**

Shannon works in the Main Office with Pam and is responsible for the design of all Bucksbaum Center programs and tickets. Please include Shannon on all production staff emails and also inform her of production meetings, which she will attend to facilitate FOH discussions. She will contact you early in the rehearsal process to obtain text for cast/crew biographies to put into the playbill. If you are stage managing an Open Space production, Shannon may be able to assist you with poster designs.\* NOTE: Shannon is **not** responsible for the content of these publications. YOU are responsible for getting all information to Shannon in advance of the deadlines that she sets. Shannon will give you a rough draft of the program to proofread. Make sure that the cast and crew have the opportunity to check their bios, and that the director has the opportunity to check his/her notes. You should proofread the rest and make sure that the PSM, the Technical Director, and the Department Chair review it as well.\*\* In addition to the duties already described, Shannon is responsible for maintaining the Theatre Department website. If you have specific audition announcements or other news-worthy information that you would like posted, send it to her. Shannon's desk is located in the middle of the Main Office, around the corner from the copy machine.

\* For mainstage productions, Jim Powers in Office of Communication and Events is responsible for poster designs.

\*\* Contact the PSM if you are not sure of what information needs to go into the program or visit <http://web.grinnell.edu/theatre/publicity.html>

### **Box Office Manager and House Manager (Student Staff)**

The Box Office Manager oversees the operation of all Front-Of-House (FOH) services in the Theatre Department, including ticket distribution, house management, and training of Box Office personnel. You will need to coordinate with the Box Office Manager as you approach Tech Week for ticket reservations and other Box Office procedures.

If you have any questions or concerns about FOH operations or ushering, the House Manager is the person to contact. Be sure to include both the Box Office

Manager and the House Manager on all major mailings, such as the final tech week schedule once the production staff has approved it.

## Pre-Production

- Read the script, and, in consultation with the Director:

- Complete a scene breakdown chart. Break down the script into small pieces (your director may divide the script into French scenes, which are easiest to use) and note which characters appear and the action onstage.
- Complete a character breakdown chart. List character names along the side and scenes across the top. Mark in the box when a character appears in a scene.
- Discuss audition needs. Ask the Director how long each audition period should be. Some directors prefer to audition everyone at once. Be prepared to be flexible about the audition process. Find out if the Director wants cold readings of sides, which should be placed outside the theatre. Find out which sides the Director wants and photocopy the appropriate text. Give your Director a copy of the standard audition form (available on the Theatre Department Website) and find out what s/he wants to add/delete from it for your particular production. Find out if s/he wants any additional items for use in auditions (acting cubes, mats, CD player, additional copies of scenes to be read).

-Meet with the PSM to discuss audition processes, rehearsals, and Assistant Stage Managers (ASMs).

- Make sure you know the audition schedule and make a sign-up sheet to put on the BCA notice boards in the Roberts and/or Flanagan lobbies. The list should contain slots for people to sign up to audition.
- Wait to print the audition form until you can include rehearsal information, as well as a tentative tech/production week schedule (use the Theatre Department academic year calendar located on NT Storage to guide you).
- Many directors like to meet with their stage managers one-on-one at least once a week. You should encourage such meetings. They provide a forum for you to obtain new scheduling information, as well as voice concerns that you (or the director) might have but do not wish to express in front of the cast.

-Meet with your Scenic Designer and/or Technical Director to obtain the ground plan of the set.

- You will need a full-size plan and section to tape out the floor plan on the stage\*, and you will need mini floor plans to copy into your prompt book for taking blocking notes. If the Scenic Designer for your production is an off-campus guest, the Technical Director is the person to contact with any questions about the set. In most of these cases, the TD

will have more frequent contact with the Scenic Designer than you will, especially during the set construction phase.

\* In some cases, the Technical Director will tape out the floor for you. It is best to coordinate this activity with him.

#### -Write shift sheets.

- Meet with your Scenic Designer as soon as possible to go over the set design and find out how he/she wants things to move on and off the stage. Find out what doors/curtains s/he wants to use for entrances and exits, who s/he wants to do the physical moving (actors\* and/or crew), and discuss the choreography of individual scene changes. It is important to know early in the process whether the Director and Scenic Designer want actors to do most of the scene shifts or would prefer for a backstage crew to perform them.

\*The Director must approve the use of actors for scene shifts.

- If actors are moving scenery or props, you will want to have the shift sheets done a week or two before tech, and begin rehearsing those changes. That way you have plenty of time to work out the kinks before the tech crew arrives.

- A sample shift sheet is located in the “SM docs” folder on Theatre NT Storage.

#### -Meet with your Dramaturg.

- You should meet with the Director and the Dramaturg to create dramaturgy packets, which may be handed out to the cast and crew at the first company meeting. You are **not** responsible for researching anything or putting together the packets. All the Dramaturg can ask you to do is to duplicate and hand them out to the production company.

- However, other parts of the actor packet ARE your responsibility. You must include:

- two copies of the Actor Agreement (available from the PSM)
- a biography form (available from the PSM)
- makeup order form (if the Costume Designer requests it)
- dialect tapes/CDs (if they are used and are given to you to distribute)
- a contact sheet

- Optional but recommended:

- an “information sheet” for cast members to hang up near their desks with the most important contact numbers, dates and times of tech week and production week, strike, and the clauses of the Actor Agreement. In general, it is better to give too much information than too little.

#### -Plan a design presentation.

- If at all possible, you and your Director should plan to take an evening for the cast to meet with the designers and look at models and renderings. Schedule the design presentation at a production meeting.
- For all mainstage productions, the department will assign you one or two Assistant Stage Managers (ASMs). In addition, the Production Stage Manager will pass on to you the list of THE 115: Introduction to Stagecraft students who signed up to work on your production. ASMs need to be assigned in time to help with auditions. Keep in contact with the PSM regarding your ASMs and crew assignments.

-Make sure your rehearsal space is reserved in the Blue Book.

- *Mainstage Facility Booking:* Confirm that your space is reserved for rehearsals, techs, and performances. If it is not, contact the Department Chair before you start filling out reservation forms.
- *Open Spaces Facility Reservation:* Fill out a request form for the Blue Book when you are sure of your rehearsal schedule. You will need a signature from your faculty advisor on your request form.

-Make contact with your production team as soon as possible.

- Introduce yourself, by phone, by e-mail, or in person, and give information about yourself. Remind them that you are here to facilitate their process and they can contact you at any point. Mention how excited you are that you will be working with them. Be positive and upbeat. Include the dates of tech week, production week, and strike, and mention that you will be forwarding a complete, detailed schedule later in the rehearsal process. It is important that anybody with a potential conflict during these important days contact you well in advance.
- Obtain contact information: e-mail, phone number, and mailing address. You never know when you might need this information later on.
- If your production has off-campus guest designers, you will need e-mail addresses, physical addresses, and phone numbers for them as well, as this information is not available in the Grinnell College online directory. Also, find out when they will be coming to Grinnell and where you can get a hold of them when they are here. Ask the Technical Director for this information.
- Meet with your ASMs to establish a good, working relationship with them.

-Post the audition sign-ups in the appropriate lobby.

Avoid using Scotch tape on wooden doors. A portable notice board is available in Flanagan or in the Box Office coatroom (contact the Box Office Manager if you wish to use it).

5-7 minutes is usually a good block per auditionee, but check with your Director. Be sure to schedule breaks, and make them long enough that if you run over, you still can have a slightly shorter break. Some directors may want to have a group audition where all auditionees come at the same time, as is often the case for musical theatre and dance auditions.

## Production Meetings

- Facilitate weekly production meetings.

- *Mainstage*: All mainstage production meetings, with few exceptions, occur on Tuesdays at 4:15pm in the Green Room (in the basement of the BCA).
- *Open Spaces*: Find a place and time that works weekly for your production team, and maintain it.
- Send a reminder each week, a day or so in advance, to everyone you expect to be there, including the designers' assistants (who might not be attending every rehearsal).
- Make introductions if necessary.
- Mention also anyone who is absent that day, or who will be late.
- Ask if anyone needs to leave early for any reason. If somebody does, see to it that he or she speaks early, answers questions from others, and asks questions as necessary.
- Read off the order in which the meeting will proceed. The production meeting notes form in "SM docs" on Theatre NT Storage provides a suggested order:

Greetings (introductions of new people, etc.)  
Director  
Stage Manager  
Set Designer  
Props Master  
Scenic Painting  
TD/Budget  
Light Designer/ME  
Sound Designer  
Costume Designer  
PR/Front of House  
General Questions

- Stay on task. Facilitate further meetings for individual members of the production team if necessary.

- Production Meetings need to end by 5:15pm.

- Take careful notes.

- Use the production meeting notes form to take careful notes during the meeting. It would be advantageous to use a laptop computer if you have one and can type fast.

Otherwise, type them up afterwards and send them to the full production team, Director, Technical Director, and PSM. Cast members should not receive these notes unless they are serving in a technical position as well.

## Auditions

### - Prepare the space.

- Sweep the stage and any other areas that might be used by actors. In Flanagan, this includes any platforms that may be set up. Because the first day of auditions might be your first day working in the space, try to perform the sweeping and set-up during business hours so that you can ask the Technical Director any questions that you might have. If you did not receive an orientation to your theatre beforehand, make sure that the TD shows you the locations of fire extinguishers, fire pull stations, first aid kits, and light switches for your facility.
- Bring in any equipment that the Director has requested.
- Set up the Director's table and chairs in the audience. Seated at the table will be the Director, Assistant Director (AD), SM, ASM(s), and Musical Director (if applicable).

### - Prepare the materials.

- Check with your AD to see if he or she is making copies of "sides" (sides are scene sets for cold readings) or if this is your responsibility. Make copies of the final audition form during office hours if possible. Send as much of this copy work to Copy Connection as possible.

### - Set up a table outside the theatre for the sides and forms.

- You need to have extra pens or pencils available at the table, as well as all necessary forms and sides.
- Assign one of your ASMs to supervise this table and to answer questions. He or she will need to make sure people fill out the forms and bring them inside. This ASM will be in charge of sending in the next person on the list when someone is finished. It is a good idea to choose the more outgoing of your ASMs for this job, as it can require comforting hesitant or nervous auditionees. This ASM also will be responsible for keeping an eye on people's backpacks and coats while they are auditioning.

### - Establish yourself as the organizational hub of the show.

- Your Director may wish to take digital photographs of auditionees. If so, talk to the TD about getting the appropriate camera for your needs.
- The second ASM will be in charge of going to the door and escorting each auditionee into the room, announcing his/her full name in a clear, loud voice. The ASM then will

hand audition forms to the SM, who in turn will hand them to the Director after writing down the person's name.

- Write down everything the Director says – as you go, you will learn what the Director considers important.
- Keep everything running on schedule. If your ASM is having difficulty keeping the scene outside running efficiently, speak to him/her about the problems at the first available opportunity. Do not force people to enter early, but do not hesitate to make them go at their scheduled time.

## Casting

- Provide organizational assistance for your Director and AD as they make decisions.
  - Be sure to keep character and cast lists at hand to make sure that all characters are accounted for. Use post-it notes on the audition forms to keep track of selections.
  - The Director seldom will ask for your input in the casting decisions. The decision-making process is very difficult and very confidential. Stage management and personnel need to be sensitive to this confidentiality.
- Some directors wish to make the final decision alone and/or spend the night thinking it over. They also may wish to post the list themselves. As always, be flexible and support your Director as needed.
- If the Director is ready to announce casting at the end of the casting meeting, post the cast list after proofreading it very carefully.
  - Post the cast list on the appropriate lobby notice board (Flanagan or Roberts). If you do not post the list the same night as the final auditions, post it the next morning.
  - The list should include the title of the production, the Director's name, the full cast list, and the date and time of the first company meeting. Thank everybody for auditioning. Finally, sign your name as the stage manager at the bottom.
  - On the list, ask cast members to initial next to their name to acknowledge that they accept their role.
  - Remind your ASM(s) not to discuss auditions or the casting meeting with anybody beyond the people who were in the room at the time. Also, they should know that it is poor form to go to the dining hall and start announcing the casting decisions, even after they are posted. In order to avoid awkward situations, you should tell any auditionees that may ask you about casting to check the posted list, because a) it allows them to discover the news on their own, and b) it eliminates the possibility that you could have a mental lapse and give the wrong information.

## First Company Meeting (First Rehearsal)

- All cast members are required to attend. Production staff is invited.

- This is one of the few and important opportunities for the entire production team to get acquainted. Take attendance and have an assistant call anybody who is late.
- Get everybody's attention and bring the meeting to order. Introduce yourself as the production's stage manager and say that you are looking forward to a wonderful process. Then, proceed as follows:
  - If the Director is FACULTY, simply turn the meeting over to him or her to make some opening remarks
  - If the Director is a GUEST, turn it over to the Department Chair, who then will introduce the guest director
- The Director will give his or her background, explain a bit about the play's historical context or playwright (unless a Dramaturg is present), and perhaps talk about his or her vision for the production.

- When the Director is finished:

- Give a quick introduction of yourself again and explain the job of a Stage Manager as the communication hub of the production and the bridge between the cast and the technical side of the production. Remind cast members they should feel comfortable contacting you (or your assistant(s)) at ANY time with any questions related to the production. If you are not able to answer the questions, you can pass them on to somebody who is able to do so.
- Tell them when you'll be sending out rehearsal schedules for the next week (usually Friday night is a good time). If cast members need to bring anything special- rehearsal clothes, shoes, etc.- let them know now. Reinforce the importance of checking the callboard and email at least once a day.
- Explain that you will be using the first part of today's meeting to complete some paperwork and other logistics with the cast before you turn the rehearsal over to the director.

- Hand out cast packets.

- Include a copy of the script and any dialect information people will need. Also include contact sheets for cast. Production dramaturgy packets need to be handed out at this meeting if they are being used.
- If you are handing out packets that you will need to collect later, number them so that you can identify which cast member received which packet. This way, if someone leaves

a script at rehearsal, you know whose it is. If you have several dialects, remember which packets have which dialects and make sure they go to the right cast members. See the preparation section for more information on what needs to go into the cast packet.

-Go over facility rules and regulations.

- Point out bathroom locations\*, nearest fire extinguishers and first aid kits. Inform cast members that they must speak to somebody on stage management before leaving the theatre for any reason during a rehearsal. Give a brief description of how rehearsals will run (how long before a break, break lengths, etc.). Review the no food/drink policy. Review the Grinnell College smoking policy. It is better to give too much information than too little.

\*Remember that in Roberts, the closest bathrooms to the stage are in the basement, on the left as you exit the stairwell from the crossover.

- Sign Actor Agreements.

- Each actor's packet should contain two copies of the Actor Agreement (preferably printed on two colors of paper). Answer all questions, and invite cast members to approach you or the Director in person at the end of the meeting if they have any further questions or concerns. Each cast member should sign one copy and return it to you, and retain the other copy for his or her reference.

- Elect a cast deputy.

- The cast needs to elect its deputy, who will take any concerns of the cast to the SM or Director. Everyone except the cast needs to leave the room for this election, including the ASM(s), the SM, the Director, and any crew and designers present. As soon as you return, write down the name of the individual elected to serve as the cast deputy.

- Obtain cast measurements.

- The costuming staff may be present at this meeting to take each cast member aside at some point to take his/her measurements. Some will have measurements on file that are accurate, some will not. Some will require only "spot checks," while others will require full measurements. Make sure the Director is aware that the costuming staff could be pulling people out of the rehearsal for measurements.

- Explain the electronic bio system.

- Have all cast members fill out the new electronic bio form available on the web at: <http://web.grinnell.edu/finearts/forms/bio.html>. Designers also need to submit a bio at their earliest possible convenience. Faculty designers have their bios on file in the Main Office. For off-campus guest designers, contact the Technical Director to see if they

have a bio on file, or if they have sent their bio already. Otherwise, begin asking for the bio via e-mail or the electronic system immediately. Oftentimes guest designers can be very elusive when asked to write a bio, especially if it's just an e-mail that they can ignore rather than having you in front of them. Do not be surprised if you have to ask repeatedly.

- Have all cast members fill out a makeup order form (if applicable).

- The Theatre Department is beginning to use these forms to alleviate confusion when the kits arrive and not enough are available for everybody who needs a specific shade. You can include the form (available from the Costume Studio Supervisor) in the cast packet.

-Remember, your ASMs are there to help. Delegate.

- You will need somebody to help you collect all of the paperwork and bring it to you, as well as to keep track of who has had measurements taken and who has not.

- As soon as the above is completed, turn the rehearsal back over to the Director.

- Most likely, your job for the evening is finished. It is highly unlikely that the Director will begin blocking at the first rehearsal, but instead will begin to get acquainted with the cast, begin table work, perhaps play some theatrical games, and so on. You should take advantage of the time to process all of the paperwork that you have received and determine if anybody still needs to turn in something. **DO NOT LET ANYBODY LEAVE** until all paperwork is present and accounted for. For example, a cast member who had a concern about the Actor Agreement might not have signed it and returned it, so be sure to speak to him/her before that person leaves. If any cast member refuses to sign an Actor Agreement, you should ensure that he or she meets as soon as possible with the Director, and, if necessary, the Department Chair.

## Before Blocking Rehearsals

- Tape out the ground plan in the appropriate theatre.

- Supplies:
  - Copy of ground plan
  - Scale Rule
  - T-Square
  - 50' tape measures, 25' tape measures (2)
  - Chalk Line
  - Rolls of spike tape in a few different colors
  
- Note basic things about the ground plan: dimensions of the set, offstage space, furniture location and size, stage levels, moving pieces, floor coverings, and practical lamps.
  
- Go over the ground plan and measure anything you will need to tape out. Note edges of walls, doors and windows and which way they open, furniture, rugs, stairs, traps, etc.
  
- Using the chalk line, snap a line down the Center Line.
  
- Using the chalk line, snap a line down the Plaster Line.
  
- Put small dots of tape at each spot you measured on the ground plan. Then go back and connect the dots.
  
- Use different colors for different levels or for different sets, depending upon the design. Be clear in your color choice. Ensure that the Center Line and Plaster Line are a different color than the set walls.
  
- The Technical Director is there to help. Don't hesitate to ask if you have any questions. Thus, it is in your best interests to complete this task during Scene Shop hours. As noted earlier, the TD may get to this before you do.

- Procure rehearsal props.

- It is the responsibility of stage management to pull rehearsal props. Enlist the help of ASMs. The real production props should be used early in the rehearsal process only if absolutely necessary. In most cases, begin using the real props at First Tech.
  
- Use the rehearsal props list that you created during your initial analysis of the script.
  
- Keep track during rehearsals of how props move and where they need to be preset. Start marking this down on your props lists. You probably will want to assign this job to an ASM.

- Begin maintaining a callboard.

- *Mainstage*: Roberts productions should use the board located back stage left. Productions in the Flanagan should use the board opposite the painting area of the Scene Shop. Using the Daily Call Sheet, alert cast and crew of rehearsal times and other meetings or fittings. Post a long-term rehearsal schedule. Also post the most up-to-date Tech/Production Week schedule. Update the callboard daily. Also, post a copy of the notes you send out by email in case anyone doesn't receive the email.
- *Open Space, etc*: You may not have need for a callboard if your cast is small and easy to contact. If you do feel you need one, a portable 3-fold notice board is available for use in the Wall.

## Rehearsals

- Always arrive early.

- You need to be there at least 15 minutes prior to the start of rehearsal to set up. Your ASM(s) should be there to help you.

- Duties before each rehearsal:

- Sweep and/or mop the stage. (contact the TD for mopping procedures)
- Prepare the stage for warm-ups or set the stage for the first scene to be rehearsed.
- Unlock the prop cabinet and make sure it is properly organized.
- Check weapons (if applicable).
- Open dressing rooms if actors need them to change into rehearsal clothes.

- Divide up responsibilities.

- You need to keep track of props, costumes, weapons, sweeping, and mopping at rehearsals. Determine who will be responsible for each. For example, you might have one ASM keep track of props, and the other ASM, weapons. Weapons need to be checked daily to make sure hilts of swords are tight, etc. Perhaps one ASM could be in charge of female rehearsal clothes and one male. Etc, etc, etc.

- Make everyone aware of changes in the script.

- Either make the changes on a master script and make copies for everyone or announce the changes in rehearsal so everyone can write them down.

- Keep track of where people are.

- Make sure you know by the official start time who is there and who is not. Keep time fine sheets for those who are not. If the Director chooses to keep time fines, the following policy applies:

- For every one (1) minute a cast member is late, the Director can keep the entire cast one (1) minute after any rehearsal. For every minute the Director is late, cast members can leave early (or one minute is subtracted from the accumulated time fines).

- If people go outside during a rehearsal, make sure you know where. Tell the cast that you or the AD needs to know where they will be if they leave the theatre to go to the bathroom or to get a drink.

- After the “off-book” date, keep line notes.

- Some directors like to charge line fines: \$.05 per line missed, going up to \$.10 during Tech Week, with the proceeds going toward the cast party. Even if your Director does not want to use time fines, you still need to write detailed line notes for the actors to study.
  - While your ASMs write line notes, you need to keep blocking notes. During blocking rehearsals, write the blocking in your prompt book. Then, when anyone does not use the correct blocking, take notes to give at the end of rehearsal. Be flexible if the Director prefers that the actors deviate from their original blocking.
- Keep rehearsal notes.
- Anything the Director says or that you notice that may need to be changed about design elements or props needs to be recorded. If you choose to write out these notes by hand, and then transfer them to your email later, a Rehearsal Notes form is available on Theatre NT Storage under “SM Docs.” Rehearsal notes must be detailed and accurate, and you must type them up after every rehearsal to send to the production team. These notes should go to all members of the production team, plus the Director, Technical Director, ASMs, Department Chair, and PSM. Cast members should not be included in these mailings unless they are serving in a technical position as well.
- Be sure to take breaks.
- The actors should get a break of at least 10 minutes about halfway through each rehearsal. If necessary, remind the director a break is in order. Be sure that *you* take a break as well, even if it’s only a few minutes. If the Director wishes to meet with you during the break, make sure you get at least a couple of free minutes.
- Keep rehearsals running in good order.
- Do not be afraid to speak up and tell performers or crew to be quiet and listen while the Director is giving notes or direction. They should also willingly listen to your notes. Remind actors they need to have pen and paper to write down notes given, per their Actor Agreement.
  - Do not dismiss the cast or crew (or allow the Director to do so) before you give your own notes.
- Make sure performers fulfill their obligations with the Costume Designer and any other production staff.
- Continue to schedule all meetings (mostly fittings) between cast members and the Costume Designer and/or costuming staff. Always send e-mail reminders of these meetings.

- Keep an eye on Front-Of-House (FOH) issues.
  
- Stay in contact with Shannon Harman to make sure she has everything that she needs in order to produce the playbill, tickets, poster, etc. Shannon will give you a draft of the playbill to proofread and to allow cast members to check their bios. If she has not sent it to you by the last week of regular rehearsals, contact her immediately. Remember that the Director, TD and Department Chair should have the opportunity to proofread it as well.
  
  
- Special considerations for dance productions:
  - While you may not need to be at every rehearsal, you should attend rehearsals regularly (especially runs of pieces) to become familiar with the choreography.
    - Calling dance is one of the most challenging aspects of stage management. It would behoove you to see the finished pieces as much as possible in advance of Tech Week.
  
  - Facilitate the visits of guest choreographers to campus (coordinate with TD).
    - Many guest choreographers come to campus for an intensive weekend rehearsal period. Plan to be available on the applicable weekends, and check in once a day or so to make sure that everything is running smoothly.
  
  - Maintain contact with Director, Lighting Designer, and Costume Designer.
    - Schedule costume fittings and *always send reminders!*
    - Make sure that the Lighting Designer receives videotapes of runs of all pieces.
  
  - Stay in contact with the TD regarding technical requirements and safety issues.
  
  - Arrange for regular floor moppings, especially if lighting work is occurring during shop hours before rehearsals. Stagecraft students on the dance crew can perform these duties. Coordinate with the TD.
  
  - Check the Green Room freezer regularly to ensure that an adequate supply of ice and plastic baggies is available in case of injuries. This step is in addition to the emergency ice packs located in the first aid kits throughout the theatre wing of the BCA.

## Dry Tech

### - The two definitions of “Dry Tech”:

- Sometimes “Dry Tech” means preparing the theatre and setting up backstage for First Tech.
- More often, “Dry Tech” means you’re running the show “cue to cue,” in real time and order with the crew, lights, sound, and set shifts, but not the cast.
- Sometimes “Dry Tech” means both of the above. You should make decisions with the Technical Director and designers about Dry Tech at the final regular production meeting. For example, the Lighting Designer might want to use the time to work on cues and/or see them together with sound, but at the same time the Technical Director might want to be setting up special effects equipment and training the crew to use it. Try to balance all of the requests as you develop the schedule. Remember that Dry Tech must end at 5:00pm.
- You probably will have a long list of things to do on the morning of Dry Tech. Arrive early, call your ASM(s) in early, and get as much done as possible before everybody else shows up. Typical stage management responsibilities involve putting up signs (shift sheets and schedules) throughout the spaces being used for the production, putting glow tape backstage and on dangerous sections of the stage (i.e. stairs/ramps), setting up props tables, procuring food props if applicable, and general cleaning and preparation. If you are unsure if something is your responsibility, ask the Technical Director.

### - Meet with your crew.

- The Production Stage Manager and/or Technical Director will have met with the crewmembers and introduced them to how things work. They will have been taught to operate their console or read a cue sheet or shift sheet. They also will have been given a description of their duties. However, you should get together with them to talk a little about the show—most of them will not know what to expect, or anything about the plot. Give everybody a good background so that there are no surprises. Answer all questions and go over the schedule one last time to be absolutely sure that nobody has a conflict.
- Distribute the most updated version of the shift sheets to the TD, set run crew and ASMs, if they do not already have them.
- The Technical Director and designers are in charge of Dry Tech.

### - Clean backstage.

- The backstage area should be virtually spotless. Sweep everything- nooks and crannies, behind doors, under and behind curtains. Wet mop as well. Clear out everything you can

that you will not be using during Tech/Production Week and ask the Technical Director where to put it.

- Set up the backstage area.

- Tape shift sheets and prop lists to the walls (out of sightlines) and make sure they are lit with bluelight. (The lighting crew should hang the blue light for a mainstage, but you probably will have to do your own in the Wall.) Use black gaff tape to tape down all cords to the wall or floor so no one can trip over them (incidentally, as of Dry Tech, you should have a large roll of gaff tape on the stage management table at all times).
- Get chairs and music stands for your ASMs. These can go backstage in the theatre if they can be out of sight lines. All actors should have their chairs in the back hall in Roberts or the scene shop for Flanagan. Talk to the Technical Director about setting these up. Sound and video monitors are the responsibility of the TD.
- Do not allow your ASMs or crew to leave paperwork on the floor — this is a huge slipping hazard for actors.
- *Mainstage:* Set up the water cooler (stored in the paint area of the scene shop) in the back hallway or scene shop. Purchase paper cups if there are none in the prop cabinet or Green Room. Make sure everyone knows that only water is allowed backstage and **NO GLASS OR BREAKABLES AT ANY TIME** is permitted backstage. Label cups with names for multiple uses. Keep this area clean.
- Organize and spike all props on the floor and tables. Have a main prop table in the back hall or shop and small tables backstage if there are quick changes.
- Arrange with the Technical Director for quick-change areas if you'll need them, based on the information that the costume designer gives you about the complexity of the costumes and costume changes. You will need to talk to the Costume Designer to obtain mirrors or any other specialized equipment.
- If traffic is too loud backstage, bring carpet down from the mezzanine over Roberts. Tape down the carpet in major walkways backstage. Coordinate this process with the TD.
- Glow-tape or star anything actors or crew might trip over in the dark.

- Get the cues from your designers *before* Dry Tech.

- As soon as your designers have their cue sheets made, request copies so that you can begin to create your prompt book. If you would like to see a sample prompt book, contact the Production Stage Manager. Color-coding works well for the various different types of cues (lights, sound, video, shift, etc.).

## First Tech Rehearsal

- Take charge. But do not forget your actors in the hubbub. Make sure they are present and on time.

- Ask the entire cast to come on stage so you can give a quick introductory speech. You should:

- 1) Introduce each crewmember by name (including the wardrobe crew in the basement!) and say what they will be doing for the production. Remind actors that the Assistant Stage Managers are their contact in backstage area from now through the final performance.
- 2) Introduce any designers or other production staff that the cast might not have met previously.
- 3) Ask each cast member to introduce him/herself to the crew.
- 4) Explain to actors and crew that today's rehearsal is very important for you and for the designers, and that it is absolutely critical that they be focused 100% of the time. Also, remind everybody that today is your first time calling the show, and ask that they please have patience with you if you make a mistake and have to go back and fix it. That said, tell everybody that today is the day when mistakes can happen—that is why we have First Tech! But they should try, to the greatest extent possible, to make today's rehearsal exactly like a performance.

- If cues go badly, “hold” the show, go back, and run the cues again. (Simply shout “Hold!” Inform your actors ahead of time that if they hear “Hold!” they are to freeze and stay where they are until you give them a line from which to begin again.) This is the rehearsal to work cue placement, set moves, sound cues, and lighting cues with actors. Be efficient.

- This is also the designers' rehearsal. Allow them the time they need. If the Director wishes to talk to the actors while they are holding and a designer is fixing something, it is okay. The Director may call a hold as well if something is terribly wrong.

- Be very patient and take your time today. Given the complexity of a particular show, you may need to resort to a cue to cue to get through the show during the tech period.

- How do you determine crew call times?

- You and your ASM(s) probably will need to be at the theatre about 1.5 hrs before curtain, or at least at the cast's call time. The complexity of the set will determine the crew's call time. If you have a set that requires maintenance, you probably will want to call your crew earlier. Remember to leave time for setting props both on and off stage.

- The Wardrobe Crew Chief will set the call times for the individual members of the wardrobe crew based on the preparation and laundry work that they need to accomplish.

You should be sure to check in personally with the Wardrobe Crew Chief upon your arrival each evening to make sure everything is running smoothly.

- Work with your lighting, sound, and costume designers to set up the preshow schedule. The ME has to do dimmer checks and the sound board op has to check speakers. While the ME does dimmer check, you can have ASMs sweeping and setting up backstage, getting out props, refilling the water cooler, checking weapons, etc. In most circumstances, dimmer/sound checks will occur at 4:15 or 4:30pm for an 8:00pm curtain, to allow for time to fix any problems encountered.
- The call time(s) for the cast will depend on:
  - How much warm-up time the Director needs or the cast requests.
  - How much time the Costume Designer thinks the cast will need before and/or after warm-ups to get into costume and makeup.
- Be especially vigilant that everybody (cast and crew) arrive ON TIME to technical rehearsals! If somebody is even five minutes late, speak to the person immediately and explain that it shows disrespect to the rest of the production company for him or her to arrive late. The success of technical rehearsals and performances depends upon a series of checks and preparations occurring in a specific order, within a specific time frame.
- If any member of the cast or crew is more than 15 minutes late, contact the person. If the person does not answer, call the PSM, Technical Director, and Department Chair (in that order, if one cannot be reached).

- Remind the crew that food and drinks are not allowed in the theatre spaces.

- There should be no food or drinks in the booths near electronic equipment, including on the tech table behind the curtain in the Wall.
- The Green Room is available for all members of the company (cast and crew) to store/cook food, eat, drink, and relax before their call time.

- Remind the crew to wear blacks.

- Crewmembers working backstage (including set crew, fly crew, and at least one member of wardrobe crew) should wear all black to every technical rehearsal and performance—black shirt, black pants, black socks, and black shoes. Tank tops are not permitted, and long sleeves are preferred. For safety reasons, long pants and closed-toed shoes are required. If crewmembers do not own anything black, they can wear navy blue or dark gray. The only exception to this policy is if the crew is in costume.
- Remember, First Tech must end no later than 5:00pm.

## Dress Rehearsals

- Make sure you check in with the Wardrobe Crew Chief as you arrive at the theatre each day.

- Usually the Wardrobe Crew Chief will be in the building 2 hours prior to curtain. He or she is allowed to change call times of the wardrobe crewmembers based on the amount of costume-related work they have to accomplish before curtain and after each performance. Try to keep abreast of these changes.

- You are to work closely with the Costume Studio Student Staff member assigned to the production as Wardrobe Crew Chief.

- Delegate.

- Make a preshow checklist for ASMs and crew, and help them follow it. By the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> Dress, they should be capable of presetting the show themselves. By that point, all you should need to do before the show is make sure ASMs and crew are on schedule and check on the cast.

- Stay on schedule.

- Try to keep things moving. Remind everybody that you are timing the show to get an idea of how long it is.

- Check your preshow settings.

- Make sure all doors and windows onstage are open/closed as they should be by about 40 minutes before curtain. Doors will open at 30 minutes before curtain, at which point you should be in the booth, and all setup should be completed.

- All technicians should check in on headset at 45 minutes prior to curtain. Then they can go off headset, but must be back and on headset permanently by the time the house opens (usually 30 minutes before curtain). If you don't have everybody on headset, don't open the house yet.

- Run dress rehearsals as if they were performances. Call a "Hold!" only if absolutely necessary.

- Maintain proper headset etiquette (see list on next page).

- Before you call the first rehearsal over headset, meet briefly with your ASMs and board operators to explain how you will be calling cues. Make sure that a copy of the Headset

Etiquette sheet is in all control booths. Contact the PSM if a sheet is not available, or photocopy more sheets yourself to post and hand out.

- Some SMs call a “warning” or “wakeup call” about a page in advance of a cue, especially when many pages have passed with no cues. This procedure can be particularly useful for set changes, as ASMs may have to locate the appropriate crew or performers.
- Always call a “standby” a few lines in advance of the cue. A standby means that set crews are at the appropriate entrance to come onstage, and board ops have their finger over their “go” buttons. All those who have been told to stand by should respond as follows:
  - Stage right ASM: “stage right”
  - Stage left ASM: “stage left”
  - Light Board Op: “lights”
  - Sound Board Op: “sound”
  - Video Op: “video”
  - Spot Ops: “spot one,” “spot two” etc.
- No one should speak during a standby except in an emergency relating to the cue currently on standby.
- Call the “Go!” just before the cue is to fall. Learning the timing is one of the most difficult parts of stage management, because you have to be a split-second ahead of what is onstage. You will pick up the timing as rehearsals continue. **Remind the crew that NOBODY can say the word “GO” on headset besides the Stage Manager.**
- All cues should be marked in your prompt book. If you are unsure about how to mark cues in your prompt book, contact the PSM.

### **MAJOR ELEMENTS OF HEADSET PROTOCOL AND ETTIQUITE:**

- 1) The Stage Manager has the final word on everything from the moment the house closes until the final cue.
- 2) If the Stage Manager says “QUIET ON SET!” then all conversations, however urgent or show-related, must cease immediately.
- 3) Only specifically designated personnel are allowed on headset, including the Stage Manager, ASMs, board operators, spot operators, conductor, and others as applicable—substitutes **MUST** be approved in advance by the Stage Manager (in the unlikely event that somebody has a sudden emergency and needs to leave his/her post).
- 4) **ONLY** the Stage Manager is allowed to say the word “GO” on headset. If others need to refer to a go, they should spell it: “G-O.”
- 5) Absolutely no speaking on headset between a “STANDBY” and a “GO” unless it’s a real emergency relating to the cue currently on standby.

- 6) Nobody may remove a headset without requesting the Stage Manager's permission, and after obtaining it a person must say "going off set" before doing so.
- 7) At the beginning of a run, or after intermissions, anybody returning to headset must announce his or her presence by position name (i.e. "SM on set," "Stage Left on set," "Lights on set," etc.)
- 8) Remember to turn off your microphone before removing your headset from your head.

## Photo Call

- Meet with the Director and designers to establish the date and time of Photo Call.
  - Have this discussion at a production meeting, and ask all of the designers and the Director to give you a list of the “moments” that s/he would like photographed sorted by act, scene, and script page number. The sooner you receive the list from the Director, the better.
  - Usually it is best to have Photo Call after one of the later dress rehearsals, though if it’s at all possible to do it at one of the dresses that starts at 7:00pm, you will be able to leave earlier.
  - Inform your actors ASAP when Photo Call will be and approximately how long it will last. Remind them that they are under contract to participate fully in Photo Call.
  - Make sure the Technical Director knows when Photo Call will be so that he can come in with the camera to take the pictures.
  
- Create a Photo Call list.
  - Put together a list of these “moments” on the Photo Call sheet (form is available on NT Storage). Depending on your show, you will want to organize them either by sets or by costumes, depending on which are harder to change. If you organize by set, place all the photos to be taken on the same set in a row, and so on. If you organize by costumes, place all the photos to be taken in one set of costumes together, then excuse the actors to change into their next costumes.
  - Fill in the rest of the sheet with the appropriate cues and notes, and who will need to be in which shots. Choose a line from the script about five lines before you want the shot so that the actors can get into character.
  - Make copies of this list for you, the designers, your LBO, ASMs, and Props Coordinator (if he or she is backstage for the show), and post about four copies backstage and in the dressing rooms for the cast.
  
- During Photo Call, keep things running as smoothly and quickly as possible.
  - Make sure everyone knows where you have posted the Photo Call lists.
  - Go through Photo Call protocol with the actors. They need to start on the line you give them, and then either you or the Director will call “Hold!” when they need to stop. When they hear “Hold!” they need to freeze, maintaining whatever expression and position they had. The Technical Director then will inform you when he is finished taking the photo and is ready to move on.

- Be sure to take a full cast and crew shot before you start with the individual pictures. EVERYONE needs to be in this shot for archival purposes.

You should be on a wireless headset in the house during Photo Call so that you can talk to your LBO, ASMs, and to the actors. Tell your SBO to switch to “PARTY LINE” on the ClearCom system in the sound booth so that you will be able to talk to the technicians on both channels. Keep track of set and props, and make sure that you are in the correct lighting cue. Early preparation on your part will make Photo Call move a lot more efficiently.

## Opening Night

- Follow your schedule.

- All you should need to do for preshow is make sure that your ASMs and crew members are on schedule and cast is there on time. Again, if anyone is more than 5 minutes late, CALL HIM OR HER. If anyone is more than 15 minutes late, call the PSM, Technical Director, or Department Chair (in that order until you reach somebody).

- Don't forget to check in the Wardrobe Crew Chief at least once before the house opens.

- Be upstairs by 40 minutes prior to curtain and on headset.

- The House Manager needs to request permission to open the house. Before you grant it, make sure the ASMs do a final, quick walkabout to make sure that everything on stage is set and that backstage is clear. Also check to make sure that all work lights are off (including the fluorescent lights in the Roberts mezzanine). Be sure to announce through the Clearcom system to everybody that the house is open.

- Once house management is finished with standby seating, the House Manager will give the "house closed" call to the SM by way of the lobby headset. SM thanks the House Manager and immediately begins standbys to proceed with the production. In the Wall, the House Manager will step behind the backstage curtain and tell the SM that the house is closed.

-The House Manager will stay in contact during intermission.

- House management needs to monitor intermission, which is generally 10 minutes long, and give the "house closed" signal to the SM again at the end of intermission.

## Strike

- Attendance is required by all performers and technicians involved in the show.
  - Everyone's participation is required at strike. Theatre Department Student Staff might attend as well. Your job as Stage Manager is over as soon as you have made sure that everybody is present at Strike. Strike is a departmental work call, not a production-specific call. The Technical Director is in charge of making sure that everybody works safely and efficiently. Once you have determined that everybody is present and/or accounted for, simply report to your own crew chief and begin working on your assignment.
- The Technical Director will post all crew assignments for Strike.
  - Strike lists and assignments are posted on the callboard and in dressing rooms. Encourage cast and crew to check the lists in advance if possible.
  - For an Open Space or other student-directed productions, you need to make the assignments for the Strike crews. You should put your student designers in charge of set, props, lighting (grid/catwalk and deck crews), costumes, and any FOH concerns. You also might want to head a crew yourself to clean up the backstage area.
- Don't forget circle and dinner.
  - Usually even for smaller shows at Grinnell, we have pizza or other light dinner and a closing circle. You should take this opportunity to thank the people with whom you have worked who do not get to take a bow or receive other recognition for their hard work, namely the crews. You should acknowledge each crewperson by name.
  - If you have time, you can help the Technical Director clean up from the dinner.
  - **FINALLY, MAKE SURE ALL OF YOUR PERSONAL PROPERTY IS OUT OF THE STAGE MANAGEMENT BOOTH BEFORE YOU LEAVE AT THE END OF STRIKE!!!**

## FURTHER RESOURCES

- Visit Theatre NT Storage, especially the “SM Docs” folder
- For information on how to handle emergency situations, please read the *Emergency Procedures* handbook located in Roberts and Flanagan SM booths and the Box Office
- Use your support network! The PSM, Technical Director, Department Chair, and Resident Designers are here to help you!