

CAREERS IN THEATRE

Actor or Performer

The actor, performer or cast member is by far the most visible person in the theatre. Performers combine their own interpretation of their character with the artistic vision of the director to communicate the words and ideas of the playwright on stage. There are many different tools for the actor to perfect their craft. If you are an actor, you are responsible to the director and stage manager for punctual attendance at rehearsals, memorizing your lines and learning your role. It is your responsibility to come to rehearsals well-prepared and ready to work. During the show, all actors are responsible to the stage manager in all areas concerning conduct backstage, the maintenance of the dressing room and handling of make up, properties and costumes.

Artistic Director

The artistic director is often trained as a director, actor, stage manager or writer and brings their extensive knowledge and experience as the leader of a theatre company. The artistic director is responsible for creating an artistic vision not only for any show they direct and but for theatre company's entire season. The artistic director selects the plays, the directors, organizes auditions and casting and assembles the creative team for each show in consultation with the selected directors. The artistic director may also commission a playwright to create a new play, coordinate workshops of plays-in-progress, read a wide variety of scripts and attend theatre productions to keep in touch with the rich pool of theatre talent. Together the artistic director and general manager of a theatre company work within the mandate of the company to plan the overall artistic activities, deliver programming in the theatre and share administrative duties necessary for the successful operation of the theatre (human resources, community outreach, fundraising, Board and committee work).

Choreographer

The choreographer is responsible to the director for the creation of all dance movement for the production. The choreographer sets dance rehearsals in cooperation with the director, the musical director and the stage manager; auditions the dancers and may assist the director in casting. They may also, together with the director and musical director, block and direct those scenes in the play that move into and out of the musical numbers. Because some actors may not be trained in dance, the choreographer is also the one who teaches the cast members how to execute the choreography and rehearses them.

Composer or Sound Designer

Having original music created by a composer is a plus for any production although it's not always feasible for some smaller companies. The Composer or Sound Designer should have a good understanding of the play that allows them to interpret and emphasize the themes and ideas of the work through music. They are responsible for planning, designing and creating sound effects, soundscapes, pre-show and

intermission music which support the director's vision and takes into account budgets and equipment limitations. They also help the director to select music that helps to bridge scene changes or transitions. In the technical rehearsal, the sound designer fine-tunes and sets the timing and levels of sound cues in consultation with the director, the stage manager and technical director. During technical rehearsals and shows, the sound operator runs the lights.

Costume Designer

The costume designer is responsible for clothing the actors including wigs, hair style, jewelry, footwear, period clothing and undergarments. They work within the director to create costumes that are both functional, affordable and imaginative. The designer must also take into account the activity, safety and comfort of the actors. The costume designer creates colour sketches that easily communicate the final "look" that are presented for approval to the director. The costume designer supervises the collection of costume pieces that may be purchased, borrowed or constructed. The costume designer does not necessarily build the costumes, they may have wardrobe assistants, a cutter or seamstresses to assist them. A costume designer has a strong visual sense, a talent and love for fabric, colour and clothing, and a strong sense of what looks good on an individual. They have experience in building costumes, mixing and matching, and adapting existing costume pieces to new uses.

Director

The director is responsible for bringing the actors and the playwright's words and ideas together under one artistic vision. Whatever interpretative approach the director takes, it involves research, collaboration with designers, leadership, an ability to match actors with suitable roles and an understanding of the actors' craft. Some directors are also artistic directors and have an opportunity to select the script and creative team. The director oversees auditions and casting and may have an opportunity to select the creative team for the show in consultation with the artistic director or producer. The director must have excellent communication skills, strong organizational skills, strong intuition, a clear artistic vision, and a willingness to work with many people with a range of experience and abilities in a nurturing and supportive manner. The director is responsible to the artistic director/producer/general manager for the delivery and interpretation of the show's artistic elements by opening night in a financially responsible manner. He or she is responsible for rehearsing and preparing the actors, and communicating the artistic vision to the designers and other creative, technical and administrative players. Because any decision taken by the director will have a ripple effect on the whole company, he or she should be knowledgeable in all aspects of theatre, including design, lighting, sound, costume and acting technique.

Lighting Designer

As with the other designers, the lighting designer is a part of the design team whose responsibility it is to design the lighting for the show. The lighting designer creates a lighting design concept for the show, based on and supporting the set designer's and director's vision, taking in other design elements and the limitations of the available equipment and budget. Keeping in close consultation with the director, other designers, production manager and technical director, the lighting designer assesses the lighting

needs for the production, creates a lighting plot, a rough cue-by-cue lighting plan, then hangs and focuses the lights. In the technical rehearsal, the lighting designer fine-tunes and sets the timing and intensities of lighting cues in consultation with the director, with the stage manager and technical director. During technical rehearsals and performances, the lighting operator runs the lights.

Musical Director

If a musical is being produced, the show will have a Musical Director. They are responsible to the director for all musical aspects of the production. The musical director may serve as the conductor, rehearse the musicians, teach the cast the music or act as the rehearsal pianist. The musical director sets music rehearsals in co-operation with the director, the choreographer, and the stage manager; auditions the singers, and may assist the director in casting.

Playwright or Writer

Whether it was written last week or a hundred years ago, the playwright's work is the source of all that happens on stage. The playwright or writer creates a make believe world in which the audience can learn, be engaged and entertained and escape.

Set Designer

The set designer creates a design concept and set that mirrors the director's artistic vision, and takes into account the available space and budget. The set designer creates a model that easily communicates the final set, and also creates a set of accurate blueprints for the carpenters, painters, and props department. A set designer has a strong visual sense and the ability to conceptualize in three dimensions and large spaces. They have a good understanding of the interaction of colour, light and shadow. The set designer must be able to build scale models, create accurate blueprints and should have the technical experience and communication skills to supervise carpenters, technicians, and scenic painters.

Carpenter

The carpenter (also known as master carpenter or head carpenter) interprets the set designer's drawings and set model into a functional set. What kind of drawings you receive will depend on the talents of the designer. You should also be prepared to consult fully with the set designer and the technical director on every aspect of the design and budget to complete it.

Lighting Technician/Operator

The lighting operator/operator begins their job with the hanging and focusing of the lights under the supervision of the electrician or technical director. They are responsible to the technical director for handling and operating of lighting equipment during the rehearsal and run of the show, checking of all lighting equipment prior to each run, reporting all equipment failures to the technical director, and checking to see that all equipment is turned off and safely stored at the end of each rehearsal or performance. The lighting technician/operator is responsible artistically to the lighting designer and director for the lighting cues as rehearsed. During rehearsals and performances, the stage manager is the leader who calls the lighting, sound and special effect cues in the

booth or on headset. At the close of the show, the lighting technician/operator, under the supervision of the technical director, participates in the taking down of lights and safe storage or return of lights. The lighting technician/operator should have a good understanding of electrics, lighting equipment and computerized lighting boards.

Make-Up Artist

This position is not always necessary as many actors take responsibility for purchasing and applying their own make-up. For more imaginative and intricate make-up designs, a Make-Up Artist may be consulted.

Props

The properties department (props) is responsible for borrowing, buying, or building stage properties and furnishings (set dressing) for both rehearsal and performance. Props is responsible to the director and set designer for securing props that match the designer's drawings and ideas. The head of props is required to work within the budget provided by the producer, set designer or production manager and to keep clear records of all loans and rentals for safe return following the final performance. Props is responsible for the creation, building, purchase, borrowing, rental and repair of props, food used on stage and set dressing for the show. A props person, production assistant or crew often works backstage to oversee props placement, needs and storage.

Scenic Artist or Scenic Painter

Depending on the size of your theatre company and its production needs, the scenic artist is responsible to the set designer for the supervision of painting and decorating of the set, including furnishings and props. The scenic painter may be responsible to the designer or the scenic artist for painting backdrops, refinishing furniture, painting and texturing flats and set pieces.

Sound Technician

Along the same lines as the Lighting Technician, the Sound Technician is responsible for running the sound of a show. This includes all sound effects and music unless it is provided by a live musician.

Stage Manager

The stage manager is always on time, and makes sure everyone else is too. The stage manager is responsible for the smooth running of rehearsals, and is the first to arrive and the last to leave. During rehearsals, the stage manager works closely with the director and communicates any notes from the director to the producer and production team. Actors report to the stage manager, both during rehearsal and during the run of the show. The stage manager maintains a neat, orderly and easily understood prompt book that includes all information involved in the running of the show (blocking notes, schedules, all production memos and company lists). Once the show has started, the stage manager oversees all backstage activities and ensures the show is technically sound and running smoothly. After opening, the stage manager is responsible for maintaining the director's vision throughout the run. Stage managers have strong organizational and communication skills, efficient work habits, a calm and helpful

manner under pressure, the ability to deal with several problems at once, an excellent sense of time and humor and very neat handwriting.

Technical Director and Production Manager

The Technical Director is responsible to the Producer or Production Manager for the organizing and costing of the technical needs of the show - materials for the set, lights, sound, equipment rentals and special effect needs. The Technical Director manages and directs the crew, coordinates the lighting technicians, the sound technicians, the set builders to keep everyone working together to meet deadlines. The Technical Director works with the designers and technicians to make technical rehearsals work smoothly up to the final dress rehearsals, previews and opening night. In many productions, the production manager and technical director role are merged into one job. The Production Manager oversees the work of the Technical Director, designers, wardrobe and props and is responsible for supervising, coordinating and balancing the technical needs of the director, designers and department heads, with an eye on the production budget and the group's resources of manpower, time, space and equipment. The Production Manager keeps the technical side of the production following along a similar path much like the Director does.

Wardrobe Team

The wardrobe team, depending on the size of your production may include head of wardrobe, a cutter, seamstresses and a dresser. The head of wardrobe is responsible to the costume designer and stage manager for the organization, supervision and maintenance of the dressing rooms and costumes. In a larger theatre, the specialized skills of a cutter will be used to create a pattern from the designer's drawings that matches the measurements of the actor, the fabric selected and historical period of the show. The seamstresses sew, alter and repair the costumes under the direction of the cutter or wardrobe head. A wardrobe person or dresser at performances and technical rehearsals will have duties of checking, washing, ironing, repairing and pre-setting of costumes and assisting actors with difficult costume changes.

Accountant or Bookkeeper

As every business, it is important to have an Accountant or Bookkeeper - someone who is familiar with accounting principles, banking, budgeting, cash flow, contracts, financial reporting procedures and ticketing operations.

Box Office Manager

The Box Office Manager is responsible for the courteous and efficient processing of ticket sales and the box office's financial reporting systems. This includes keeping track of how many tickets are sold by performance, ticket type and origin of sale, as well as making sure the money is secure, arranging any complimentary tickets and making sure that everyone working the box office is aware of all the upcoming events or other information. They may also supervise the box office marketing procedures through phone, mail, in-person, email and subscription ticket sales, including gift certificates and ticket exchanges & refunds. Box office staff will also provide advice about restaurants, parking, tourist attractions, accommodation and suitability of play content for children, students or seniors.

Front of House Staff and Ushers

The first people the audience sees is the Front of House staff when they enter a theatre and they are responsible for all activities in the auditorium (house), the lobbies and grounds of the theatre. The Front of House Manager supervises the ushering, concessions & bar staff, counts tickets and submits a final report at the end of the night. The House Manager coordinates all activities and controls audience traffic before the show and during intermission with the ushers and stage manager to enable all performances to begin as scheduled. "Concessions" refers to refreshments, food and bar services and novelty materials sold by front of house staff before performances and at intermissions. Ushers take tickets, distribute programs, show the public to their seats, and offer any help that may be needed while being as friendly as possible to the theatre's customers. In the event of latecomers, disruptive patrons, first-aid needs, injuries or emergencies, the front of house staff oversee the safety and implements the policies of the theatre. Health and safety training and first-aid training is necessary for front of house management. At the end of each performance, the house manager prepares a report.

Fundraiser or Development Manager

Serves as the director of the theatre's fundraising activities (membership, sponsorship, special events) working in partnership with the General Manager and Board volunteers.

General Manager or Administrator

The business side of the theatre may be managed by the Producer, Administrator or General Manager. Most theatre companies delegate this management role to the General Manager or Administrator. The General Manager is responsible for the overall management of all administrative aspects of operation, including revenue development, contracting, legal, budgeting, human resources, financial reporting and planning, supervision of marketing, box office and fund raising activities and community outreach. They prepare grant applications and reports to all public and private partners. Together the artistic director and general manager work within the mandate of the company and its resources to ensure the successful operation of the theatre. They report to and work with the Board of Directors of the company.

Marketing Director

The Marketing Director is responsible for the overall image of the organization and coordinates staff and activities in all areas of education, group sales, publicity, media relations, telemarketing, advertising, ticket marketing and subscriptions in order to sustain and expand audiences and earned revenues.

Producer

The business side of the theatre may be managed by the Producer, Administrator or General Manager. In a small company, the Producer coordinates and is responsible for all aspects of a production, both technical and artistic. She or he is responsible for the organizing and management of finances, personnel, scheduling, and time management and reports to the Board of Directors of the company. The producer coordinates production meetings, facilitates communication between departments, and keeps up to date on all developments from first inception to final wrap-up of the theatre project.

Ultimately, it is the producer's job to ensure that everyone has a clear job description and is able to do their job effectively and with pleasure. The producer must be enthusiastic about and show a strong commitment to the artistic vision of the project. Most theatre companies divide the producer's responsibilities between the artistic director, general manager and production manager.

Publicist

Getting the word out, using the media to promote your show and drawing people into the theatre is the Publicist's job. He or she develops posters, brochures, postcards, flyers, advertisements, public service announcements, web information and press releases in order to draw attention to the play. The Publicist also coordinates interview requests, all content in the house program including artists biographies and program notes, press kits, media's complimentary tickets, lobby display, photo shoots with actors, and opening night party.