adc theatre
stage manager's guide

2021 edition

The Stage Manager is responsible for all rehearsals and performances of their production on the stage. This means taking responsibility for the health and safety of all cast and crew, as well as being responsible for the evacuation of the backstage areas in case of fire.

It is essential that all ADC Theatre Stage Managers and Deputy Stage Managers have received training from a member of Theatre Management. Training is not required for the Corpus Playroom. It is essential that all Stage Managers have been trained in the ADC's fire procedures by Management before any work in the Larkum Studio starts. Make sure that you arrange a time the week before your show to do this.

Stage Managers and Deputy Stage Managers also need to be authorised on a production-by-production basis. They are required to sign the Stage Manager form in the front of the show's Risk Assessment folder for the production in order to receive authorisation.

About the ADC

The ADC Theatre has **four full-time members of staff**: Jamie, the Theatre Manager; Eduardo, the Technical Manager; Lucia, the Production Manager, and Luke, the Operations Manager. All of them have done lots of shows and will be able to help you with any problems. There is also the CUADC Committee, who can offer help and advice and who produce their own version of this guide. They can be contacted via e-mail at committee@cuadc.org, and the CUADC Stage Managers' Representative can be contacted at sm@cuadc.org.

The ADC Theatre does not have its own props store, but houses the **CUADC Props Store**, run by the CUADC SM Rep. The prop store is a veritable treasure trove, and may just have that odd thing that you're looking for, so it's always worth contacting the SM Rep to see if they can help! Props enquiries should be directed to sm@cuadc.org.

If you need any LX tape for marking out the stage, gaffer tape for holding down cables, or Flamecheck, it can be obtained from the theatre's **sundries stores**. The money is taken off your show's account, so you don't need to pay 'up front' for it. Just visit the management office and we can help.

The ADC also has facilities for **photocopying, printing, laminating and scanning** – come and ask the management for your show's print code to use the printer/photocopier, or for assistance with laminating. This is also charged to your show's account, but is very useful for paper props and for printing your book/script.

Introduction

As Stage Manager you are expected to do exactly that – manage everything that goes on onstage. This includes ensuring all props and set are in the correct places, that cast are in the right place at the right time and that all technical things happen as they should. You are also responsible for **health and safety** in the stage area during rehearsal and performance, and for ensuring that the show complies with **fire regulations**. This guide tells you all that you are required to do, and also gives advice on other things which may need to be done, along with hints and tips on how to make your life easier. It is intended both as an **introduction** for first-time Stage Managers, and as a **reference** for the more experienced.

As outlined above, training is mandatory for any Stage Manager at the ADC Theatre. Nothing in this guide is a substitute for completing the relevant training – it is merely meant to assist and remind you once you have been signed off as a Stage Manager.

The first part of the guide covers our Health and Safety policy, including our **fire and evacuation** procedures and **risk assessments**. The second part covers the **production process**, the production responsibilities of the Stage Manager and other helpful things.

There are also appendices to the Stage Manager's Guide:

- Appendix I covers Safety Talk Notes

- Appendix II is the Fire Check list for the Stage

- Appendix III is the Fire Check list for the Larkum Studio

- Appendix IV is the summary of Stage Managers' Announcements and Calls to be made from the SM desk before and during each performance.

1   Fire Procedures

1.1   The Fire Alarm

The Theatre's Fire Alarm is a sophisticated system with several stages of alert. Information about activation is duplicated by repeater panels around the building, notably by the SM Desk and by the Control Position in the Larkum Studio.

A trained member of Stage Management **must** always be sat at the SM desk while there are members of the public in the auditorium, or at any time while the optical sensors in the auditorium are isolated in order to monitor the fire alarm.

Stage	Indicator	Time	Source	SM Action (Performance)	SM Action (Other times)
Pre-Alarm	Fire Alarm Panel flashing 'Pre-Alarm'	Can go on for an indefinite amount of time	Small amounts of haze *or* Fault on fire system	**KEEP PERFORMANCE RUNNING** Alert Duty Manager (222)	Alert Theatre Management or Keyholder
Pre-Alert	Intermittent sirens backstage Red strobes on stage and in control boxes	2 minutes before Full Alert	Some smoke/haze	**KEEP PERFORMANCE RUNNING** Make contact with Duty Manager, and prepare for an evacuation	**EVACUATE** if no Theatre Management present. Otherwise prepare for an evacuation
Full Alert Fire Service alerted	Continuous sirens backstage Louvres have opened (light has gone red on control panel)	Fire Service on route	Lots of smoke/haze *or* Heat sensor triggered *or* Break glass activated	**EVACUATE**	**EVACUATE**

1.2   Running an Evacuation of the Backstage Areas

The Production Manager should go through this with you in Stage Management training, but here's a reminder:

1. Press the **'Panic Houselights'** switch to bring the houselights up.

2. Stop the performance and make a short announcement to the audience, asking them to follow the stewards out of the building. **Do not use the word 'fire'.**

3. Bring any performers on the forestage back behind the line of the **safety curtain** and release it using the white handle.

4. Ensure your cast and crew evacuate the building quickly and safely using the routes defined in the Building Users Guide. The **Fire Assembly Point** is the pavement on the other side of Park Street, opposite the Theatre.

5. Use the **sign-in sheet** to check that the company has made it out safely. Do not re-enter the building until you are told it is safe to do so. Report anyone missing to the Fire Service, University Security or Theatre Management.

1.3   Fire Fighting

The ADC is well-equipped with **fire extinguishers** that can be used to tackle a small fire. Large fires should not be tackled, but you should instead **operate the nearest break-glass and evacuate the building**. Do not take unnecessary risks – no one will ever be angry if you chose not to tackle a fire.

You will be taken through the different types of fire extinguisher during Stage Management training, and the relevant information can also be found on the bodies of the extinguishers themselves.

1.4   Fire Check

The Stage Manager should carry out a **fire check** before every rehearsal or performance on the stage.

The fire check ensures that fire equipment is accessible, that fire passages are clear, and that other conditions necessary for performance are in place.

There are **fire checklists** for the Stage and the Larkum Studio in Appendices II and III respectively.

1.5   Sign-in Sheet

The Stage Manager prepares and maintains the **sign-in** sheet for the production company.

All cast and crew are required to sign in and sign out of the building when they come in for rehearsals and performances. The Stage Manager is responsible for ensuring that everyone does this.

The sign-in sheet is normally kept on the noticeboard inside the Stage Door.

It should be collected by the Stage Manager during an evacuation, so that they can check the company have made it out safely.

If your show is listed on Camdram (www.camdram.net) then you can generate a sign-in sheet for your show by visiting the page and clicking on **'Download sign in sheet (CSV)'**

1.6   SM Log

The SM Log is a record of the **important times and incidents** in the running of a rehearsal or performance. The Stage Manager is responsible for logging the appropriate information in the log so that the Theatre has a record.

Records are kept of the times of the **fire check, start and end of the interval, and start and end of the show itself.** Information is also recorded on any health and safety incidents, and any other information the Stage Manager considers useful.

The Log lives in the folder kept **inside the SM Desk**. Let the Production Manager know if it is full.

## 2	Health and Safety and Risk Assessment

The Theatre has a comprehensive **Health and Safety Policy** that covers most of the activity that occurs in the Theatre. Productions are required to abide by the Health and Safety Policy, and to supplement it by carrying out a **risk assessment** of their own show, which should dovetail with the Theatre's policy and ensure all activity that occurs in the Theatre is covered.

You can view the complete Health and Safety policy on the **Production Office computers** at sharedfiles\Resources\Health and Safety Policy - Current Version.

Section 4 of the Production Risk Assessment for each production is completed by the Stage Manager.

Standard risk assessments for some of the regular risks can be found in the **Stage Manager's Standard Practices Guide**. If a production is planning activities which fall under the content of that guide and the mitigations listed will be followed, then the Stage Manager can tick the box for 'Standard practice'.

If a production is doing something that doesn't fall under the theatre's Standard Practices, then the Stage Manager will need to select **'Additional risk assessment'** and carry out a risk assessment on the sheet available at the back of the Production Documentation.

If you have any questions about how to fill in risk assessments or how to risk assess something in particular, please come and chat to the Technical or Production Manager, who will be able to help you.

## 2.5	Safety Talk

Just before the start of the technical rehearsal, the Stage Manager should talk the cast through:

a) The **fire procedures** for rehearsals and performances on stage

b) Any **special conditions** required by either the conditions for use of special effects or the Production Risk Assessment

c) Any **fight or intimacy choreography** that forms part of the performance – a separate call for fight or intimacy choreography should be done before the start of each show.

d) **Safe use of the set** and other practical features, and **any hazards** that need to be identified

e) The location of **First Aid kits**

The second part of the safety talk is normally carried out alongside a walk-around of the set.

See Appendix I Stage Manager's Safety Talk Notes for a list of things that should be included in the talk.

3   Production Week

A production's **Technical Representative (TR)** is responsible for the safe running of the production's get-in. The Stage Manager will take over responsibility before the start of the technical rehearsal.

3.1   Pre-Tech

Section 4 of the Risk Assessment should be signed off prior to the start of the technical rehearsal; see the Production or Technical Manager for this.

The Stage Manager should ensure that **the stage is made safe** before the Tech rehearsal can start, including checking that:

- All the **mitigation steps** in Section 4 have been carried out.

- The **props** have been dealt with as planned in Section 4.4.

- All **fire passages** are clearly marked out and safe.

- Any **hazards** such as edges of raised platforms are clearly marked.

- Any measures required for **Special Permissions** are in place.

- The crew have installed any **temporary emergency or working light**.

- Any steps identified in 4.3 **Stage Manager's Checklist** have been carried out.

- A **sign-in sheet** (see 1.5) has been produced.

3.2   Stage Sign-Off

Before the technical rehearsal can start, a member of Theatre Management needs to approve the stage and the production's set as being **safe for use.**

The Technical Representative and Stage Manager should find a member of Theatre Management to walk around the stage prior to the start of the tech. There is a checklist of things that will be checked at the back of the Production Risk Assessment. The Stage Manager and member of Theatre Management will also **sign and countersign** this list to say that the technical rehearsal can start.

3.3   Tech and Dress Rehearsals and Performances

The Stage Manager will then take responsibility for the **safe and smooth** running of all onstage rehearsals and performance, with reference to the Production Risk Assessment.

The **Safety Talk** (see 2.5) should be carried out with all cast members and stage crew before the start of the technical rehearsal.

A **fire check** (see 1.4 and Appendix II) should be carried out before the start of every rehearsal and performance.

All rehearsals and performances should be logged in the SM Log (see 1.6).

The start of performances should be run according to the procedures identified in Appendix IV Stage Manager's Announcements and Calls.

Once the house has opened for a public performance, a member of trained stage management should be sat at the SM desk in order to monitor the **fire alarm** (see 1.1).
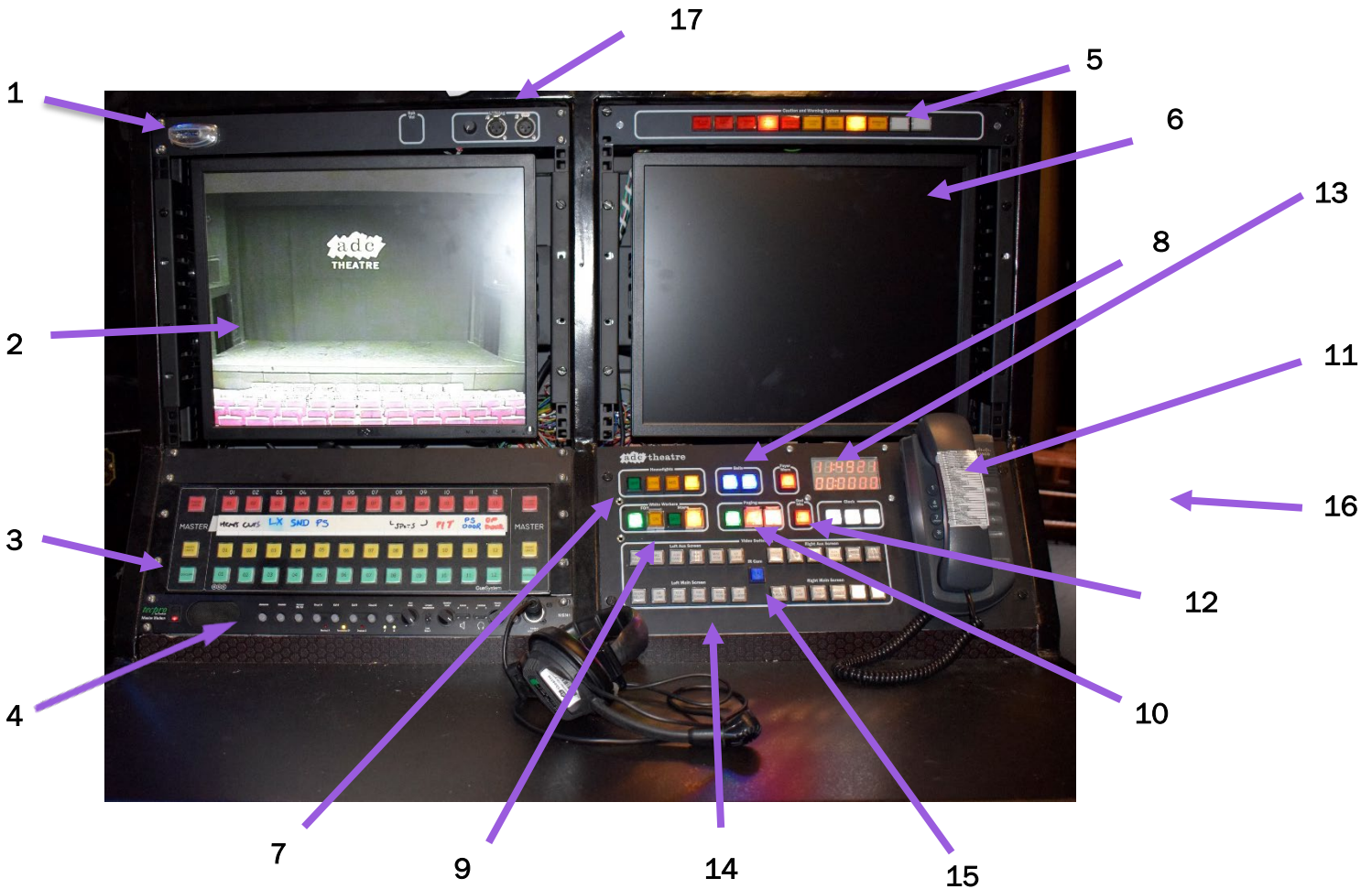
3.4   Get-Out

The TR will reassume responsibility for the running of the get-out after the last performance.

The Stage Manager will normally ensure the **correct removal of all props** from the building, and then assist with the clearing of either the set or the backstage areas.

4   SM Desk

The SM Desk can be turned on and off by a labelled switch on the wall behind the SM desk.

1. Phone Strobe
2. Left Main Screen
3. Cue Lights
4. Cans and Cans Channels
5. Warning Lights
6. Right Main Screen
7. Houselights Control
8. Bells
9. White Workers Control
10. Paging
11. Foyer Warn
12. God Mic
13. Clock
14. Video Switch Panel
15. IR Camera Switch
16. Phone
17. XLR Ports for Gooseneck Lights

1. Phone Strobe

When the secondaries system is turned on for a performance the phone will not ring when it is called. Instead, this strobe light will flash to alert you.

2. Left Main Screen

This screen typically displays Show Relay, which you will need to be able to see what's going on onstage, but you can change the display if necessary on the Video Switch Panel (14).

3. **Cue Lights**

   The cue lights are operated by pressing the relevant **red stand-by button** on the top row to stand-by operators, then pressing the **corresponding green button** on the bottom row to tell them to go. The **middle yellow switches** can be used to set any of the cue lights to a master. Once cue lights have been set to the master switch, they will go green whenever the master is pressed: this is useful for telling multiple operators to go simultaneously, but cue lights will still need to be put on stand-by individually. Cue lights are flexible and can be changed and re-patched according to the needs of individual shows, with corresponding labels added. Please use white LX tape and a sharpie!

4. **Cans and Cans Channels**

   The headset is for our internal comms system, or cans, and allows you to speak to LX and Sound Operators, and anyone else where you've patched a cans set (this is done up in the Patch Bay). Cans operates on two channels: A and B. On this panel, you can link the channels together to talk to everyone at once, or split your channels.

5. **Warning Lights**

   These will light up to warn you of things you need to be aware of. They are: Fire Panel Warn (this will illuminate in Stage 1 of the Fire Alarm); Stage Power Off; LX Power Off; Sound Power Off; House LX Panic; Louvres Open; No. 10 Door Open; Secondaries Off; Workers On. If in doubt what any of these warnings mean, ask the Duty Manager or other member of Management.

6. **Right Main Screen**

   You can select the display for this screen from the Video Switch Panel. For musicals, it will often be useful to have the MD Camera display here, and for smokers this is where the KVM will display for operating LX and Sound from the SM desk.

7. **Houselights Control**

   Here you can change the houselights level from Low to Mid to High to Off. This is usually only useful during the Get-In weekend, as the LX Operator should have control of the houselights for performances.

8. **Bells**

   The **bar bell** is rung as part of the SM's Front of House announcements (see Appendix IV). The dressing room bell may be used along with backstage pages.

9. **White Workers Control**

   Before turning these off, it is good practice to shout **'going dark'** so that anyone working has some warning. The on buttons are under covers, so you don't accidentally turn workers on during a performance. It is fine to turn Stage white workers on during the interval once the Safety Curtain is in, though. Please note that the Front of House workers include those in the Patch Bay and the Roof.

10. Paging

You have a green Dressing Room page button, a red Front of House page button, and a red Whole Building page button. All paging runs through the microphone on your cans headset and you need to hold each button down to talk. Please follow the instructions in Appendix IV for Front of House pages, and be aware that you should only use the Whole Building page button if instructed to do so by a member of Management, your TR, or your Keyholder.

11. Foyer Warn

This button should be pressed before each performance when all cast and crew are **completely ready to begin.** It will then illuminate, both at the desk and at the auditorium doors, where the Duty Manager will see it. When all members of the audience are seated and Front of House are ready for the show to start, the Duty Manager will press the button on their end, and the button will then deluminate at the SM desk, indicating that you can start the show.

12. God Mic

Like the paging system, the God Mic runs through the microphone on your cans headset, and projects your voice out onto stage. It will need to be intentionally patched in the sound system in the sound box if you wish to use it, for instance during technical rehearsals when you need to give regular instructions to the cast onstage.

13. Clock

The first button below the clock starts and stops the stopwatch and the second button resets it. This is useful for timing dress rehearsals and letting Management know the runtime of your show.

14. Video Switch Panel

Here you can change the displays on the two main screens. There are also inputs for two extra screens to be added to the desk.

15. IR Camera Switch

This blue button changes your Show Relay display to an IR Show Relay display, enabling you to see in the dark! This is useful during blackouts to ensure you can still see that scene changes are done safely and/or that actors are in position.

16. Phone

The building has an internal telephone system. A list of numbers is taped to the desk below the phone.

17. XLR Points for Gooseneck Lights

These can be added to the desk to allow the DSM to read their cue script more easily!

5   SM Secure Storage

There is a **metal box** fixed to the wall behind the SM desk.

The Stage Manager can sign out a **key** for the Secure Storage from Theatre Management. It should be signed out at the start of each evening and then signed back in after the performance.

The Theatre cannot take any responsibility for lost items.

The Secure Storage box should be used to store **firearms or pyrotechnics** while they are not being used during the performance, as this is stipulated in the Licence Conditions for these effects (08a and 08c).

6. The Stage Management Team

The Stage Management team work together to ensure all shows run smoothly and safely. They are responsible for **sourcing or making props** for the show, **attending rehearsals** to familiarise themselves with the show, and **liaising amongst technical departments** and different areas of the company.

Larger shows, like ADC Mainshows, the Pantomime and the Lent Term Musical, will normally have a Stage Manager, Deputy Stage Manager, and multiple Assistant Stage Managers. It is unusual for this to be the case for every show, and Corpus Playroom shows will often have just a Stage Manager, or not even that, owing to the nature and technical set up of the Playroom; for example, there is **no SM desk** there, so there will be operators to manage lighting and sound rather than a DSM to call the show. It is also not uncommon to have an ADC show with only a Stage Manager, or a Stage Manager and an Assistant Stage Manager, where the Stage Manager combines the responsibilities of both SM and DSM.

All Stage Managers and Deputy Stage Managers at the ADC Theatre **must** receive Stage Management training before their show's get-in. This should be arranged for at least a week before the start of your show by contacting the Production Manager on production@adctheatre.com

6.1 Stage Manager

The Stage Manager (SM) is responsible for all rehearsals and performances on stage and all practical considerations on stage. They keep the show running smoothly and safely. One of the SM's most important jobs is as **a people manager**, ensuring everyone one the show's team is working together efficiently and happily, and that communication happens effectively between different departments.

The Stage Manager should, as much as possible, attend rehearsals to ensure they are aware of the demands and nature of the show, identify potential problems, keep notes about blocking, costume changes and props. It is up to the individual SM how many rehearsals they attend, but as with any aspect of the job, **the more complicated the show the more time you should devote to it**, as the better you know the show, the better you can run it. Full runs are the most useful type of rehearsal to attend, as it is here you will be able to note potential issues moving from scene to scene and gain an overall idea of the show

During shows, **the Stage Manager is in charge**, taking responsibility for everything that happens on- and off-stage, including all health and safety (particularly fire-related) issues, organising and running scene changes and keeping the performance running safely and smoothly. The SM also tends to be the person to whom all problems encountered by actors or crew are reported; if any of these are related to accident, injury or near-miss, they should be reported to management.

6.2 Deputy Stage Manager

The Deputy Stage Manager (DSM) sits at the **Stage Managers' desk** in the PS wing and 'calls' the show, by cueing lighting, sound, scene changes and any other effects or changes, using our cans system and the cue lights on the desk. The DSM will have a copy of the script for the show with all the cues written in it; this should be arranged in advance of the get-in at a 'paper-tech' (see **7.3 The Prompt Book, or Calling a Show**).

6.3 Assistant Stage Managers

Assistant Stage Managers (ASMs) assist the Stage Manager and Deputy Stage Manager during performances. Not all shows require ASMs, and the number of ASMs a show has will vary greatly between productions, from one or two for a standard Mainshow or Lateshow to up to a dozen for larger show like the Pantomime or the Lent Term Musical. Their responsibilities will often include sourcing and setting props, assisting the SM with scene changes and assisting the SM with any trouble shooting on the night.

7 The Production Process

7.1 Rehearsals

The Stage Manager is in charge of all rehearsals on stage. Generally, a show will have two rehearsals on stage, **your technical rehearsal (tech) and your dress rehearsal.** The technical rehearsal is a practice for you and your technicians to get lighting changes, set changes, etc. all happening correctly and safely. It is normal for the technical rehearsal to **stop and start** to redo cues or changes until the technical team and cast are happy. The dress rehearsal, however, is **run like a show** and should not stop.

You will need to go to rehearsals outside the theatre before your show starts in order to find out where lighting and sound cues happen and also to get a 'feel' for the show. It can also be helpful for you to **mark out the set** using tape for some rehearsals so that your cast get a feel for the stage space they will have, helping the director arrange blocking and saving stage time.

If you are Deputy Stage Managing (or, on a smaller show, a Stage Manager at the desk), you will need to assemble **a cue script (a 'book')** – a copy of the script with **all cues and scene changes** marked in it. It can also helpful to **draw diagrams** of the stage for each scene, and to liaise with the rest of the Stage Management team to work out who is going to be responsible for moving bits of set or furniture into position.

The times of your tech and dress will depend on your get-in schedule, and this should be discussed at production meetings as early as possible. Generally, if you are an ADC Mainshow you will do your tech on Monday, with a dress on either Monday or Tuesday. If you are an ADC Lateshow, your dress and tech will both be on Wednesday. Playroom Mainshows and Lateshows have time to get-in, tech and dress between Sunday and Tuesday, and should liaise with each other to arrange use of the space over this time.

7.2 Sourcing and Making Props

The Stage Manager normally organises the collection of props for the show. On larger shows, an Assistant Stage Manager (ASM) or Props Manager may be appointed. You will need to request a list of props and where they are to be used from your director. It is good to start thinking about this **around a month before opening night** to ensure you have enough time to source appropriate and budget-friendly items. You should also agree with your Set Designer (SD) and Technical Director (TD) **which items of furniture are to be counted as props and which as set,** as this can be an area of controversy.

CUADC has a **props store** in the Theatre scene dock run by the Stage Managers' Representative – e-mail sm@cuadc.org to contact them about prop hire. If furniture is being arranged by the SM team, contact the Production Manager on production@adctheatre.com to arrange use of **ADC stock furniture.**

The best places to buy props and furniture are **charity shops** (particularly those around the Grafton Centre), or the Cambridge Market. Particularly unusual or period items can be hired if necessary, but be aware that this can be expensive. Good websites to search include GumTree, Freecycle and eBay.

All props and risks associated with them should be discussed in your **production's risk assessment,** which must be signed off by the management before your technical rehearsal.

7.3 The Prompt Book, or Calling a Show

Whoever will be calling the show (the DSM or, if you don't have one, the SM) compiles **the show 'book' or prompt book** –an annotated script from which the show will be run – during the **paper-tech**. The accepted way of constructing a prompt book is to have each page of the script on a portrait side of A4. Hole-punch these pages and put them in a file, **so that each page of the script sits opposite a blank page** - the underside of the previous page. The blank side can then be used for taking blocking and cue notes. Many find it helpful to split the blank page in half from top to bottom, and use the left-hand side for blocking notes and the right-hand side (the side closest to the script) for cue notes. You should always write blocking and cues into the book in **pencil**, as things can (and do) change right up until the final performance.

The eventual size and complexity of the book will depend upon the show; if you are calling a musical or an opera you will probably need to supplement the book/libretto with music and a complete score, as **cuing from a score is the best way of cuing a musical**. The prompt book really is the 'Bible' for your show, it's the only place where dozens, or even hundreds, of cues will be noted exactly – make sure it's clearly marked with your show, name and contact details!

There is a fairly standard way to mark up the Book to ensure that it can be universally understood, in case of emergency. The following abbreviations are typical:

Q = cue

LX = lighting

SND = sound (avoid FX – this sounds too much like 'LX' over cans)

CW = counterweights

H = Hemps

PS = prompt side (=SL = stage left)

OP = opposite prompt side (=SR = stage right)

US = upstage

Lime = cues for followspot

Pit = the band or orchestra

MD = Musical Director

S/B = Stand By

Most of these abbreviations correspond to the **cue lights** on the SM's desk, but not all cues will be used in all shows, and the cue lights on the desk can be re-patched and re-labelled according to the needs of the show. More and more often, DSMs choose to call a show over **cans only** and to switch to cue lights if silence is needed on cans for another reason (e.g. a special effect or a health and safety emergency).

When writing these into the Book, **lighting cue 10** should appear (for example) as **LX10** and **counterweight cue 4** as **CW4**. For more complex shows, you may also wish to write your relevant **'standbys'** (warning of imminent cues) into the book. You should also underline the **exact word or end of phrase** that triggers the cue to make it clear to yourself and others. Some SMs even find it helpful to draw an arrow from the cue marking across the page to the exact point in the script. During the show the DSM (or SM at the desk) 'calls' the show by giving cues to the lighting operator (LX op) and sound operator as well as any other crew as to when to 'go' with a cue.

Standard cue calling runs as follows:

1. A short while before the cue (e.g. two lines), you should **'stand by'** the crew by saying "Stand by LXQ10" (for example) and pressing the **red stand-by button**. You can stand by **more than one person at a time** (e.g. "stand by LXQ10 and SNDQ2") and also **blocks of cues** if there are several close together (eg. "stand by LXQs10-15").

2. The standby will be **acknowledged** by the op, who will press the black button on their cue light to turn off the flash on the desk. **A steady red light therefore means that the standby has been acknowledged.** Operators may also add verbally, "Standing by", though you may wish to discourage verbal response in busy shows, as it can be distracting.

3. To give a cue, you should repeat the title of the cue and instruct them to 'go' by saying **"LXQ10 – GO"** whilst depressing the cue light to green (in time with the word GO to avoid confusion). **Notice that 'standby' precedes the cue and 'go' comes after the cue.** This is to ensure that there can be no confusion when the actual cue (as opposed to the stand by) is going!

Never say 'GO LXQ10', as it is then unclear which operator is being cued, and when exactly they are meant to act! To avoid confusion or false starts, make sure the word 'go' is not said over cans (**especially while anyone is on standby for a cue**) except by the DSM/SM on book, and **only** when you wish a cue to go. You should encourage anyone else to spell out the word if necessary (e.g. G-O).

Above all else, the DSM/SM on book needs to feel comfortable that they can communicate with their operators to call the show **effectively and to time**. A good way to ensure things run smoothly, especially if operators change over a show's run, is to ask any 'guest' ops to arrive at 7pm and report to the DSM, so they can talk about **the DSM's preferred methods of calling a show and etiquette on cans.** Talking with your ops on cans during a show is great fun, but if you are anxious about not being heard or cues being missed, then don't be afraid to ask for silence on cans. This is particularly important once operators have been put on standby, as talking during standbys can be distracting and lead to erroneous cuing.

7.4 The Paper Tech

The most effective way of compiling an accurate working list of cues for the show is by meeting with key crew members for a **paper tech.** It is designed to make both the **lighting plot** and the **tech** run quickly and smoothly, and is advisable to hold **the week before your show**, attended by the Director, Stage Manager, Deputy Stage Manager, Lighting Designer and Sound Designer. This is by no means a definitive or complete list, and the demands of the particular show will affect the usefulness and attendants of the paper tech. The paper tech is important, as it provides possibly the only opportunity before the show for all the key crew members to sit down with the artistic team and make sure that everyone has the same conception of what happens and when at every point in the show.

During the paper tech, lighting, sound, fly and set cues can all be written into the **Prompt Book.** Before the paper tech can take place, you will need to have a clear idea of the set, the Director and Lighting Designer (LD) should have a clear idea of the lighting cues, and someone should be aware of points in the show at which fly cues may be necessary. For this reason, it is often **not worth calling a paper tech more than a week before the get-in weekend.** For simple shows the whole procedure may well be unnecessary, but the more complex the show, the more crucial a paper tech can be. If in doubt, consult with your TD and LD and make the decision between you.

7.5 Before the Tech Rehearsal

Before you start your tech rehearsal, it is essential that your stage is **signed off by a member of management** and to hold a **safety talk** with all cast members and backstage crew. A list of things that management will look for and expect to be done before the stage can be signed off can be found in the back of your production risk assessment.

Ensure **props tables** are set up, out of the way of **fire passages** and marked out in masking tape or LX tape with labelled spaces for each prop, to minimise the chances of props going missing unnoticed.

7.6 Tech & Dress Rehearsals

The tech is normally run with **the director sat in the auditorium on cans,** with all the crew at the relevant positions and the DSM/SM on book at the stage managers desk. Have a chat to the director before the tech and explain that it will go much quicker if artistic points are noted during the tech to be discussed with the cast later. **Don't forget, the Stage Manager is in charge of the tech**; as technical rehearsals can be so tight on time, it's good to be polite but firm with the other people involved if things start to veer away from technical issues. The Stage Manager should be in control of starting and stopping the technical rehearsal, and should always know why the rehearsal has been stopped.

To make the tech as short as possible it is essential to **talk to everyone before the start**, especially the cast, and explain that you only have this short period to get all the technical things sorted out, so they need to have patience. It is important to stress to everyone that you will try to make it as quick as possible, which may mean interrupting actors mid speech or missing out very simple cues. Remind them that they will have time to address any issues that arise for them but that are not directly relevant to the tech, and that they will have their time onstage for a full dress rehearsal after the tech has been completed – they have also had weeks of rehearsal before this point, and this is the tech team's only chance to get things right. Another useful thing to explain is that when you ask actors to start from a certain line, it means start from that line **when the SM shouts go and not before**, otherwise the crew may not be ready.

Often the most efficient way to run the tech is to go from **cue to cue**. This means starting the actors with a line just before a cue and then stopping them as soon as you have done (and feel happy with!) the cue. This may not be feasible if your show has many cues; it can be quicker in this case to let the actors keep going rather than repeatedly stopping and starting. You can repeat a cue as often as need be to ensure the change or effect runs smoothly. Scene changes will all also need practising to ensure set and props go off and on quickly and quietly. A useful tip for cue to cue technical rehearsals is to let the actors continue going through lines after you've run the cue until you are ready to stop them and go on to the next cue that needs teching, so that they have as much rehearsal time for them in the tech as it is possible to give them.

Where the tech rehearsal is the technical and production crew's opportunity to feel happy and comfortable with the running of the show, the dress rehearsal is that time for the cast. It is important that they have the same priority during the dress that crew have during the tech, so the dress rehearsal should **run through without stopping**, as an ordinary performance would.

You should remember to fill in the **stage manager's log** for both the technical and dress rehearsals.

More information about stage management can be found in the CUADC Stage Manager's Guide at http://cuadc.org/resources/job-guides/

If you have any queries, worries, or just want to talk about how to stage manage, please contact the Production Manager on production@adctheatre.com **or the CUADC SM Rep on** sm@cuadc.org**.**