Copenhagen Theatre Circle – Production Handbook

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Introduction

This handbook is meant to serve as a guideline for all who work on a Copenhagen Theatre Circle production.

How to use the handbook

As a minimum, you should read the description of your area of responsibility in the section The Production Team (p15), and then use the recommendations in the section Production Phases (p4) to plan your work during the production. You should also take a look at Best practice for Everyone (p44).

The main focus of this handbook is to, as far as possible, make it clear where the responsibility for each part of a production lies. It is, however, quite impossible to include everything that can or may happen during a production, so it is important that you keep your eyes and ears open at all times, and use your common sense.

Every production is different – the size, the scope, the number of people involved. The guidelines in this handbook are therefore meant as just that – *guidelines*. Do your best to adapt them to the needs of the actual production.

Comments and corrections

Any suggestions, comments or corrections to this handbook should be adressed to info@ctcircle.dk. Please write "Production Handbook" in the subject line.

Production Phases

A production is divided into the following phases:

- **Start** – selection of play and director and agreeing on general parameters for production

- **Initiation** – director prepares, key production team players are assembled, cast is chosen

- **Production** – rehearsals, construction of sets, costumes, props etc

- **Preparation for load-in** – getting ready to move into the theatre (this is concurrent with the last weeks of the Production phase)

- **Load-in** – getting into the theatre, and getting ready for the opening night, including final tech and dress rehearsals

- **Production run** – performances

- **Post production** – load-out and wrapping up after the last performances

In the following, key activities for each phase are listed in more detail.

Note that the **Responsible** column denotes who has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring the task is carried out, which is not necessarily the same as the person(s) who do(es) the actual work. The person responsible for the task can delegate the work to someone else, but is then obligated to follow-up on the task actually getting done.

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Start

Tasks

Task	Deadline	Responsibility	Done
Theatre is booked, and dates for load-in, opening night and load-out are determined	6-12 months in advance	CTC Committe	
Committee selects play and director	6 months in advance	CTC Committee	
Ticket pricing policy agreed on	6 months in advance	CTC Committee	
PR Manager is appointed	6 months in advance	CTC Committe	
Preliminary PR strategy	5 months in advance	PR Manager	
Production Manager appointed	4 months in advance	CTC Committee	
Director's Assistant, costume / set designers / light designers appointed	5-6 months in advance	Production manager	

Deliverables

- Ticket pricing policy

- Contract with theatre

- Budget

- PR strategy

- Contact sheet

Best practice

- Ticket prices agreed in advance, including which days allocated to student days etc, when press will be in etc

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Initiation

Tasks

Task	Deadline	Responsibility	Done
Production Manager is informed of production budget	5-3 months in advance	CTC Committee	
Director prepares playbook, containing concepts for set, costume, lighting, roles and play as a whole	5-3 months in advance	Director	
Graphics for posters and web are prepared	5-3 months in advance	PR Manager	
Text for PR is prepared	5-3 months in advance	PR Manager	
Website is updated with a page for the production	5-3 months in advance	CTC Website manager	
Rest of production team is appointed	3 months in advance	Production Manager	
Director and Director's Assistant arrange auditions, rehearsal venues, create rehearsal schedule, & communication plan for all	3 months in advance	Director, Director's Assistant	
Communication strategy for the production	3 months in advance	Production Manager	
Initial meeting between all non-cast to take place to agree on rehearsal schedule, communication plan, rehearsal space etc	3 months in advance	Production Manager	
Hold auditions following appropriate standard procedure, & agree checklist, ensure all actors are aware of responsibilities to commit to production should they be successful	3 months in advance	Director, Director's Assistant	
Inform all those auditioning within reasonable time	3 months in advance	Director, Director's Assistant	

Deliverables

- Playbook

- Audition notice

- Audition forms (for people attending auditions to fill out)

- Rehearsal schedule

- Updated contact sheet (with cast)

- Communication strategy

- PR text and graphics

- Poster & postcard design

- Press releases

- Website – ticket page and production page

- Ticket information in Place2Book

Best practice

- In discussion with the Director and Director's Assistant have guidelines for rehearsals ready prior to conducting auditions. Actors should be given an idea of the time commitment involved, even though the actual dates will not be set until the cast is known

- A communication strategy must be established early on, and circulated for information by the Production Manager - the Production Manager will be responsible for ensuring all are adhering to the communication strategy

- As far as possible, share information electronically, e.g. using cloud services such as Google Drive, where all involved can have access

- No one member of the 'team' should have more than one role without extreme justification!

- Ensure budget for costume and set is realistic - Production Manager to consult with creative circle

- At the first/early Production meeting agree props, crew, equipment, and other resources needed

- Make sure everyone attending auditions is made aware of the commitment they are asked to make, particularly regarding rehearsal schedule and time in theatre.

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Production

Task	Deadline	Responsibility	Done
First rehearsal(s) to involve following: - agreement on schedule with all cast & non-cast, - All cast to agree 'rehearsal rules' together, - all non-cast to attend early rehearsal by way of a meet-n-greet, to hear first run-through of production	2 months in advance	All (cast and non-cast)	
All cast to attend: - one session with costume to help for a day alongside getting measured up for costume - one session with set construction to help, but also to get idea of set design	During rehearsal months	All cast	
Ensure all cast and budget-responsible production crew are CTC members	1 week into rehearsals	Production Manager	
Production Manager to attend agreed amount of rehearsals - agree with Director	During rehearsal months	Production Manager	
Production Manager to receive reports from Director's Assistant, Creative circle (including costume, props & set), lighting, sound, Choreographer, Vocalist & Marketing. Production manager to call production meetings weekly or bi-weekly, according to need. Time and form of reports and meetings to be discussed in initial non-cast meeting	During rehearsal months	Production Manager	
Prior to moving in to theatre, ensure cast & non-cast are updated on the plan, & that non-cast are on schedule	Last two weeks prior to moving in to theatre	Production Manager / Assistant Director	
Report expenditures to CTC Treasurer	Concurrently	Production Manager	
Design programme layout	Before Load-in	PR Manager	

Deliverables

- Set design document

- Costume design document

- Light design

- Sound design

- Properties list

- Updated webpage (with cast)

Best practice

- Communication between actors and both costume and set designers should happen as early as possible. Also encourage actors to support costume/set for one session to ease workload as well as become aware of what costume and set will look like in the end!

- An introduction for everyone should be part of the process in first few early rehearsals including the Production Manager, Choreographer, Vocalist, Creative Circle

- All actors/theatre team should agree their 'rules' or charter that they will work to for the good of the team!

- Production Manager should schedule regular visits to the rehearsals to establish presence and become familiar with the play and the cast

- All actors should be responsible for taking notes during the rehearsals

- Production Manager should also do regular check-ins with non-actor team members

- If cast are late for rehearsals they should contribute to the snack box, but a responsibility to be on time is expected to be tied in to the 'rules', for the good of the whole team

- Props should be usable in advance where possible

- First rehearsal: plan a read-through of the script, where possible with full 'team' present - with follow-up and feedback on thoughts of how production will be managed. Note points people like and don't like. Identify logistical issues with producing it

- Set, costume and properties design documents / lists should include information on how items are disposed of after production – what is discarded, what is kept in CTC storage, what is returned to owners (with when and how)

- If the Stage Manager is a separate role, s/he should start coming to rehearsals about midway through the rehearsal process, in order to become familiar with both cast and script

- Assistand Director should keep a **prompt book** with all information to be handed over to the Stage Manager for the production run , and then kept after the production for future reference. The prompt book should include script, blocking, set design, other design elements, contact sheets etc.

Preparation for theatre

Task	Deadline	Responsibility	Done
Finalize set	2 weeks before load-in	Production Manager	
Finalize costumes	2 weeks before load-in	Production Manager	
Finalize props	2 weeks before load-in	Production Manager	
Prepare load-in plan	1 week before load-in	Production Manager	
Inform cast & crew of load-in plan	1 week before load-in	Production Manager	
Prepare load-out plan	1 week before load-in	Production Manager	
Inform cast & crew of load-out plan	1 week before load-in	Production Manager	
Plan for crew to run light and sound during production run	1 week before load-in	Production Manager	
Plan for Front of House	1 week before load-in	Front of House responsible	
Plan for Box Office	1 week before load-in	CTC Treasurer	
Get input together for programme	1 week before load-in	Production Manager	
Edit, proof read, print programme	Before opening night	PR Manager	
Decide which production crew members to give comps to	Before opening night	Production Manager	
Book a photographer to take pictures at the tech and dress rehearsals	Before load-in	PR Manager	

Deliverables

- Load-in plan

- Load-out plan

- Schedule for Front of House

- Schedule for Box Office

- Programme

Best practice

- A plan of get-in and get-out must be agreed to by all and led by the Production Manager.

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- Before finalizing programme design, circulate draft programme to cast and crew to ensure names are spelled correctly, and no-one has been left out

- Schedules for Front of House and Box office do not need to be in place early, but it's a good idea to start working on them in good time, perhaps even during the Production phase. People like to be asked in good time

- Even though the load-in plan is first finalized at this point, it is important to let people know early in the process (beginning of Production phase) when they are required to be present

- It's a good idea to plan the load-out at this point. If time does not allow this, it can be postponed to during the production run, but only if absolutely necessary

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Load-in

Task	Deadline	Responsibility	Done
Move in set Bring props Sound and lighting in, and begin set-up once set installed - all to be coordinated appropriately	1st day in theatre	Production Manager	
Bring in costumes	2nd day in theatres	Production Manager	
Actors in and agreement of rules for in the theatre, and reconfirm agreed rules for cast and non-cast	2nd day in theatre	Stage Manager	
Tech rehearsal to allow sound and lighting to plot the script and programme sound and lights	2nd day in theatre	Production Manager	
Full technical rehearsal, with costumes.	3rd day in theatre	Production Manager	
Dress rehearsal along with follow up of any final alterations/changes to any aspect of the performance	4th day in theatre	Stage Manager	
Get photos for lobby printed and hung	Before opening night	PR Manager	

Best practice

- Keep the cast out of the theatre until the first tech run. Bring them in in time for them to familiarize themselves with the backstage area, and work with their costumes and props, before the actual tech run starts
- When planning the Load-in, the Production Manager should ensure that the Stage Manager and the Stage Hands have sufficient time to rehearse set changes and any other duties they may be asked to perform
- When coordinating costumes, make sure there's time for final fittings at least before the dress rehersal, preferably before the full tech
- If possible, the cast should do a walk through and spacing rehearsal before the tech run. This will help lighting to know where actors are placed
- Tech (2nd day) should be run as a "10 out of 12" - i.e. 5 hours work, 2 hour break, 5 hours work - including a full run of the show

Production run

Task	Deadline	Responsibility	Done
Prepare sign-in sheet for cast and crew	Daily	Stage Manager	
Warm-up cast 1 hour before performance	Daily	Stage Manager	
Reset props and stage at the end of every performance	Daily	Stage Manager	
Report online ticket sales to FoH and Box Office	Daily	Sales responsible	
Costume problems, set repairs, prop replacements – fix or hand over to relevant responsible personal	Daily	Stage Manager	
Plan cast party	Before end of run	Production Manager	
Prepare list of people for the CTC to give gifts to	Before cast party	Production Manager	

Deliverables

- Daily ticket reports
- Daily Stage Manager report
- Sign-in sheets
- Plan for cast party
- Gift list

Best practice

- Make sure everyone involved in show is invited to cast party – don't forget Front of House, Box Office, and any late-comers to the production teams, or anyone who was involved early on and then left the production
- Make sure there's food enough for everyone – if people are asked to bring food, keep hounding them to report what they are bringing
- Stage Manager should liaise with Front of House and Box office and daily report to entire team:
  - what's the audience head count
  - did people leave at intermission, and why
  - what was the response like

Post production

Task	Deadline	Responsibility	Done
Clear the theatre.	After last performance	Production Manager	
Update storage catalogues (costumes, props)		Production Manager	
Evaluation meeting called within two weeks of final performance	2 weeks after final performance	Production Manager	
If music was used, report usage to KODA	2 weeks after final performance	Production Manager (Musical Director, if that role is active)	
Finalize financial report for production	1 month after final performance	CTC Treasurer	
Finalize ticket statistics report	1 month af ter final performance	CTC Treasurer	
Update relevant webpages	1 week after final performance	CTC Website manager	

Deliverables

- Financial report

- Statistics on final ticket sales

- Web page gallery with photos from production

- Edited production webpage

- Post production evaluation survey

- Post production evaluation report

Best practice

- The load-out and disposal of set, costumes and properties is just as important as any other task in the production. Plan it ahead of time, including getting the people to do it, as it tends to be slightly overlooked in the haze following the last performance

- Post production survey – see separate documentation on how to best arrange this

The Production Team

Teams

There are a number of teams involved in a production. A team may consist of one person in a small production, and may go up to any number of persons in a larger production. The following table shows the teams that are always present in a production. Some productions may have more.

Team	Notes
Set team	Design and construction of sets
Costume team	Design and construction of costumes
PR team	Drawing up and executing PR strategy, in collaboration with Committee Communication Manager
Light and sound team	Design of light and sound, running light and sound during production run
Properties team	Maintains list of props and procures and stores props for rehearsals and performances

Mandatory roles

Any production should have someone appointed for each of these roles. In smaller productions, some roles can be assigned to the same person, but it is not recommended due to the workload and possible conflicts of responsibility.

Apart from the people chosen by the committee, i.e. the Director, the Production Manager, the Committee Liaison and the Box Office Manager, it is the responsibility of the Production Manager to ensure that the roles are covered. S/he does not necessarily have to appoint them on his/her own, but s/he has to follow up that there is a "warm body" for each role.

Role	Notes
CTC Committee	The committee acts as the producer of the show
Director	The director is responsible for the creative side of the show
Cast	
Production Manager	Primary contact for the Committee. The PM is responsible for holding the production together and on track for agreed deadlines, and also for reporting observed problems to the Committee

Role	Notes
	liaison, if outside intervention is needed. The PM is also responsible for keeping the production on budget, on time and on specs (i.e. conforming to any quality requirements agreed with the committee)
Set Designer	Team leader for set construction (unless a separate Set Construction Manager is appointed)
Costume Designer	Team leader for costume team
Light Designer	Usually functions as team leader for light and sound team
Property Manager	
Stage Manager	Responsible for managing cast and venue during the production run
PR Manager	
Graphics Designer	
Front of House Manager	Responsible for assembling Front of House personnel and instructing them in their duties
Box Office Manager	Responsible for ticket sales on performance nights. Appointed by the committee (because there's cash involved)
Committee liaison	Contact person on the committee
Committee	

Optional roles

Depending on nature and size of production, additional roles may be necessary.

Role	Notes
Director's Assistant	Handles administration of the cast. In smaller productions this can be covered by the Director, or – better – by the Stage Manager, as the SM will then have the opportunity of becoming familiar with the cast and the play early on
Sound designer	Usually covered by the light designer, but in larger productions a separate role may be

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Role	Notes
	advantageous
Set Construction Manager	For smaller sets, this can be covered by the Set Designer
Sales Manager	Responsible for online ticket sales. Can be covered by the Box Office Manager.
Musical director	
Choreographer	
Make-up/Hair Responsible	In most productions the cast takes care of their own make-up. However, in some instances, e.g. in period shows or if the cast is inexperienced, it can be necessary to appoint a Make-up person.
Assistant Director	In larger productions it may be necessary to have two persons co-directing. It could also be necessary if the director is unavailable for part of the rehearsal period. However, this is to be avoided if at all possible, as it opens the door to many conflicts about directing style, shared responsibilities and so on.
Children's Director	In pantos with child actors, it can be a good idea to separate the responsibility for the children out from the regular production, as the requirements and needs are very different
Stage Hands	If set changes require more than the Cast or the Stage Manager can handle, additional Stage Hands may be necessary.

Additional roles

Apart from the production team roles mentioned above, there are always a number of people on the "ground level" involved in costume sewing, set construction, being Front of House, helping out with PR etc., etc.

Responsibility for recruiting these people, and ensuring they are introduced to the production in a proper way, ultimately lies with the Production Manager, but is usually carried out by the team leaders themselves (set designer/set constructor, costume designer, PR Manager, etc.).

The Production Manager should still do his/her best to ensure that people recruited into the production are introduced to the production, and cared for in the best way possible.

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Useful people outside the production team

Role	Notes	Contact
Costume responsible	Takes care of the costumes belonging to the CTC. Responsible for checking costumes in and out of the storage space.	- none at the moment -
Workshop responsible	Manages the workshop space at Østerport. Responsible for giving access to the production team, and for ensuring that the workshop is ready for set construction.	Frank Theakston
Property responsible	Takes care of the properties belonging to the CTC. Responsible for checking props in and out of the storage space.	- none at the moment -

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Responsibilities

In the following pages the responsibilities of each role is detailed.

The relationship between the different roles is illustrated in this diagram, with emphasis on how lines of communication between the different roles.
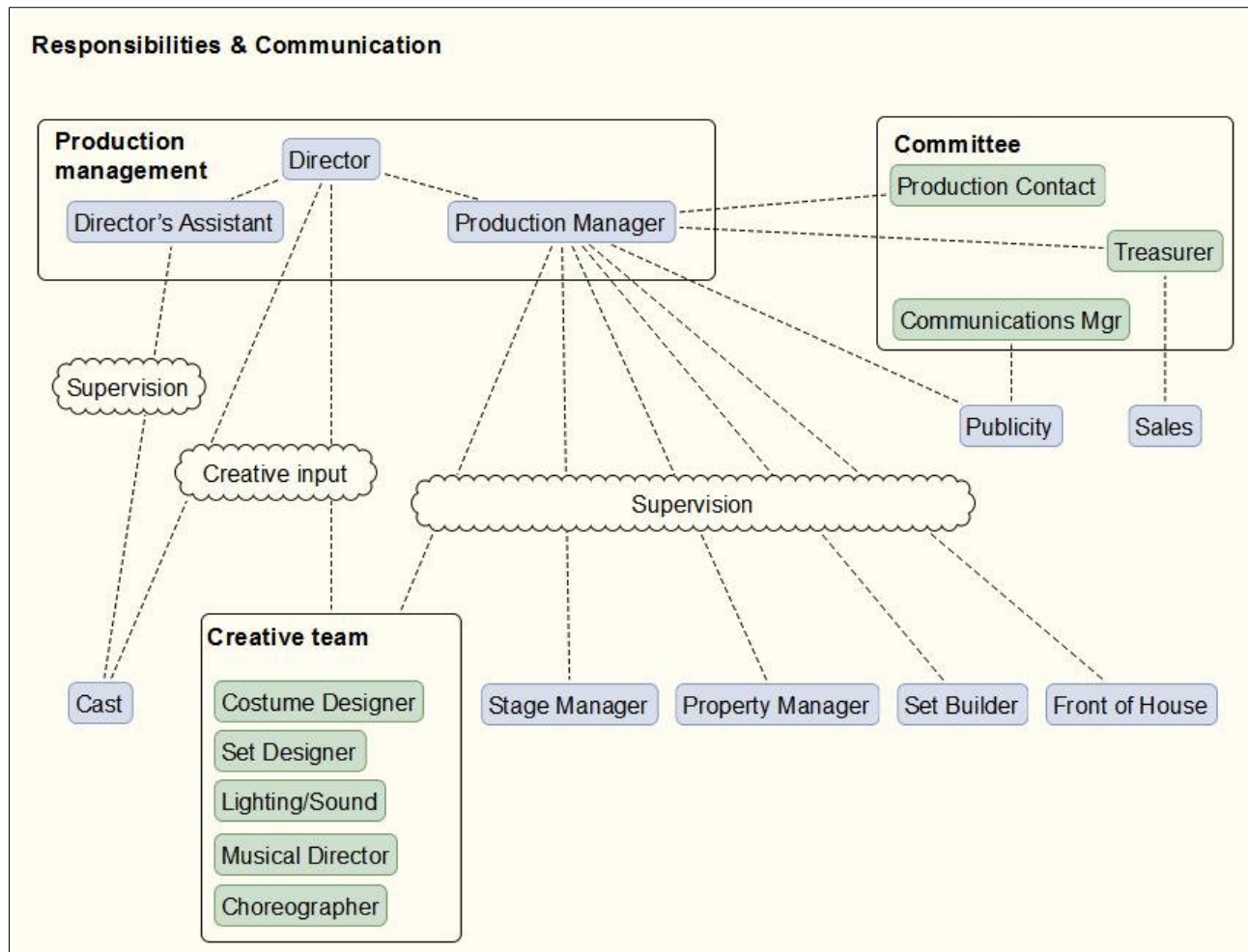
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Committee

The Committee acts throughout as the **producer** of the play, taking strategic and financial decisions, and monitoring the progress of the production and how it conforms to the agreed standards.

Responsibilities

- Selects the **play**.

- Nominates (and, if need be, sacks) the **director**.

- Nominates (and, if need be, sacks) the **production manage**r and the **director's assistant** (both after agreement with the director).

- Provides a draft **budget** for the production manager, including the figures for **ticket prices**, projected **earnings** and budget allocations to individual **cost areas**.

- Greenlights **budget increases** as negotiated with production manager.

- Greenlights the **core team** proposed by the production manager.

- Greenlights the **poster design** proposed by the PR team.

- Drafts a **ticket pricing policy** for the PR team to work with.

- Drafts a **sponsorship policy** for the sponsorship team to work with.

- Greenlights any PR and sponsorship decisions that fall outside the drafted policies.

Any requests for information updates *in between committee meetings* are to be made by the **committee liaison** and addressed to the **production manager**.

Committee Liaison

For each production the committee appoints a committee liaision, who act as as the contact point between the **production manager** and the **committee**. The main purpose of this role is to ensure that communication goes through one channel, and not to the committee or the production team as a whole, as this tends to confuse matters and make it uncertain who is responsible for taking action.

Responsibilities

- ensuring that matters that need to be resolved are taken up with the committee, and that questions from the committee are taken up with the production manager
- if children are involved in the production, coordinate the filling out of necessary police forms
- with the Production Manager, arrange post production evaluation
- with the Committee Chairman and the Director, draws up a shortlist of production crew members, who are to be rewarded for their efforts. Usually the rewards are handed out at the end-of-run party by the Chairman.

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Director

The Director is responsible for all the creative aspects of a show. Together with the Production Manager, s/he is responsible for gathering the production team, and ensuring a good working environment for everyone.

Deliverables

The Director needs to make his vision for the play clear to everyone involved. This means preparing the following input for the cast and the production crew:

- overall vision – the intended atmosphere, general concept (is the staging realistic or abstract, what is the idea behind the production, etc)

- set concept

- costume concept

- light and sound concept

- character descriptions

What the best method of documenting the Director's concept is depends on the size and complexity of the show, but it should be done in a way that clearly conveys the Director's ideas to everyone. The concept input is the basis for the work of everyone else in the production.

Responsibilities

Start & Initiation

- Pre-production discussions

- Prepare script

- Design set (concept)

- Design costumes (concept)

- Light & sound design (concept)

- Conduct auditions

- Select and announce casting

- With Director's Assistant, prepare and communicate rehearsal schedules

Production phase

- Take artistic decisions as required by Production Manager

- Run rehearsals

- Supply input to PR Manager as required

Load-in

- Assist with tech runs

- Make creative decisions as necessary

- Notes to cast after tech and dress rehearsal

Production Run

- Notes to cast after opening night

- Keep contact with Stage Manager

- Liaise with committee regarding gifts for crew

Post production

- Participate in post production evaluation

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Cast

All cast members must agree to follow the rehearsal schedule. All cast members are responsible for learning their roles, and for contributing to the rehearsals in the best way possible.

If for any reason a cast member cannot attend a scheduled rehearsal, s/he must inform the Director's Assistant or the Director as soon as this becomes clear.

In the theatre, all cast members must follow the guidelines provided by the Stage Manager.

Best practice

- if possible, lend a hand to set construction and/or costume design, to familiarize yourself with the work that's being done there

- when in rehearsals, follow the guidelines set out by the Director and the Director's Assistant

- write down your own blocking and any notes given to you during rehearsals. Even if the Director's Assistant also makes notes of the blocking, you are ultimately responsible for remembering it

- when in the theatre, follow the guidelines set out by the Stage Manager

- be on time, both for rehearsals and performances. Keep yourself informed of changes in the rehearsal schedule, and make sure you update your personal calendar. If you realize you will be late for a rehearsal, inform the Director's Assistant as soon as possible, even if it's "just" ten minutes

- don't start directing each other. If you have suggestions for e.g. a scene blocking or how another cast member should approach a moment in the play, make the suggestion to the Director, and let him/her decide if your suggestion should be used

- do help each other as much as possible. Be supportive of the other cast members, and help create a safe and fun work environment

- if you are dissatisfied with anything or worried about something, go to the Director's Assistant. If the Director's Assistant is unable or unwilling to assist, go to the Production Manager, then to the Committee. Don't grumble to others in the production, or people outside the production. It creates a bad mood for everyone, and undermines the efforts to produce and sell the show. If something is wrong, it needs to be adressed within the production, through the proper channels

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Production Manager

The Production Manager is ultimately responsible for all technical aspects of the production, that is to say anything that doesn't fall under creative decisions. The Production Manager also serves as sparring partner to the director when it comes to technical consequences of creative decisions.

Deliverables

- communication strategy
- a policy for exchanging information (e.g. establishing a cloud drive for shared documents)
- contact sheet with contact information for everyone involved in the production
- a plan for the load-in
- a plan for the load-out, including how to dispose of set, costume and property elements
- post production evaluation report

Responsibilities

Initiation

- **Canvasses** to acquire members of the production team.
- **Nominates** the core members (i.e. the captains) of the production team (after agreement with the director and greenlighting of the committee).
- Organize design meeting with Director, Director's Assistant and the various designers

Production

- **Monitors expenses** throughout production, ensuring that the cheapest usable and safe items are selected. Negotiates with committe in case the budget needs to be amended.
- Calls, coordinates and chairs **production meetings** between the key production members (captains, director, assistant director).
- Assembles and maintains **key production data**, and makes sure they are centrally accessible to the relevant people. This includes:
  - o Contact details
  - o Script breakdowns, including lists for set pieces, props, costumes, sound effects, music and special effects
  - o Any files relevant to the production, e.g. music pieces, script, pdfs of advertising material
- Stays in touch with the captains on a regular basis to discuss progress and problem areas.

- Helps to **solve specific problem areas** arising in a production area, either by addressing the problem directly, recruiting more staff to address the problem or negotiating more funds.

- Helps organise a **rehearsal space**, if requested by the director''s assistant.

- Communicates **production updates** to the committee at committee meetings, or, if requested by the chairman, through production bulletins via mail in between meetings.

- Stays in close contact to the **director's assistant** to discuss the director's creative decisions that have an effect on production processes, and vice-versa.

- Liaise with venue on practical matters when necessary

- Ensure information for the programme is gathered

- Secures the **musical rights** for a show.

Load-in and Load-out

- Plans and coordinates the load-in and load-out from the venue

- Obtains keys for theatre, and arranges opening of the theatre

- Hand over keys to Stage Manager when Load-in is done

Production

- Organize end-of-run party

Post production

- Finalize expenditure reporting to Committee

- Organize post production evaluation (coordinating this with Committee Liaison)

Best practice

- Make sure you are the hub of communication – that is, make sure that new wishes and requests from the director come to you, and not straight to e.g. the set designer. Untamed directors can cause a lot of stress among the creative production team, so the DA is a good first filter here and the PM a good second filter. Generally, additional requests should basically go from the DA to the PM, and he can then make sure it happens.

- You are the strongest line of defense against the director making bad decisions! It is your responsibility to pull the brake if the director starts expanding the scope of the production, demanding unexpected expenditures, harassing the production teams etc. If you find you cannot keep the director in check, escalate to the committee via the committee liaison.

Set Designer

Deliverables

Based on discussions with the Director, the Set Designer presents a design document, detailing the elements of the set, and how each scene will be presented.

Responsibilities

Initiation

- Pre-production discussions
- Model making or mock-up drawings

Production

- Final drawings/design

- Get Director's approval

- Supervise construction of set

- Liaise with production manager regarding changes in set designer

- Monitor expenditure and report expenses to production manager

Load-in

- Supervise load-in of set elements

- Set up on stage each item of furniture and trim prior to the technical rehearsal. When the positions have been approved by the Director, assists the Stage Manager in marking the position of each item of furniture, using a different colour for each set.

- Assist with planning of scene changes

Best practice

- in the design document, it should be clearly noted how the various set elements should be dealt with at the end of the production, i.e. kept, disposed of or sold. This way set construction will know which elements are to be built to last, and which are not

- throughout the design process it is important to focus on how scene changes can be handled. There is usually not much room in the theatres we use, and scene changes mostly have to take place with the audience watching

- one of the first things to consider is how the sides of the stages are treated. This impacts how wide the actual playing space will be. Usually, if there are set elements that need to be taken off stage during set changes they will have to be stored behind curtains on the side,

and it is important to ensure that there is room to store the elements, and room to maneuver with them

- see also Best practice for the Set Construction Manager(p40) for tips on building set elements

- drawings and scale models help you make decisions about which sets to construct as well as actual sizes. This also cuts down on the hours and materials that otherwise might be wasted by creating unnecessary or unusable sets. Drawings are the first step in the process. If the idea is acceptable, begin production of a scale model, as precise as possible. Try to include every detail such as fabric choices for furniture. During the steps, be sure to account for lighting during each scene in addition to any special effects that might occur.

Costume Designer

Deliverables

Based on discussions with the Director, the Costume Designer should present a design document, detailing the costumes for each character and scene.

Responsibilities

Initiation

- Pre-production discussions

Production

- Final drawings/design

- Get Director's approval

- Supervise production / procurement of costume items

- Liaise with production manager regarding changes in costume design

- Liaise with director's assistant to arrange costume fittings with the actors

- Monitor expenditure and report expenses to production manager

Load-in

- Deliver costumes to theatre

- Assist with planning of scene changes

Load-out

- Ensure costumes that are to be kept are cleaned and delivered to the costume storage (arrange with CTC costume manager)

- Dispose of costume elements that are not to be kept

Best practice

- in the design document, it should be clearly noted how the various costume items should be dealt with at the end of the production, i.e. kept, disposed of or sold. This way the costume team will know which items are to be made to last, and which are not

- whenever possible, re-use costumes and costume items from the costume storage

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Light designer

Responsibilities

Initiation phase

- Pre-production discussions

Production

- Final drawings/design

- Get Director's approval

- Procure any special items needed for the light design (filters etc.)

Load-in

- Supervise hanging of lights

- Supervise tech runs

Production run

- Supervise running of lights

Load-out

- Supervise taking down of lights

- Return light design items that are to be kept

Property Manager

The Properties Coordinator is responsible to the Production Manager in the gathering and setting up of furniture and props, and to the Stage Manager during dress rehearsals and performances.

Deliverables

List of properties, including source and how they are to be dealt with after the end of the production.

Responsibilities

Production

- Makes up a complete properties list based on the script. Divides the properties list into:

    - trim props (set dressing)

    - hand props (a) on stage (indicating where) and (b) off stage (indicating who carries it in).

- After making the list of hand props from reading the play, noting each prop referred to and checking it against the list in the back of the acting edition (if any), checks the list with the Director to make sure no properties have been added or omitted.

- Discusses the budget with the Director and Production Manager, deciding which items will have to be bought or rented.

- Lists possible sources for finding properties, to be tried in the following order:

    - the CTC's own stock

    - private sources, including members of the crew, cast and friends

    - construction by the backstage crew

    - borrowing from shops etc.; as an inducement a credit in the programme may be offered, in which case the Production Manager should be informed promptly

    - buying the property with a view to adding it to the CTC stock

    - renting the property (as a last resort).

- Organizes the location of items from the above sources. Before making a commitment on any item:

    - notes the size, colour and general description of the item to show the Designer and Director
    - finds out the price if buying or renting is being considered

   ○ discusses with the provider of the item the dates it will be required

   ○ finds possible alternatives if the item is unacceptable to the Designer or Director.

   ○ When items have been approved, makes final arrangements for pickup and delivery.

- Attends rehearsals when necessary to note the placement and use of hand props.
- Assembles and checks with the Director and Set Designer every prop prior to the first dress rehearsal.

Load-in

- Sets up props table(s) backstage for all hand props. Ensures actors return hand props to the props table.
- Prepares a special list of personal hand props to be checked each night with the actors concerned.

Post production

- Arranges for the return of all items by dates agreed with suppliers.
- Prepares for the production file a list of properties obtained, where obtained and under what conditions, and sends it to the Technical Director.

Best practice

- Make sure Stage Manager is informed of props that need special consideration, e.g. fragile, valuable or dangerous props.
- Stay in touch with Director's Assistant during rehearsal period to ensure that any changes in props that are made during rehearsals are caught.

Stage Manager

The Stage Manager runs the theatre during the Production Run. It can often be an advantage if the SM works as Director's Assistant during the rehearsals, in order to familiarize him/herself with all details of the production.

Responsibilities

Production

- Attend rehearsals to get the feel of the show

Load-in

- assist with load-in (see details for Set Designer (p27), Property Manager (p31) and Costume Designer (p29) in particular)

- plan and rehearse scene changes with Stage Hands

Production Run

- Co-ordinate cast

- Warm-up cast

- Co-ordinate back stage staff

- Co-ordinate tech staff

- Open and close theatre

- Check sets, props, set dressing

- Run shows as per running lists

- Co-ordinate audience handling with Front of House staff

Load-out

- assist with load-out

PR Manager

The promotion of any production is normally the responsibility of the CTC Publicity Manager.

Duties

Initiation

- Confers with the Committee and the Director on the general approach to be used in publicity.

- Negotiates sponsorship to cover the costs of printing and producing posters, flyers and programmes.

Production

- Assists the Director in finding an artist to design the poster, supplying the artist with all relevant information.

- Contacts newspaper critics and invites them to the opening night, arranging for complimentary tickets with the Sales Manager.

- Prepares copy for flyer in consultation with the Director and the Committee.

- Arranges for the printing of posters and flyers.

- Collects the proofs of the poster and flyer from the printer; corrects and returns them.

- Arranges for the addressing of envelopes according to the publicity mailing list, taking into account the type and quantity of material to be sent to each address.

- Collects the posters and flyers from the printer and organizes a group to stuff envelopes. Arranges for the posting of the publicity material.

- Organizes the personal delivery of posters.

- Assembles a complete cast and crew list with names checked for spelling.

- Contacts or follows up with advertisers and obtains copy for inclusion in the programme.

- Attends a rehearsal and interviews each actor, obtaining relevant information on past experience etc. as copy for the programme.

- Prepares copy for newsletters, taking into account deadlines and publication dates.

Preparation for theatre

- Obtains any additional copy for the programme from the Director and Committee, and any credits to be included from the Technical Director.

- Makes up final programme copy for the approval of the Director and Committee.

- Arranges a photograph session in consultation with the Director, Stage Manager, Costumes Designer and the cast, usually to take place during the final tech or dress rehearsal.

- Checks with the Director, Technical Director and House Manager that there are no last-minute changes to the cast, crew or credits as shown in the programme.

- Takes programme copy to the printer and arranges to collect the proof.

- Collects the programme proof from the printer; corrects and returns it.

Load-in

- Collects the programmes from the printer and arranges for their delivery to the House Manager on opening night.

- Arranges for photos from dress rehearsal to be hung in the lobby of the theatre

Post production

- Sends all bills for the printing of flyers, posters and programmes to the Business Manager.

- Compiles a complete record of the promotion of the show for the publicity file.

- Takes down and stores photos from lobby

Best practice

See also Best practice for the Graphics Designer (p36).

Graphics Designer

The Graphics Designer is responsible for the design of the poster for the show, as well as for graphic elements used on the web and in newspaper ads and similar places.

The Graphics Designer should, if possible, also be involved in designing the layout for the programme.

Best practice

- for inspiration, use the direcctor's concepts for set and costume and overall vision of the production

- when designing the poster, bear in mind that the signature visual elements must also be reused for the web graphics, which are in a different format from the poster (e.g. the wide banner on the ctcircle.dk front page)

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Front of House Manager

The Front of House Manager is responsible for recruiting people to handle the audience at each performance. S/he is also responsible for making sure the front of house personnel are all aware of their duties.

Best practice

- Arrive 1 hour before curtain
- Liaise with Box Office and troubleshoot any problems
- Reserve seats only as agreed for handicapped people, VIPs etc.
- Distribute programmes to audience on arrival (roughly one programme per two persons)
- Ask audience on arrival whether they have tickets; if not, direct them to the Box Office
- By all means chat with your friends, but please also pay attention to the needs of the rest of the audience
- Liaise with stage management on procedure for opening theatre
- Take tickets from audience on entering theatre
- When the house is full or nearly so, make sure people sit together without leaving single seats
- Agree with stage management procedure for starting the show (to be repeated after the interval)
- Signal the lighting person after the last person has been seated and the show can begin
- Make announcement as agreed with Director/Production Manager
- Air the theatre as necessary in liaison with the lighting person (the theatre during Spring productions can quickly get warm)
- Sit back and enjoy the show!

Box Office Manager

The Box Office Manager handles ticket sales at the performance. S/he is usually appointed by the Treasurer.

Unless a separate Sales Manager has been appointed, the Box Office Manager is also responsible for setting up and monitoring online ticket sales.

Best practice

- when the deadline for online sales is passed (usually 3-4 hours before curtain up), pull reports from Place2Book showing which tickets have been reserved for payment on the door, and how many tickets are available to sell on the door

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Responsibilities

Initiation

- As soon as the dates for auditions are known, ensures the finding of a suitable venue and the announcement of the auditions.

- Once auditions are over and the production is cast, informs auditionees of the Director's decision and distributes a rehearsal plan and details of rehearsal venue(s) to the cast.

  ○ Liaise with the Secretary on the booking of rehearsal space, having agreed the rehearsal schedule with the Director and cast

  ○ ensure that the rehearsal premises are open on the dates and times agreed.

Production

- Be the Director's right-hand wo/man during rehearsals, managing the company and making sure that the cast is informed and happy.

  ○ produce a cast list with contact details for the cast, Director and him/herself

  ○ not all the cast will be needed at every rehearsal and the DA should request a detailed schedule from the Director to make the most efficient use of the time available

  ○ during rehearsals, take notes for the Director as required, and document the blocking decisions that are made

  ○ during rehearsals, you can be asked to take on a number of other functions: as prompter, as a stand in for unavailable actors, as stand in for the Director, in finding temporary props, etc.

  ○ endeavour to ensure that cast members arrive on time and issues reprimands if there is continued tardiness.

  ○ ensure that the Production Manager is informed of any changes to artistic requirements that may affect the technical aspects of the production (e.g. props list, set building).

Best practice

- be present at all rehearsals, if at all possible

- don't imagine that you will gain any particular insight into the field of direction by being an AD. Your job is primarily administrative and managerial.

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Best practice

Most of the points in this list were taken from https://suite.io/ben-lingenfelter/2vdb2kf.

- Always have a focus on whether a set element is to be discarded after the play, or kept for re-use. There's no use building something to last if it is destined for the scrap heap.

- If the piece has to bear weight, use ½" plywood and 2x4's. In reality, anything more than that is too heavy to move and usually more expensive than is needed.

- Use foam. Foam sheeting is light, easy to cut and manipulate, paintable (with latex paint), and it's $10 cheaper per sheet than plywood. Spray foam can also be useful for texturing pieces. It can be used to make stones more realistic, and for tree trunks to simulate bark.

- Spending money on good wheels is smart. Little castors inevitably break the day before performance. There's nothing more irritating that having to swap out castors on set pieces that weigh 500 lbs. Buying big ones that support the needed weight (and then some) pays off in the long run.

- Flats can be made out of a variety of materials. They can be made out 1x3's with canvas stretched over them; they can be made with old bed sheets, too; they can be made with luan, as well – 4x8 in size, instead of the taller, canvas/bedsheet variety. These more-sturdy 4x8 flats can be bolted together to make a sturdy wall.

- Screws, not nails. If there's a professional builder on the crew, this one will be difficult for him. It's a lot faster to build with a nail gun, but tear-down afterward is a nightmare. Using varying lengths of drywall screws makes tear-down fast and efficient.

- Prisms are three-sided pieces on wheels. Each side shows a different scene, and if braced properly, can open up to a fourth "room."

- With a unit set, especially one that requires an exterior and interior, see-through walls work well. See through walls only frame corners and any angled "line" (like where wall meets ceiling) with 1x3 or 1x4 lumber, creating a "skeleton" of the structure. This provides the audience with both the idea of "building" and the ability to see what's going on everywhere on stage.

- Almost every set piece should serve at least two purposes. Everything should be reversible, fold down into something else, or fly up to disappear.

- Objects in the distance can be built in miniature and hang from flies in the back of the stage. They can be made three-dimensional, and have lights built inside with little window

cut-outs. One spotlight can be pointed right at the mini-palace or mini-town and the stage darkened to add effect. This can be used to signify that action in the front of the stage is taking place there, not at the place shown with the rest of the set.

- Backdrops are great, but they take a lot of time and a lot of hands to prepare.

- Stencils are a quick way to add large amounts of detail such as a field of flowers. This also works in adding legible print in any font as well as embellishing already painted pieces.

Set Construction Timeline

- Start building as soon as possible. Ideally aim at having the set built at least a week before Load-in.

Who Should Build – Setting up the Stage Construction Crew

- Providing subs, snacks, coffee, and soda will bring in more volunteers.

- A good set crew might vary from 6-10 quality builders, and probably shouldn't climb too much higher, unless some of them are willing to manage others.

- Transient help is often more a detriment to quick and quality building than it is a help. A manager can waste far more time organizing, cajoling, and managing transient help than it is worth, not to mention the invariable clean-up they leave for others.

- Building a set can be fun, or it can be a nightmare. A good set will wow audiences into coming back for years, and a bad one can turn a great play into a second-rate show. Quality is more important than quantity, and practicality trumps just about everything else.

Sales Manager

Sound Designer

Musical Director

Choreographer

Make-up/Hair Responsible

Children's Director

Stage Hands

The Stage Hands are responsible for executing set changes, and in other ways assist the Stage Manager with the running of the performances.

Best practice

- Stage Hands should attend a run-through before the load-in, in order to get a feeling for the play

Best practice for Everyone

- Be good to people. You'll be working with volunteers who spend inordinate amounts of time and energy in making the production a success. Make sure that you show your appreciation in the form of kind words, thanks and generally by doing all you can to make everybody's job easier.

- Don't procrastinate - when jobs crop up, do them ASAP. The snowball effect of "I'll deal with this later…" will end up stressing you out.

- Don't be afraid to ask questions.

- Try not to get involved with things that are clearly outside your area of responsibility, but at the same time don't be afraid to share your experience and chip in where it is beneficial. Knowing when that is, is not always easy, so use your best judgment, and ask yourself the question: will my contribution be helpful for the production?

- if you are dissatisfied with anything or worried about something in the production, take it up with the responsible person. If you're unsure of whom to contact, take a look at the diagram on page 19 (usually the first person to go to will be either the Director's Assistant or the Production Manager). If that doesn't help, go one step further up.

- Don't grumble to random persons in the production or to people outside the production. It creates a bad mood for everyone, and undermines the efforts to produce and sell the show in the best way. If something is wrong, it needs to be adressed within the production, through the proper channels, as mentioned in the previous point.

Forms

The following section contains a number of useful templates for various parts of a production.

- Audition Form
- Rehearsal Schedule
- Properties spreadsheet
- Contact sheet
- Sign-in form (performances)
- Reporting of use of recorded music to KODA
- Budget template – standard production
- Budget template – musical production
- Fringe Suggestion Submission
- Play Suggestion Submission
- Child Certification (Børneattest)

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Revision history

16-03-15	Jeremy's initial revisions incorporated
01-03-15	Expanded with descriptions of roles, incorporating material from Frank Theakston
14-02-15	First draft handed to Jeremy Thomas-Poulsen, Nino Burini, Jessica Thomas and Sylvain Verdier for comment
01-02-15	First draft put together by Jens Blegaa incorporating existing Best Practice and Scheduler document from Jessica Thomas

To do

Revise recommended deadlines.

Distinguish between regular play productions and musical / panto productions, particular when it comes to recommended deadlines.

Add suggested timeline instead of deadlines for each task?