

Theatrical Job Descriptions – Production Staff

Director – The director is responsible for the overall practical and creative interpretation of a dramatic script or musical score. They work with the design team to create a unified and cohesive artistic vision for the show while taking into account the budgetary and physical constraints of the production.

Musical Director - The musical director is responsible for the musical notation in a theatrical production. This includes arranging the vocal and instrumental configuration of the orchestra, and auditioning and rehearsing performers and musicians. They typically act as the rehearsal pianist as well as conduct the orchestra for performances.

Designers (Lighting, Sound, Video, Set, Props and Costumes) – Members of the design team who work closely with the director and each other to create a unified and cohesive artistic look for the show. They can be responsible for one or more areas of the design as well as its technical execution.

Dramaturge – A dramaturge or dramaturg mainly deals with research and development of theatrical works. They aid the directors by researching plays, assisting with period, historical or stylistic problems, and generally act as the literary expert for the production. Additional responsibilities may include: leading many of the educational events associated with the show (preshow discussions and post show talkbacks.)

Stage Manager – A stage manager oversees and coordinates everything that happens onstage and backstage in preproduction, during rehearsals, and in performance to ensure the successful and consistent delivery. They are the hub of communication, ensuring that all changes throughout the process are shared with the entire company. They don't make any of the decisions, but enforce them all acting as the director's voice in their absence.

Fight Director – A fight director is responsible for technically staging physical combat onstage without causing harm to the performers. As the designer and director of the physical conflict of any play, they teach the art of Stage Combat, including everything from simple slaps, hand-to-hand combat, swordplay, to the use of other weapons, etc., so that all physical conflict in a play can look real and yet be performed safely.

Choreographer – The Choreographer creates the style and form of the dance routines and teaches them to the cast. They may also assist in additional musical staging or movement sections at the director's discretion.

Make Up / Wigs Consultant – The Make Up / Wig Consultant assists with period, historical or stylistic design of hair styles, wigs and make up application. They can be present at every performance to assist with hair styling and make up application or can be brought in to teach the applications to the performers themselves.

Theatrical Job Descriptions – Volunteer Positions at HHT

Assistant Director – Working directly with the Director to bring together all aspects of the production into a cohesive product to ensure the artistic vision, concepts and interpretations are clear and satisfying for the audience as a work of art. Specific tasks will be delegated by the Director.

Assistant Musical Director – Working directly with the Musical Director to bring together all aspects of the music for the production. This includes working with both actors and musicians to rehearse the songs to ensure consistency of playing/singing throughout the production.

Assistant Technical Director – Working directly with the Technical Director to facilitate all the technical aspects and support required to mount the production onstage. Specific tasks will be delegated by the Technical Director. A valid driver's license is required for interested candidates.

Head of Set/Props – Is responsible for the maintenance of the Theatre's set and prop inventories for the season as well as the coordination of rentals with campus group and community partners.

Head of Wardrobe – Is responsible for the maintenance of the Theatre's costume inventory for the season as well as the coordination of rentals with campus group and community partners.

Head Painter - Working directly with Set Designer and Technical Director to learn the paint treatments required for the production. Instructs student painters on the techniques and leads the work calls.

Assistant Stage Manager – Working directly with the Stage Manager as part of the management team. They are responsible for the tracking of people, set pieces and props in rehearsals to ensure the smooth running of the show backstage during the performances. They are responsible for attending all technical rehearsals and shows as they are the backstage liaison to the stage manager.

Operators – Working directly with the Stage Manager, Head Technician and other Running Crew. They are responsible for attending all technical rehearsals and performances. They run one of the technical elements for the show from the booth (lighting, sound, video).

Backstage Running Crew – Working directly with the Stage Manager, Head Technician and other Running Crew. They are responsible for attending all technical rehearsals and shows. They assist with technical elements during the show from backstage (curtain, fire watch, costume changes, props and set movements).

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Wardrobe Running Crew – Working directly with the Stage Manager, Head Technician and other Running Crew. They are responsible for all wardrobe elements during the run of the show (costume changes, wardrobe repairs and laundry).

Design Assistant – Working directly with / supporting the show designer. These positions tend to be more administrative in nature – research on time periods and sourcing products – allowing the designer to focus on their art (sound, lighting, set, props and costumes). For more creative opportunities, please consult the description for Production Assistants below.

Production Assistants – Participate in a specific task or many tasks to contribute to the labour requirements for the show. This might include, but is not limited to: light walking, painting, set/prop builds, replacement running crew, dressing room set up/clean up, cleanup of set/prop/costume inventories, postering and audience outreach. The most common contributions are:

- Light Walkers – moving mannequin who assists in the lighting level-set process. Generally light walkers act as stand-in's for performers while the Lighting Designer and Director set specific lighting levels.
- Painters – help paint the set and props for the production.
- Set / Props builders – help build the set and props for the production.
- Backstage Clean up / Set Up – help put away costume, properties and technical equipment from our productions in order to ensure the backstage area is clean, tidy and ready for the next production.

Theatrical Terms (In alphabetical order)

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| Alcove | Downstage areas off stage right and left of the proscenium arch/main curtain. |
| Apron | Area downstage of the proscenium arch / main curtain. |
| Blackout | Extinguishing of all visible light typically used to signify the end of a scene, act or play. An absence of light. |
| Block / Blocking | An acting direction instructing actors to move in a prescribed manner and/or to a specific location. |
| Booms | Equipment set on stands in the wings. |
| Booth | The enclosed area near the back of the auditorium used for operation of technical elements (lighting, sound, video) as well as the calling position for the Stage Manager. |

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| Borders | Pieces of fabric or flats (masking) that hangs horizontally to hide lighting fixtures, speakers and other things hung from the grid. |
| Callboard | Bulletin board at the theatre where show relevant information is posted including: the schedule, announcements and sign in sheets. |
| Call Time | The time in which you are expected to be at the theatre ready to start work. |
| Centre stage | The middle area of the stage or playing space. |
| Chorus Rooms | Large dressing rooms to accommodate big groups of people. |
| Closing (Night) | Last day of public performance for the production. |
| Cue | A technical command or change that can be applied to equipment or people. |
| Cueing | The technical process of determining when each technical change (sound/lights/video equipment and stage/costume settings) will happen. |
| Cue-to-cue or Q2Q | Technical rehearsal with performers to rehearse each technical change in order. |
| Curtain Page / Paging Curtain | Pulling back of the closed main curtain to allow someone to enter/exit through the split. |
| CYC or Cyclorama | A backdrop (light in colour) that can be illuminated with lights to change colour. |
| Dark | When the theatre is closed or has no activity occurring onstage. |
| Dead Hung | Tied off to the grid and therefore not able to be raised or lowered as part of the action of the show. |
| Dead Spot | In lighting – an area onstage with the absence of light. In sound – an area where little or no signal can be received. |
| Down Stage | Towards the front of the stage and towards the audience. |
| Dressing Rooms | Rooms assigned to individuals to change in and out of costume. |
| Dress Rehearsal or Dress Run | Final rehearsal of the production before opening night with all performers, crew, costumes, props, set pieces and technical cues. This |

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| | performance is typically photographed and videotaped for archives and promotional purposes. |
| Drops | Pieces of fabric or flats that hang from the grid for decorative purposes. |
| Dry Ice | Theatrical effect that creates a fog that moves along the floor. Used less often in theatrical productions. It requires proper handling to avoid frost bite and the ability to keep the carbon dioxide in its (frozen) solid form. |
| Fade In | Gradually dimming up of lights or sound. |
| Fade Out | Gradually dimming down of lights or sound. |
| Flat | Piece of scenery covered with fabric or wood for painting. |
| Floor Plan / Ground Plan | A drawing showing exact locations of scenery pieces on the stage. |
| Fly Rail / Fly Gallery | Location backstage where any moving scenery is operated from. |
| Focusing Lights | The process of pointing and setting the lamps to illuminate the stage. |
| Fog | Water-based effect that creates rising fog. Used often in theatrical productions to create a creepy atmosphere and reduced visibility onstage. |
| Followspot | A spotlight mounted on a swivel so it can be moved to follow the movements of a performer. |
| Footlight | Lights placed on the downstage edge of the stage and used to light actors from below. Often used to create shadow effects. |
| Front of House | The general name for the area and department responsible for navigating the audience in and out of the theatre. |
| Go | Command from Stage Manager of when to operate a cue. |
| Gobo | Pattern or design put into a frame for a lighting fixture. |
| Gobo Holder | Metal frame that holds the Gobo for inserting into a lighting fixture. |
| Gel | Colour put into a frame for a lighting fixture. |
| Gel Frame | Cardboard or metal frame that holds the Gel for inserting into a lighting fixture. |

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| General Wash | Term given to a group of lights that evenly illuminates the stage in a consistent look. |
| Ghost Light | A safety light left onstage overnight. The theatre's nightlight! |
| Greenroom | The living room / dining room area backstage. A public area for cast and crew to hang out and eat. |
| Grid | Structural framework of pipes up in the air that lighting, sound and scenery can be attached to. |
| Groundrow | A series of cyc lights sitting on the ground for when a backdrop needs to be lit from the bottom as well as the top. |
| Haze | Water-based effect that creates a fog like mist up in the air. Used often in theatrical productions to show the beams of light coming from the lighting fixtures. |
| Headsets | Mode of communication between people working backstage who must receive cues directly from Stage Management. |
| Hot Spot | The brightest point of output from a lighting fixture. |
| House Lights | Lights used to illuminate the auditorium. |
| House Closed | The majority of the patrons are in their seats and Front of House has given the Stage Manager permission to start the show. |
| House Open | Referring to the time (typically 30 minutes in length) in which Front of House seats the patrons in the auditorium. |
| IATSE | International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees. Union for Technicians. |
| I-Cue / IQ | Lighting accessory added to the front of a fixture with a moving mirror that allows you to reposition the beam of light to different areas of the stage. |
| Lamps | The general name/term given to lighting fixtures. |
| Legs | Pieces of fabric or flats (masking) that hang vertically to hide lighting fixtures, speakers and other things hung from the grid. |
| Level Set | Process by which the designer builds the technical cues. |

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| Load In | Bringing in and setting up of all technical elements (equipment, scenery, props, costumes, etc) on the stage. |
| Main Curtain | Permanently hung curtain at the front of the stage. |
| Masking | Fabric or Flats installed to block the visibility of certain areas onstage or backstage. |
| Offstage | Any part of the stage outside of the performance area / unseen by the audience. |
| Onstage | Any part of the stage that is part of the performance area / seen by the audience. |
| Opening (Night) | First day of public performance for the production. |
| Page / Paging | Using an intercom system to call performers to the stage. |
| Performance | A public display of a creative endeavor. |
| Places | Orders given by Stage Management, alerting cast and crew that the performance is about to begin and that everyone should be ready in their proper places. |
| Plot (Set, lighting, Sound) | To scale diagram of the locations / layout and positioning of equipment or items. |
| Post Show | Referring to things happening after the end of the performance. |
| Practical | A set piece or piece of equipment constructed for actual use. Example: doors and windows that open, lights that performers can turn on/off, etc... |
| Preset | Checks or duties that must be fulfilled before the audience comes into the auditorium / top of the performance. |
| Preshow | Referring to things happening before the start of the performance. |
| Prompt Book | Stage Managements binder of information on the show, including a copy of the script with all the movements and technical cues notated. |
| Props / Properties | The general name and department responsible for all hand held items that appear on the stage (ex. Books, kitchenware, stationary, stuffed animals, etc.) |
| Proscenium Arch | The frame separating the stage from the auditorium. |

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| Pyrotechnics | Use of flash powder, chemicals or explosives to make flashes, smoke or special effects. |
| Qlab | Apple based computer program for designing and playing back of sound and video cues. |
| Rehearsal | A practice session of a production, during which time lines and blocking are learned, dances and music are integrated. |
| Running Lights | Lights that are left on backstage during the show for the crew and cast. Generally covered with a blue gel to reduce visibility to the audience. |
| Rigging | A system of using ropes, pulleys and other equipment to hang items from the grid. |
| Riser | Elevated platform onstage. |
| Scene | A subdivision of an act of a play. |
| Scrim | A loosely woven material that can be either transparent or opaque depending on how it's been lit. |
| Script | Individuals copy of the play. |
| Scrollers | Lighting accessory added to the front of a lighting fixture containing a string of Gel in order to change the colour of the lamp. |
| Set / Set Pieces | The general name and department responsible for all scenery pieces that appear on the stage (ex. Furniture, walls, stairs, platforms, backdrops, etc.) |
| Sightlines | Lines of vision from seats in extreme positions in the auditorium. These are used to determine the visibility of the set / action onstage and the masking requirements in order to hide what we don't want the audience to see. |
| Sitzprobe | Is a German term used in opera and musical theatre to describe a rehearsal where the singers sing with the orchestra, focusing attention on integrating the two groups. Often the first rehearsal where the orchestra and singers rehearse together. |
| Sound Effects | Sounds in the production that are recorded and played back. |
| Spikes / Spiking | To mark a spot where a particular performer, prop or set piece will be placed. |

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| Spike Marks | Tape marks onstage to ensure performers, set and prop pieces end up in the same location. Often colour coded to represent different scenes. |
| Spot / Spotlight | A tight lighting special on a performer or object to light them. |
| Stage | Performance area in the theatre. |
| Stage Door | Backstage entrance to the theatre. |
| Stage Left | Your left when standing onstage facing the audience. |
| Stage Right | Your right when standing onstage facing the audience. |
| Staging | Directing a play onstage, planning physical, prop and set settings and movements throughout the show. |
| Stand By | Warning given by Stage Management, alerting cast and/or crew to be ready for their next cue. |
| Technical Rehearsal or Tech Run | Rehearsals of the production before opening with all performers, crew, costumes, props, set pieces and technical cues to practice and perfect all the aspects of the show. |
| Traveler | A track used for hanging curtains which can be operated to open / close. |
| Trim (Height) | A process of setting the height of a hanging element onstage. Trim height refers to the distance between the stage and the item. |
| Twofer | An electrical cable that provides two outlets. Lights plugged into a twofer will come on together. |
| Upstage | Towards the back of the stage, away from the audience. |
| Upstaging | Usurping audience attention or forcing fellow actors to speak with their backs to the audience. |
| Walk it Up | Process by which an item is raise from the ground to an upright position. |
| Wings | The areas created by the masking that are offstage and out of audience sightlines. |
| Work Lights | A group of lights controlled independently from the stage lighting control. Used for working onstage or for rehearsals. |