

# Central Alberta Theatre

## Position Description

### Assistant Stage Manager

#### The Assistant Stage Manager's Role

The Assistant Stage Manager (ASM) for a CAT production is a key position for ensuring a successful production. The ASM's overall purpose is to ensure smooth backstage operations during tech week and during the run of the production. The ASM will, under the supervision of the Stage Manager, organize, schedule and execute backstage operations.

#### Reporting

The ASM takes direction from the Stage Manager during the post-production and rehearsal period of a production and from the Stage Manager, Production Manager or Vice President – Productions as appropriate and as detailed in this document.

#### Etiquette

Assistant Stage managers commit to behavioural etiquette throughout their time with the production in order to show respect to their craft, the stage manager, the director, actors, the play, the production team, their audience, and CAT. An Assistant Stage Manager is kind, polite, respectful, firm and calm, and is encouraging to actors, crew, techs, and staff. They have stamina and a sense of humour, and can adapt to the production needs of each production.

#### *Overall*

- I shall respect the play and the playwright, remembering that “A work of art is not a work of art until it is finished”
- I shall inspire the public to respect me and my craft through graciousness in accepting both praise and constructive criticism

- I shall never lose my enthusiasm for the theatre because of disappointment or failure, for they are the lessons by which I learn
- I shall direct my efforts in such a manner that when I leave the theatre it will stand as a greater institution for my having laboured there
- I shall look upon the production as a collective effort demanding my utmost cooperation. Hence, I will forgo the gratification of ego for the demands of the play
- I will **always** treat everyone who is a part of the production with respect and dignity (i.e. the backstage crew, stage manager, director, actors, production manager, Vice President – Productions, designers, technicians, etc.)
- I will not mistreat or put unnecessary strain on the actors because it can lead to miscommunication, hurt feelings, tension, broken trust and anxiety. I do not want this to happen
- I will not arrive for rehearsals or performances under the influence of any drugs or substances for this will automatically remove me from the production

#### *During the Rehearsal Period*

- I will leave personal problems outside the rehearsal room
- I will be patient and avoid temperamental outbursts, for they create tension and serve no useful purpose

#### Duties

##### *Ongoing*

- Become familiar with the written board-approved policies and procedures as they relate to CAT productions and follow them
- Share the vision and mission of CAT

#### *Preparation Before the Rehearsal Period Starts*

- Get to know the dinner theatre venue well enough to ensure smooth operation of the production and to ensure the safety of the cast, crew and audience: know the location and operation of the fire extinguishers, the fire exits, the venue lights, the heating and cooling system.

- Along with the Stage Manager, ensure CAT members are recruited and scheduled for the needed backstage positions for the run. **Note:** some CAT Stage Managers prefer to recruit and schedule their own backstage crew, some will ask the Production Manager to do this. Both routes are acceptable. However, there may be occasions where the Production Manager requests that one or two new CAT volunteers be part of your backstage crew as an introduction to theatre volunteering. SMs and ASMs will accommodate that request.
- In conjunction with the Stage Manager, decide whether crew rehearsals will be needed, separate from the acting rehearsals, to choreograph and rehearse changing scenes or props, and schedule those. Whenever possible, the Stage Manager will schedule the ASM and the entire backstage crew to attend two run-through rehearsals with the actors before moving to the venue. This is especially recommended when tech week has to be condensed.

### *During Tech Week*

- I will respect crew members/actors that are focusing on the needs of the production (i.e. avoid interrupting actors if they are rehearsing lines, stay out of the way of working crew members that are setting up furniture and/or props, etc.)
- I shall accept the Vice President - Productions and the Production Manager's direction in the spirit in which it is given for s/he sees the production as a whole and my role as a portion thereof. They have the authority to direct minor set design changes/alterations if there are safety issues.
- In the backstage area, section and label the props tables.
- Identify a secure place for cast and crew to place valuables
- The Production Manager, Technical Manager and Construction Head will make sure the other backstage components are provided, such as
  - Stage Manager's box (fully supplied)
  - First aid kit (fully supplied)
  - Props box for storing props when not in use
  - Head set for communicating with the sound and light techs in the audience area
  - Work lights (generally blue lights) for props and quick costume changes backstage.
  - Makeup area in dressing room, including tables, lights and makeup

- Bar fridge for storing fresh food props
- Written back stage etiquette procedure for cast and crew
- Create pre-show, set change, intermission and post-show props checklists for backstage crew, one sheet for each run of the production. See **Note A** for a description of props checklists.
- In conjunction with the Stage Manager, schedule set and scene changes with backstage crew before the first dress rehearsal if possible. Ideally, this will be done during a tech dress or dry tech rehearsal but you may decide the time set aside in this rehearsal isn't sufficient
- Ensure you have accurate and complete contact information for all tech and backstage crew scheduled during the run

### *During the Run*

The Assistant Stage Manager, under the direction of the Stage Manager, is responsible for everything and everyone being ready backstage, and for the smooth operation of backstage processes and schedules. The ASM also assists the Stage Manager to ensure a safe and healthy environment for all involved backstage.

### Etiquette

- I will leave personal problems outside the theatre
- I will respect the audience regardless of size or station
- I shall strive to never miss carrying out my duties for each performance
- I will observe backstage courtesy and shall conduct myself in strict compliance with rules of the theatre in which I work

### Duties

- Be in charge of organizing, scheduling and implementing pre-show, set change, intermission and post-show backstage procedures regarding props, set pieces and costume pieces
- Make sure actors have checked that their props are in place before start of each show
- Make sure actors and backstage crew are following the backstage etiquette procedure posted backstage by the Production Manager. Advise Stage Manager of major violations
- Make sure the actors keep their props on the props table and hang their costumes when not in use
- Ensure no unauthorized people are in the backstage area

- Make notes on what procedures worked well and which could be improved for submitting at a post-production meeting or on-line survey the Vice President of Productions will implement after the run

### After the Run

In conjunction with the Stage Manager:

- Be there for the strike to coordinate with props, costumes, makeup, set decorator to ensure items are either taken back to CAT Studios or are picked up by their owners
- Assist the strike crew if needed
- Ensure backstage area is left clean and neat
- Be part of the load-out procedure

At the request of the Vice President - Productions

- Participate in the post-production meeting/procedure

### Note A: Props Checklists

These checklists contain the details of specific movement of props during a production. They are created along a timeline: pre-show, set change, intermission and post-show. One sheet is created for each point in the timeline and for each performance. ASMs use these to organize and coordinate the backstage crew for the management of props.

Sample: Pre-Show Checklist

Prop	Description	Done
Cake	Place on counter	
Knife	Place to right of cake	
Napkin	Place to left of cake	

