

Central Alberta Theatre

Position Description

Set Designer

The Set Designer's Role

The set designer for CAT's Studio Theatre productions will be in charge of designing the physical surroundings in which the action of the play will take place, within the budget allocated by CAT's Production Manager. A CAT Studio Theatre set compliments the style and tone of the production, indicates the location, and accommodates the required movement of the actors. It also is designed so that the backstage areas used by the actors and stage crew are kept out of sight from the audience.

Reporting

The set designer works in collaboration with the director and the members of the design team, and takes direction from the Production Manager and Vice President – Productions as appropriate. For example, they have the authority to direct set design changes if there are safety issues, and they are in charge of the production's budget.

Etiquette

Theatre volunteers commit to behavioral etiquette throughout their time with the production in order to show respect to the Stage Manager, the Production Manager, the play, the actors, the audience, and CAT:

Overall

- 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 actors, Stage Manager, Director, Production Manager, Vice President – Productions, designers, technicians, etc.)
- I will not mistreat, direct or put unnecessary strain on my fellow volunteers because it can lead to miscommunication, hurt feelings, tension, broken trust and anxiety. I do not want this to happen

During Tech Week

- I shall accept the Stage Manager's, the Production Manager's and the Vice President – Production'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. The Vice President – Productions and the Production Manager have the authority to direct minor set design changes/alterations if there are safety issues.

Duties

On-going

- 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

Pre-production:

- Obtain a copy of the script from the director and read it a few times to get a feel for the flavour of the production and to make notes on specific set requirements
- Find out from the Production Manager the important dates of the play (start of rehearsals, move-in, tech week, preview)
- Find out from the Production Manager the budget for set design and construction
- Attend the first production meeting, scheduled by the Production Manager in conjunction with the director and the stage manager, at which the director will share their artistic concept with the production team: the Stage Manager, the Lighting Designer, the Sound Designer, the Set Designer, the Set Decorator, the construction head, the painting head, head of costumes, head of props. This meeting will take place before or immediately after the auditions for each play. Be prepared to ask questions of the director about their intent for style, tone, etc., or, if you have a lot of detailed questions, work with the director to schedule a follow-up meeting early in the rehearsal process

- Work with the rest of the design team (set decorator, construction head, head painter, props, costume, sound designer and lighting designer) to ensure a unified look and feel for the production, consistent with the production's budget
- Attend any other production meetings scheduled by the Production Manager
- If possible, prepare a maquette, a miniature three-dimensional model showing how each set will look when finished, for the first rehearsal

Tech Week:

To facilitate planning and preparation, there will be a predictable tech week routine, in as much as is possible, for each Studio Theatre production. The routine, while flexible, will focus on the importance of keeping the overall volunteer experience as positive and enjoyable as possible.

Load-in of the set, the sound equipment, the main set pieces and the putting up of the set, lights and sound equipment will be the priority as soon as the production is given access to the performance space as booked. The set designer will normally be present as the set is put up.

The schedule for tech week will be largely dictated by the timing of the access to the space.

A typical schedule for a five-day tech week could be:

Saturday:	load in and assemble stage, set, all equipment, set lights
Sunday:	AM: finalize light design with director (& cast at director's discretion) PM: Cue-to-Cue rehearsal (cast & full production crew) then dry tech if needed/time
Mon:	Tech Run, with lights and sound (costumes, makeup optional)
Tues:	Dress Run, costumes and makeup, lights and sound
Wed:	dark (or second dress, at the discretion of the director)
Thurs:	Preview (full show, CAT members as audience)
Fri:	Opening Night

However, we may have to operate on a condensed tech schedule that starts on the Sunday prior to Thursday's preview.

A typical schedule for a condensed tech week could be:

Sunday: load in and assemble stage, set, remaining equipment (lights will be hung during the days of the week prior), set lights, finalize light design with director (& cast at director's discretion)
Monday: Cue-to-Cue rehearsal (cast & full production crew)
Mon: Tech Run, with lights and sound (costumes, makeup optional)
Tues: Dress Run, costumes and makeup, lights and sound
Wed: dark (or second dress, at the discretion of the director)
Thurs: Preview (full show, CAT members as audience)
Fri: Opening Night

Tech week will be supervised by the Production Manager or the Vice President - Productions. They have the authority to direct minor set design changes/alterations if there are safety issues.

Post Production:

- Attend a post-production meeting or participate in a post-production process, set up by the Production Manager as soon as possible after the show closes, for all production heads to contribute information/feedback on what production elements went well and what improvements could be made
- After the post-production meeting/process, the routine of subsequent shows will be adjusted if necessary by the Production Manager to incorporate any changes needed to optimize the volunteer experience and the presentation of CAT Studio theatre shows.

