

Central Alberta Theatre

Position Description

Sound Designer

The Sound Designer's Role

The sound designer for CAT's Studio Theatre productions will be in charge of creating a sound design that enhances the director's vision by reinforcing the style of the production. The sound design provides music, announcements, and creates unique effects if appropriate. It can also create mood and changes in mood, locate the action, establish time of day, season and weather, build transitions between scenes, stimulate audience expectations of what's to come, etc. The sound designer will also train the sound techs in operating the sound board if needed.

Reporting

The sound designer takes direction from the director of each production and from the Production Manager as appropriate and as detailed in this document.

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
- I will not arrive for my volunteer work under the influence of any drugs or substances for this will automatically remove me from the production

During Tech Week

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

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

Preparation Before Tech Week

- Obtain a copy of the script from the director as early as possible after the play has been approved by the Board and read it through at least once
- Find out from the Vice President – Productions or the Production Manager the performance, move-in and tech week dates of the play
- 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 Vice President – Marketing & Communications and 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 the sound, special effects, 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, costume and lighting designers) to ensure a unified look and feel for the production
- Attend rehearsals to get a feel for the sound cues and be available to meet with the director to discuss the sound design
- Create the sound plot
- Input the sound design into the assigned laptop well ahead of the cue-to-cue rehearsal

Tech Week

To facilitate planning and preparation, there will be a predictable tech week routine, in as much as is possible, for each 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 lights, 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 sound designer might be asked to assist the Operations & Technical Manager or designated staff with the setting up of the sound equipment.
- The sound designer will have their design and equipment finalized in time for the scheduled cue-to-cue rehearsal. A small portion of that rehearsal may be used to make minor alterations to these designs, at the request of the director and with the permission of the Production Manager. This is so that volunteer time will not be wasted at this valuable technical rehearsal, and the show can be run at least once from one cue to another in a reasonable amount of time. The sound designer, in conjunction with the Stage Manager of each production, will finalize the sound cue numbering. The sound designer will also train the sound techs on operating the sound program during this time.
- A dry tech rehearsal (no actors) will be held immediately after the cue-to-cue rehearsal when needed or whenever possible so that backstage crew and tech crew can practice the technical aspects of the

production. The sound designer will use that time for additional training of the sound techs if needed.

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 set, equipment
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, sometimes we operate with 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.

The sound designer will ordinarily not attend the full dress rehearsals except under extraordinary circumstances and at the request of the Production Manager.

Post Production

- Participate in a post-production evaluation 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, 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.

