



Useful Information For Producers (and everyone else!) v2.1

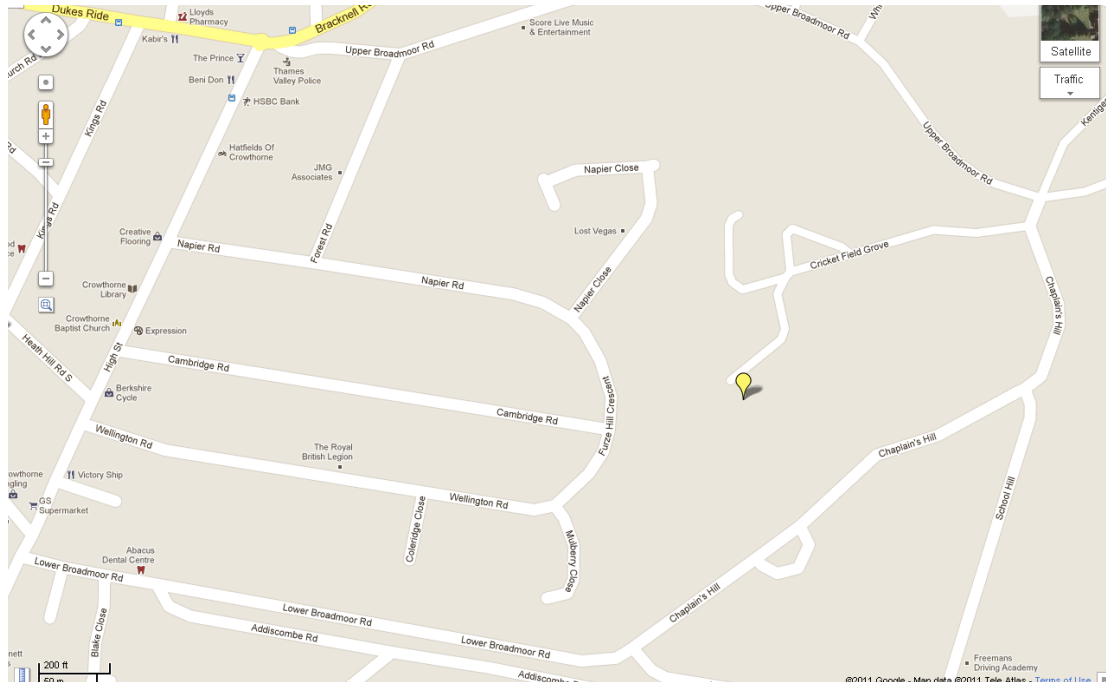
This information is designed to aid in the production of CATS shows. Of course, each production is different, so it is intended to give basic guidance only.

The majority of the document is based on The Complete Stage Planning Kit, by Gill Davies.

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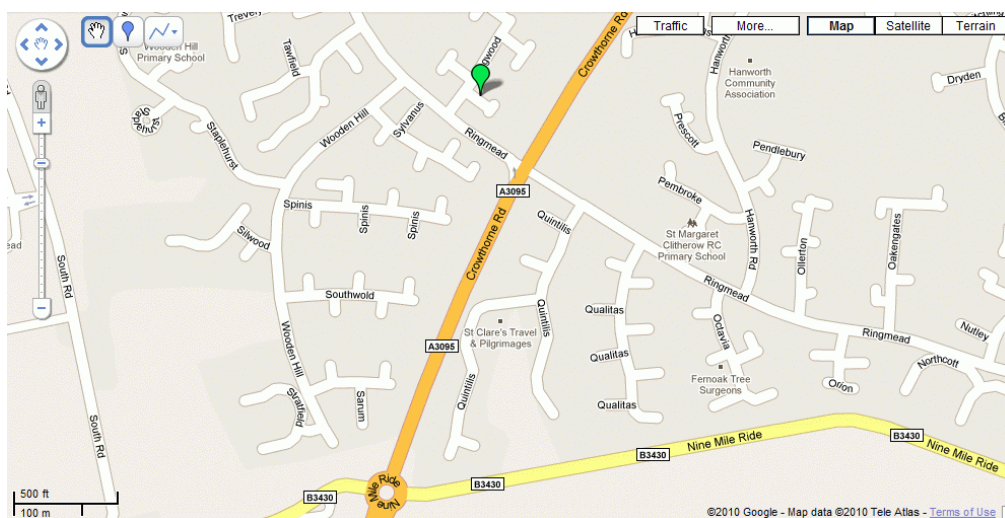
Information About Storage

Most of our scenery and equipment is stored in a garage at Broadmoor Hospital. There is space for several vehicles, though please be aware that residents may need to access their garages while we are there, so cars may need to be moved quickly. Access to the site is available 24 hours a day.



Garage 28, behind the hostels, Cricket Field Grove, Broadmoor Hospital, Crowthorne RG45 7EG

Some scenery, furniture, props and costumes are stored in our garage in Great Hollands. There are no access restrictions for this site.



Garage 10, Ringwood, Great Hollands, Bracknell, Berks

Other items may be stored in the Parish Hall, or in members' own houses or garages. If you want to know where something is kept, please ask the Committee! Myf, Angie and Heather hold keys for the garages.

Direction

Rehearsal Guidelines

First Rehearsal

1. The first rehearsal should establish what is expected of everyone, the style of production and general approach to it. Set goals.
2. Introduce the music, if appropriate.
3. Provide an opportunity for social mingling; an opportunity for the producer to talk to individuals and ideas to be exchanged.

Play Read-through

The first gathering should include a play read-through – or give a summary of the play and its major points, plus the reading of a few excerpts. Make sure the entire plot is understood by everyone before it is segmented up for the rehearsals that will follow next.

Stress The Need To:

1. Attend rehearsals
2. Turn up on time
3. Learn lines early
4. Work together as a team

Throughout All Rehearsals:

1. Maximise rehearsal time. Keep everybody busy and working hard. Make sure each section is given appropriate time and commitment. Be fair.
2. Encourage actors to think! Do not straightjacket the performers. Explore the possibilities together.
3. Stay in control. Discipline is essential. Noise levels must be kept down and members should respect each others' needs.
4. Be aware of potential problems, undercurrents and "feelings". Avoid personality clashes.
5. Keep everybody informed, especially about rehearsal changes.
6. Criticism should be constructive, not destructive.
7. Maintain enthusiasm and be positive. Have the courage of your convictions. Constant stimulation and moving forward will compensate for any extra imposed on cast and crew.

Line Rehearsals

Specific line rehearsals can speed up delivery and reaction to cues. Run through either the entire play or whichever sections need concentrated attention.

Run-throughs

Complete run-throughs are essential to establish pace, continuity and timing. This will help back and front stage to assess the flow and so be prepared for entrances, cues and curtains.

Technical Rehearsals

A technical rehearsal should not be a full run-through. It should concentrate on the technical aspects, such as lighting, sound, props and scene changes.

Good technical preparation will reduce the inevitable tensions that arise as time runs short.

Curtain Calls

Ensure a continuous flow, that everyone knows the order in which to step forward, and where to go afterwards.

If the actors bow all together, ensure that somebody whom every actor can see is appointed as the lead, so that all bow in unison.

Curtain calls must be rehearsed, just like any other element of the performance.

The Stage Manager will judge the applause and when to close the finally. The cast must hold their positions until the Stage Manager signals the curtains will stay closed.

Production

Responsibilities

The Producer is the overall co-ordinator for a production. They are responsible for ensuring all departments involved in a production know what is required, who is doing things, when they need to be done by, what budget they have been set, etc.

In addition, although they do not necessarily need to do these things themselves, the Producer needs to ensure that certain formalities are completed in good time:

1. Ensure rehearsal venues are booked by the Treasurer, including any additional dates
2. Order scripts
3. Apply for licence to perform play
4. Apply for temporary event notice (bar licence)
5. Booking a **long wheelbase** van for the Saturday & Sunday of the get-in, and the Sunday of the get-out. The van must be big enough to fit 9ft-long flats in!

The Producer is responsible for the following (less formal but still important) items:

1. Booking the Friday night curry at Kabirs (01344 776522)
2. Finding a venue for the Saturday night after-show party

3. Purchasing cards and presents for the Director(s), and circulating the cards and posters for the cast to sign
4. Organising the present draw – this should be done no later than the technical rehearsal

The producer is also the person that departments should speak to if they have any problems or need advice.

People Needed

The Producer, along with the Director(s), will need to find people to undertake the following jobs:

Job	Name	Phone	Email
Stage Manager			
Front of House Manager			
Lighting			
Make-up			
Props			
Costume			
Set design			
Sound			
Stage crew			
Ticket production			
Poster design			
Programme			
Box office			
<i>If required:</i>			
Chaperone			
Choreographer			
Musicians			
Prompt			

Planning The Budget

Item	Initial budget	Final budget
Licence from publisher		
Scripts		
Hall hire		
Costumes		
Make-up		
Set		
Hiring set items		
Lighting		
Sound		
Special effects		
Props		
Handouts for audience		
Poster & flyer printing		

Tickets		
Programme printing		
Front of House stock		
Raffle tickets & prizes		
Contingency		
Total		

Stage Management

The Stage Manager is responsible for running the performances accurately and safely. As such, in the final week of the production, they have more responsibilities than most other departments involved in the show.

Responsibilities

1. Communication: Keep in touch with everyone throughout the performances.
2. Marking the stage: The stage floor should be marked to indicate the positions of major items.
3. Control of personnel: Check noise levels near the stage. Ensure actors watching from the wings do not block entrances for other actors or scene changes.
4. Scene changes.
5. Special effects.
6. Co-ordinating backstage: The aim is to ensure everything is done at the right time.
7. Control of the curtain: Close co-ordination is needed with Front of House, lighting, sound and beginners to ensure a well-timed curtain. The curtain must also be controlled during the curtain call. The timing for this will need some instant judgement based on audience response.
8. Dealing with emergencies: The Stage Manager should keep the show "on the road" and the audience oblivious to minor problems backstage. The Stage Manager should be prepared to evacuate everyone who is behind the curtain should there be a fire – more information is contained in the Health & Safety Policy.
9. Keeping everybody calm throughout.
10. Security: Check everything is switched off and locked up after the performances.

Practical Guidelines

1. Be very well organised.
2. Mark up a copy of the script with all the notes required between the relevant pages.
3. Make a cast list with the names of actors and that phone numbers.
4. Make a crew list with the names and phone numbers of the backstage team.
5. Make a list of other useful contacts, including suppliers and hall caretaker.
6. Make notes about major busy moments and pin up a reminder sheet. This should list each complicated scene in order and show the following:
 - a. Page number
 - b. Set change requirements

- c. Which props to set or strike
 - d. Any special effects
 - e. Characters involved
 - f. Special requirements such as quick costume changes
7. Keep a file with copies of the props list, lighting, sound & special effects plots, costume list, plus diagrams of the stage showing positions of major items.

Running The Show

1. Turn up early so that the last-minute checks are not done in a panic.
2. Check everyone has arrived. All cast and crew members should sign in on arrival, and sign out when leaving.
3. Make a final check of the stage set and props. Is everything ready for the succeeding scenes?
4. Check that the marked-up script and any cue sheets, lists or diagrams required are set out ready.
5. Ensure the communications system is working properly.
6. Put up any notices or items of interest. These might include press notices or Good Luck cards.
7. Ensure the curtain is closed prior to audience members arriving.
8. As the time for curtain up approaches, the Stage Manager should remind everyone of the timing, e.g. "Five minutes please!"

Prior To Performances

Before the show begins – and prior to curtain up on each scene – always check:

- The stage is set for the right scene
- Props are in the correct places
- Beginners are changed, made up and ready
- All the technicians are ready
- Special effects are organised
- The prompt is in place
- The Front of House team are ready
- Musicians are ready
- The audience are, for the most part, settled down in their seats

After The Performance

At the end of the show, the Stage Manager and assistants should tidy up the stage, and organise clearing everything from Front of House onto the stage for storage. They should check whether any item is missing or broken and arranged for repair or replacement. The Stage Manager should always remember to thank the stage hands and other technicians for their hard work.

Front of House

The Front of House manager is responsible for ensuring the safety and well-being of everybody in front of the curtain line. The Front of House team should aim to give audience members a pleasant experience, and assist with any problems or queries.

Before The Show

The Front of House manager will need to check the refreshments inventory, and if necessary arrange for fresh supplies to be purchased before the opening night.

The main job for Front of House is to look after the audience. However, this means checking the venue thoroughly *before the audience arrives*.

1. Check all the house lights exit lights and emergency lights are working.
2. Check the stage curtain is closed.
3. Check that auditorium is clean and tidy.
4. Make sure the float is sufficient.
5. Prepare any reserved tickets for collection.
6. Check programmes are ready to sell.
7. Ensure raffle tickets are available, and prizes are on display.
8. Put up any notices necessary, including bar price lists and licence sign.
9. Make sure all the seats are set out correctly.
10. Check refreshments are set out in the kitchen.

Guidelines

1. Be sympathetic and helpful – but firm.
 2. Deal with problems promptly.
 3. Try to get everyone seated quickly.
 4. Make sure there are sufficient helpers to keep queues to a minimum.
 5. Be very polite if problems arise.
 6. After the show, say good-bye to the audience.
 7. Note any good comments from the audience to pass on to all concerned.
 8. The Front of House Manager should be prepared to evacuate everyone who is in front of the curtain should there be a fire or other emergency – more information is contained in the Health & Safety Policy.
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Set Design

Preparation

1. Assess the overall play and discuss themes with director.
2. Research useful information and illustrative material.
3. Work out a basic structure for the set.

Guidelines

1. Plan & present ideas: give a general overview of how the sets will look and work. Use rough sketches and a scale model to demonstrate ideas.
2. Detailed design: design individual scenes in detail. Decide on colour schemes.
3. Co-ordination checks: check with the Director and other backstage departments to avoid complications or clashes.
4. Ordering: check stock then order any paints & materials required.

5. Set creation: implement or oversee the structure and painting of the scenery, making sure that the sets work as a whole.
 6. Check safety factors: the sets must be practical and safe. Check everything is in working order.
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Lighting

Guidelines

1. Assess the overall play, discussing with both producer and set designer.
2. Make a first lighting plan. Plan and present ideas.
3. Research and experiment.
4. Check revised plans with producer and other technical teams.
5. Sort details, work out cues, and make lighting plot.
6. Run through lighting plot until it is very familiar.
7. In rehearsal, check appropriateness of ideas and incorporate any changes into plot.
8. Stock check. Organise new equipment or hire.
9. Rig lights. Check all angles and focusing.
10. Do safety checks.
11. At technical run-through, make adjustments. Alter lights, fixings, angles and gels as necessary.
12. Test everything again at dress rehearsals.
13. Run lights during performances.
14. De-rig. If necessary, take down lighting equipment after the show and return or store safely.

Sound

Guidelines

1. Read play and highlight when sound effects are needed.
 2. Discuss requirements with producer.
 3. Check what music is needed for pre-performance and during intervals.
 4. Make sound plot.
 5. Attend rehearsals. Incorporate any changes or additions into the sound plot.
 6. Borrow, buy, make or hire any effects or equipment needed.
 7. Record sound effects in correct order.
 8. Supervise sound effects at technical rehearsal. Make any last adjustments and finalise co-ordination with Stage Manager and backstage crew.
 9. Be there in good time on performance nights to set up equipment, check everything is in order, and have welcoming music playing as audience arrives.
 10. After final performance, return any borrowed or hired equipment and store the rest safely.
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Props

Guidelines

1. Read play.
 2. Discuss ideas with producer, director and set designer.
 3. Research: find information and illustrations.
 4. Draw up final lists. Make a plan of on-stage property positions.
 5. Mark up script with cues for personal props, props needed in wings and prop changes on set.
 6. Sketch out ideas for anything that has to be made specially.
 7. Check through existing props.
 8. Discuss ideas with producer and director.
 9. Ask cast if they can supply any items.
 10. Buy or make any items needed.
 11. Supervise props at technical rehearsal. Check everything looks ok from out front.
 12. Organise props throughout performances.
 13. Clean, repair and return items as necessary.
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Costume

Guidelines

1. Read play.
 2. Discuss ideas with producer, director, lighting and set designers.
 3. Research information.
 4. Sketch out rough ideas.
 5. Measure cast.
 6. Check through existing wardrobe.
 7. Buy any materials necessary.
 8. Make or organise hire of costumes.
 9. Try costumes on cast, and make alterations if necessary.
 10. Supervise costumes at dress rehearsals.
 11. After show, gather in everything safely and then clean, repair and return items as necessary.
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Make-up

Guidelines

1. Read play.
2. Analyse appearance of characters.
3. Discuss overall style and aims of production and individual characters with producer.
4. Research background information and how to achieve effects.
5. Make plot of timing, noting any fast changes or when people will need help with their make-up at once.
6. Attend rehearsals to check out ideas and incorporate any changes that occur.
7. Check through stock and buy any new make-up required.
8. Organise hire of wigs.
9. Supervise make-up and hair styling at dress rehearsals. Allow ample opportunity to practice difficult or previously untried types of make-up.
10. Check effects out front and make any necessary adjustments.

11. Be there early on performance nights. Allow plenty of time to make up the masses for any grand opening scenes and to concentrate on complicated characters.
 12. Be well organised for any quick changes.
 13. After final performance, tidy up and collect everything together, noting any items which need replacement, and returning wigs to hire companies.
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