

Role

The Stage Manager is in charge of everything on and off-stage during performances, supporting and organising all of the different teams involved in the running of the show. As you can imagine this a highly pressurised job working with multiple teams to strict deadlines to achieve a smooth running production with the highest possible standards.

A typical career path to Stage Manager progresses from Assistant Stage Manager to Deputy Stage Manager and Stage Managers often go on to become Company Stage Managers or Production Managers.

Responsibilities include

Scheduling rehearsals, including daily call times

Marking-out the set on the rehearsal room floor

Sourcing rehearsal furniture and props

Arrange costume and wig fittings

Preparing and circulating daily rehearsal notes

Create a prompt script compiled with notes on Actors' cues and requirements for props, lighting and sound

Liaising with the Producer and/or Production Manager regarding budgets and schedules

Monitoring working hours, ensuring cast and crew take necessary breaks, and documenting this on time-sheets

Liaising with in-house technicians at venues, especially when touring productions

Supervising get-ins and get-outs at venues

Operating sound and/or lights on smaller productions, including relighting shows on tours

Preparing and circulating show reports for each performance

Create a risk assessment to ensure the safety of the full company

Key Skills

Excellent communication, including people skills

High standard of organisational skills

Excellent time-management

Calmness, particularly when working under pressure

A sharp eye for detail

Excelling at problem solving and use of initiative

Organisation and efficiency

Diplomacy and a sense of humour

Training

There are no specific qualifications required to become a Stage Manager. You can start in an entry level position which would be Backstage Crew or an Assistant Stage Manager. After gaining experience you can move on to Deputy Stage Manager, to Stage Manager, and in larger theatres Company Stage Manager. People with the right skills can get into the field, however it can be useful to have training in any of the following subjects:

Drama and Theatre Studies

Music

Performing Arts

Stage Management

Theatre Production/Professional Practice.

Vocational training in Stage Management is widely available in drama schools. Selection is by interview and GCSE and A Level/BTEC qualifications are a requirement of most courses, or previous experience in the theatre industry.

Practical experience on school productions or with a local amateur theatre is an advantage when applying to drama schools. While people do enter the industry without formal training, your employment prospects are greatly enhanced if you've completed a recognised course.

Courses include but are not limited to the following

BA (Hons) Theatre Practice in Stage Management – Central School of Speech and Drama

Foundation Degree in Technical Theatre & Stage Management – Royal Academy of Dramatic Art

BA (Hons) Production & Technical Arts – London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art

Technical Theatre (Stage Management) – Guildford School of Music and Drama

BA (Hons) Theatre Production Arts – Mountview Academy of Performing Arts

BA (Hons) Stage Management – Rose Bruford College

BA (Hons) Professional Stage Management – Bristol Old Vic Theatre School

BA (Hons) Stage Management & Technical Theatre – The Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama

BA (Hons) Stage Management – Birmingham City University

Foundation Degree in Stage Management and Technical Theatre – Newcastle College

Useful Information

Stage Management: The Essential Handbook by Gail Pallin, 2010

The Stage Guide to Stage Management by Barbara Eifler, 2008

Essentials of Stage Management by Peter Maccoby, 2004