

Oregon Straw Hat Players
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Guidelines and Information for Production Staff

This document is developed in order to clarify and record a variety of information that may be useful to production staff. We hope that it is useful to all. Please provide feedback, updates, and corrections by emailing artpol@oshponline.org.

Staff members are also invited to prepare more detailed information on their own jobs which can be available for future productions.

All staff should receive a copy of OSHP's Production Guidelines and be familiar with its contents.

Staff roles

Producer

Heads the production team. All other staff members are under the general guidance of the Producer, who reports to the OSHP Board. The Producer has broad discretion in the oversight of a production, within the guidelines and budget allocations provided by the board.

The short job description for the Producer is “people and resources.” Gathering the staff, consulting with other staff as appropriate, and securing the various resources, monetary and otherwise, required to mount a production are part of this role.

The Producer is the sole authority for the allocation of complimentary tickets, and should receive all requests for such consideration.

The Producer may recruit Associate or Assistant Producers and delegate duties to them.

Director

Guides the artistic vision of a production. Specific responsibilities include consulting with design staff, blocking, pacing, and guiding performers in developing their characters.

The Director holds final authority over Choreography and, except for an opera, musical issues, but should make every effort to consider and respect the ideas of the artists overseeing those areas.

Design staff

A production normally has designers at least for scenery, lighting, and costumes. Often a production will also require separate designers for sound and properties. A production with unusual requirements may also utilize hair/makeup designers, though for many shows the Costume Designer may be most appropriate to oversee these areas. The producer has wide authority to configure design staff according to a production's needs and complexity.

Design staff works closely with the Director in serving the overall vision of the production. Conversely, the Director considers carefully all input from the designers. If there are disagreements between the Director and a member or members of the design staff, every effort must be made to reach a consensus as collaborating artists. To that end, regular face-to-face collaborative meetings should be held throughout the production process.

Musical Director

If included on the staff, oversees all musical elements of a performance. This person may or may not actually conduct performances, in which case a Conductor may be needed, and may have additional staff for choral preparation, contracting of orchestra players, coaching of singers, and other matters.

In non-operatic musical theatre the final authority on musical issues is normally the Director, but an open and collaborative relationship is strongly encouraged. The relationship should be clearly articulated early in the production process.

Choreographer

Has primary responsibility for the dance elements of a production. Assisting staff such as an Assistant Choreographer and a Dance Captain may also be needed.

There are many different appropriate ways for the Director and the Choreographer to divide the staging of musical numbers. The final authority on any matters of staging is normally the Director, but an open and collaborative relationship is strongly encouraged. As with the Musical Director, the relationship should be clearly articulated early in the production process.

Stage Manager

Responsible for the smooth running of rehearsals and performances. This includes overseeing the efficient scheduling of rehearsals and ensuring that the OSHP Production Guidelines are observed in the rehearsal process.

During a performance, the Stage Manager is the sole authority on all matters, calling cues as appropriate and generally holding exclusive power to make final decisions on all matters that may arise.

The Stage Manager turns primary authority over to the House Manager when the production is ready for the house to open, and coordinates the efficient running of intermissions with the House Manager.

The Stage Manager will have a variety of assistance depending on the complexity of a production. The head of stage management may be designated as Production Stage Manager, and a variety of Assistant Stage Managers may be required at various stages of a production.

Stage Managers should refer to our document "The Prompt Book" for guidelines on preparing that resource and recording blocking and cues in it.

House Manager

Responsible for the smooth operation of the front of the house, including the recruitment and scheduling of ushers and other hospitality personnel. If refreshments are to be available the house manager also oversees their acquisition and serving.

After receiving from the Stage Manager clearance to open the doors, this individual is the sole authority for the process of getting the audience into their seats and ready to start the performance.

The House Manager turns the show over to the Stage Manager when the audience is ready for the production to begin. At intermission, the House Manager is once again in charge until giving the Stage Manager clearance to start the following act.

The House Manager has the authority to stop the performance in case of emergency, and once more takes charge.

When we are performing at a venue with flexible seating, the house manager collaborates with other staff to implement the seating arrangement, and is especially responsible for ensuring that there are marked wheelchair locations that meet, to the extent possible, the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Refer to our separate document on accessible seating.

Construction Coordinator

OSHP sets are executed by volunteers. Over the years, we have found it most successful to free our skilled carpenters to practice their craft, and to secure an individual with strong organizational skills to coordinate the work of all those assisting.

Publicist/Marketing Manager

Works directly with the Producer. While the Director's ideas may be useful and certainly should be considered, a director's (or designer's) ideas may not always lead to the most effective publicity. Publicists should also collaborate with the OSHP Board member overseeing marketing.

Business Manager

Tracks the production budget and authorizes the payment of bills and reimbursements. The producer may take on this role personally in some cases, and in others the organization's treasurer may find it convenient to do so.

Ticket coordinator

Oversees any reservation or advance sales system, secures and coordinates door sales staff, and oversees the accounting of attendance.

Orchestra Contractor

Recruits and secures players. The contractor may negotiate with any who request honoraria, or may request that another member of the production staff, a producer or business manager, carry out negotiations.

Photographer

Takes both publicity photos and record shots of the production, normally during final rehearsals.

Social Chair

The Social Chair recruits and coordinates the scheduling of cast parties hosted by company members and families, and plans and facilitates official events hosted by OSHP.

Other jobs

There are many other staff and crew roles with traditional theatrical titles, including electrician, seamstress, grip, flyman, technician, operator, stitcher, scenic artist, carpenter, and many others. All these have generally understood responsibilities.

The head of department is often designated master, lead, or charge.

Some traditional titles have gender connotations, however, it may be useful to consider such as terms as seamstress and flyman to be gender-neutral.