

THEATRE MANAGEMENT: PRODUCING AND STAGE MANAGING IN MASQUE

An Interactive Qualifying Project Report

submitted to the Faculty

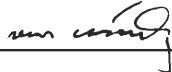
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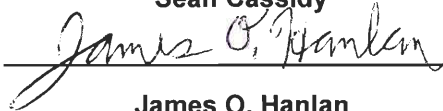
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Degree of Bachelor of Science

by



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Abstract

The goal of this project was to gather and synthesize information about stage managing and producing a typical WPI Masque production. The overall results are the WPI Stage Manager's Handbook and the WPI Producer's Handbook, booklets containing a concentrated wealth of information on each position. Development of these booklets involved the team researching each position and the duties it entails in textual and personal resources and subsequently taking on these roles in two different Masque productions. The team then synthesized the information it felt would be most helpful to future WPI stage managers and producers to create the Handbooks. The Handbooks will be printed in booklet form for distribution to the WPI theatre community in a future addendum to this project.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost we would like to thank our advisors. Their unwavering support and dedication to this project has been greatly appreciated

Professor Helen Vassallo

Thank you for dealing with us as young people who sometimes get ourselves involved in too much at once and for being so understanding when we couldn't meet our deadline at the end of C-term.

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Thank you for going against your normal regime and taking on this IQP during the year. We appreciate all the hard work you do and know that you don't have much time between your work, Sufficiencies, and MQPs to give to much else.

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Professor Jessica Sands

Thank you for becoming an advisor half way through the process. We know that like Professor Vick you have little time between classes and other projects to give to us, a Management/Theatre IQP, but all the time and information you have been able to give to us has been invaluable.

To all the interviewees who gave their time to tell us about their experiences stage managing and producing shows – your knowledge of the small details that were not covered in our preliminary research was very helpful. Thank you.

Mr. Jeff Zinn

Professor Susan Vick

Professor Jessica Sands

Mr. Richard Booth

Mr. Jonathan Parette

Miss Amanda Jean Nowack

Glossary

Batons – Metals bars suspended above the stage that are used to hold lights used in a performance.

Board operators – The people who run equipment boards during a production.

Call – An action taken by the stage manager or director to get everyone and everything in place before the beginning of or during the performance.

Call Time – A time when all actors and board operators should arrive at the theatre for rehearsal, special meeting, and the performance.

Cast – All actors that are involved in the actual performance of the play. (They do not have to have a speaking role.)

Company – Everyone that is involved in a production. Saying ‘the company’ refers to the cast and crew together.

Contact sheets - A complete list of the company members' names, addresses and phone numbers.

Crew – All technical department people who are involved in the production. This includes directors, producers, designers, etc.

Cue – A visual or audio signal that causes something else to happen. These signals can be for exits, entrances, lights, sounds, etc.)

Designers – Includes the lighting designer, props designer, costumes designer, and audio designer. These people design all the settings, costumes, lighting, and properties subject to the approval of the producer, director and playwright. Each supervises the execution of his or her design.¹

Dimmer rack – A machine that is connected to the lighting system of the theatre. It allows the lighting board operator to set the house lights and the hung lights to different intensities. Without a dimmer rack the only settings the lights would have are on (100%) and off (0%).

Director – The ultimate source of creativity in a given production. He or she directs the play and approves all actors and all parts of the production.¹

Dramaturg – A WPI-created position, these people select the plays that will be featured in New Voices. While the plays are being rehearsed and performed, they make sure

that the integrity and true essence of the play is upheld. They are the communication between the director and the playwright about confusions in the script and/ or changes to the script.

House Manager – The person who takes care of the theatre and its upkeep. They make sure that they hall is clean for a performance; oversee ticket sales and café sales.

Improvisation (Improv) – A totally spontaneous form of theatre, generally inspired by audience suggestions

Interactive Qualifying Project (IQP) - An out-of-major group project required of all WPI students to graduate.

Intercom (KGB) system – A system that uses a microphone to transmit what is happening onstage to the different areas of the theatre (i.e. lighting booth, dressing rooms, etc.). WPI theatre students refer to it as the KGB system after the KGB of WWII and their habit of spying on people.

Line notes – These are notes taken by the stage manager about when and to what extent the actor asks for a prompt. They are given to the actor to review at the end of the rehearsal.

Major Qualifying Project (MQP) – An in-major project required of all WPI students to graduate and show their knowledge of their major.

Master Electrician – Aids the lighting designer by preparing and collecting lighting equipment, effects, and fixtures. Thereafter he or she is in charge of the handling, maintenance, and operation of the lighting equipment.¹ At WPI the ME is the only person allowed to touch the power box.

Master Carpenter – Supervises original set up of scenery and, thereafter, is in charge of handling and maintenance of the scenery. He is the traditional “head” of the production stage crew and, consequently, head man or woman of all stage hands.¹

New Voices Festival – A WPI theatre festival which features student, faculty, community members, and alumni plays that have never been performed on stage before. The festival was founded 1982 by Professor Susan Vick.

Producer – The person in charge of all the technical aspects of the show. All technical problems are taken to him or her.

Production Manager – Takes care of all financial aspects of a show. He or she makes sure the company has enough money to do certain things and is in charge of making sure that the production does not go over budget. In the professional world people holding this position are responsible for the hiring of the crew, while at WPI they only help the producers accomplish this.

Prompt Book – A script with all the final cues and staging written into them. It is used by the stage manager during the performance to give the board operators and actors their cues at the correct time.

Prompting - When an actor cannot remember his or her line and call for ‘line’ the SM will give them the first couple of words of the next sentence.

Prop – Anything used onstage by the actors during a performance other than the set. Fixed props include furniture. Hand props are anything held and used by the actor.

Publicity Manager – The person in charge of making sure the public knows about the performance, how much it costs and where it is being performed.

Rehearsal – Practice for a production, the time when the director can see the actors saying their lines while moving through the staging of the play. Meanwhile they can give the actors advice on how to improve and can add changes in the technical areas.

Rehearsal calls - Letting the appropriate people know when they are supposed to be at the rehearsal space and when the company is going to start rehearsing

Rehearsal notes - Notes on everything from rehearsal pertaining to the different departments

Set plots - A documentation of where are located at the beginning and end of rehearsal or performance, also includes the position of furniture and dressings

Sketch Comedy – Consists of pre-written comedic material presented by a group of actors through a mixture of live and video-recorded performances.

Stage Manager – The person in charge of the stage. He or she is primarily in charge of the actors during rehearsal and is equivalent to the director’s secretary. Once the props are handed over from the props manager he or she is also responsible for them.

Staging notes - The recording of an actors entrances, exits, moves, gestures, pace, use of props, etc. against the script.

Sufficiency – A major project required of all WPI students to graduate that is normally done in the Humanities and Arts unless the student is majoring in the Humanities and Arts. In the latter case, the sufficiency must be in a field of science. In the case of a dual major, where one is in the Humanities and Arts, two MQPs are required and the sufficiency requirement is waived.

Tech Director – A WPI-created production position. This person is present at all setups and builds (i.e. lighting hangs and set builds). He or she is in charge of the safety of the company before, during and after a production.

Truss – A structure consisting of metal beams that forms a box or pyramid shape. Trusses are hung by chains from the ceiling and are primarily used to hold lights and lighting equipment that is used in a performance.

Wash lighting – Lighting used to light up a wide area of the stage. It is also used to set the mood of a scene.

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I. Introduction and Problem Statement

Despite its primary focus on engineering sciences, Worcester Polytechnic Institute supports a thriving theatre community. Trustees of the Institute recently invested a substantial amount of money in the creation of the Little Theatre, a new performance space devoted specifically to theatre arts. WPI supports five different theatre organizations, comprising a total membership of approximately four or five dozen continual members. The number and variety of students, alumni, faculty and community members involved in theatre on campus swells to a couple hundred each D-term when the Institute's largest theatre organization, Masque, stages New Voices, a theatre festival featuring never-before-performed original works written by members of the WPI community.

WPI's theatre program is both curricular and extracurricular in nature. Students studying theatre arts officially through the Institute's Humanities and Arts Department can, and often do, earn academic credit from their involvement in theatrical productions in the form of various projects, including ISPs (Independent Study Projects), Suffs (Sufficiency projects), IQPs (Interactive Qualifying Projects), and MQPs (Major Qualifying Projects). Academic courses in theatre offered by the Institute are limited. It is important to note also that these courses are not prerequisite for involvement in theatre productions. Effectually, these facts make for a theatre environment whose participants may be very enthusiastic but have little experience or exposure to theatre practices.

Two production positions for which it is particularly important to have a broad understanding and working knowledge of theatre practices are the roles of stage manager and producer. These are pivotal managerial positions found in every WPI Masque production and, indeed, in theatre productions on all levels. The success of any given show is often dependent upon the persons holding these positions, and yet in WPI theatre those persons may have little to no experience with the positions. When this is the case, the avid stage manager or producer to-be may go in search of resources to assist him or her in the fulfillment of the position's duties. To date, the resources available to these students have been limited, and the continual search for such resources has been a systematic source of rework and, therefore, inefficiency in the structure of WPI theatre.

A number of WPI students over the years have made their MQPs out of producing Masque shows and writing about the experience. A common notion expressed in the reports of these projects is the belief that an account of the student's experiences could benefit future producers. The current project team wholeheartedly agrees with this idea, but notes that in general these MQP reports have been intimidating, lengthy documents filled with situation-specific information which a first-time producer would find extraneous. The fact that there are now a number of these project reports available to read further supports the argument that a first-time producer might spend excessive time searching through these documents for helpful and pertinent information, if they pursue information in that way at all.

Consequently, the IQP team chose to make its primary objective to create a succinct resource which would help potentially inexperienced future WPI stage managers and producers to fulfill the duties of their positions.

II. Background

This section presents some background information on the textual resources consulted by the IQP team in the course of the project. Most of texts consulted were IQPs and MQPs completed in the Drama/Theatre division of the Humanities and Arts Department while some were books written by theatre professionals. Each of the resources canvassed in this section is available on the WPI campus through either the internet or through the George C. Gordon Library. This availability suggests that these resources may have been called upon in the past by WPI stage managers and producers, so discussion of the texts constitutes a fitting background for this report.

The texts which are described below helped the team develop a comprehensive understanding of each of three important areas: the WPI theatre environment, the stage manager production position, and the producer position.

A. Texts on the WPI Theatre Environment

The MQP by James C. Cook, *Resources for Undergraduate Theatre Students @ WPI*, was written with the intention of making it easier for WPI students to find information about theatre.²

The IQP written by Catherine Carrigan, Allison DiNitto, Jonathan Lucas, Jarthly Monterroso, Amanda Jean Nowack, and John Remby in E-term 2005 coincided with the development of WPI's new Little Theatre. The project resulted in a website detailing the history and operation of the Little Theatre and a multiple-volume report containing valuable information on technical aspects of the theatre.¹⁹

Jeremy M. Hammond's 2001 IQP titled *The History of Theatre @ WPI* collected in one place significant historical information about the campus's largest theatre organization, Masque. Hammond's contention was that understanding where club came from and what it has been through can yield a better understanding of the nature of WPI theatre today.¹⁰

B. Texts on Stage Management

Searches for IQPs and MQPs which focused on stage management yielded no results. To learn about stage managing, the team turned to other textual resources.

The Stage Manager's Handbook was written by Bert Gruver in 1952 and has since been revised by Frank Hamilton. This book was written to give information about professional touring shows to future professional stage managers. The book walks a person through the pre-rehearsal, rehearsal, production week, and performance duties of a professional stage manager.¹

Stage Management: The Essential Handbook was written by Gail Pallin in 2000. This book was written to give people information about stage managing in England on a professional level. This book gives information on how to manage both people and situations in the theatre as well as the duties from before rehearsals begin to the final performance.²⁰

Stage Management: A Practical Guide was written by Soozie Copley and Philippa Killner and published in 2001. This text also details the various stage management positions as they exist in England's professional theatre. Like *The Essential Handbook*, it walks the reader through a stage manager's duties in the various stages of production.³

C. Texts on Theatre Production

In 1997 an undergraduate student, Melissa Perkalis, wrote “An Illustrated and Annotated Manual for the WPI Producer” as her IQP. This manual details a WPI producer's duties and provides a number of hints and suggestions on how to go about selecting members of the production staff, how and when to hold different kinds of meetings, and how the emphasis of a producer's duties should change as the production progresses.⁴ In the years since its creation, this text has been indispensable to a number of first-time producers, but its usefulness has dwindled as it is in need of updating and revision.

John Mock spent A and B terms of 1997 producing Luna Muebles for M.W.Repertory Theatre, Etc., and MEDEA/media for Masque for his IQP. The purpose of his IQP was to present the complications and solutions he had discovered while

producing not only at WPI, but also throughout his theatre career.⁵ This IQP is geared more towards streamlining ongoing producing efforts than to guiding potential future WPI producers.

Michael J. DeNoia's 2002 MQP, *Producing Theatre*, details the author's experiences as producer in Masque's production of *Frankenstein*. DeNoia emphasizes the need for communication, preparation and organization in the role of the producer.⁶

The 1999 MQP by Seth Flagg, titled *A Guide to the Position of Executive Producer of New Voices* details the author's experiences working as the executive producer of New Voices 17. In the report, Flagg works to generalize his activities so as to create "a blueprint for the success of future Executive Producers."⁷

Josette Victoria Jaecksch's 2004 MQP, *Producer Based Multi-Personal Production*, was a portfolio exhibiting the author's work as producer of Masque's production of *The Rivals*. The report principally concerns the author's activities, but she mentions that it could be used as a "basic reference for future producers."⁸

The 2001 MQP *Producing Academic Theatre* by James G. Nichols is another review of one person's activities as a WPI producer in which the author suggests that others could benefit from exposure to his experiences and methodologies. Nichols suggests the use of a written contract which he refers to as a Production Agreement whereby each member of the production staff would agree in writing to fulfill the duties of his or her position.⁹

III. Materials and Methods

The team pursued information relevant to the project in three different ways. These included researching relevant literary resources, conducting interviews with people who have varying degrees of experience working in at least one theatre environment, and taking on managerial positions in two WPI Masque productions.

A. Literary Resources

Literary resources consulted by the team include nine previously-completed WPI project reports (three IQP reports and six MQP reports) and four commercially-available texts written by theatre professionals.

WPI project reports:

IQPs

- Carrigan, DiNitto, Lucas, Monterroso, Nowack, and Remby, Operations, Procedures, and Resources for the Little Theatre at WPI
- Hamond, The History of Theatre @ WPI
- Perkalis, An Illustrated and Annotated Manual for the WPI Producer

MQPs

- Cook, Resources for Undergraduate Theatre Students at WPI
- DeNoia, Producing Theatre
- Flag, A Guide to the Position of Executive Producer of New Voices
- Jaecksch, Producer Based Multi-Personal Production
- Mock, A Practical Guide to Producing at WPI
- Nichols, Producing Academic Theatre

Texts by theatre professionals:

- Stage Management: A Practical Guide by Copley and Killner
- Stage Management: The Essential Handbook by Pallin
- The Stage Manager's Handbook by Gruver
- Theatre Management and Production in America by Langley

B. Interviews

The team conducted interviews as follows:

- Richard Booth, owner of the Booth Theatre, Maine, H.S. Performing Arts Teacher, Holy Name Central Catholic Junior/Senior High School
- Amanda Jean Nowack, undergraduate, Humanities and Arts major, Theatre concentration, WPI
- Jonathan Paretti, undergraduate, Humanities and Arts major, Theatre concentration, WPI
- Jessica Sands, Adjunct Professor of Drama/Theatre, Humanities and Arts, WPI
- Susan Vick, Professor and Director of Drama/Theatre, Humanities and Arts, WPI
- Jeff Zinn, co-owner of Wellfleet Harbor Actor's Theatre, Cape Cod

C. Production Activities

During the course of the project, the team had the opportunity to take on managerial production positions in two Masque shows. During B-term of 2005, the IQP team led the stage management team for the *New Works for a New Theatre* production, which featured the plays *In Bad Taste* by Dean O'Donnell and *Prime Time Crime: Teal Version* by Catherine Darensbourg. During C-term of 2006 the IQP team led the production staff in Masque's production of *Much Ado About Nothing* by William Shakespeare.

IV. Results

As discussed in Section III, the team collected information relevant to the project by reading, speaking with experienced persons, and personally assuming managerial production positions. The team compiled and synthesized this accumulated information to construct most of the remainder of the body of this IQP report. The team then identified the information which it felt would likely be of greatest value to persons taking on, for the first time, the position of a stage manager or the position of a producer at WPI. This information was used to create two handbooks: the WPI Stage Manager's Handbook and the WPI Producer's Handbook. These Handbooks will be distributed to various locations of interest on campus so as to be made available to students involved with theatre at WPI. The Handbooks are presented as inserts to this report in the following pages.

A. WPI Stage Manager's Handbook

The insert following this page constitutes the text of the WPI Stage Manager's Handbook developed by the IQP team.

The WPI Stage Manager's Handbook

A handy, quick-reference guide to stage managing at WPI

Produced by the A05-C06
Theatre Management IQP Team:
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Introduction

College theatre generally exhibits a high turnover rate in the production staff from one production to the next. Often this means that people with little or no experience in the technical aspects of theatre find themselves in demanding production positions, charged with a high degree of responsibility. In such situations, a deal of expectation is placed on inexperienced shoulders. This can be a source of stress both to the person holding the responsibility and to the others working with and around this person.

This text has been compiled with the goal of reducing the stress which comes from inexperience as a stage manager. It is intended to be a quick reference guide to help you, a new or prospective stage manager at WPI, become acquainted with the duties this position entails and with some documents and tips that can help you deal with these duties. This document includes:

- a description of the production position titled “stage manager;”
- a list and explanation of the duties and responsibilities of a stage manager and how the focus of these changes over time;
- descriptions of a number of documents and forms which a stage manager may be responsible for or may choose to employ;
- a list of tips and “do’s and don’ts;” and
- an appendix containing examples of some of the forms described in the documents and forms section.

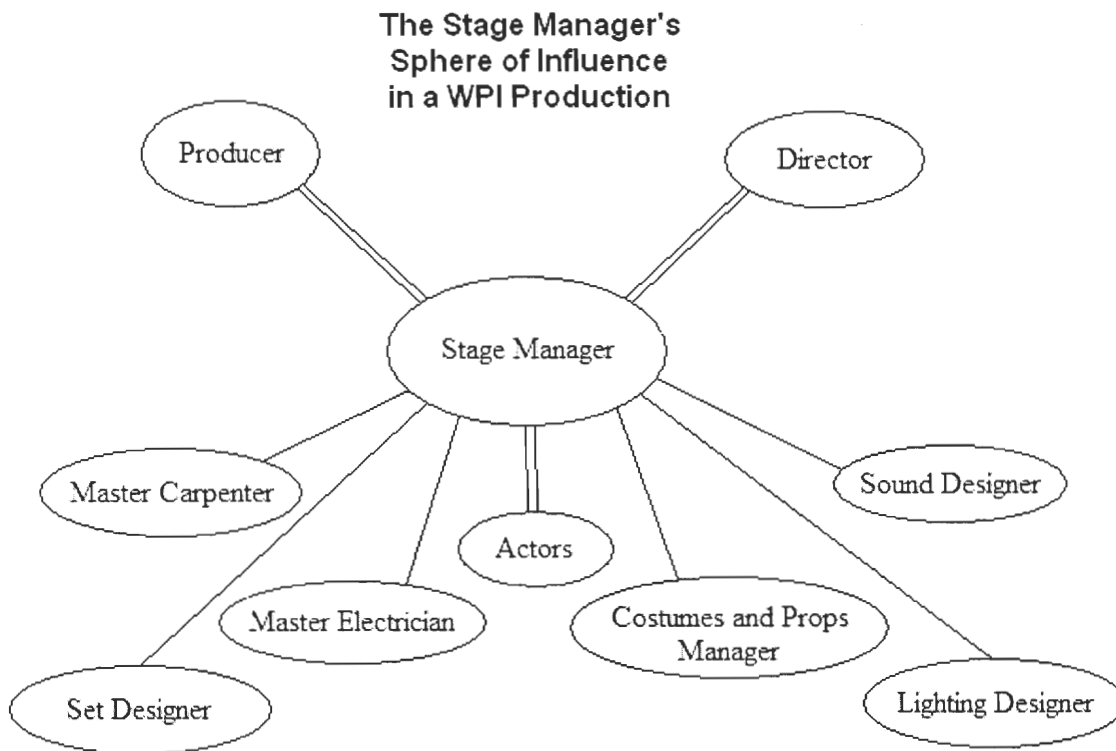
We hope that you find this text helpful and wish you all the best of luck with your production.

- The IQP Team -

The Stage Manager in a WPI Production

The stage manager (SM) is an organizer of people and information. At times, the SM acts as truant officer, ensuring the timely attendance of actors and others as appropriate at calls for rehearsals and performances. At other times, the SM acts as secretary, taking notes on artistic aspects of the show from the director and passing them on to corresponding technical designers and crew members as needed. The SM is unique in that he or she is perhaps the only person to interact with nearly every other member of a production. While the SM is intimately connected to almost all aspects of the production, he or she does not, however, have any official say in its artistic development.

The SM's relationship to other members of the production staff is illustrated in the following diagram. A double line connecting production positions indicates that the position which is placed lower in the web interacts with and reports to the position placed higher in the web. A single line represents that the two positions interact with each other but neither reports to the other. Each production position shown in the diagram is also given a brief description below.



Producer – The producer is the taskmaster for the rest of the production staff, and as such he or she starts working before anyone else involved with the production. The producer's duties are as follows:

- Populating the production staff
- Distributing scripts to all those involved
- Conducting weekly production meetings with the production staff
- Maintaining open lines of communication with the production staff outside of production meetings
- Finding solutions to technical and personal, problems that occur within the production staff
- Ensuring that all of the production staffs' duties are completed before opening night

Director – The director is the creative control of the show and holds the final say on all creative aspects of the show. The director's duties include:

- Creating the rehearsal schedule
- Running all rehearsals
- Meeting with all of the designers to finalize and approve all designs. It is the director's prerogative to order things changed within those designs at any time if he or she deems it necessary.

Costumes and Props Manager – The costumes and props manager is responsible for the wardrobe and properties used in a show. He or she is responsible for:

- Obtaining as many required costumes and props as possible from the Props Closet (in with the Scene Shop in Alden Hall)
- Making any required costumes or props that cannot be found in the Props Closet
- Buying any costumes or props which cannot be made
- Coordinating with the stage manager to make sure costumes and props are properly stored and maintained

Lighting Designer (LD) – The lighting designer's job is to create a guideline for the arrangement of lights for the show. The lighting designer's job requires:

- Meeting with the director to discuss themes and special effects he or she wants to see in the lights

- Creating a viable lighting design
- Working with the master electrician to implement the design

Sound Designer – The sound designer’s job is to acquire or create sound effects and recordings to be used in the show. The sound designer’s job entails:

- Meeting with the director to discuss themes and special effects he or she wants to hear in the production
- Searching collections of music and sound effects for applicable sound clips
- Creating unfindable sound clips or seeking out substitutes
- Operating the sound equipment during performances

Set Designer (SD) – The set designer’s job is to create the guideline that the master carpenter will use for the creation of the set. This entails:

- Meeting with the director to discuss what he or she wants to see in the set
- Creating a viable scenic and set design
- Working with the master carpenter to build the set

Master Electrician (ME) – The master electrician is responsible for working with the electrical components of a production. This job entails:

- Making sure that all of the equipment needing electricity (including the lighting board, sound equipment, special set pieces, etc.) has access to it
- Working with a team to arrange, hang, and focus all lights according to the lighting designer’s direction
- Writing all of the lighting cues specified by the lighting designer
- Operating the light board during tech week and the actual performances

Master Carpenter (MC) – The Master Carpenter is accountable for the construction of the set according to the set design. This job’s demands include:

- Working with the producer to coordinate a crew to build the set by the deadline provided by the producer
- Ensuring that the set created is safe for the actors to perform on
- Maintaining a clean and safe working environment within the performance space and the scene shop

Duties and Responsibilities of a Stage Manager

The role of stage manager is perhaps best defined by a description of what he or she does. This section focuses on a stage manager's activities.

❖ **Maintaining the Rehearsal Space**

One of the main charges of the stage manager is to hold the keys to the theatre. The stage manager must be at the rehearsal space a full half hour before each rehearsal is slated to begin. This is so that the stage manager can ensure the space is clean and ready for use, as well as to make sure there are enough chairs arranged and drinking water is accessible for the actors. Just as the stage manager made sure the rehearsal space was clean before rehearsal he or she is also responsible for making sure the space is clean after rehearsal and for locking up after everyone has left. The stage manager should always be the last person to leave once a rehearsal has finished, unless there are people staying to work on the set or lights.

❖ **Taking Attendance**

The stage manager is expected to keep track of the attendance and tardiness of all persons required to be present at each rehearsal (see rehearsal attendance sheet in Documents and Forms). If someone is either not present or is late, even if it is only by a minute, the stage manager is expected to log the occurrence. If someone is regularly late and this is becoming a problem, the stage manager should inform the director or producer and they will see to disciplinary issues.

❖ **Taking Notes – Staging, Tech, and Line**

Once rehearsal has begun, the stage manager must shift gears and begin the occasionally tedious, yet very necessary task of taking notes. There are three different kinds of information to be written down – staging notes, tech notes, and line notes.

Staging notes consist of how and when the actors move around the set. Thus the stage manager keeps a log of the action on stage. He or she may be called upon to remind others of what happened on stage during the previous rehearsal.

Tech notes consist of cues (the phrases or actions which come immediately before a technical effect is supposed to occur) and artistic notes from the director. Artistic tech notes consist of anything that the director mentions during rehearsal which is related to a technical department (lighting, sound, costuming, set, etc.).

The stage manager must pass these notes on to the appropriate designers and tech-related persons as soon as possible after the rehearsal in which the notes were taken. In the capacity of a note-taker, the SM acts primarily as a secretary and reporter, not as a source of original ideas. Artistic tech notes are intended to be from the director to the other parties (designers) as appropriate. If something the director said about one aspect of the production or another seems unclear, it would be better to contact the director and clarify his or her vision before passing on the note than to embellish it with your own thoughts, however creative they may be. As mentioned in the Description of a Stage Manager section, officially speaking, the stage manager has no say in the artistic development of a show.

Every director works differently; some do not like to be troubled with questions immediately after rehearsal because they prefer to use the post-rehearsal period to reflect on the show's progress. As such, it is best to check with the director before the first rehearsal as to how such clarification on technical questions can be obtained. If interaction with the director during or after rehearsal is not possible, e-mail may be the next best alternative.

Line notes are records of each actor's error in or difficulty with remembering the text of the play as written in the script. These should be distributed individually to actors as appropriate after each rehearsal in which they are taken. Fortunately for the stage manager, line notes are not generally taken until the actors are required to be off-book. By this time in the production, most of the staging and cue notes are set, so the stage manager can simply shift from one version of note-taking to another. In some productions, however, a dramaturg is present during rehearsals who can assume the stage manager's responsibility of taking line notes.

Accurate line notes become particularly important the closer it gets to production week and the performances. In order to preserve the playwright's intentions, by show time actors should be as close as possible to reproducing their part in the script verbatim, unless specified otherwise by the director.

The stage manager is also expected to keep track of the run time of each scene and the performance as a whole.

The **Rehearsal Log** described in the Documents and Forms section may be a valuable tool when it comes to in-rehearsal note taking of all kinds.

❖ **Preparing for and Calling the Show**

During the performances and dress rehearsals, a stage manager's duties become threefold. The first duty is to manage props. The stage manager must make sure all props are in their proper placement before each rehearsal or performance and return the props to an appropriate storage location afterward. The second duty of a stage manager is to make sure that the actors in the green room are on deck and ready to go before the show starts. The third duty for a stage manager during a show is to call the show. This entails making sure all of the technical aspects of a production (lights, sound, special effects, etc.) occur on time by following along with the action on stage in a specially annotated copy of the script and giving the appropriate tech persons their cues over the headset communication system.

It is common practice to delegate the first and second performance-night duties to the assistant stage manager (ASM). The ASM is also required to remain in the green room during the performance to make sure that the actors are quiet so that sound does not filter up to the stage.

Documents and Forms

This section contains information about some of the documents which the SM is likely to encounter, including:

- What each document is,
- Who assembles/distributes it, and
- How and when the SM interacts with it.

❖ Rehearsal Staff Contact Sheet

This sheet contains contact information (generally e-mail addresses and telephone numbers) for all persons who are expected to be present at rehearsals. This includes actors, directors, stage managers, dramaturgs, and others as appropriate. It is one of the first documents the SM must assemble. It is the SM's duty to track down the information needed to populate the list (much of which can usually be found on the forms which the actors filled out when they came to audition) and to make the list available to members of the cast, preferably by the time of the first rehearsal. The producer of the show is responsible for assembling and distributing the Production Staff Contact Sheet – a similar document containing contact information for the production staff. A blank template which can be used for either contact sheet is included in the Appendix.

❖ Rehearsal Attendance Sheet

This is a grid which sets the name of each person listed on the rehearsal staff contact sheet alongside the dates of each rehearsal. It is assembled and maintained by the SM, and it is used to keep track of each person's attendance and punctuality at rehearsals. A blank template of a contact sheet is included in the Appendix.

❖ Cue Lists

These sheets contain a description of each effect, its cue (i.e. the phrase or action which immediately precedes it), and its location in the play (given, for example, by act and scene or by page number in the script). One of these sheets should exist for each technical aspect of the production which has cues during the show (for example: lighting, sound, projection, and special effects). These lists are either assembled by the SM in the early stages of the rehearsal process and distributed to the appropriate designers or are developed by the designers themselves. (The decision about who assembles the list is up to you as SM and the designers in question, though both persons should keep continually

updated copies.) Information on effect cues is also included in the Prompt Book (see below). An example of a completed cue list is included in the Appendix.

❖ **Props List**

This document contains descriptions of each prop, the scene(s) in which it is used, which characters interact with it, and sometimes where it is located at the beginning and the end of each show. This list is either assembled by the SM in the early stages of the rehearsal process and distributed to the costumes and props manager or is developed by the costumes and props manager himself or herself. (The decision about who assembles the list is up to you as SM and the manager in question, though both persons should keep continually updated copies.) An example of a completed props list is included in the Appendix.

❖ **Rehearsal Log**

This is a sheet you may use during rehearsals to concentrate and organize some important information. It generally consists of a number of different fields, each of which is designated for a different aspect of the production. This allows the stage manager to keep record of attendance, scene run times, and notes from the director for tech designers on one piece of paper. A number of common templates of this form exist, and in the end you even want to make your own. One blank template of a rehearsal log is included in the Appendix.

❖ **Prompt Book**

The prompt book consists of a copy of the play that has been printed on one-sided paper. Notes about staging (the actors' movements on stage) and technical cues are hand-written on the blank side of each page facing the page in the script on which the action takes place. The prompt book is developed by the stage manager during rehearsals, and he or she must make sure that it is continually updated and well-maintained. During production week and the performances, the stage manager uses the prompt book to call the show.

Tips / Do's and Don'ts

- Be organized. As stage manager you will be handling a number of different important documents. Develop a filing system whereby you can produce an document requested at a moment's notice.
- Try to be one step ahead of everything. Anticipate questions. Have extra copies of contact lists, rehearsal schedules, and such things on hand for when others request a copy. Bring extra pencils to each rehearsal for anyone who may have forgotten to bring one.
- Do not wait to do something. Procrastination is a mortal sin in the theatre world given the inflexible deadlines.
- Start taking attendance fifteen minutes before each rehearsal begins. At about ten minutes before rehearsal, start calling actors who have not yet shown up to make sure that they are indeed on their way and to find out when they will arrive. If you have a cell phone, you may want to take the time early on to add all the names and numbers on the rehearsal staff contact sheet to your address book. This will make those pre-rehearsal calls that much quicker.
- Do not try to do everything yourself. Delegate responsibility whenever possible. In a WPI production the producer will generally make sure that you have an assistant stage manager (ASM) at your disposal – see that he or she is not an underutilized resource.
- Pay attention to everything on which the director comments. Sometimes artistic notes which need to be passed on to designers are stated as off-the-cuff remarks which do not sound official. Pay attention to these to stay ahead of the game.
- Do not let your mind wander. During both rehearsal and performances, your attentiveness can have a significant impact on the show's success. See that you eschew distractions.
- During the show, try not to respond to mistakes with panic. Focus on the rest of the show. Fretting about one mistake could cause you to make more.

Appendix – Document Templates and Examples

The following pages contain instances of some of the papers described in the Documents and Forms section. This section includes a blank contact sheet, a blank rehearsal attendance sheet, an example of a cue list (taken from the B-term 2005 production which marked the opening of the Little Theatre), an example of a props list, and a blank template of a rehearsal log.

Contact Sheet

Role/Production Position	Name	E-mail Address	Phone Number

Rehearsal Attendance Sheet

Production:

Key:

- ✓: Present, on time
- L: Present, late
- E: Absent, excused
- U: Absent, unexcused

		Date of rehearsal												
	Role/Title	Name												
Cast														
Prod. Staff														

Sound Cues

Production:
Prime Time Crime: Teal Version

Date: 11/4/2005
Log by: XXXXXXXXXX
Page: 1 of 1

p#	Scene	Description	Timing
1	1	Music & static & "testing, testing, 1, 2, 3..."	Opening of show
1	1	Intro theme music to "Crime Time"	Prologue's line, "And 5, 4, 3..."
3	1	Beeping	Coincident with the blinking of the red light, after line "What will the viewers say?"
4	1 to 2	Going off the air music	After "And that's a wrap."
10	3 to 4	"Futuristic" waiting-in-the-dentist's-office-type music	After "Will corner offices do?"
27	7 to 8	Music/commercial noises from TV	After "I need a vacation!", should get quiet as actors begin speaking in Scene 8, maybe remaining very low as background noise until next cue, below
30	8	TV sound stops, coincident with cease of flickering TV light	After "Fine!" when Dennis gets up, walks over to the television, and turns it off.
33	8 to 9	Musical interlude	After "You still haven't fixed my television!"
40	10	Phone rings in box in northeast corner of the theatre	After "Jeff?...Jeff? Janice?" when Dennis pulls out cell phone and dials.
45	11	Mother Google's voice saying "Access denied."	After "Come on... I know you're there."
45	11	Mother Google's voice saying "Access denied. Password invalid."	After "You know you want to -"
46	11	Gun shot	After "Even the score."
49	12	"And welcome to 'Blue Children, Bright Futures' Fifth Grade Nursery Hour..."	After "Come on. You know you want to -", Coincident with TV lights coming on
49	12	"Now it's time to 'Get Down with Brown', the Dance Show of Today -" maybe said with an inner city accent...?	After "No. Try again! Come on!", coincident with TV coming back on
49	12	"Previously on 'The Orange Countess' -"	After "No! Where are you?", coincident with TV coming back on once again
54	12 to 13	Musical interlude	After "Are you in there? Open up!"
59	13	Exit music	Starting at the line "Any idea where we go from here?", remaining quiet but with a very gradual crescendo, then volume really up after "Who reads these days?"

Prop Breakdown

	Date:	11/3/2005
Production: <i>Prime Time Crime: Teal Version</i>	Log by:	██████████
	Page:	1 of 1

Props crew: ██████████
 Stage management: ██████████

Prop No.	Description	Scene (s)	Used-by character(s)	Notes
1	Police tape	1,13	"Crew"	
2	Gun--murder weapon for opening scene (?), also carried by Detective	1,11,13	Detective	Use farce gun from IBT
3	Headsets (2)--the type a news journalist might wear	1,3,5,7	Detective, Mother Google	M.G. wears hers almost always
4	Laptop--supposedly two different laptops, but could simply be one shared	1,3,5,7,9,11,12,13	Dennis, Mother Google	TC saw two laptops in the props room...
5	Small red light--this blinks on M.G.'s desk to indicate the Boss is watching	1	*probably run by techies*	
6	Wallet with business card	4	Classifier	
7	Teal covered book	5	Mother Google	Reuse in boxes in Scenes 10 and 13?
8	Cell phones (2 or 3)	6,10,13	Jeff, Dennis, Boss, box	Must investigate doubling logistics
9	Pink covered books	7	Mother Google	Reuse in boxes in Scenes 10 and 13?
10	Television (Jeff's)	8	Dennis, Jeff, Janice	This might be mimed--ask Susan
11	Food tray with 'steak'--hunk of something that looks like meat	8	Jeff	Forget about this--will be just implied
12	Remote for television	8	Jeff	
13	Boxes--various in shape, size, and fullness. At least one must have red-covered books.	10,13	M.G., Dennis, Moving Person	Scattered by "Crew" before final scene
14	Wrist watch	10	Jeff	
15	Fedora hat	thru-out	Detective	
16	Small cigar--the kind of thing you might have seen in Casablanca	12	Jeff	
17	Clipboard	4	Classifier	

Rehearsal Log

Production:

Date:
 Log
 by:
 Page: of

Scheduled Time:	Attendance:
Actual Time:	
Stage Manager(s) present:	
Director(s) present:	

Scene	Start	Stop	Total		Scene	Start	Stop	Total	

Props:	Lights:
Sets:	Sound:
Costumes:	Other:

B. WPI Producer's Handbook

The following pages constitute the text of the WPI Producer's Handbook, as developed by the IQP team.

The WPI Producer's Handbook

A handy, quick-reference guide to producing at WPI

Produced by the A05-D06
Theatre Management IQP Team:
Sean Cassidy, '06
James Hanlan, '07
Brienne Murphy, '07

Introduction

College theatre generally exhibits a high turnover rate in the production staff from one production to the next. Often this means that people with little or no experience in the technical aspects of theatre find themselves in demanding production positions, charged with a high degree of responsibility. In such situations, a deal of expectation is placed on inexperienced shoulders. This can be a source of stress both to the person holding the responsibility and to the others working with and around this person.

This text has been compiled with the goal of reducing the stress which comes from inexperience as a producer. It is intended to be a quick reference guide to help you, a new or prospective theatre producer at WPI, become acquainted with the duties this position entails and with some documents and tips that can help you deal with these duties. This document includes:

- a description of the production position titled “producer;”
- a list and explanation of the duties and responsibilities of a producer;
- descriptions of a number of documents and forms which a producer may be responsible for;
- a list of tips and “do’s and don’ts;” and
- an appendix containing examples of some of the forms described in the documents and forms section.

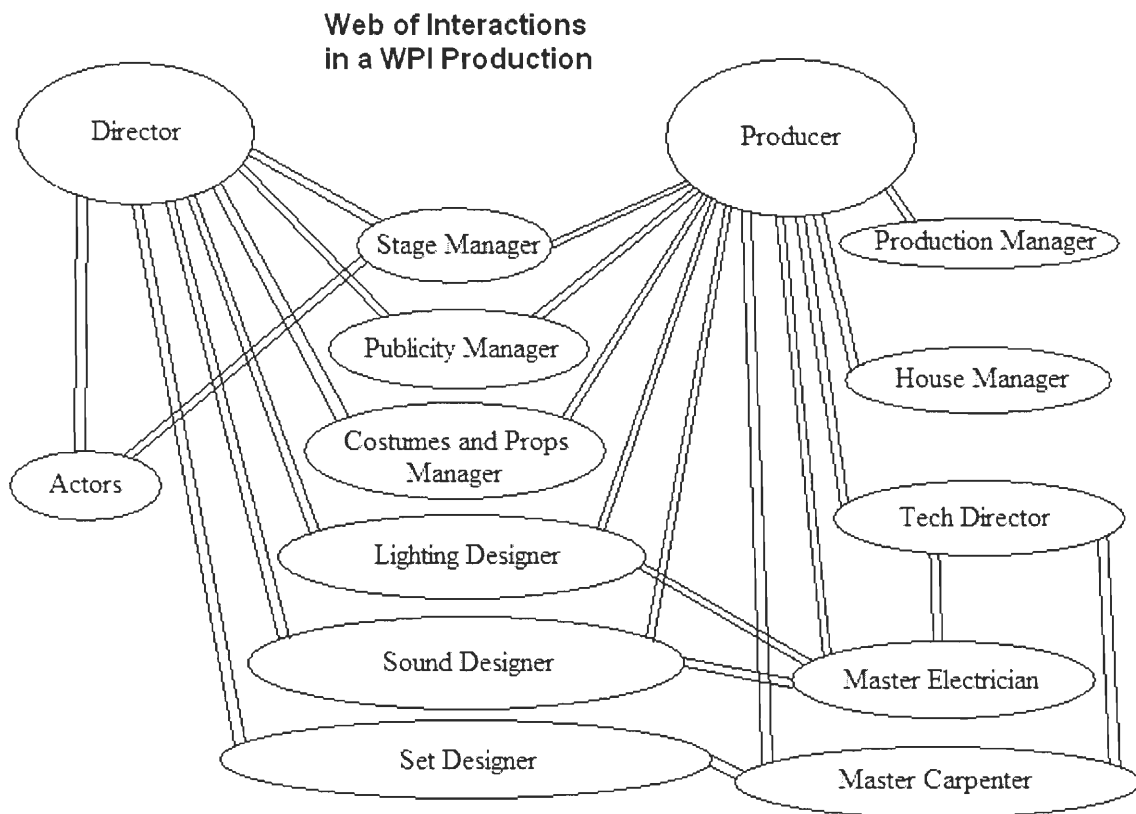
We hope that you find this text helpful and wish you all the best of luck with your production.

- The IQP Team -

The Producer in a WPI Production

The producer is, at best, the unsung hero of the show and, at worst, the reason it all went wrong. The producer has a very difficult job within a production at WPI as he or she is the taskmaster for and coordinator of the entire production staff. If a member of the production staff is not pulling his or her weight it is up to the producer to find out why and to find a solution for the problem. This is the key component of a producer's job, solving problems wherever they crop up.

The producer's relationship to other members of the production staff is illustrated in the following diagram. Each double line connecting production positions indicates that the position which is placed lower in the web interacts with and reports to the position placed higher in the web. Each production position listed in the diagram is also given a brief description below.



Director – The director is the creative control of the show and holds the final say on all creative aspects of the show. The director's duties include:

- Creating the rehearsal schedule

- Running all rehearsals
- Meeting with all of the designers to finalize and approve all designs. It is the director's prerogative to order things changed within those designs at any time if he or she deems it necessary.

Stage Manager – The stage manager manages the rehearsal space of the show and takes an integral role in the production. The stage manager's duties include:

- Opening up the rehearsal space one half hour before the rehearsal is due to start
- Checking attendance at every rehearsal and contacting anyone late for rehearsal
- Taking notes from the director during rehearsals regarding all staging, lights, sound, costumes, props and other special technical aspects of the show
- In the absence of a dramaturg, the stage manager will also take line notes
- Placing all props in their proper spaces before each performance and putting them away after each performance
- Calling all technical cues during the show
- Locking up the performance space after every performance or rehearsal

Production Manager – The production manager takes care of the finances for the show. The production manager is responsible for:

- Properly managing the budget for the show
- Allotting money as needed to appropriate members of the production staff
- Taking the minutes at all production meetings
- Assisting the producer with other aspects of his or her position as requested

Publicity Manager – The publicity manager's job is to make sure that word gets out about the show so that there will be an audience. While the ways in which this is accomplished are limited only by the publicity manager's creativity, common tasks include:

- Meeting with the producer and director to go over the intended publicity plan
- Posting fliers in high-traffic areas on campus
- Posting fliers in off-campus student hang-outs
- Chalking in front of dorms

- E-mailing en masse the WPI student body, faculty, and alumni and/or certain smaller groups therein
- Maintaining the reservation line
- Arranging to have tickets printed and reserved as appropriate
- Coordinating with the producer to create the program

Costumes and Props Manager – The costumes and props manager is responsible for the wardrobe and properties used in a show. He or she is responsible for:

- Obtaining as many required costumes and props as possible from the Props Closet (in with the Scene Shop in Alden Hall)
- Making any required costumes or props that cannot be found in the Props Closet
- Buying any costumes or props which cannot be made
- Coordinating with the stage manager to make sure costumes and props are properly stored and maintained

Lighting Designer (LD) – The lighting designer’s job is to create a guideline for the arrangement of lights for the show. The lighting designer’s job requires:

- Meeting with the director to discuss themes and special effects he or she wants to see in the lights
- Creating a viable lighting design
- Working with the master electrician to implement the design

Sound Designer – The sound designer’s job is to acquire or create sound effects and recordings to be used in the show. The sound designer’s job entails:

- Meeting with the director to discuss themes and special effects he or she wants to hear in the production
- Searching collections of music and sound effects for applicable sound clips
- Creating unfindable sound clips or seeking out substitutes
- Operating the sound equipment during performances

Set Designer (SD) – The set designer’s job is to create the guideline that the master carpenter will use for the creation of the set. This entails:

- Meeting with the director to discuss what he or she wants to see in the set
- Creating a viable scenic and set design

- Working with the master carpenter to build the set

Master Electrician (ME) – The master electrician is responsible for working with the electrical components of a production. This job entails:

- Making sure that all of the equipment needing electricity (including the lighting board, sound equipment, special set pieces, etc.) has access to it
- Working with a team to arrange, hang, and focus all lights according to the lighting designer's direction
- Writing all of the lighting cues specified by the lighting designer
- Operating the light board during tech week and the actual performances

Master Carpenter (MC) – The Master Carpenter is accountable for the construction of the set according to the set design. This job's demands include:

- Working with the producer to coordinate a crew to build the set by the deadline provided by the producer
- Ensuring that the set created is safe for the actors to perform on
- Maintaining a clean and safe working environment within the performance space and the scene shop

House Manager – The house manager oversees the space occupied by audience members before they enter the theatre. The specifics of this job include:

- Managing the ushers and box office during all performance nights
- Ensuring that all spaces traveled by audience members are cleaned off and swept or vacuumed before all performances. (This includes seating areas and the stairs leading up to them, café, and – at least when working in the Little Theatre – the stage itself.)
- Opening the doors to the public on performance nights
- Managing the café during intermission

Tech Director – The tech director is in charge of safety in the performance space. This job requires an experienced, conscientious individual and entails:

- Being present during any set build or light hanging events to ensure that everyone is taking the correct safety precautions
- Performing safety checks on the set during and after construction to make sure that it is built with safety in mind

- Performing a safety check on all lighting equipment
- Ensuring that there are first aid kits and fire extinguishers available in the construction space and wherever else they may be needed

Duties and Responsibilities of a Producer

The role of producer is perhaps best defined by a description of what he or she does. This section focuses on a producer's activities.

❖ **Populating the Production Staff**

The producer is generally responsible for every technical aspect of a production. Negotiating this responsibility usually involves delegating tasks to as many other people as can be convinced to volunteer. These other people become the production staff. Since work on a show commonly starts at the very beginning of a term, the producer must work to fill the production staff in the term before the show is to be staged. This is the producer's first – and potentially most difficult – task. It is important to note that if a producer cannot find someone to fill a particular production position, he or she must then personally take on the responsibility of that position.

It is preferable to fill the production staff list before auditions, in part because students frequently hold production positions and perform in the same production. If the production list is already complete before auditions, then the director will already be aware of a source of potentially conflicting obligations.

Populating the production staff can be a tricky business. While most producers would typically prefer to fill all of the production positions with experienced individuals who have worked on other productions, this is not always possible. The producer will normally work with experienced persons, project students, and new students who have never before worked on a Masque production, all at the same time.

Project students and those with production experience generally bring a level of independence to the production. Sufficiency students in particular typically come to a production staff having already been involved in at least one Masque production before now attempting to earn significant academic credit by working on another. Inexperienced students working in technical positions, however, occasionally require personal assistance to become acquainted with their roles. This is where the idea of a mentor comes in. A mentor is another person who has held a particular production position before and has agreed to help a new student along and walk him or her through the particular position. Mentors may be added to the production staff for just about any production position (the most noted exception being that of the producer, and thus the

need for this Handbook). If either the producer or the student holding the production position feels the need for personal assistance, then it is up to the producer to find someone willing to mentor.

The producer is also responsible for making sure that every member of the production staff in need of a script has a copy. This may entail ordering extra copies of the script or making use of the printing services in the basement of Boynton Hall.

❖ **Running Production Meetings**

After the production staff has been collected, if all production positions are filled the producer's primary occupation is simply to make sure that each and every person fulfills the duties and obligations of his or her position in a timely fashion. One of the most common ways to do this is to hold weekly production meetings.

A production meeting is a gathering of the producer and everyone who has a position within the production (except actors). These meetings must be held at least weekly with more meetings occurring at the producer's discretion. Production meetings are the producer's chance to meet with all of his or her staff so as to elicit updates on progress and to discuss what still needs to be done and how much time is left in which to do it. In these meetings the producer gets to find out how all of his or her staff is doing and what, if any, problems they may be facing. Production meetings are essential as they may be the only time a producer sees certain members of the staff before tech week.

Following are some key things to keep in mind when running a production meeting:

- Always start on time. Everyone is very busy and typically has somewhere to be after the production meeting, so do not make them wait. It is better to start on-time and catch-up after the meeting with whomever showed up late.
- Try to make everything understandable. Not everyone on your production staff may be experienced. If you use terminology they do not understand they will get confused. Some people never speak up about their confusion, so strive to be personal and accessible and to communicate without jargon.
- Keep the production meetings efficient. Do not allow yourself to get sidetracked or to lose focus. Try to keep conversation strictly pertaining to the production.

The more others get sidetracked, the longer the meeting becomes. There is plenty of time to socialize and joke around after the meeting.

- Direct nonessential commentary to the parties to whom it pertains. If a person holding a production position mentions a problem in his or her update and others immediately begin to toss around potential solutions, ask that the discussion be held after the major business of the production meeting has concluded. For example, if the master carpenter is looking for sources of materials and someone knows where to get particularly inexpensive plywood, that person should be asked to approach you or the master carpenter after the meeting. This way the production meeting does not digress into an active discussion on who has the best prices for lumber.

❖ **Solving problems**

Inevitably the operations of a production are not perfectly smooth and problems do occur. Some of these problems are of a technical nature (for example, difficulty finding a particular costume piece or acquiring a certain piece of lighting equipment) while others may be personal (for example, conflicting personalities between two production staff members who commonly interact). It is the producer's job to smooth out these problems as quickly as possible, for the show must go on. Since a member of the production could encounter a problem at any time, it is necessary that the producer establish open lines of communication with all of the production staff. At the first production meeting the producer should have a contact list already prepared with everyone's e-mail address, and at least the producer's phone number. This contact list should be made available to all of the production staff. While it is possible that this may lead to some trivial phone calls, this list will ensure that, when a serious problem does occur, the producer can be informed about it immediately.

Documents and Forms

This section contains information about some of the documents which the SM is likely to encounter, including:

- What each document is,
- Who assembles/distributes it, and
- How and when the producer interacts with it.

❖ **Production Staff Contact Sheet**

This sheet contains contact information (generally e-mail addresses and telephone numbers) for all members of the production staff. It is one of the first documents the producer must assemble. It is the producer's duty to track down the information needed to populate the list and to make the list available to members of the cast, preferably by the time of the first production meeting. The stage manager of the show is responsible for assembling and distributing the Rehearsal Staff Contact Sheet – a similar document containing contact information for all persons who are expected to be present at rehearsals. A blank template which can be used for either contact sheet is included at the end of this Handbook.

❖ **Production Agreement**

The production agreement is essentially a contract which is signed by a member of the production staff to acknowledge acceptance of his or her responsibilities to the production. The agreement states clearly what is expected of the person and also lists some important dates, such as particular deadlines and the dates of production meetings, tech rehearsals, and performances. If a producer chooses to make use of this form, he or she should present it to all members of the production staff to be discussed, read-over, and signed at the first production meeting. A blank template of a production agreement is included in the Appendix. This template was adapted from a form created by WPI student James G. Nichols for his 2001 MQP titled *Producing Academic Theatre*.

❖ **Academic Project Forms (ISPs)**

These are forms which document the progress of a person who is participating in the production for academic credit. Each project student is responsible for keeping and maintaining his or her own form. The only usual interaction the producer has with these forms is that he or she may need to sign them, in the capacity of the project student's

supervisor, upon the completion of the project (i.e. the production). Sometimes a person holding another managerial role in the production (such as the stage manager or the director) is asked to sign the form, so the producer may never even see the document for a given project student. The most common form of this type is the ISP Form, kept by students performing an Independent Study Project. ISP Forms require the project student to list all the time he or she has spent working for the production. In the case of an ISP, you should make sure to review this list before giving your signature to determine whether or not the student is likely to have actually worked all the hours reported.

❖ **Detailed Budget Forms**

While the production manager is the person in charge of handling the flow of money, the producer can greatly assist the production manager by requiring the heads of each department (lighting, sound, costumes and props, etc.) to present records of their expected and actual production-related expenditures. The detailed budget form is comprised by a list of items to be bought, the quantity of each which is required, the price of one individual item, and the total price for each list item (quantity multiplied by individual price). The amount of money requested is then totaled at the bottom of the form. The producer and production manager present detailed budget forms to department heads at the first production meeting and ask that the department heads tally the items they wish to acquire for the production and how much each would cost. At the following production meeting, the department heads present their forms for budget approval or revision. (The production manager is responsible for either approving the budget or working with the department head to reduce unfeasible requests.) Another blank copy of the same detailed budget form may subsequently be used to list items which have been bought and money which has been spent, for the sake of record keeping. All budget forms are to be turned in to the production manager by the end of the production. A blank template of a detailed budget form is included in the Appendix.

Tips / Do's and Don'ts

- The trick to running a production meeting lies in having an agenda prepared before the meeting. Have a list of the things you need to talk about written out before you get up in front of the assembled production staff to speak.
- Make sure that notes of the production meeting (a.k.a. minutes) are taken and recorded. Later, you or somebody else may need to refer to these notes for anything that was missed or forgotten.
- Keep in mind the inflexible deadline of opening night. The producer must ensure that everything that needs to get done by the production staff is done in a timely fashion and definitely complete before opening night.
- Keep constant tabs on the progress of your production staff. A thirty second phone call or two-line e-mail can sometimes communicate very important information which should not wait until the next production meeting.
- The producer does not have to know everything, but he or she does need to know how to find everything. Make a point of familiarizing yourself with all the resources at your disposal, and seek new ones in areas with which you are not familiar.
- Be able to confess your ignorance, but know where to turn for answers. Sometimes people will ask you questions which you can not – and perhaps should not – answer. It is better to admit that you do not know everything and point to other people who can help than to try to answer a question you are not completely sure about and run the risk of causing future complications.
- Keep in mind that your responsibility as a producer is all-encompassing. Everything difficult encountered by a member of the production staff could become your problem, so you must be prepared to step in to any situation to help find a solution.

Appendix – Document Templates

The following pages contain blank templates of some of the forms described in the Documents and Forms section. This includes a contact sheet, a two-page production agreement, and a detailed budget form.

Production Agreement

Name: _____

[please print all information clearly so that it can be easily read]

E-mail: _____ Phone #: _____

WPI mailbox #: _____ Status: _____

[position in the WPI community]

Production Position: _____ Project: ISP / Suff / IQP / MQP / none

[circle one]

In order to hold a position in this production you must:

- Be available for the nights of performances, which are _____, _____, and _____
- Have no evening conflicts whatsoever during production week (the week immediately preceding the first performance)
- Attend the first read through, on _____
- Stay after the final performance to help with strike until it is over

Your production responsibilities will include, but not be limited to, the following:

People that can answer your questions include:

The producer: _____ Your mentor: _____

_____ : _____ : _____

[next page]

A few things to keep in mind:

- The director is in charge of the production and has the final say on all aspects of the production.
- The producer, your immediate supervisor, is responsible to see that you complete your work in an efficient and timely manner that is acceptable to the director.
- Specifically if you are completing an academic project:
 - Think of the producer as your TA.
 - In order to fulfill his or her responsibilities, the producer can reassign activities and replace staff members as needed.
 - There is an established protocol between your advisor and the producer for removal of project students from the production. Don't let things come to that.
- A tremendous group effort is involved in putting together a theatrical production. Don't lose sight of that just because you may be working in apparent isolation.
- No matter what your reasons for being involved with the production, the producer, the director, and everyone else involved assumes that you are here purely for the sake of the art and adhere to the dictum, "Performance is its own reward."

In signing below, you acknowledge that you have read all of the above and agree to accept the stated responsibilities.

_____ Date: _____
[you, member of the production staff]

_____ Date: _____
[the producer]

SIGN BOTH COPIES; RETURN TO THE PRODUCER AND KEEP THE OTHER FOR YOUR RECORDS

Detailed Budget Form

Detailed Budget Form	Date:
	Page: _____ of _____
Production:	Form by:
Division requesting funds:	Position:

Item Description	Used By	Qty	Item Price	Total Price
				Total Requested:

For Producer/Production Manager Only:

Budget approved by:	Date:	Amount approved:
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V. Discussion

In this chapter of the report, the IQP team presents the sum total of its findings over the course of four terms of work. Information about the environment in which WPI stage managers and producers operate is presented in Section V.A. Section V.B illustrates the ways in which the activities of stage managers and producers in Masque productions differ from those in the professional world. Section V.C is composed of discussions of how the IQP team's experiences may differ from those of any other given WPI stage management or production team. Section V.C culminates in a series of case studies which detail a number of lessons learned from particularly notable experiences. The WPI Stage Manager's Handbook and the WPI Producer's Handbook were derived from the information presented in this discussion chapter.

A. Introduction to Theatre at WPI

WPI supports a rich theatre community currently composed of five active performance organizations. These include three officially-recognized groups which receive school funding through the Student Activities Office (SAO) and two other unofficial and independently-funded groups. The recognized groups include Masque; the Rho Kappa cast of Alpha Psi Omega (abbreviated as AΨO or AYO); and Student Comedy Productions (SCP), which is an umbrella organization for the three groups Guerrilla Improv (GI), Kilroy, and Empty Set (which is most often denoted by the mathematical symbol for a set containing no elements, i.e. an empty set: {}). The two unofficial groups are M.W. Repertory Theatre Company, Etcetera (most often referred to as MW Rep) and Sunburns Theatre Company. Each of these organizations occupies a particular niche in the campus theatre scene, and together they make for a vibrant artistic community.

The first theatre group to be established on the WPI campus was Masque, WPI's largest theatre organization. Masque was established in the year 1911. Masque was not the first group to stage a theatrical production at WPI, but it was the first organized group to consistently perform on campus. In 1931 the first women were cast in plays, though faculty and undergraduate women did not appear in Masque productions until the late 1960's. Until 1949, Masque staged only one performance each year.¹⁰ Currently Masque oversees three productions each year. There is a major show performed every B-term, which is run by the head of the theatre department. The second show is performed in C-term and is completely student-run and directed. The last major production is New Voices, a festival of WPI student-, faculty-, alumni-, and community member- written plays. The New Voices festival was founded by Susan Vick, Professor and Director of Drama/Theatre in the Humanities and Arts Department at WPI, in 1982.¹¹

The second officially recognized theatre group on campus is the Rho Kappa cast of Alpha Psi Omega (AΨO or AYO). AΨO is the national dramatic honor fraternity. The Rho Kappa chapter was established on the WPI campus in 1961. Each year, AΨO stages two elaborate induction ceremonies during which those persons being honored with membership in the group perform various theatrical pieces. Once a year, AΨO also

stages the 24-Hour Show, in which members take a production from conceptualization to performance on-stage in just twenty-four hours.¹²

The Student Comedy Productions umbrella organization was established in 2001. The three groups of which it is composed are Guerilla Improv (GI), Kilroy, and Empty Set ({}). Guerilla Improv was established in 1999 as a part of Masque, by Chad Pytel. Its performances feature improvisation, a totally spontaneous form of theatre, generally inspired by audience suggestions. At the end of the school year the two groups separated and GI became an officially sanctioned WPI organization under the name WPI Improv Comedy.¹³ The second group, Kilroy was established in 2001. It was then that GI and Kilroy united and changed the name WPI Improv Comedy to Student Comedy Productions. Kilroy was created as a sketch comedy group by Chad Pytel, Calvin Swaim, Willie Conrad, and Ben Sandofsky with the support of GI and Masque. Sketch comedy consists of pre-written comedic material presented by a group of actors through a mixture of live and video-recorded performances.¹⁴ The final group is Empty Set, which was established in 2003. Empty Set performed along side GI until a year after its establishment when it performed its first stand-alone production in 2004. Empty Set performances feature a combination of improvisation and sketch comedy.¹⁵

M.W. Repertory Theatre Company, Etcetera (MW Rep) was started by a group of Masque students in 1988. Its first performance was in January of 1989. While MW Rep is not financially supported by WPI through the SAO, its operations are integrally tied with those of Masque, as it uses many of the same resources, including people. Since the group receives no school funding it relies entirely on performance revenue and alumni support, along with equipment borrowed from Masque. MW Rep is principally run by WPI alumni, but students and community members are welcome to get involved. The goal of the founders of MW Rep was “to push the limits of what was normally done in the WPI theatre community.”¹⁶ Consequently, MW Rep often stages plays which are little-known to modern-day audiences. MW Rep generally stages two productions during the school year: one in A-term and one in C-term.

Sunburns Theatre Company (often referred to as, simply, “Sunburns”) was started in 1992 by a group of people looking for a theatrical outlet during the summer break from school. As with MW Rep, Sunburns is not financially supported by WPI and depends

instead on performance revenue, alumni support, and occasionally equipment borrowed from Masque. Sunburns is also predominantly alumni-run and open to the WPI community. Helene Andersson, one of the original founders, describes herself as "one of the people who thought it would be a good idea to take some old New Voices plays and do them again during the summer."¹⁷ Since then, Sunburns has featured a mixture of WPI-original, mainstream, and little-known works during its summer performances.

A large percentage of the theatre community is involved in more than one of the above organizations, but nearly all participants are members of Masque. As the oldest and largest theatre organization on campus, Masque has the greatest influence in WPI theatre, and to a certain extent it acts as an umbrella organization for all the other groups. For these reasons, the IQP team chose to focus its attentions on Masque and its productions.

1. Organizational Structure of Masque

Members of Masque include students, faculty, alumni, and community members. The following, which was taken directly from the Masque Constitution describes the membership of Masque:

*Membership is open to all WPI students and members of the WPI community. Masque does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, age, sexual orientation, disability, veteran status, marital status or national origin. The officers of Masque and the faculty advisor shall determine who is a member of Masque. The officers of Masque and the faculty advisor may not remove a member from the membership rolls without a two-thirds vote of the active members.*¹¹

Masque's standing rule is that if a person would like to join the club all he or she has to do is start to attend the weekly meetings and actively take part in a production. Students can receive academic credit for working on any given Masque production if they pursue it through the proper channels, but their default status is that of volunteer.¹¹

There is a wide diversity among the people involved in Masque. As suggested by the excerpt above, Masque includes people of different races, creeds, colors, religions, ages, sexual orientations, disabilities, marital statuses and national origins. The following

quote from the Masque website may be the best way to describe members of Masque. “Masque members represent a wide variety of the WPI population. They come from all corners of our fine Institution.”¹¹

Members of any given production crew invariably interact with the Masque Officers, so it is important to the current discussion to establish who can be an officer and what each officer’s job entails. Officers of Masque include the President, VP Master Carpenter, VP Master Electrician, VP Properties Manager, VP Publicity Coordinator, Treasurer, Secretary, Webmaster, Masquot, and Student Government Representative. No individual may hold more than one office at a time. All active members of Masque are eligible to serve as an officer. The four Vice Presidents serve as advisors to those individuals holding production positions for a particular play in addition to any further duties. In the following descriptions, italicized font indicates text which comes directly from the Masque Constitution, and for certain positions, other important information has been appended in non-italicized text:¹¹

- **President** - *The President shall preside over all meetings, unless unable to do so, and shall perform the duties of such an office. The President shall have direct control over the entire organization, the other officers of the club being directly responsible to him/her. The President shall be a member ex-officio of all committees. The President is responsible for the C-term show, either personally or through an appointed representative.*¹¹
- **VP Master Carpenter** - *In addition to advising on the construction of all staging, the VP-Master Carpenter is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the Masque Scene Shop. This includes, but is not limited to, cleaning and repair of all tools, organizing all storage areas, ensuring safe working areas and the construction of any items not normally used in a performance. The Master Carpenter is also responsible for seeing that an up to date inventory of all staging is kept and properly maintained.*¹¹ The VP-MC is always present in the scene shop during the striking of a show.
- **VP Master Electrician** - *The official liaison between Masque and Lens and Lights. The Master Electrician is responsible for submitting work orders for*

lighting and sound requests in a timely fashion. He/she also serves to advise any lighting and audio designers on the principles of theatre lighting and sound, should such advice be needed.¹¹ The VP-ME is always present at the striking of the lights.

- **VP Properties Manager** - Responsible for maintaining and organizing the Props Closet. The Properties Manager is responsible for seeing that an up to date inventory of all props is kept and properly maintained. The Properties Manager also serves to advise other students in the methods of creating and procuring props.¹¹
- **VP Publicity Coordinator** - Shall advise on the printing of tickets, programs and posters. The Publicity Coordinator shall have the charge of all club publicity not relating to a specific play or collection of plays. This shall include making contacts within various publications, including but not limited to the local newspaper, TechNews. The Publicity Coordinator shall also ensure a reasonable level of participation by Masque in all school activities fairs and other related projects.¹¹
- **Treasurer** - The Treasurer shall keep clear records of all transactions, both from the petty cash box and from the account with the WPI Student Activities Office. The Treasurer must authorize all these transactions. The Treasurer shall have the charge of the receipts from the sale of tickets. The Treasurer shall be responsible for drafting the yearly budgets requests and for distributing this budget amongst all the events that Masque produces in that academic year. The Treasurer shall defend the budget request before OCFC. Should any Masque production require a request for additional funds from SGA, the Treasurer should be party to this request.¹¹ The Treasurer is present during strike to collect receipts for reimbursement of materials bought for the production.
- **Secretary** - The Secretary shall act as recording and corresponding secretary and perform the general duties of a secretary. The Secretary shall keep the minutes of all meetings, both general and officers'. The Secretary shall post notices of every meeting along with any other general announcements he/she

deems necessary. The Secretary is responsible for the timely maintenance of the mailing list, membership list and web page.¹¹

- **Webmaster** - *The Webmaster shall maintain the Masque website. The Webmaster shall ensure that the officer contact information is up to date. The Webmaster shall post the weekly Masque meeting minutes on the website. The Webmaster shall update information on current or upcoming shows or alternatively, provide the link to such a page. The Webmaster shall also be responsible for the acquisition and care of any necessary computer equipment.¹¹*
- **Masquot** – The Masquot is responsible for performing a short piece at each of Masque's weekly meetings. The Masquot prepares these pieces beforehand, frequently developing comedic stories from personal experiences. The Masquot's time in front of the assemblage, which comes after all current business has been announced and discussed, is often the highlight of each meeting.

2. Locations of Importance

As will be discussed in Section V.A, there are many different types of people that contribute to Masque. Without a place to perform, however, none of them would be able to exhibit their work.

This section consists of a discussion of the spaces in which Masque performs shows, as well as some other important places that are essential to the club. Alden Hall's Great Hall and a number of other places inside Alden have been vital in the staging of a great number of productions. The Little Theatre is a new addition to the spaces available to Masque, and it promises to be the organization's new base of operations. One of Masque's first performance spaces, Riley Commons, is still used by the group today, although in very different ways than it has been.

a. Alden Hall

The construction of Alden Memorial Auditorium was made possible by the George I. Alden Trust. The hall was completed and opened in 1940. The hall sits on the

hill between Stanford Riley Hall and West Street. Entering through the north entrance of the building brings a person directly into the Great Hall auditorium. The Great Hall is an open hall with stained glass depicting scenes from American history. There is a stage on one end of the hall and a balcony at the other. Behind the stage are dressing rooms and a Green Room. The remainder of the building originally housed offices; the basement level was home to the school's general library. Currently the offices are occupied by music professors; the basement houses music classrooms and practice rooms. The sub-basement contains the Lens and Lights closet and the Masque scene shop.¹⁸

Until the beginning of the 2005-2006 school year, Alden was the principal home of WPI's performing arts and theatrical performances. Many of the comedy groups on campus still use the hall, and the Hall is still used for musical performances, but the larger theatrical groups, such as MW Rep and Masque, have now turned to the Little Theatre as their primary performance space.

i. The Great Hall

The Great Hall of Alden Hall has historically been a very convenient and versatile space for theatrical performances. The building was designed to house the arts, and consequently the Great Hall exhibits good overall acoustic properties. There are also many lighting possibilities in Alden Hall. The high ceiling is equipped with heavy hooks that are able to support weighty light-supporting trusses. Above the stage are batons that are certified to hold a substantial amount of weight. There is no permanent lighting or sound equipment in the Hall, however. All such equipment used during performances must be rented from WPI's Lens and Lights Club. Because this valuable equipment is rented, all floor equipment must be packed away and stored at the end of each night of performance and setup again at the beginning of the next day of performance. One advantage of the Great Hall is its size. The hall is very long and therefore can hold large audiences. During the New Voices Festival, the average audience size has historically been approximately three hundred people per performance, which can be easily accommodated in the Hall. The most significant disadvantage of the Great Hall, however, is that it is not particularly well suited to theatrical performances because its high ceilings make it difficult for actors to adequately project their voices.

ii. The Scene Shop

The subbasement of Alden Hall is where the Scene Shop is located. The Scene Shop is the domain of the Master Carpenter. This is where everything that is set-related is built and stored. The Scene Shop is the location of many tools (both handheld and table-top), paint, painting equipment, flats, spare wood, etc. The work that occurs here is mostly preliminary work, such as painting and putting small sections of the set together before full construction on site at the performance space itself. Inside the Scene Shop is another key room to Masque, the Props Closet. It is filled with both properties and costumes that the club can go through during every performance before deciding that it may be necessary to purchase a new prop or costume.

iii. The Green Room

Another room in Alden Hall is the Green Room, located behind the stage. The Green Room acts as any green room should, as a rehearsal area and a space to commune. Although Masque has moved its performances to the Little Theatre, the club still uses the Alden Green Room for its weekly meetings and as a rehearsal space when more than one performance is being rehearsed at the same time. The Alden Green Room is dedicated to Kim Bauman, a WPI theatre alumna who died young of leukemia.

b. The Little Theatre

The Little Theatre is another important theatre performance space. It was renovated during the 2004-2005 school year and opened in the fall of 2005. The space was first built in 1927 in the basement of Riley dormitory, and it originally housed several offices and rooms. The Little Theatre space was known as the service wing. Later the space was turned into The Goat's Head Pub. At this time alcohol, among other things, was sold here. It was closed in April 1979 when Massachusetts increased the drinking age from eighteen to twenty-one. Some time thereafter, it became Gompei's Place, or as it was referred to, Gompei's Pizza. After that was closed down the space became storage until 2004 when it was cleaned out to be renovated into the theatre.¹⁹

The Little Theatre is a black box theatre. There are 87 fixed seats arranged in a small stadium style arrangement along the north and west walls. The windows are

equipped with light-blocking shades. In the northeast corner there is a Lighting Booth, and the floor below is a green room, referred to by members of the club as the “Little Green Room,” which is partitioned with curtains so as to provide dressing spaces. The main entrance to the Little Theatre is located off the same vestibule as Riley Commons.¹⁹

The Little Theatre opened in the fall of 2005 with the Masque production, *New Works for a New Theatre*. Since that time many other groups have performed in the space including: MWRep, Alpha Psi Omega, and some of the Student Comedy Productions groups on campus.

The Little Theatre has advantages and disadvantages when compared with Alden Hall. The space is a much more intimate setting, so each audience has an easier time seeing the play. However, with only a limited amount of seating and little room for additional seating it will not hold as large an audience as Alden Hall. The intimacy does create a good environment for sound effects. Sound does not need to be projected as far and therefore only needs minimal amplification. Projection of the actor’s voices is also better because of the audience’s proximity and the low ceiling. Just below the ceiling, a permanent fixture of pipes arranged into a grid pattern of squares three feet on a side supports lights and any projection or other special effect equipment. One disadvantage of the lights being so low is that fact that they become very hot the longer they are on and increase the heat on the actor. Because of this they must be hung over the grid, which can cause difficulty positioning and focusing the lights. The low ceiling gives no option to hang trusses, as in Alden Hall, which can increase the distance between the actors and the lights.

i. The Lighting Booth

The Lighting Booth is located in the southwest corner of the Little Theatre. This Booth is controlled primarily by the Master Electrician. All technical aspects of a show can be controlled from this one central location. The Booth therefore also becomes the realm of the Stage Manager during each performance. This also makes it easy for the ME to make sure that everything having to do with power is set up and the operators have everything that they need. The booth is where all the technical equipment is housed. This permanent equipment includes lighting and sound boards, dimmer rack, an open intercom

system (referred to as the KGB), etc. There is also room for other technical equipment to be set up and run—projections, for example. This equipment is owned by the Little Theatre, and as a result there is little reason to rent from an outside source. The Booth is kept locked whenever it is not in use so that equipment can be left as-is with no fear of anyone tampering.

ii. The Alpha Psi Omega Green Room

The Alpha Psi Omega Green Room is used like the Alden Green Room as a rehearsal space and a space for actors during performances. While Alden has actual dressing rooms aside from its green room, the AYO Green Room doubles as one massive dressing room, partitioned off by curtains. The Alden Green Room is still used for the Masque meetings because it is a good deal larger than the Little Theatre's and there is more seating available.

c. Riley Commons

Riley Commons is located across from the Little Theatre and as such is used in conjunction with the theatre during performances. Until recently Riley Commons was used as MW Rep's principal performance space. Masque has not used this space for a performance since Alden Hall was built in 1940.¹⁹ Since the Little Theatre's opening in the fall of 2005, Riley Commons has been used as a café-type area during performances. A refreshments table is set up in the hall, and there is plenty of room for audience members to walk around, stretch and eat before and after the play as well as during intermission. Ticket sales have also been located in Riley Commons for some of the performances. At the Little Theatre's Gala opening event, the Commons was adorned with posters and images of some of WPI theatre's accomplishments. During this the room was decorated and information on all of the current theatre organizations was available. In the future, during the New Voice 24 Festival there is a plan to create another decorated area where theatre alumni will be honored for their many theatre achievements after college.

d. Other Spaces of Interest

Along with all these important locations, Masque occasionally uses classrooms around campus and some rooms in the campus center as rehearsal spaces. This is done most frequently during D-term, when the club prepares for the New Voices Festival. Arrangements to reserve these spaces for rehearsals are made through the Campus Center and Events Office in the Campus Center.

3. Organizational Structure of a Masque Production

This section consists of descriptions of all of the off-stage positions within a production and lists of their responsibilities. Two figures are also presented to illustrate how each of these production positions interacts with the others and to whom the person holding each position is responsible. It is important to note that occasionally one person may have multiple positions within a production (for example, an actor who is also the master carpenter) and as such will be responsible to multiple parties.

The following graphics depict the chains of interactions within a production staff. A double line connecting production positions indicates that the position which is placed lower in the web interacts with and reports to the position placed higher in the web. A single line represents that the two positions interact with each other but neither reports to the other. (Single-line interactions are omitted from the first web for the sake of clarity.) For the sake of simplicity, any position depicted within the web represents both that position and its crew (i.e. master carpenter and set crew are both represented by "master carpenter"). Crew members, however, report first to whoever is in charge of their area of work (i.e. the lighting crew reports to the master electrician).

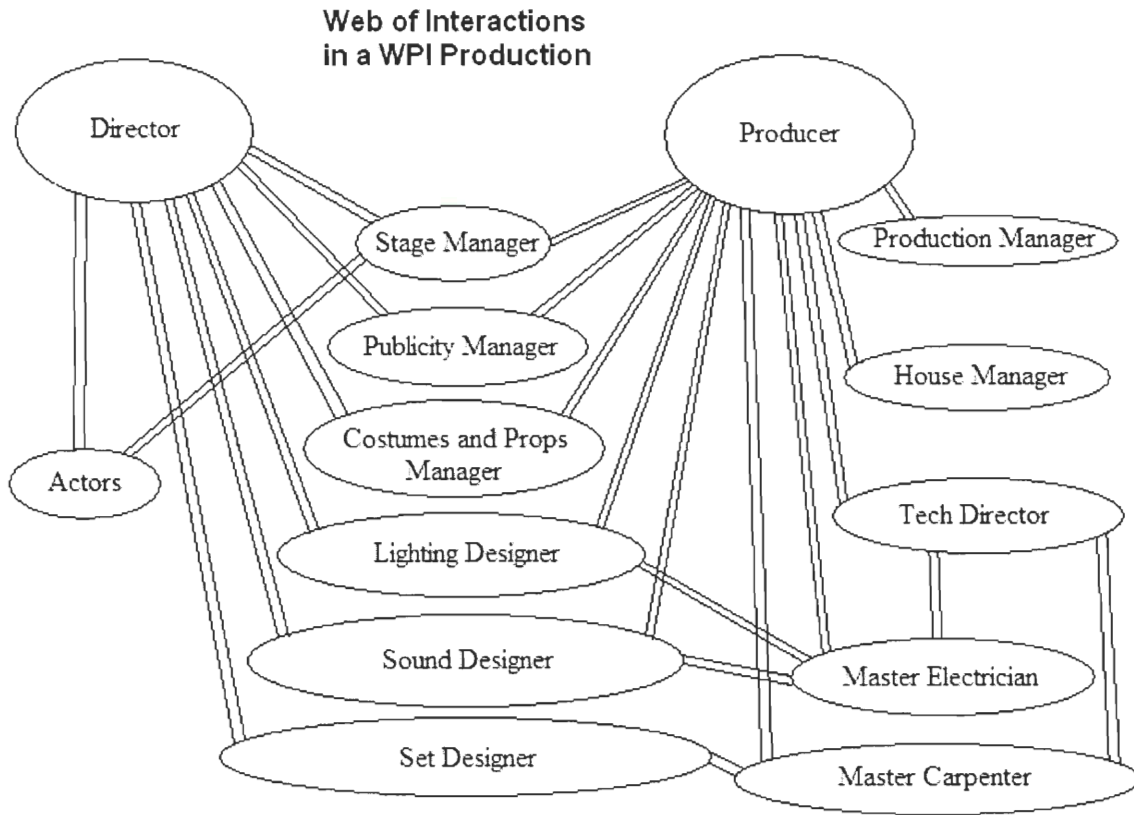


Figure 1 - Web Detailing Interactions in a WPI Production, Featuring the Producer and Director as Principal Leaders

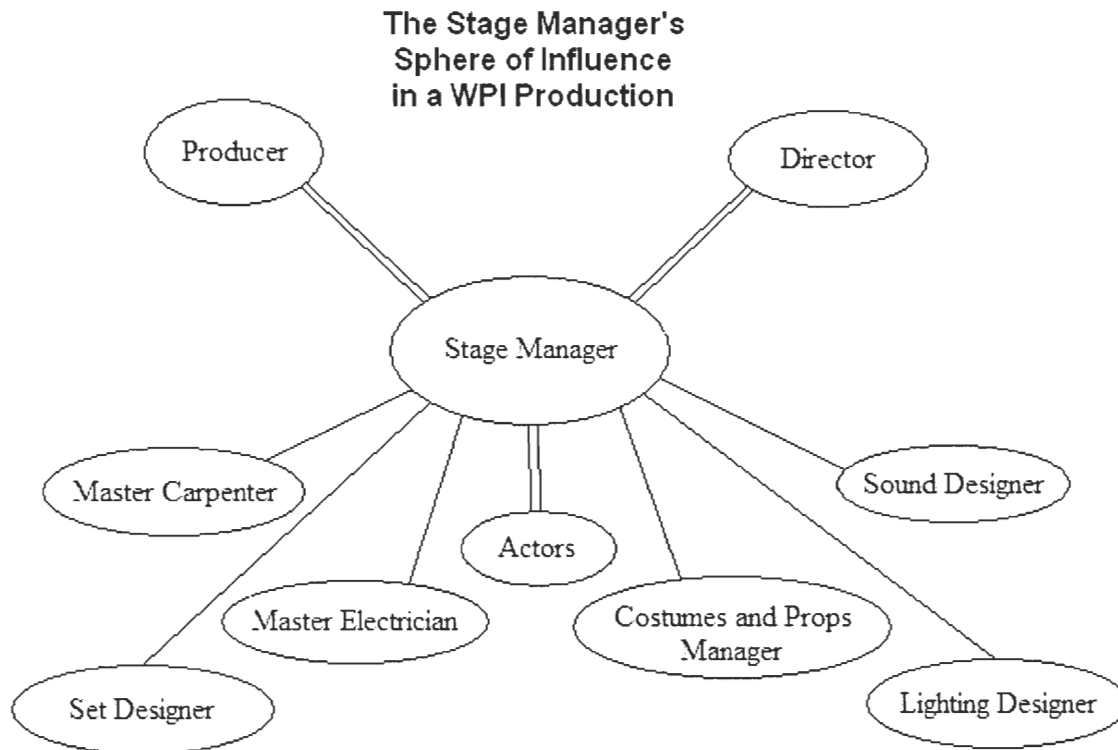


Figure 2 - Web Detailing Interactions in a WPI Production, Featuring the Stage Manager

a. Producer

The producer is the taskmaster for the rest of the production staff, and as such he or she starts working before anyone else involved with the production. The producer's duties are as follows:

- Populating the production staff
- Distributing scripts to all those involved
- Conducting weekly production meetings with the production staff
- Maintaining open lines of communication with the production staff outside of production meetings
- Finding solutions to technical and personal, problems that occur within the production staff
- Ensuring that all of the production staffs' duties are completed before opening night

b. Director

The director is the creative control of the show and holds the final say on all creative aspects of the show. The director's duties include:

- Creating the rehearsal schedule
- Running all rehearsals
- Meeting with all of the designers to finalize and approve all designs. It is the director's prerogative to order things changed within those designs at any time if he or she deems it necessary.

c. Stage Manager

The stage manager manages the rehearsal space of the show and takes an integral role in the production. The stage manager's duties include:

- Opening up the rehearsal space one half hour before the rehearsal is due to start
- Checking attendance at every rehearsal and contacting anyone late for rehearsal
- Taking notes from the director during rehearsals regarding all staging, lights, sound, costumes, props and other special technical aspects of the show
- In the absence of a dramaturg, the stage manager will also take line notes
- Placing all props in their proper spaces before each performance and putting them away after each performance
- Calling all technical cues during the show
- Locking up the performance space after every performance or rehearsal

d. Production Manager

The production manager takes care of the finances for the show. The production manager is responsible for:

- Properly managing the budget for the show
- Allotting money as needed to appropriate members of the production staff
- Taking the minutes at all production meetings
- Assisting the producer with other aspects of his or her position as requested

e. Publicity Manager

The publicity manager's job is to make sure that word gets out about the show so that there will be an audience. While the ways in which this is accomplished are limited only by the publicity manager's creativity, common tasks include:

- Meeting with the producer and director to go over the intended publicity plan
- Posting fliers in high-traffic areas on campus
- Posting fliers in off-campus student hang-outs
- Chalking in front of dorms
- E-mailing en masse the WPI student body, faculty, and alumni and/or certain smaller groups therein
- Maintaining the reservation line
- Arranging to have tickets printed and reserved as appropriate
- Coordinating with the producer to create the program

f. Costumes and Props Manager

The costumes and props manager is responsible for the wardrobe and properties used in a show. He or she is responsible for:

- Obtaining as many required costumes and props as possible from the Props Closet (in with the Scene Shop in Alden Hall)
- Making any required costumes or props that cannot be found in the Props Closet
- Buying any costumes or props which cannot be made
- Coordinating with the stage manager to make sure costumes and props are properly stored and maintained

g. Lighting Designer (LD)

The lighting designer's job is to create a guideline for the arrangement of lights for the show. The lighting designer's job requires:

- Meeting with the director to discuss themes and special effects he or she wants to see in the lights
- Creating a viable lighting design

- Working with the master electrician to implement the design

h. Sound Designer

The sound designer's job is to acquire or create sound effects and recordings to be used in the show. The sound designer's job entails:

- Meeting with the director to discuss themes and special effects he or she wants to hear in the production
- Searching collections of music and sound effects for applicable sound clips
- Creating unfindable sound clips or seeking out substitutes
- Operating the sound equipment during performances

i. Set Designer (SD)

The set designer's job is to create the guideline that the master carpenter will use for the creation of the set. This entails:

- Meeting with the director to discuss what he or she wants to see in the set
- Creating a viable scenic and set design
- Working with the master carpenter to build the set

j. Master Electrician (ME)

The master electrician is responsible for working with the electrical components of a production. This job entails:

- Making sure that all of the equipment needing electricity (including the lighting board, sound equipment, special set pieces, etc.) has access to it
- Working with a team to arrange, hang, and focus all lights according to the lighting designer's direction
- Writing all of the lighting cues specified by the lighting designer
- Operating the light board during tech week and the actual performances

k. Master Carpenter (MC)

The Master Carpenter is accountable for the construction of the set according to the set design. This job's demands include:

- Working with the producer to coordinate a crew to build the set by the deadline provided by the producer
- Ensuring that the set created is safe for the actors to perform on
- Maintaining a clean and safe working environment within the performance space and the scene shop

l. House Manager

The house manager oversees the space occupied by audience members before they enter the theatre. The specifics of this job include:

- Managing the ushers and box office during all performance nights
- Ensuring that all spaces traveled by audience members are cleaned off and swept or vacuumed before all performances. (This includes seating areas and the stairs leading up to them, café, and – at least when working in the Little Theatre – the stage itself.)
- Opening the doors to the public on performance nights
- Managing the café during intermission

m. Tech Director

The tech director is in charge of safety in the performance space. This job requires an experienced, conscientious individual and entails:

- Being present during any set build or light hanging events to ensure that everyone is taking the correct safety precautions
- Performing safety checks on the set during and after construction to make sure that it is built with safety in mind
- Performing a safety check on all lighting equipment
- Ensuring that there are first aid kits and fire extinguishers available in the construction space and wherever else they may be needed

B. Professional vs. WPI Theatre

The professional theatre world and the WPI theatre world are alike in many respects but have their share of differences. The IQP team feels that it is important to understand the differences in the roles held by stage managers and producers in either realm. These things are of great import to this project in particular because the head of the theatre department would like WPI theatre to become more professional now that the school has a new performance space devoted solely to theatre arts. Since the Handbooks produced by the team could have a strong influence in future productions, the team has worked to incorporate in them elements of professionalism.

Though the teams work is geared to helping WPI theatre become more professional, it is important to remember that not everything can be the same in both realms. The structure and methodologies of WPI theatre have developed over the decades to become in some ways be very different from those of the professional world. This section of the report focuses on those differences.

1. Stage Management Team

This section concentrates on the differences and similarities between the professional stage manager's duties and the WPI stage manager's duties.

In the professional world the stage manager is the big shot of the stage. He or she is one of the first to be hired by the production manager. The stage manager's first job, once hired, is to pick up and start looking through the script.²⁰ The stage manager uses the script to create plots for each of the other technical departments. These plots consist of cue lists for lighting and sound, initial list of costumes and props needed, and a description of the set.¹ All these things can be found in the staging notes that the playwright has written into the play. This is the first major difference between the professional world and WPI. At WPI, a SM does not make the plots for all the departments. This is the responsibility of the designers that are appointed by the producer. Also, obtaining the script and making sure that all the actors and production positions get a copy, is the responsibility of the WPI producer.

Next a professional stage manager is responsible for discussing with the director the scheduling of the rehearsals and the first read-through of the play. At WPI, depending on the director, scheduling issues might already be taken care of – handled by the director alone. The job of the SM, then, is just to make sure that the production staff and the actors are adequately exposed to the appropriate schedules. The WPI director also determines the rehearsal schedule and usually reminds the actors in person at the end of each rehearsal when the next one is and any other important dates that are coming up, including when the actors are supposed to have their lines memorized.

Perhaps the most important job of the stage manager, is the creation and handling of the prompt book. Some common elements of all prompt books, whether they are for a professional production or a college production, include:

- Title Page
- List of cast/characters and scenes
- A contact sheet
- Picture and/or ground plan of each set
- A copy of the script printed on only one side of each page

A professional prompt book will also include department plots, a copy of the program,¹ and all schedules.²⁰ The prompt book is used throughout the production process and should be updated frequently, with cues drawn in on the non-printed side of the script, opposite to their occurrence in the play. This book is what the SM will make all his or her cue calls from during the actual performance.

The script in the prompt book should be one sided so that the blank page opposite the play page may be used as a space on which to write all notes. These notes include staging, cues, items of import to select departments, and line notes. All these things are included in both WPI prompt scripts and professional prompt scripts. The final prompt script and prompt book should be kept as neat and well organized as possible so that, in the event that the SM is for some reason unable to call a show, others will not find the prompt book indecipherable.

As previously mentioned, the SM is the big shot of the stage. His or her word is second only to the director's. The stage manager should be the first to the rehearsal space to open it for the actors, and he or she should be the last one to leave each night. When

the SM gets to the rehearsal space, he or she (and his or her team) should make sure everything is set up for the rehearsal. The rehearsal set should be in place as should all working props, if there are any. Throughout the rehearsal, the stage manager should be focused on the prompt book and make note of anything the director says pertaining to any of the production departments. Once rehearsal is over he or she will make sure that everything is put away in its proper place. The stage manager then makes sure all doors are securely locked before leaving for the night.¹

The SM in a professional theatre rehearsal typically makes announcements about the following day's rehearsal and any appointments of which the actors need to be aware. The SM may also go over line notes with the director.¹ At WPI the director will make any and all announcements and the line notes are normally e-mailed out to the actors. Alternatively, according to the director's preference, line notes are sometimes discussed at the beginning of the next rehearsal.

In both the professional world and at WPI the SM is responsible for keeping track of the props once they have been acquired by the Props Manager. It is important to note that in the professional world, props are acquired fast and by different means than WPI. They are acquired faster due to the fact that there are separate props and costume managers, while at WPI the person responsible for props is also responsible for costumes. Also, in professional theatre many props are borrowed from other local theatres or businesses, while at WPI all the props are either already owned by Masque, are made, or are bought outright.¹

The biggest difference between professional theatre and WPI theatre is the rules each has to follow. In the professional world SMs need to make sure that all Equity rules are adhered to during rehearsal and productions. The SM needs to mail many things to Actor's Equity, the union for professional actors and stage managers, before the production, else the company could be in danger of having its production canceled by the union.¹ The rules are not as strict at WPI. The school has certain rules that all its clubs and organizations need to follow for the safety of all. The directors, producers, and SMs may also have some rules they expect the people under them to follow, but nothing that, if broken, could result in a legal battle. Professional SMs need to be very careful with their rules or that could happen to them and the company for whom they work.

2. Production Team

Many of the responsibilities held by a producer at WPI are allotted in the professional realm to another position, the production manager, and the reverse is also true. The two positions – producer and production manager – are closely related managerial positions in both professional theatre and WPI theatre. For this reason, the team decided to investigate both positions, which will be collectively referred to in this document as “the production team” of a given show. Textual research canvassed both positions, and for Masque’s C-term 2006 production of *Much Ado About Nothing*, two team members acted in the capacity of co-producers while the third became the show’s production manager.

In the professional world the production manager’s first task is to hire the production staff.¹ At WPI the majority of this job is done by the producer(s) and the production manager plays a very minor role in the process. At WPI the production manager’s principal job is to properly manage the budget for the show. This entails reviewing and approving or rejecting all general and detailed budgets proposed by the heads of each technical department; ensuring that there is an amount of money set aside for emergency purposes; and keeping track of each department’s expenditures to make sure that the production does not go over budget. In the professional theatre world, all these budgeting tasks are handled by the show’s producer. The professional production manager must make sure there is enough money to pay the cast and crew and have enough money to pay for materials needed for the production.¹

In the event that the production appears to be running over budget, the WPI production manager consults the VP Treasurer of Masque to see if the club can supply the production with additional funds. A Masque production is funded by the Masque budget, which is divided among its three annual shows. Masque itself receives money from the WPI Student Activities Office (SAO), like all WPI organizations, and also gets some of its funding from the Institute’s theatre department. A professional performance receives its money from previous performances, outside investors, and other sponsors. This leaves the producer of a given show in a tighter spot if the production appears to be going over budget.

The WPI production manager may also be responsible for taking minutes at production meetings; making the minutes available to the producer; and helping the producer with certain aspects of his or her job, including populating the production staff, as requested to do so.

During light hanging, set build, and other aspects of the preparation phase of a production, professional production managers take on responsibilities which at WPI are delegated to the technical director. These include informing the company and staff about safety issues and potential hazards on and off stage and making sure that all equipment is safe and used properly.¹

C. The IQP Team's Experience vs. the Typical WPI Experience

The IQP team stepped into the roles of stage managers for the B term 2005 production and producers for the C term 2006 production knowing things would not be the same as a typical WPI production, for a number of reasons. The following section deals with how the IQP team's experiences may have differed from those of a typical WPI stage manager or producer.

On particularly important point to note is that the team's research and experience principally concerns productions which only feature one show at a time, as opposed to festivals in which a number of shows are being produced simultaneously. Consequently, the Handbooks may or may not be useable as outlines for stage management and production team position in the New Voices Festival. In New Voices there is a stage manager for every show as well as a festival stage manager; and the producer must worry about seeing to the needs of all the plays, which usually number in the mid-teens – certainly not just one. The activities of the stage management and production teams in a festival setting are beyond the scope of the current IQP.

1. Stage Management Team

The first and most important factor which defined the team's experiences in the B-term 2005 production of *New Works for a New Theatre* was that each member had dual roles in the production. Two were also actors and the third was also the production's master electrician, in addition to their positions on the stage management team. Each person had to divide his or her time so as to fulfill obligations for both roles he or she held.

The nature of this production was different from an ordinary play. *New Works for a New Theatre* was actually two separate plays staged in tandem with an intermission between so as to mimic a two-act play. This enabled two team members to act in either play while at the same time heading the stage management team of the other. This dictated an interesting schedule for the members of the IQP team. Rehearsals were also arranged to occur in tandem in the same space (the Little Theatre), rather than

simultaneously in different rehearsal spaces. Thus the actors in the team needed to be ready to act right after or right before they completed their SM duties each night.

New Works also featured an unusual abundance of persons available to work on stage management issues. There were, as stated above, three principal SMs for the production – one primary SM for each production and one swing stage manager. The swing stage manager attended both rehearsals to back up the stage management crew. There were also two ASMs (one for each play) and three dramaturgs (one for each play and a third overseeing). Each show therefore had two SMs, an ASM, and at least one dramaturg present during each rehearsal to perform all the duties which would normally be accounted for by just one SM and one ASM.

Tasks generally allotted to the stage management team during rehearsals include taking line notes, department notes, cue notes, staging notes, and attendance; maintaining order and quiet; calling breaks; and timing scenes and/or acts. In *New Works*, the dramaturgs were responsible for line notes, which normally take up a good deal of the SM's attention. The actors, wary of the director's particular operating methodologies, generally knew to keep as quiet and orderly as possible, so the SMs did not have to worry about maintaining order. Taking attendance only ever occurs at the beginning of the rehearsal so that did not offer a significant challenge. Breaks are normally ten minutes and no one is allowed to leave the premises, so the task of corralling actors in those times was hardly an issue. Also, the timing of scenes/acts is only important in later performances due to the fact that in early rehearsals the director is still stopping the actors all the time and going back and forth in a scene. While the principal SM could always concentrate on taking notes in the prompt book, at least one member of the stage management team for each show was often left with little to do.

Another major difference between the IQP team's experience as stage managers and the normal experience of a WPI stage manager was the addition of a position called the production stage manager (PSM). Normally, the stage manager will remain throughout the entirety of the production, from the first read-through to the final night of performance. However, the dual roles of the team members did not allow for this, and the PSM position was created. Once production week started, the stage managers handed off their duties and materials to the PSM. The ASMs stayed on as helpers to the PSM.

The foreknowledge of this transfer required the IQP stage managers to avoid using any form of short-hand which, while it might have been understandable to themselves, would be unintelligible to the PSM. Also it did not allow the team to experience a stage manager's in-performance activities, namely calling the show.

Another job that the team did not have to perform that a normal stage manager would, was props handling. Generally, a WPI SM's job includes making sure that all props are put into place at the beginning of each rehearsal or production and put away at the end. In this production, props had not been completely collected until the very beginning of production week, at which point the team had already handed its stage management responsibilities over to the PSM and the ASMs. This task was overseen by the ASMs during production week

2. Production Team

The primary difference between the IQP team's experiences as the production team of the C-term 2006 production of *Much Ado About Nothing* and the experiences of a typical WPI production team were that two people took on the role of the producer. Aside from this, the co-producers together fulfilled all of the normal duties of a WPI producer, and the production manager operated just as in any other WPI production, as described in Section V.B.2 above. Some difficulties which arose from the practice of having two co-producers are discussed in the case study detailed in Section V.C.3.I.A.1.e below.

3. Case studies

In this section, the IQP team has recorded and detailed a number of the situations it encountered while taking on positions in the stage management team in B-term 2005 and the production team in C-term 2006. These experiences have been organized as case studies in order to detail some of the valuable lessons the team learned from its activities. While it may not be likely for any future WPI stage manager or producer to encounter a situation which is directly comparable to those featured here, these case studies present a view of the kind of unusual circumstances which any stage manager or producer might encounter.

a. Concerning an Actor with an Attendance Problem

The following situation was encountered by one member of the IQP team as he took the position of stage manager for *Prime Time Crime: Teal Version*, part of *New Works for a New Theatre* in B-term 2005.

Theatre productions are characterized by an inflexible publication deadline, meaning that there comes a point at which, with an audience waiting, there is no asking for an extension or suggesting a make-up performance—the show simply must go on.²¹ Because of this, time can easily become the scarcest resource of any given production. Every aspect of the production therefore becomes time-sensitive. Some of the deadlines which characterize this time sensitivity are defined in terms of days and weeks while others are defined in terms of hours and minutes.

One of the most common deadlines is referred to as “call.” This is the time on a given day when a person or a group of people is expected to be present and ready to do some kind of work for the production. Call is generally associated with actors and is used most frequently in reference to rehearsals and show nights. For example, on nights of performances, actors’ call is generally at least an hour before the show begins, which allows time for the actors to get into costume and put on makeup. Setting call prior to the anticipated start time of rehearsal or performance also allows the stage manager time to take a tally of the people who need to be present for the rehearsal or show to go on.

For *New Works for a New Theatre*, actors were asked to arrive ten minutes early to every rehearsal – in other words, actors’ call was always ten minutes before each rehearsal began. Many considered this an informal suggestion, but still took the hint that they needed to arrive prior to scheduled start time. One actress, however – call her Adrienne – frequently missed not only call but also the rehearsal start time.

After the third or fourth time Adrienne arrived late, the stage manager approached the director of the show about the actress’s recurring tardiness. In WPI theatre, while the stage manager keeps track of attendance, it is generally considered the director’s responsibility to handle disciplinary issues with actors, at least when they involve recurring transgressions. The director of the show then spoke with Adrienne about her attendance in private and informed the stage manager in confidence of that communication.

In the week following this reprimand, Adrienne had an excused absence from the first hour of a given rehearsal. She had approached her stage manager approximately two weeks in advance, aware that she had conflicting obligations on this particular night. As per established procedure, the stage manager had noted this, informed the director, and contacted the designated understudy actress to make sure that there would be someone present on that night to fill in.

One person who had been left out of the chain of communication, however, was the assistant director – call her Laura. Laura was a headstrong type, proud of the fact that she, as a student, had managed find herself in the position of assistant director of the B-term show, which is traditionally directed by the faculty head of the theatre department. Laura was anxious to continually prove, in whatever way possible, that she was worthy of the role. Laura had noted Adrienne’s recurring tardiness but had not been informed that Adrienne had been confronted about it. Laura had also not been informed that Adrienne was excused from the first hour of rehearsal on this particular night.

When Adrienne arrived an hour late on the night of her excused tardiness, she was immediately accosted by Laura, who had decided to take it upon herself to dispense a reprimand. Laura launched into a heated tirade about Adrienne’s rudeness to the production and how unacceptable her behavior had been. This confrontation happened in the AYO green room, downstairs from the progressing rehearsal—a decidedly more public location than that of Adrienne’s private conference with the director. Adrienne, who had been assured that her tardiness on this night was excused and acceptable, became staunchly defensive in the face of Laura’s onslaught, and the situation quickly took on an explosive tenor. Luckily, the stage manager who had excused Adrienne’s tardiness happened to be close at hand and managed to become aware of situation in time to dispel it. The stage manager stepped into the conversation at Adrienne’s beckoning and explained to Laura what was going on. Laura then apologized to Adrienne and returned to the rehearsal upstairs.

In this situation, three people were at fault. Adrienne was wrong to have let her tardiness become an issue. Laura was wrong to have taken it upon herself to chastise an actor without acquiring all the necessary information. Finally, the stage manager had failed to inform all the appropriate parties about a special circumstance.

This is an example of the sort of drama which can happen behind stage in any given production. Instances of this kind of clash – between a willful person who has developed a sense of ownership and a personal affinity for the production and a more lax person whose actions might sometimes seem to hinder the production’s progress – are all too common. While no one can predict such situations, the IQP team would like to suggest that the persons in charge can help to avoid their occurrence by simply maintaining appropriate lines of communication.

b. Concerning a Set Designer

This case study comes from team’s personal experience in the capacity of the production team for Masque’s C-term 2006 production of *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Work for a theatre show at WPI always begins at the end of the term before the term in which the show is slated to perform. The reasoning for this is that there is a lot of work to be done for a show and some of the more creative jobs can be done over the term break. One of these jobs is that of the scenic designer. The scenic designer’s job requires the extra time as his or her job is design the intended set for the show and have it approved by the director. This job may take some time as revisions to a scenic design are usually required. The scenic designer for the C term show is Betty Daniels. Betty was a bubbly person who, while she has never designed a set before, is confident she can do it especially with the aid of a mentor. Now Betty is a very active person on campus, she works for the school paper as well as being involved in several other student groups on campus. When worries are expressed that she may be over extending herself, her reply is “Don’t worry, I can get it all done.”

The break in-between terms passes by and everyone involved with the show comes back eager to work on the production. However, when the master carpenter for the show contacts Betty about the scenic design, the reply comes back that she is still working on it, but will have it ready for the first production meeting. While this is an annoyance to the master carpenter, Catherine, as she and her mentor were eager to start set construction as soon as possible; waiting until the first production meeting seems reasonable. When the time for the production meeting comes around however, the master carpenter learns that Betty could not make it as she has a newspaper meeting at

the same time and has sent her mentor to the meeting to deliver the scenic design. Unfortunately, the file containing the scenic design that Betty had sent to her mentor was corrupted and so there is no scenic design for Catherine to use to start construction. Catherine informs her mentor of the problem, and he e-mails Betty asking her to redraw the scenic design in MS Paint and send it to him. Four days later there is no reply from Betty, and Catherine and her mentor are getting impatient as Betty's delay is cutting into their construction time. Catherine e-mails Betty once again and schedules a meeting with her in the campus center to go over whatever Betty has for a scenic design. At this point, there are only two weeks left in which Catherine and her mentor can build the set so they are willing to take whatever they can get and begin construction. When Catherine and her mentor sat down with Betty they found that the design was not drawn to scale, and was incomplete as Betty had to point out where pieces of the set would go that were not drawn in. After conferring with Betty and finding out what was missing from the design, Catherine and her mentor went to work buying the materials and building the set knowing that their time was now limited to two weeks to complete the set. Now production week has started and there are only four days until opening night, Catherine and her mentor still have a little work left to do on the set but they know they can finish in time and are sitting down in the last production meeting confident that the set will be ready. A short while into the meeting, Betty comes in and approaches Catherine's mentor with a question. "Why don't you guys have the extra seating bank up over there?" To which Catherine's mentor inquires as to which extra seating bank Betty is talking about. Betty then shows Catherine's mentor how there is an extra seating bank drawn into the scenic design that had never been mentioned earlier. Now Catherine and her mentor have to go and rent seating platforms from the Campus Events office to put into the theatre before the dress rehearsal in two days. Fortunately there are platforms nearby that Events say they can use and everything gets set up in time. But now, Betty does not understand why Catherine and her mentor are upset with her. In her mind she has done the job she was given and Catherine should not be upset.

c. Concerning a Lighting Designer

This case study comes from team's personal experience when it acted in the capacity of the production team for Masque's C-term 2006 production of *Much Ado About Nothing*.

The Lighting Designer

The lighting designer is the person who designs the set up of the lights for a performance. He or she is the creative aspects of the lights. In C-term 2006 the IQP team had a very competent lighting designer. He was a member of the WPI Lens and Lights club, so he was very knowledgeable about lights and how they work. He was a freshman at WPI and had been doing theatre lighting since he was in High School. He was punctual in getting in his designs to be approved by the director and his general budget to get approved by the production manager. He was on top of things and always aware that he was on a schedule and needed to get everything done by a certain time.

Lens and Lights (LNL)

Lens and Lights is a club that specializes in setting up and running lighting, sound, and projection equipment. If they are unable to provide the equipment needed by the person requesting their services they can contact companies that will have the equipment. All of these transactions must go through their club.

The LNL Technical Director (TD)

The Technical Director of LNL is a person who is knowledgeable in how to fix electrical lighting and sound equipment. He is one of their officers, but he is not the officer that normally checks with outside companies to get quotes for a rental. This job is normally taken care of by the LNL Vice President.

The Problem

The rule for a production is that no one may buy or pay for anything until his or her general and detailed budgets are approved by the production manager. To hand in an accurate detailed budget for the C-term production, the lighting designer needed to get a quote from LNL about how much a rental would cost along with any other equipment needed.

The lighting designer knew this and requested a quote from LNL. When he went back to them to get the quote he was informed that instead of getting a quote, the LNL

TD went ahead and ordered the equipment and had told the company to ship the order. This would not have been a problem due to the fact that the rental cost was relatively small, and once the situation was explained to the production manager the rental would have been approved, but the rental price that was the problem. It was the shipping costs that made the order so ridiculous. The rental cost was \$84, but the shipping cost was over \$200.

The Solution

In this situation the lighting designer followed the chain of command when informing the production staff about the problem. He went to the production manager and informed her of the problem. At this point the production manager was the person who would come up with a solution. She informed the lighting designer to either have the LNL Technical Director cancel the entire order or see if he could just cancel the shipping so that someone could go and pick up the equipment. The lighting designer was told to inform the TD that these were the only two acceptable solutions.

In the end the TD was able to cancel the shipping on the order and it was picked up by the lighting designer and his mentor.

No Solution?

If the lighting designer had come back to the production manager saying that the TD refused to either cancel the whole order or cancel the shipping then the production manager would have had to talk to the TD herself. If that had still not worked she would have moved up to the next person in the chain of command and brought the problem to the producer's attention.

d. Concerning Adding Seating on a Performance Night

The following study focuses on the night of the final performance of *Much Ado About Nothing*.

It has been said that the producer is responsible for every aspect of a production. The hugeness of this responsibility is precisely why the producer spends so much time seeking out and coordinating assistants to whom some parts of the responsibility can be delegated. Ultimately the producer is responsible, however, and he or she holds the final word. Consequently the producer is the person to whom all members of the production

staff appeal when they encounter difficult situations. This means that the producer may occasionally be called upon to make time-sensitive decisions which have immediate impact on the play or on how others (namely the audience members) experience it.

In the hour or so preceding each performance of *Much Ado*, Sean would bounce around between the AYO green room, the café and the front of the house, checking in here and there. This habit likely had less to do with any real or imagined need to keep these areas under constant supervision and more to do with Sean's need to release the nervous energy which he always feels before a performance, whether or not he is going to be one of the people on stage. He did get a little stage time for *Much Ado*, actually, because each night just prior to the start of the show he would come before the audience to greet them and deliver the conventional address requesting that audience members turn off their cell phones, informing them that food would be sold in Riley Commons during the intermission, about the location of the bathrooms, etcetera. Sean looked forward to these moments as his small opportunity to contribute to the performance aspect of the production, to get people comfortable with their environment and maybe eke out a laugh or two. Thus, right up to the very moment each show began, Sean was a very present and very accessible producer.

Weather forecasters had predicted that a snowstorm would hit on the night of the third and final performance. In spite of the forecast, there were still a fairly high number of ticket reservations. Noting this number, the house manager, Jean, approached Sean about ten or fifteen minutes before the house opened to tell him they might have a fairly large audience and to suggest that he might want to arrange some more chairs in various locations so as to accommodate more people. As Jean went back to prepare to open the house, Sean took Jean's advice and started to look into additional locations to add seating, enlisting the help of any tech crew passerby who had a suggestion. At first there did not seem to be all that much space left open, and only a half dozen chairs or so were brought up from the stacks of extras downstairs. These were placed in some unusual locations – at the top of the stair cases leading into the permanent seating fixtures, in corners around the column and large ventilation tube at the southeastern corner of the stage, at the ends of rows of permanently fixed chairs. This was all happening as people started to pour in.

The biggest issue of the night centered around one particular location which had been identified as a potential spot to drop another half dozen or so chairs. It was thought that a new row could be added in front of an embankment of seating which had been added in the northeastern corner of the theatre specifically for this show before the first performance.

Initially the suggested additional row of chairs seemed like a great way to provide more seats, but then someone noted that there might be a problem with the lighting. The worry was that people sitting in chairs placed in this particular space might end up in the field of the wash lights, meaning that, during scenes which took place near that area, these audience members might effectively appear to be on stage. If that were to happen, it would be both embarrassing to the audience members in those seats and detrimental to the production because it would be a very visual distraction from what was supposed to be happening onstage. Sean appealed to those members of the tech staff who happened to be in the Booth at the time to find out if this would be an issue. The stage manager therein said that she thought that the lighting would be an issue in that area, so Sean assured her that he would not order new seats up to be placed there. He then went out and told the others who had been helping him to arrange the new chairs to nix the idea of this additional row.

As the scheduled start time of the play approached, however, it became apparent that this performance was unquestionably going to sell out – there was still a significant line at the door at the time the show had been scheduled to start. As Sean was running around between the stores of spare seats downstairs, the audience seating upstairs, and the still-packed front house, he bumped into the lighting designer, a person very familiar with the set-up of the lights. This designer, who had not been exposed to the initial decision to nix the row of seating in question, suggested that a row be added in just that location, saying that he did not think that the lighting would be a problem. Pressed by the desire to accommodate as many audience members as possible and fueled with this new information, Sean reneged on his prior statement and ordered another half dozen chairs to be brought up and arranged in a row in front of the seating embankment in the northeastern corner of the theatre.

After arranging the row, he then informed the house manager that six more seats were available. By this time, however, the house manager had already started to turn people away. There was still a line remaining – latecomers hoping that there might be a seat or two left – so the seats were indeed filled. When informed of the last addition to the seating, however, the house manager expressed marked discontent at the unfairness of letting these stragglers in when others had already been turned away. Sean, who had thought that he was doing a service for the show, was immediately disheartened, acknowledging the injustice.

To top it off, because of all this business with additional seating and latecomers, the performance did not begin until twelve minutes after its originally scheduled go time. Sean's welcoming address that evening had a decidedly less jovial air about it, beginning with an apology for anyone who had a friend who was turned away at the door and for the delay before the show.

The producer must be ready to deal with difficult situations which arise. Doing so can mean making a decision between alternative options presented by the party which posed the problem, or it can mean redirecting the question to a more knowledgeable person. It is immensely important that a producer be able to admit when he or she lacks the knowledge or experience to be able to adequately handle a situation. At the same time, it is important that the producer have a working knowledge of who can be appealed to for information on any particular matter.

In this case, Sean should have appealed to house manager before making the call to bring up chairs for a final additional row of seating. This line of communication was lacking and the person who had the most relevant information was left out of the loop.

As a final note, this experience could involve a more common occurrence than some of the other case studies presented in this section. For that reason, the IQP team feels that it is important to suggest that future WPI producers discuss this possibility with their house managers and develop a plan of action to be implemented in the case of an over-full house.

e. Concerning the Practice of Co-Producing

This case study concerns the team's experiences as the production team for Masque's C-term 2006 production of *Much Ado About Nothing*.

It was initially anticipated that the employment of two co-producers would be beneficial – the co-producers would be able to work together to accomplish certain tasks and then could divide duties and responsibilities as appropriate when necessary. In the end, however, the team encountered some systematic difficulties stemming from this practice.

In order to effectively work on a team (of any size), it is necessary for each individual member of the team to share the same understanding of the group's goals and how they can be achieved. Often it is necessary to have strong lines of communication between each individual team member. That understanding and those lines of communication were for the most part missing between the IQP team producers.

In populating the production staff (i.e. finding qualified people to accept technical production positions), both co-producers and the third IQP team member (who was to become the production manager) worked together effectively. After that, however, oversight duties were divided among the team members such that certain departments would report to one co-producer and other departments would report to the other co-producer. This seemed to diminish each co-producer's workload, allowing each to operate under the assumption that many aspects of the production would be taken care of without need for his attention. One significantly detrimental result of this practice, however, was that neither producer ended up having a view of the overall progress of the production.

When the first day of production week arrived, one co-producer became aware for the first time that certain aspects of the production, which had been allocated to the other co-producer's sphere of influence, were lacking and behind schedule. The costume managers still needed to meet with the cast to make sure that the wardrobe items they had acquired fit and were acceptable. The scenic designer, set designer, and master carpenter had yet to finish construction and painting of the set. The first co-producer then took it upon himself to assume the other's duties and immediately coordinated a meeting of the costume managers with the cast and worked to assemble a crew to help complete the set

with speed. This producer would effectually take on all producer's duties during production week and the performances. Production week thus became an intensely stressful experience for this producer. The stress was aggravated by the feeling that a lot of what he was doing "should have been done already" and also by the knowledge that at least part of his frustration was due to his previous faulty assumption that all aspects of the production had been progressing adequately.

In splitting oversight duties, the co-producers had reduced the scope of their concern without reducing the scope of their responsibility. Each co-producer could be held accountable for every aspect of the production, and yet each was only letting himself be exposed to a few limited aspects. While the co-producers had each delegated responsibility for particular technical aspects of the production to members of the production staff, they had each abdicated responsibility between each other.

As a final note, if there had been greater communication between the two co-producers, it might have been possible to share a unified view of the production's overall progress, but this was lacking.

VI. Conclusions and Recommendations

This project involved three significant components – research, activity, and synthesis. During the research phase the team collected information from third party sources, namely textual resources and interviews. In the activity phase the team took on the production positions which it had been studying. In the synthesis phase the team reviewed its research and activities and gathered the information of greatest import to create a valuable resource for the WPI theatre community. The team's accomplishments and the project itself is therefore representative of the motto of Worcester Polytechnic Institute: *Lehr und Kunst*, Theory and Practice.

Stage managing and producing are both daunting tasks for students when attempted with little experience. The IQP team benefited from being able to research the positions before taking them on, and subsequently the team has developed a more concrete reference tool for others. It is the recommendation of the IQP team that the Handbooks it has created be popularized and made available to future stage managers and producers at WPI. This is currently scheduled to happen during an addendum to the project to be performed by team member Brieanne Murphy in A-term, 2006. The IQP team feels that these Handbooks will be a great resource in aiding future students in their tasks of stage management and production.

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Appendices

The documents included in this section provide additional evidence of the IQP team's work on this project.

A. Budget Information and Documentation

At the first production meeting of *Much Ado About Nothing*, each department head was asked to give a very rough estimate of how much he or she thought that his or her department would spend in the course of the production. The head of each department was then asked to use the next week to determine the specifics and fill out a Detailed Budget Form (which was supplied by the production team) by the time of the next production meeting. The production manager then reviewed these detailed budget forms and used a certain formula to determine how much money should be approved for each department. The production manager informed the department heads of how much money had been approved and gave them the go-ahead to start purchasing items for the show. After all departments had completed their work, the department heads were then asked to present another detailed budget sheet reviewing the expenditures they had actually accrued.

This section contains the documents used by the production manager and department heads throughout the various stages of the budgeting process described above.

1. Budget Overview

Budget C'06 Much Ado About Nothing

Budget		\$2,000	
Contingency Funds		\$500	
Total		\$1,500	
<u>Preliminary Budgets</u>		Requested:	Granted:
SET		\$750	\$562
LIGHTING		\$400	\$300
HOUSE		\$50	\$37.50
COSTUMES AND PROPS		\$300	\$225
STAGE MANAGER		\$40	\$30
SOUND		\$0	\$0
PUBLICITY		\$30	\$22.50
	Total	\$1,570	\$1,177
<u>Detailed (Approved) Budgets</u>			
SET		\$555	
LIGHTING		\$371	
HOUSE		\$64	
COSTUMES AND PROPS		\$310	
STAGE MANAGER		\$32+	
SOUND		\$0	
PUBLICITY		\$30	
	Total	\$1,362	
<u>Final Budgets</u>			
SET		\$376.49	
LIGHTING		\$307.71	
HOUSE		\$87.03	
COSTUMES AND PROPS		\$217.84	
STAGE MANAGER		\$26.48	
SOUND		\$0	
PUBLICITY		\$37.80	
	Total	\$1,053.35	
Ticket and Café Sales		\$955	
Net Total Spent		\$98.35	

2. Detailed Budgets

Detailed Budget Form

		Date:	
		Page: 1	of 1
Production: Much Ado About Nothing		Form by: [REDACTED]	
Division requesting funds: Costumes and Props		Position: C+P Manager	

Item Description	Used By	Qty	Item Price	Total Price
Fabric white/black/beige	Men	19	\$10	\$190
Masks	the dance scene	10	\$2	\$20
Dresses	Hero, Beatrice	2	\$20	\$40
Skirts	Ursula, Margaret	2	\$10	\$20
Blouses	Ursula, Margaret	2	\$10	\$20
Pants and shoes for [REDACTED]	Antonio	2 itm	\$20	\$20
Total Requested:				\$310

Detailed Budget Form

		Date:	1/18/2006
		Page:	1 of 1
Production: Much Ado About Nothing		Form by:	██████████
Division requesting funds:	Publicity	Position:	Publicity Manager

Item Description	Used By	Qty	Item Price	Total Price
tickets	house	375	\$0.48	\$7.50
Posters	theatre		?	\$20

Total Requested:	\$27.50
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Detailed Budget Form

Date:	
Page:	1 of 1
Form by:	[REDACTED]
Position:	Set Designer

Production: Much Ado About Nothing
Division requesting funds: Set

Item Description	Used By	Qty	Item Price	Total Price
Fountain	set	1		\$100
Lattice	set	2		\$30
Vines/Flowers	set			\$50
Pump	set	1		\$50
Tubing	set	1		\$20
Liner	set	1		\$200
Silicon	set			\$20
Paint	set	2		\$80
Foam	set			\$30
Lauan	set	1		\$60

Total Requested:	\$640
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Detailed Budget Form

Date:	1/18/2006		
Page:	1	of	1
Form by:	[REDACTED]		
Position:	Lighting Designer		

Production: Much Ado About Nothing
Division requesting funds: Lighting

Item Description	Used By	Qty	Item Price	Total Price
Rosco Gel	lighting	24	\$6	\$144
Rosco Gobos	lighting	6	\$10.50	\$63
%' jumper	lighting	10	\$2	\$20
10' jumper	lighting	20	\$2	\$40
Two-fer	lighting	5	\$4	\$20

Total Requested:

Detailed Budget Form

Date:	1/18/2006		
Page:	1	of	1
Production: Much Ado About Nothing	Form by: XXXXXXXXXX		
Division requesting funds: Stage Manager	Position: Stage Manager		

Item Description	Used By	Qty	Item Price	Total Price
Bottled Water	Cast and Crew	6	\$5	\$30
Total Requested:				\$30

Detailed Budget Form

Date:	1/18/2006
Page:	1 of 1
Form by:	[REDACTED]
Position:	House Manager

Production: Much Ado About Nothing
Division requesting funds: House/ Café

Item Description	Used By	Qty	Item Price	Total Price
Snacks and Drinks	café			\$36
Cleaning Products	theatre			\$6
Trim	café			\$12
Flowers/Nametags	ushers			\$10

Total Requested:	\$64
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3. Final Budgets

Final Budget Form

Performance:
Much Ado About Nothing

Page 1 of 6	Form by: [REDACTED]
Division spending funds: Costume and Props	Position: C+P Mistress

Item Description	Used By	Qty	Item Price	Total Price
Halloween outlet - police hats		2.00	9.99	\$20.98
salvation army				\$19.44
salvation army				\$20.43
goodwill				\$4.00
goodwill				\$31.91
lowes - rope				\$4.20
wal-mart				\$9.94
ac moore				\$26.44
goodwill				\$4.99
halloween outlet				\$75.51

Total Spent:	\$217.84
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Final Budget Form

Page 2 of 6	Form by: [REDACTED]
Division spending funds: Publicity	Position: Puiblicity Manager

Item Description	Used By	Qty	Item Price	Total Price
Tickets	house	375	\$0.48	\$7.80
Audition Posters	theatre	6	\$3	\$18
Show Posters	theatre	4	\$3	\$12

Total Spent: \$37.80

Final Budget Form

Page 3 of 6		Form by: [REDACTED]		
Division spending funds: Set		Position: Master Carpenter		
Item Description	Used By	Qty	Item Price	Total Price
6 oz sealer	Set	1	\$5.76	\$5.76
16 oz sealant	Set	2	\$6.44	\$12.88
16 oz foam	Set	1	\$4.97	\$4.97
luan	Set	1	\$11.95	\$11.95
black paint	Set	2	\$16.98	\$16.98
fountain	Set	1	\$139.99	\$139.99
drop clothes	Set	6	\$16.97	\$101.82
lavander flowers	Set	1	\$1.99	\$1.99
foam flower boards	Set	2	\$7.99	\$15.98
light lavender	Set	2	\$1.99	\$3.98
Bush Lavender	Set	2	\$1.99	\$3.98
Ivy	Set	3	\$3.88	\$27.16
Ivy	Set	7	\$2.99	\$8.97
Total Spent:				\$376.49

Final Budget Form

Page 4 of 6	Form by: [REDACTED]
Division spending funds: Lighting	Position: Lighting Designer

Item Description	Used By	Qty	Item Price	Total Price
Gels and Gobos	Lighting	1		\$207.75
Cable Rental	Lighting	1		\$80
Gobo Holder Rental	Lighting	4	\$2	\$8
Mirror Ball Rental	Lighting	1		\$4
Lamp Cable	Lighting	1		\$7.96

Total Spent:	\$307.71
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Final Budget Form

Page 5 of 6	Form by: [REDACTED]
Division spending funds: Stage Manager	Position: Stage Manager

Item Description	Used By	Qty	Item Price	Total Price
Poland Spring Water	Cast and Crew	2	\$5.26	\$10.52
Bottled Water	Cast and Crew	4	\$3.99	\$15.96
Total Spent:				\$26.48

Final Budget Form

Page 6 of 6	Form by: XXXXXXXXXX
Division spending funds: House	Position: House Manager

Item Description	Used By	Qty	Item Price	Total Price
Brownie Bites	Café	1	\$4.99	\$4.99
Peanut Butter Drop Cookies	Café	1	\$6.99	\$6.99
12 pk. Cupcakes	Café	1	\$4.29	\$4.29
Flowers	Café	4	\$4.99	\$19.96
Pretzels	Café	1	\$1.99	\$1.99
Soda	Café	4	\$3.70	\$12.40
Kudos	Café	1	\$2.99	\$2.99
10 pk. Minute Maid Fruit Punch	Café	1	\$2.99	\$2.99
Case of Water	Café	1	\$3.99	\$3.99
Brownie Bites	Café	1	\$3.19	\$3.19
Cookies	Café	1	\$5.49	\$5.49
Chocolate Chip Cookies	Café	1	\$2.99	\$2.99
M&M Cookies	Café	1	\$4.99	\$4.99
12 pk cookies	Café	1	\$4.49	\$4.49
Total Spent:				\$87.03

B. Production Meeting Minutes

Following are the minutes from the three production meetings, as recorded by production manager, [REDACTED].

Production Meeting Minutes January 17, 2006 8:32pm

Present: [REDACTED]

Not Present: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] – brief introduction to the meeting

Going around the room everyone introduced themselves and said what position they had.

Explanation of what is happening with Masque and MW Rep having shows in the little theatre one week apart. Strike and some production positions will be shared. There will be a strike coordinator this time.

Budget – [REDACTED] made up detailed budget sheets and gave one to the designers. They should be given back to [REDACTED] by the next production meeting. General budgets are due tonight.

Talking to the people doing costumes and props telling them we are looking for a mentor for them as we speak.

[REDACTED] will be staying after the meeting to talk to all the designers about what she wants the play to look like.

Set and lights can start being put up as soon as they get their budgets approved. She at least wants the set to be marked of ASAP. The MC and ME can be there whenever they will not hinder rehearsal.

Do not buy or start building until you get your budgets approved or you will not get reimbursed for your buy. We will thank you for donating to Masque. If you need a forward you need to talk to [REDACTED] at least three days in advance so she has time to get the money to you. Remember to save all receipts.

Lighting needs to try their hardest to use only the 90 lights we have. There was a problem last term with this issue.

Crews – please send your availability to [REDACTED] at [REDACTED]. This will help us make a schedule so that we don't have crews trying to work on top of each other.

Lighting if you have a problem talk to [REDACTED]

Costume/Props, Set and publicity bring problems to [REDACTED]

Sound and House bring problems to [REDACTED]

Now that everyone knows who they are supposed to talk to make sure you e-mail us all the time. Even for the smallest thing like you solved your problem yourself. Please tell us if you can't be at Production meetings

Meeting adjourned 8:43pm

Next meeting **January 23, 2006 8:30pm**

Production Meeting Minutes January 24, 2006 8:32pm

Present: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Not Present: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

The set design still hasn't been handed over to the director or the Master carpenter.

Detailed budgets are due tonight.

Costumes and props will have it to me by Friday. They are having trouble because they've never done it before.

Set said that she had to talk to MW Rep because we are sharing some of the costs, and will get it to me tomorrow.

Lighting has a problem. They asked for a quote from LNL and LNL just ordered the equipment before we asked them to and budgets were approved

Reminder that there is only two weeks left until production week.

Lighting has started to hang as much as they could.

Meeting adjourned 8:46pm

Next meeting **January 31, 2006 8:30pm**

Production Meeting Minutes January 31, 2006 8:32pm

Present: [REDACTED]

Not Present: [REDACTED]

Costume and Props – searched the props closet

Set – MC went shopping. The lattice and the fireplace will be carried up after this meeting. The director doesn't care if the lattice work is framed as long as it is safe. They are going to be making the fountain instead of buying it. Build will be on Saturday 10am-1pm.

Lighting – on Thursday at 930pm they will finish hanging. Friday at 3 until the Masque meeting they will be focusing and then after the meeting as long as needed. They will begin writing cues at 1pm on Saturday.

Sound – he's rented cds from the library and will be working a little 9-930 Thursday to test everything.

Budget – everyone has been approved. Stage Manager is allowed to go over due to the fact that she is buying water for the actors. If anyone finds they need to buy something not listed on their sheets they have to talk to [REDACTED] before they buy it.

Meeting adjourned 8:48pm

Final meeting **February 7, 2006 8:30pm**

06D285I

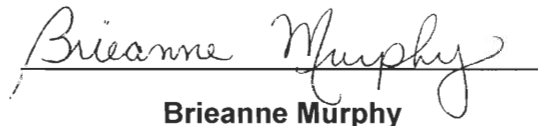
06D285I -v.2

Project Number: TH/MGT-HGV-0022

Addendum to:
**THEATRE MANAGEMENT:
PRODUCING AND STAGE MANAGING IN MASQUE**

An Interactive Qualifying Project Report
submitted to the Faculty of the
WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of Science

By


Brienne Murphy

Date: February 21, 2007

Approved:

Professor Helen G. Vassallo, Advisor

1. theatre
2. producing
3. stage management

February 22, 2007

To whom it may concern

This IQP, Addendum to Theatre Management: Producing and Stage Managing in Masque, is not in replacement of, but an addition to the previous IQP, Theatre Management: Producing and Stage Managing in Masque, completed in D-term of 2006 by Sean Cassidy and James Hanlan.

Brienne Murphy was an IQP partner of these students, but could not complete the project with them. Therefore this addendum is her completion of her IQP project.

Abstract

The goal of this project was to test and revise the Stage Manager and producer's handbooks created by Sean Cassidy and James Hanlan in the Spring of 2006. The overall results are the revised WPI Stage Manager's Handbook and the revised WPI Producer's Handbook formatted into booklets. These booklets contain a concentrated wealth of information on each position including additional information omitted by the previous team. Revision of these booklets involved the student testing each handbook, interviewing the testers and editing the handbooks. The student then printed the booklet form for each handbook and made them available to the WPI theatre community.

Acknowledgements

Professor Helen Vassallo

Thank you for letting me finish my IQP so long after the original project was completed and understanding the extenuating circumstances that made me unable to finish with the others.

Sean Cassidy

Thank you for putting up with me throughout the original IQP even though I could not finish with you. It was a pleasure and the project wouldn't have turned out as well without you.

James O. Hanlan

Thank you for letting me join your project half way through the first term. You have been a wonderful friend and this was a fantastic idea. You were the creativity behind this project. Thank you also for using the original WPI Producer's Handbook during your MQP and the feedback you gave me.

Corey Randall

Thank you for all the feedback you gave me for this, the WPI Stage Manager's Handbook. Your feedback from B-term really let me know what to emphasize and gave me a few house cleaning things to do for the handbook as well.

Also

Maureen Toohey

Linsley Kelly

Mandi Provencher

Brianne O'Neill

Alison LeFlore

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I. Introduction and Problem Statement

Although Worcester Polytechnic Institute focuses on its engineering majors there are many other majors and extracurricular activities that are just as valued. WPI has a long and rich history of theatre on campus which dates back to 1911. WPI supports two theatrical groups – Masque and Student Comedy Productions (SCP) – and houses one additional group – M.W. Repertory Theatre – which is supported by alumni and its performances. The largest, most anticipated, event in WPI theatre is the New Voices Festival, created by Professor Susan Vick. This is an annual festival sponsored by Masque.

It is important to remember that things are not always black and white. Many majors, including theatre, overlap each other in skills. For example, theatre has many areas where managerial skills are very important. These skills are seen in many of the production positions, specifically the Stage Manager and the Producer.

The addition of students with little to no experience in theatre is very common. Students frequently take the role of Stage Manager or Producer without fully knowing what is expected of them. Knowing this, students who are doing a project – either Independent Study (ISP), Sufficiency, Interactive Qualifying Project (IQP), or Major Qualifying Project (MQP) – have attempted to explain the duties of Stage Managers or Producers for many years. However, these projects are usually long and somewhat confusing. The length alone can be intimidating and detouring. Many students don't want to take the time to read the projects when they are able to ask experienced people around them.

Taking these facts into consideration an IQP team endeavored to gather and compile all the important duties and information into readily available handbooks; one for a Stage Manager and one for a Producer. The team was partially successful. The team gathered all the information and was able to create a handbook template with all the information. However, that is as far as the team had time to proceed. At the end of the project the handbooks could only be found in the middle of the IQP report. The team was not able to “field test” the handbooks, nor were they able to put them into a booklet form.

The purpose of this IQP is to finish what the previous IQP team started. The templates have been extracted from the IQP report and “field tested.” Following this the handbooks were revised and formatted into booklet form. The finished products are two useful and readily available handbooks.

II. Background

This IQP was inspired by the work of Sean Cassidy and James Hanlan entitled “Theatre Management: Producing and Stage Managing in Masque”. This IQP can be found in the Gordon Library on the Worcester Polytechnic Institute campus, located in Worcester, Massachusetts.

This IQP team endeavored to compile and condense all the information they could from previous IQP and MQP projects as well as knowledge they accumulated themselves, into information booklets. The team researched all the information from the relevant IQP and MQP theatre projects during their first term of work. During the second and third terms they took a practical approach to the problem by becoming the Stage Managers for the B term 2005 production, and the Producers of the C term 2006 production. While in these positions the team took notes on what was important for a stage manager or producer to know rather than learn by trial and error.

Meanwhile the team was taking this information and compiling it into their final report. The IQP tells a person in-depth how to be a good Stage Manager or Producer. The report is very informational for a person who knows nothing about WPI theatre. It begins by explaining the history of theatre at WPI as well as the specific groups and locations important to the WPI theatre world. The team’s focus was on only one of the many groups on campus, but the information they collected could be used in a variety of theatre groups.

The team also included some of their personal problems and solutions in the discussion section of the report. In that section the team tries to give the reader a clear understanding of the situation and how to go about trying to solve it. However, the reader must remember that every situation is different and must be dealt with in its own way.

The most important part of the Cassidy/Hanlan IQP is the “Stage Manager’s Handbook” and the “Producer’s Handbook” sections located in the center of the IQP. The team’s objective was to make these handbooks easily accessible to everyone. Although the handbooks were completed, they were not easily accessible. Unfortunately, due to their location in the middle of the IQP project the handbooks were forgotten. Most students instead hope to acquire a tiny glimpse of insight into these positions from other students.

III. Materials and Methods

Information relevant to the project was obtained in two different ways: researching relevant information from the original IQP and conducting interviews with the Producer and Stage Manager who used the handbooks during the B term 2006 production. The original handbooks were subsequently tested, removed, and revised with this information.

A. Materials

- Theatre Management: Producing and Stage Managing in Masque, Cassidy/Hanlan 2006
 - The Stage Manager's Handbook
 - The Producer's Handbook
- An Illustrated and Annotated Manual for the WPI Producer, Perkalis 1997
- Stage Management: a Practical Guide, Copley/Killner 2001.
- The Stage Manager's Handbook, Gruver/Hamilton
- Producing Academic Theatre, Nichols
- Stage Management: the Essential Handbook, Pallin 2003.

B. Interviews

- Conducted Interviews
 - James O. Hanlan
 - Corey Randall

C. Methods

- A practical test of the Stage Manager's Handbook
- A practical test of the Producer's Handbook
- Revisions and Additions to the Stage Manager's handbook
- Revisions and Additions to the Producer's handbook

IV. Results:

Stage Manager's Handbook

- The Stage Manager's Handbook (revised) printed (see back pocket)
- Sections Added to the SM handbook
 - Dry Technical Rehearsal
 - Cue to Cue
 - Technical Week
 - Strike

Stage Manager's Handbook

The Stage Manager's handbook was received well by the Stage Manager of the B-term show. He was very grateful to have it throughout the performance and often referred to it.

The handbook's most important section was reported to be the documents and forms section. There was no section that was not useful. The SM did suggest some grammatical changes in the handbook to make some concepts more understandable.

The SM found the handbook so useful that he requested that it be made available to the NV 25 SM staff. Many have not been SMs before and he believes that the basic information in the handbooks will be beneficial to them.

Producer's Handbook

- The Producer's Handbook (revised) printed (see back pocket)
- Changes made to the Producer's handbook
 - Addition to the Duties of a Producer
 - Technical Week
 - Strike
 - Additions to the web of connections
 - Additions to the descriptions section
 - Master Carpenter
 - Technical Director

Producer's Handbook

The Producer's handbook was also received with enthusiasm. The Producer of the B-term show used the handbook throughout the show and implemented many of the suggestions, such as the Producer's agreement, when working on the show.

The most important section in the Producer's handbook was Tips: Do's and Don'ts section. Another important section was the documents and forms section that contained, among other things, the Producer's Agreement. This Producer found that everything in the handbook was useful, but did suggest the addition of some material that had been omitted. This information will be integrated to the handbooks before their production.

V. Discussion

In this section of the IQP, the logic and rhythm behind the revisions to the handbooks will be explained. First, the Stage Manager's handbook will be examined and then the Producer's handbook thereafter.

The Stage Manager's Handbook

The Stage Manager's Handbook was created for the prospective students that wished to assume the role of the Stage Manager in a Masque production and had little to no experience in the role. To do this the previous team became Stage Managers themselves so that they could experience what a prospective student feels (the team had little experience as Stage Manager's themselves). The handbook was compiled as the team proceeded through the production. This was to assure that they included everything a stage manager would be unsure about.

The completed handbook was an accurate interpretation of some important information a good Stage Manager would know. There are also documents included that would be helpful to a Stage Manager as well as some quick tips.

The testing of these handbooks was done by this IQP student during the production of Our Town in B-term 2006. The Stage Manager of that production was Corey Randall. He reported that the handbook was very helpful to him during the production and that he referred to it throughout the term. Mr. Randall was already a seasoned theatre student and knew some of what was expected of a Stage Manager. He still admitted that he was unsure of how to do some tasks and this is when he used the

handbook. When asked if he liked the handbook his reply was “Yes, I found the handbook helpful. It was a good reminder for what I already knew. It cleared up a few points I was not sure about. I also learned more about my responsibilities.”

The Least Helpful Section

The success of the Stage Manager’s Handbook was very encouraging. Mr. Randall’s statement about the sections of the handbook that was least useful was that the ‘Rehearsal Report’ was an unsatisfactory layout; however, he could not give an idea for any layout he found would be more appropriate. He also stated later in the interview that he used an attendance sheet that he created himself.

This IQP student is aware that not all persons will be fond of everything in the handbook and has taken that into account when weighing the importance of the reports of these documents. These sections were subsequently not removed from the handbook for three reasons. First, is that although Mr. Randall did not like the layout of the rehearsal report he did in fact use the document and found it useful. Second, is just because Mr. Randall did not use the attendance sheet that was provided does not mean that another stage manager will not use it.

For the third reason, it is essential to recognize that every Stage Manager is different and will use things available to him differently. If tested again with another Stage Manager, these documents might be used with no complaints, and yet another might use one and not the other.

The Most Helpful Section

Mr. Randall cited these documents as what was least useful to him during the time when he was a Stage Manager. However, he also named the ‘Documents and Forms’ section of the handbook as the most useful section. He did not elaborate on this, but it is assumed that Mr. Randall said this because he used most of the forms in that section.

When commenting on the entire book, Mr. Randall explains that all the sections are useful. The section’s usefulness depends on how much experience the student has prior to taking the stage management position. To a student with no experience as a Stage Manager, but some experience as a theatre student might find the tips and explanation of a Stage Manager’s duties more useful than a student who has already been an Assistant Stage Manager.

Revisions

The handbook’s test was very encouraging, but even though the handbook is acceptable there were still areas that could be improved upon. When asked if the team missed anything that a Stage Manager should know his reply was, “I know one point of concern for me was the dry tech; I was not sure what I needed to do.”

This concern was addressed in the revisions of the SM handbook. Along with grammatical corrections three subsections were added to the Duties of a Stage Manager section; a section about the Cue to cue, Dry Technical Rehearsal, and Technical Week.

Dry Technical Rehearsal

This new section was added at the request of Mr. Randall. He said that he was unsure of what was expected of him when the time for the Dry Technical Rehearsal, or Dry Tech, came about. This is a problem for a Stage Manager because the Director will expect him or her to know what is happening, and make it happen as efficiently and quickly as possible.

The dry tech is essentially when the Director will sit with his or her assistant, the Producer, and the Stage Manager and go over the technical cues, in order of appearance, in the show with as few actors as possible. It is at this time where the Director will give the final approval of or instigate a change in any of the cues. The actors are present so that the Director will be able to visualize more clearly what they stage will look like while the acting is happening.

A Stage Manager should make sure that the actors that are needed for the dry tech are aware of when they are needed a few rehearsals before the dry tech occurs. The actors should be occasionally reminded and also called close to when it begins to make sure they will be there on time.

Cue to Cue

This section was added at the discretion of the IQP student. As dry tech was an issue with Mr. Randall and cue to cue was also a very important time in a production that occurred just prior to dry tech, this student thought it imperative to include an explanation of cue to cue for any student who had no experience as a Stage Manager. This section is quite similar to the dry tech section.

Cue to cue is when the people who are present at dry tech give the initial approval of all of the cues that are included in the show. This includes lighting, sound, and projection, if applicable. This process occurs with no actors present and allows the Director to scrutinize the cues alone before seeing them with actors.

It is important to remember that this happens directly before dry tech. Also when cue to cue is complete the SM should contact the actors to make sure they will arrive on time and dry tech can begin as soon as they are present.

Technical Week

The next subsection added to the SM handbook is the Technical Week section. A new student to the theatre scene will not understand what another student means when he or she mentions Technical week, or Tech week. Therefore, this student felt that advanced warning would aid this new student to be prepared for what is expected to be done before and during this period.

Tech week is the week of the show. It begins with cue to cue and ends with the strike of the show after the final rehearsal. The rehearsals during this week are run like they are the performance. This means that the SM will be in the booth of the theatre calling all of the cues with the board operators. The Director will only interrupt these run-throughs if something is in dire need of being corrected.

Strike

The final subsection added to the SM handbook is Strike. Many think that the end of the rehearsal is the end of the SM's job, but in fact it is only the beginning of the end. It is important for a SM to know what is expected of them during strike so that the SM and their assistant (if they have one) are able to get the job done as fast as possible.

Strike occurs as soon as the last audience member leaves the theatre after the final show. A strike in the Little Theatre should be quick and noncomplex (if all goes well). The SM's duties during strike are concurrent with the duties the SM had during the rehearsals and performances. First, the SM must gather and account for all of the props in the production. He or she should then coordinate with the Costumes and Props Manager to have them stored. Once this is completed the SM is responsible for making sure the green room is cleared of all personal belongings and cleaned. Once finished with this all the SM has left is to make sure the green room stays clean while waiting for the announcement that strike is complete.

The Producer's Handbook

The Producer's Handbook was created for the prospective students that wished to assume the role of the Producer in a Masque production and had little to no experience in the role. The previous team did this by becoming Producers so that they could experience what an inexperienced student feels (the team had little experience as Producers themselves). The handbook was compiled as the team proceeded through the production. This was to assure that they included everything a Producer would be unsure about.

The completed handbook was amassed to become a precise depiction of some important information a good Producer would know. There are also many documents that would be helpful to a Producer as well as some quick tips.

The testing of these handbooks was completed by this IQP student during the production of Our Town in B-term 2006. The Producer of that production was James Hanlan. He reported that the handbook was very helpful to him during the production and that he referred to it throughout the term. Mr. Hanlan was already a well seasoned theatre student and had assumed the role of Producer once before.

During the interview he gave very short answers to the beginning questions but the answers he did give were of good quality. When asked if he liked the handbook, his response was “Yes. I liked it.” When asked if it was useful he replied, “It was useful as a building block to base my job as Producer upon.”

The Least Helpful Section

The excellent review of the Producer’s handbook leads this student to believe that the previous IQP team included a great deal of what a Producer needs to know. However, as with the SM handbook there were minor revisions that had to be done to make the handbooks more complete.

According to Mr. Hanlan’s report, he gave no response to the question about what was the least helpful to him during the production. This is a heartening finding because this signifies that no material needs to be subtracted from the handbook, only added.

The Most Helpful Section

The Producer's handbook's most helpful sections were said to be the Tip/Do's and Don'ts section as well as the description of all the production position duties. Mr. Hanlan didn't elaborate on his answer, but also commented that he referred to the book periodically throughout the production and recommends that a Producer carry this book around in a causal sense (as in a backpack) so that it is easily accessible if needed.

Revisions

The main revisions for the Producer's handbook are additions to already existing sections and subsections. Two production position descriptions have been added onto: the Master Carpenter and the Technical Director. Another slight addition was to add two more bullet points to the Tips/Do's and Don'ts as well as to modify two others. Information was also inserted into the "Populating the Production List" subsection.

There was one full subsection that was added to the "Duties of a Producer" section of the handbook. This subsection was about the strike of the show from the Producer's vantage point.

The final revisions were to the web of connections that is located at the center of the handbooks (explained later).

Technical Week

This section was added to The Producer's Handbook so that he or she would be aware of what was required of him during this week. The Producer's job here is not too difficult if all goes according to plan, but problems can arise even on the last night of the performance, so he or she should be ready for them at all times.

Strike

The strike for a Producer is the same as the strike for a Stage Manager except for the duties that each role must take responsibility for. While the SM has smaller specific duties the Producer has more of an overseer's job.

The Producer's duties during strike are to make sure that everything that needs to happen actually happens. He or she will inspect the theatre to make sure that everything is complete before announcing the end of strike.

Revisions to the web

The last revisions that were done to The Producer's Handbook occurred not in the main book, but in the center of the book on the Web of Connections. The IQP team found it imperative to include this web in the original handbook. This is important because a Producer (and Stage Manager) should be able to see visually how they are connected to the other positions that they work with. Many people are visual learners and cannot visualize these connections in their head. These people are the target audience for this web.

The new connections that have been added to the web are that Publicity Manager talks to the House Manager; everyone has a (talking) connection to the Production Manager; and the Costumes and Props Manager talks to the actor.

VI. Conclusions and Recommendations

This addendum involved three significant components – testing, research and revisions. During the testing phase the Stage Manager, Corey Randall, and the Producer, James Hanlan, took an extracted copy of The Stage Manager and Producer’s Handbooks respectively and used them during the B-term 2006 production of Our Town. The next phase consisted of an interview with Mr. Randall and Mr. Hanlan to assess what changes that needed to be made to each handbook. This feedback was then put to use during the revisions phase. Here, the handbooks were edited as well as added to while being formatted in such a way as to allow them to be printed into a booklet.

This IQP project has been an eye opener for this IQP student. To be thrust into a position where a person has no experience can be stressful and sometimes damaging. This damage may come when a student has a bad experience in a certain production role and never want to assume the position again. Worse would be that the experience creates a bias toward theatre. This project hopes and intends to give these hopeful theatre students a positive and worthwhile experience in their production positions. Whether they are able to only take on that position once, or multiple times, it is the aspiration of this project to make these potential students as knowledgeable as possible before they assume these roles.

It is recommended that the handbooks which have been revised and formatted are made available to future Stage Managers and Producers at WPI. This will provide that future theatre students have the background that is necessary when taking on the role of Stage Manager or Producer to make them enjoyable positions for the student.

VII. References

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VIII. Appendix:

The following section contains the interviews of the Stage Manager and Producer who evaluated the handbooks during the B-term 2006 production of Our Town.

Interview with Corey Randall

WPI 2009

Stage Manager's Handbook

1. Did you like it [the handbook]?

Yes, I found the handbook helpful. It was a good reminder for what I already knew. It cleared up a few points I was not sure about. I also learned more about my responsibilities.

2. Was it useful?

It is all useful depending on your previous experience.

3. What was the most useful?

The forms provided were very useful.

4. The least [helpful]?

I did not like the layout of the rehearsal report. There was not enough space for general notes, but I did not come up with a better a layout.

5. Did we miss something?

I put some notes in the copy I had; those were all I could think of. If you have any questions about any of them feel free to ask me.

6. If so, what?

I know one point of concern for me was the dry tech; I was not sure what I needed to do.

7. Is there something in it that you really didn't need at all?

I made up my own cast roster.

8. Would you recommend that a person without experience reading it before taking the position?

Yes. It will give them a good idea of what they are getting into and also help them figure out what questions they need to ask. No matter what your experience level you will never know everything.

9. Would you suggest keeping it with you to refer to during the production?

I did refer to it as the show went through the different phases of the production. We tend to forget different bits of information and responsibilities, and need to be reminded.

10. Is there anything else you would like to say would be helpful?

It was not as useful for me as it can be for other people (especially New Voices SMs) because I had worked in the theatre on several different shows as ASM, run crew chief, and FSM.

Interview with James Hanlan

WPI 2007

Producer's Handbook

1. Did you like it[the handbook]?

Yes. I liked it.

2. Was it useful?

It was useful as a building block to base my job as producer upon.

3. What was the most useful?

Most useful: tips and definitions of everyone's duties

4. The least [helpful]?

(No response)

5. Did we miss something?

- Set properties, not addressed in book, the big ones go to Master Carpenter and the little ones go to Costumes and Props
- Additional Tech Director duty: Consult with M[aster] E[lectrician] and M[aster] C[arpenter] about how many people they will need for strike, the best way to start strike for each, basically be prepared for strike by consulting with those with stuff to strike so strike can start immediately.
- Throw in a note about populating the production staff that bribing someone with an ISP is a good way to get them on your production staff. Producers do not want to take any other job as it may well be impossible.
- [In the web of connections]
 - i. Publicity talks to House

ii. Everyone talks to Production Manager

iii. Costumes and Props talks to actors.

6. Is there something in it that you really didn't need at all?

(No response)

7. Would you recommend that a person without experience reading it before taking the position?

I strongly recommend to someone without experience.

8. Would you suggest keeping it with you to refer to during the production?

I would recommend having it on you to refer to if needed.

9. Is there anything else you would like to say would be helpful?

- My approach was in making things very personal. That worked for me because people knew I was sincere and so they actually did let me know of problems, granted they weren't perfect but I did know how things were going.
- Do your best to keep morale up within your production staff
- I set up short little meetings with all of my prod staff before our first prod meeting to make sure they knew what their job entailed and what I expected
- Communication the lifeblood of producing, you don't have to start as communication nazi. If you encounter communication problems, strictly enforce mandatory update e-mails. Make sure you know how people's personal lives are going.

- I think producers should have a small discretionary fund (\$50) so that if someone has a personal crisis/flipout in the theatre, the producer can afford to take them out for coffee and solve the problem. Coffee and cake go a long way towards making someone feel better about an upsetting situation and make them more amenable to a solution
- Something to watch out for is relationships between prod[uction] staff members, they can cause conflict