



Marblehead Little Theatre

Putting on a Show

– A guide for Producers and Directors

“Welcome to the Theater” *Applause 1970*

Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney always made it look so easy to “put on a show.” But let’s not forget how much professional help they had to make sure it all looked great the first time and every time.

You probably have yourself and a love of theatre...and maybe a couple of people willing “to help.” You may be the Producer or the Director or BOTH.

This guide was prepared to help you get a handle on the administrative side of “Putting on a Show.” It includes information and worksheets and checklist on scheduling, budgeting, and the people-ing necessary to have a successful and enjoyable theatre experience.

For thousands of years the theatre has been a source of entertainment, education and enlightenment. Since 1955 Marblehead Little Theatre and since 2006 the Firehouse Theatre have provided you, us and the community with the opportunity to learn and express the best in ourselves.

MLT provides the opportunity to experiment and grow while delivering extraordinarily high quality entertainment to our patrons. Enjoy the experience and to your delight, the audience with enjoy it along with you.

Much of what is contained in this guide is based on the “**Play Director’s Survival Kit**” by James W Rodgers and Wanda C Rodgers, and adapted to more appropriately fit our situations.

The Producer

You’re the leader of this whole project, the leader of the production team.
It’s that simple.

You may represent Marblehead Little Theatre or another organization, and you may wear multiple hats, but you’re still the big “IT.” Everything about this production is your responsibility.

What is everything? It’s everything – from hiring and overseeing the Director to scheduling auditions, rehearsal and performances to raising money to paying the bills to promoting your show to selling tickets.

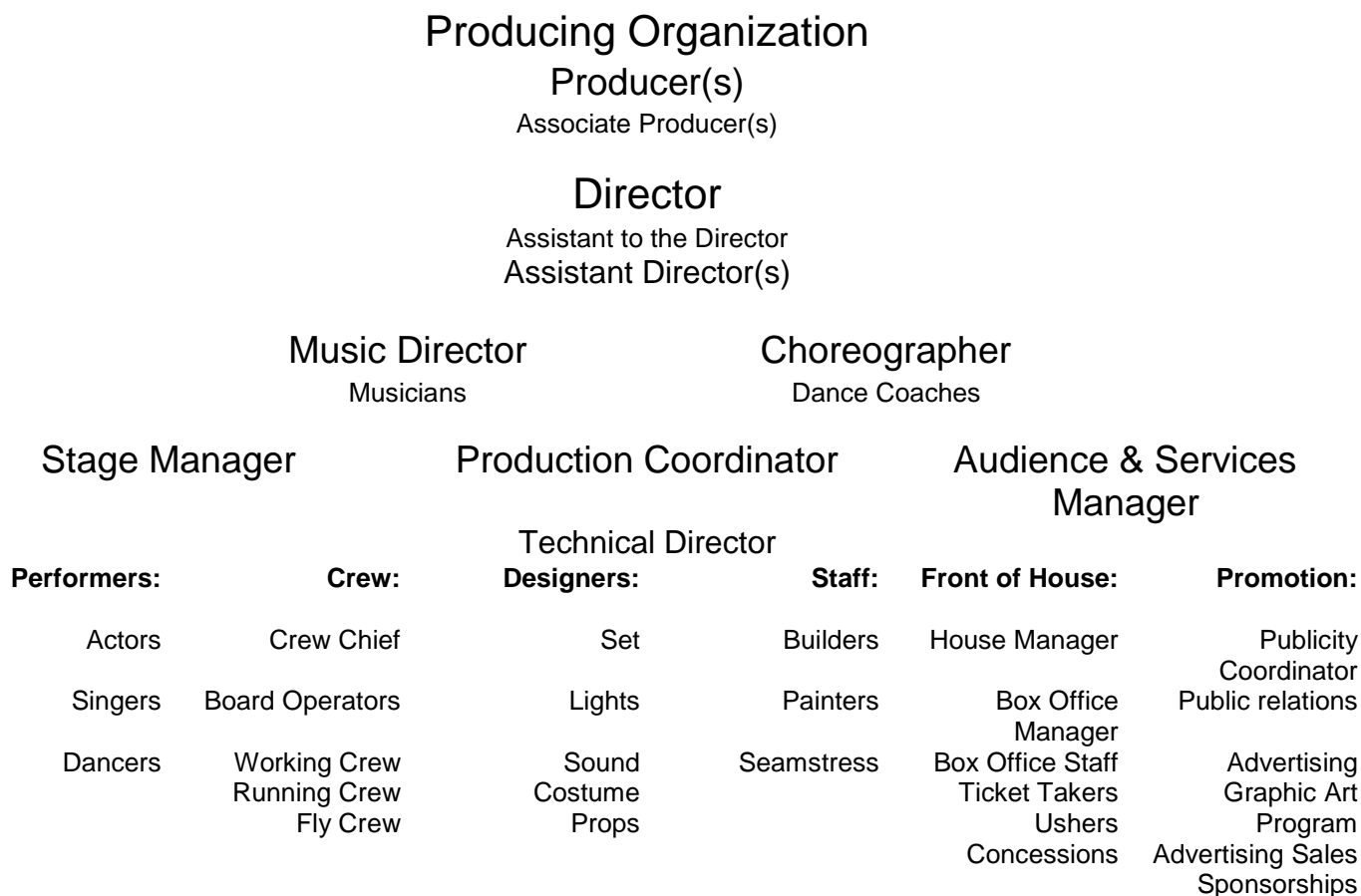
Sure hope you have lots of help!

Your production team is your lifeline to success. Recruit your team early, train them if necessary and then let them do their jobs. Your job is to help your team succeed in their jobs.

Marblehead Little Theater
 Putting on a Show – A guide for Producers and Directors
 You cannot do it all yourself and you shouldn't try. Putting on a show is so much more fun when done with a team, high performing team.

Here is a typical community theater organizational chart.

Theater Organizational Structure (typical)



That's a lot of people!

Yes, but you may not need them all. If you are doing a straight play, you won't need a Music Director or Choreographer or even musicians. For shows at the Firehouse, you would rarely need a Fly Crew, and your Ticket Taker could double as an Usher.

The point is, what you need people is people you can rely on. Here are the people you will need for every production:

1. Production Manager (Producers)
2. Director
3. Stage Manager
4. Audience & Services Manager (House Manager and Ticket Manager)

Any of these positions that you do not fill, you will have to do yourself. It's so much better to fill them.

Marblehead Little Theater

Putting on a Show – A guide for Producers and Directors

No actors? No, actors are not part of the Production Team. They might do double duty, but in their capacity as actors they are performers and not production.

Production Managers – aka, Producers

This individual(s) works closely with the Director and is where the buck stops for all things outside of the rehearsals themselves. The “Producers” are responsible include:

1. Setting and living within a budget
2. Scheduling Auditions, Rehearsals and Performances
3. Booking rehearsal and performance space
4. Obtaining rights to shows, music, graphics, etc.
5. Recruiting production staff and volunteers
6. Participate in the audition process
7. Promoting and publicizing the show
8. Observe and follow ticketing policy
9. Overseeing or setting house policies

The Director

We think we know what the Director's job is. After all, we've all been directed at one time or another. But in fact, the Director's job is perhaps the one least understood job in the theatre. The Director's job is to "turn illusion into a form of reality."

The Director brings together ideas, inspiration, intuition and enthusiasm to create a vision for their show and then they must sell that vision to their staff and actors.

We normally think of the Director as the head coach, the person who assigns roles and tells the actors what to do, where to stand and how to get there.

But the Director is so much more. This person needs to be able to deal with the day-to-day processes that includes the details of auditions, design, staging and rehearsals.

A good director has extraordinary communication skills. They are good listeners, they see and respond to body language, they are intuitive and sensitive to others and to their audience.

A good director is a multi-disciplined artist:

- They understand and can manipulate line, mass, balance, composition, light, shade and color to achieve visual meaning.
- They understand and can use rhythm, volume, pitch and tone to bring out nuances.
- They understand and how to move bodies through space to communicate both subtle meanings and complicated ideas.
- They understand how to take diverse individuals and inspire them to work together as a high performing team.

A good director knows his limitations and knows when and how to rely on others.

Stage Manager

The Stage Manager is the leading executive in charge of the form and discipline of the rehearsals and performances. This person needs to be firm but tactful, remain calm during crisis, is organized and able to resolve problems before they happen.

The specific responsibility of the Stage Manager include:

1. Preparing the Audition and Rehearsal Space

Arrive 15 minutes early – turn on lights, ventilation, heat, A/C – sweep the floor - set the space to the start of the rehearsal.

2. Take Attendance and follow up on missing actors

3. Selecting and maintaining Rehearsal Props

4. Keeping Rehearsal Running Smoothly and on Schedule

Alert the director of any scheduling issues. Keep track of times. Call for breaks.

5. Preparing and Maintaining the Prompt and Cue book

The prompt and cue book is the production bible of the show. It includes entrance , sound and light cues, blocking notes, scene changes, prop notes and running crew instructions.

6. Prompting the Actors

This includes both entrance prompts and making sure actors deliver their lines.

7. Calling cues during performances

Stage Manager's Check list

Before Rehearsals

1. Arrive 15 minute early
2. Check Ventilation and Space Temperature (Know who to call in case of a problem)
3. Sweep the floor
4. Set up space for start of rehearsal
5. Check rehearsal props
6. Check bulletin board for notes
7. Start rehearsal on time

During Rehearsals

1. Call of try to locate missing actors
2. Keep rehearsal on schedule
3. During rehearsal – Prompt actors unless otherwise informed by director
4. Record notes, blocking, cues in prompt book

After Rehearsals

1. Collect and store rehearsal props
2. Turn off all lights and other equipment
3. Secure the building – windows and doors

During Performances (and dress rehearsals)

Before Curtain

1. Arrive 90 minutes early
2. Post sign in sheet and notes
3. Check for messages with House Manager
4. Mop stage floor

One Hour Before Curtain

1. Check for late actors.
2. Run Light and Sound checks
3. Check props for readiness
4. Set Stage

One Half Hour Before Curtain

1. Inform House Manager that House is ready to open
2. Give ½ hour call to actors and director
3. Secure actor valuables

Ten Minutes Before Curtain

1. Five “ten minute” warning to actors
2. Check with all crew for readiness

Two to Five Minutes Before Curtain

1. Give places call to actors and crew
2. Check in with house manager
3. Start Performance when you get the go from the House Manager

During the Performance

1. Call all cues for lights, sound, scene changes and actors

During Intermission

1. Give two minute warning and places call

After Performance

2. Personally return all valuables to actors
3. Check with crew to make show everything has been cleared and put away
4. Follow theater closing procedures to reset thermostat, turn off lights and equipment and secure the building.
5. Unless other arrangements have been made, be the last person to leave.

House Manager

The House Manager is responsible for all things dealing with the care and comfort of the audience. House Managers should arrive at the theatre as least 1 ½ hours before curtain. They should check the temperature in the space and make sure lobby areas, rest rooms and the seating areas themselves are in order and clean.

In many cases the House Manager and Ticket Manager work together. Both need to keep the Stage Manager informed at all times.

The House Manager should have a list of emergency numbers on hand, and know how to respond to any medical, fire or other crowd control emergency.

House Manager responsibilities include:

1. Setting exterior lights and interior temperature controls
2. Insure that public areas are clean and properly stocked ***including rest rooms.***
3. Coordinate with the Ticket Manager and Stage Manager
4. Preparing Programs for distribution
5. Ushers and seating policies
6. Pre Show Speeches – preparing what items are covered
7. Concessions – counting and safeguarding concession receipts.
8. Lobby Displays
9. Clean up after the show
10. Emergency responses – Medical, Fire, Weather, Power Failure, etc.

Production Schedule Check list

8 months to one year

- Choose Production
- Schedule Dates for Performance
- Clear Dates for Tech and Production Week
- Try to clear dates for Rehearsals
- Obtain rights from publisher

6 Months

- Recruit Stage Manager
- Recruit Production Manager
- Line up Production Designers
- Hold Production and Design meeting

3 Months

- Recruit Audience and Services Manager
- Order Scripts
- Announce Auditions
- Layout Rehearsal Schedule
- Hold Production Meeting

Musicals

Straight Plays

- Hold Auditions
- Cast the Musical

8 weeks

- Start Rehearsals
- Hold Weekly Production meetings
- Organize Promotional Campaign

- Hold Auditions
- Cast the Play

6 weeks

- Start Rehearsals
- Hold Weekly Production meetings
- Organize Promotional Campaign

4 weeks

- Write releases - start promoting
- Start advertising solicitations
- Establish Front of House Policies
- Talk to media - set up stories and interviews
- Put up posters
- Begin Building sets and props

3 weeks

- Solicit ushers and ticket takers
- Monitor Ticket sales

2 weeks

- Sandwich boards

1 week

- Tech Week

Volunteers, Operators, Crew YOU ARE NEEDED!

The following is a list of positions that need to be filled by resourceful and responsible people for the upcoming production of _____.

Please indicate your support and interest by signing up below:

STAGE CREW – Assistant Stage Management (Number needed _____)

<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
-------------------	-------------------

PROPERTIES CREW (Number needed _____)

<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
-------------------	-------------------

RUNNING CREW (Number needed _____)

<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
-------------------------------	-------------------------------

WARDROP (Number needed _____)

<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
-------------------	-------------------

MAKEUP CREW (Number needed _____)

<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
-------------------	-------------------

LIGHTING CREW (Number needed _____)

<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
-------------------	-------------------

CHILDREN WRANGLERS (Number needed _____)

<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
-------------------------------------	-------------------------------------

Budget Checklist

Version	Dated		
Projected Income		Income	Expenses
	Ticket Sales	\$0.00	
	Concessions	\$0.00	
	Sponsorships	\$0.00	
	Grants	\$0.00	
	Donations	\$0.00	
	Program Ads	\$0.00	
	Other	\$0.00	
Total Projected Income		\$0.00	
Projected Expenses			
	Royalties		\$0.00
	Scripts		\$0.00
	Handling and Shipping		\$0.00
	Sets		
	Designer	\$0.00	
	Set Rentals	\$0.00	
	Transportation	\$0.00	
	Materials	\$0.00	
	Storage	\$0.00	
	Equipment rentals	\$0.00	
	Construction Labor	\$0.00	
	Paint Labor	\$0.00	
	Total Sets		\$0.00
	Lighting		
	Designer	\$0.00	
	Equipment Rental	\$0.00	
	Lightboard	\$0.00	
	Instruments	\$0.00	
	Other	\$0.00	
	Purchases	\$0.00	
	Replacement bulbs	\$0.00	
	Color Gel	\$0.00	
	Gobos	\$0.00	
	Tape and supplies	\$0.00	
	Total Lighting		\$0.00
	Properties	\$0.00	
	Purchases	\$0.00	
	Rentals	\$0.00	
	Shipping	\$0.00	
	Insurance	\$0.00	
	Total Lights		\$0.00

Marblehead Little Theater
 Putting on a Show – A guide for Producers and Directors

Sound		\$0.00	
	Equipment Rental	\$0.00	
	Sound Board	\$0.00	
	Speakers	\$0.00	
	Microphones	\$0.00	
	Other	\$0.00	
	Purchases	\$0.00	
	Recorded Music	\$0.00	
	Recording media	\$0.00	
	Batteries	\$0.00	
	other	\$0.00	
Total Sound			\$0.00
Costumes, Wigs, Makeup			
	Purchases	\$0.00	
	Costumes	\$0.00	
	Wigs	\$0.00	
	Makeup	\$0.00	
	Rentals	\$0.00	
	Shipping	\$0.00	
	Cleaning	\$0.00	
	Dry Cleaning	\$0.00	
	Washing	\$0.00	
	Services	\$0.00	
	Other	\$0.00	
Total Costumes, wigs, makeup			\$0.00
Programs			
	Design/Layout	\$0.00	
	Printing	\$0.00	
Total Program			\$0.00
Space			
	Rental	\$0.00	
	Maintenance (janitorial)	\$0.00	
	Security	\$0.00	
Total Space			\$0.00
Tickets			
	Layout	\$0.00	
	Printing	\$0.00	
	Ticketing service	\$0.00	
	Credit card Fees	\$0.00	
Total Tickets			\$0.00
Promotion			
	Advertising	\$0.00	
	PR	\$0.00	
	Posters	\$0.00	
	Handbills	\$0.00	
	Other	\$0.00	
Total Promotion			\$0.00
Contingency			\$0.00
Total Projected Expenses			\$0.00

Total Projected Profit (Loss)

\$0.00

