



DIRECTOR/S

Congratulations on your selection as director(s) to present a student production as part of Second Stage! This role takes on various levels of responsibility. You are acting as both director and producer for your production. Contained within this document are tips for success, as many of you are first-time directors. There is also information to be shared with your cast, designers and faculty mentor in this handbook. It is *your* responsibility to make sure that they receive and understand this information.

The approval of your project is an important milestone that will allow you to express your creative voice using Department of Theatre spaces and resources. Contained within this document are also policies related to use of department equipment, spaces and more.

YOUR CREATIVITY:

Your creative choices should be most important as you work with many others to create your vision. That means that collaboration, compromise and consideration are at the forefront of all you do. You are helping a production that affects large numbers of collaborators from designers to actors, to crew and ultimately, the audience.

CAST:

Casting for your production is terribly important. These students will be looking to you for guidance related to the shared interpretation of the character. As you are both on similar educational paths make sure to create supportive and open peer to peer dialogue.

At auditions please make actors aware of a tentative rehearsal schedule so you all can be aware of the possible conflicts especially related to Department productions that take priority related to BFA policies.

Remember that your Faculty Mentor is an important voice in the process. Work within the guidelines of the Second Stage information related to Faculty Mentors.

CASTING:

A generic audition form will be provided. You may alter the questions to help you cast your production successfully. It would be wise for you to be transparent about the material in your production at the auditions. It helps to display warnings, inform actors personally, or ask questions of comfort level regarding material that may contain graphic language, sexual content or situations, or other material that could cause some actors discomfort or inability to perform.

- Directors must hold auditions for all roles in their shows.
- Casting should be open to all registered MSU students and follow the Non-Traditional Casting Policy within the department.
- Casting outside of MSU should be considered only in cases where the right actors are not available.
- A director and/or writer of the Second Stage Production may not appear in their own production, in order to offer an optimal experience for all.

Some Tips for Success in Casting:

- Casting of students currently cast in Department of Theatre productions implies that you will have to rehearse at alternate rehearsal times. Make efforts to use students with fewer conflicts in order to make a smoother rehearsal process.
- Think beyond your friends when casting. Look for people who may surprise you.
- Your work with actors should allow them to explore within the realms of personal safety. The parameters they have may not match your vision. Every effort should be made in rehearsal and performance to allow actors to express their concerns while still doing their work to support yours.
- Work within the guidelines of the Second Stage information related to Actors. See the actor section for more information.

AUDIENCE:

An audience will be viewing your work, so careful consideration related to their experience may affect your vision. How does what you create impact their experience? Your Faculty Mentor may suggest changes to make sure that your work is experienced for optimal viewing. Audiences will be offered warning related to profanity, violence or other possible issues on the THR website Second Stage page as well as all other publicity materials. It is your responsibility to inform the public relations faculty member of what those warnings need to be. Please notify them of these audience warnings as soon as you are aware of them. This can be as early as casting.

Some Tips for Success in Audience Experience:

- Consider the role of the audience as you plan the use of the theatrical space.
- Consider things like running time and content when working on new productions

DESIGN:

Design within the Second Stage production can be creative and conservative. The productions here thrive on ingenuity and your design team must follow the following policies that allow you use of the various resources in the space you were allowed to produce.

Some Tips for Success in Design:

- Carefully choose your designers to make sure that they have the appropriate training to use the equipment or resources you need.
- Selecting designers who are currently working on Department of Theatre productions implies that they may have conflicts with time, which can result in struggles with completing design elements in time, or implementing designs that may not be as strong due to too many commitments. Make efforts to select students who may have experience, but not overly involved in too many other productions for best results.
- Make sure your designers are aware of the script's needs before signing on by providing them with a copy early on.
- Inform your designers of their design roles early enough in the process to allow them time to collaborate their design ideas and have time to implement them.
- Allow your design collaboration to evolve, as the resources you need may not be available.
- Creating your design team as early as casting, if not sooner, provides the greatest service for the production. For maximum collaboration, it is advised to have production meetings well in advance of the technical rehearsal.
- Look at the designer's schedule to make sure they will have time to complete designers before the tech process begins.
- Work within the guidelines of the Second Stage information related to Designers. See the design section for more details.

BUDGET:

A small stipend is provided by the Second Stage board to assist you and your designers in fulfilling your vision beyond the use of THR resources. Using the funds (to be decided per production by the Second Stage board) must follow protocol.

Purchases need to be made by the director, or other responsible party. Receipts should be turned into the MSU Department Fiscal Officer. A copy of every receipt turned into the Fiscal Officer needs to be sent to the Second Stage Productions Treasurer.

Any purchases needed beyond the allotted budget are the sole responsibility of the director.

STAGE MANAGEMENT AND CREW:

Securing a Stage manager and Crew is entirely the responsibility of the director.

Some tips for Success in Finding Stage Management and Crew:

- Finding an organized student to act as your Stage Manager is important. As all involved in the production are juggling numerous academic and extra-curricular activities, please work with the Stage Manager to create a rehearsal schedule that respects the time commitment for all involved.
- For best results, it is recommended to send out your requests for crew members *at least* 3 weeks prior to the first technical rehearsal. Earlier is better.
- Find a crew that is free from conflicts, especially department shows.
- Work within the guidelines of the Second Stage information related to Stage Managers. See the stage manager section for details.
- At the back of this document appears the Department Handbook for Stage Managers to use as a suggestion.

BOX OFFICE and PUBLICITY:

The Second Stage will offer limited publicity including postings on the department website and the Second Stage Website. The Second Stage board must approve posters and other printed, and media, information before distribution of any kind. While we encourage unique marketing, all must follow university guidelines. The Second Stage Productions logo must appear on all marketing materials.

Box office staff must also be secured by the director and follow the policies related to handling cash within the department as set forth in the following guidelines. No audience members may enter a performance without paying the \$5 ticket price. These funds are collected to ensure future productions.

At the end of the production run, the funds must be given to the Fiscal Officer the following business day. Traditionally a Monday, as early as possible.

STRIKE INFO:

The space you use must be restored to its original (or better) situation. This means that the director must oversee the restoration process including the returning of borrowed design elements and is responsible for resultant issues related to the space including damage, paint, and all design elements. The strike must happen the final night of the performance, no later.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION ISSUES:

The Faculty Mentor is the first line of assistance related to any issues. They are required to watch one rehearsal of the production but may also be brought in during moments of interpersonal disputes, issues related to design or other complications. This includes matters related to issues or infractions of sexual harassment, drug or alcohol policies or other issues covered in the undergraduate handbook.

The Second Stage committee and its Faculty Advisor may offer assistance and support should the decisions of the Faculty Mentor not be satisfactory to all involved within the production team.

REHEARSAL SPACE

Rehearsal Space Policy:

Rehearsal space is limited so procedures and priorities must be implemented to ensure equitable and balanced rehearsal schedule.

The hierarchy for Departmental shows is as follows:

1. Main Stage
2. Classes
3. Second Stage

Be aware that special events or guest artists may displace normal rehearsal procedures.

Spaces may be scheduled through Google calendar in the main office through office secretaries. Second Stage can schedule a space for rehearsals one week ahead of time.

Spaces are prioritized in the following manner:

Main Stage shows performed the Concert Auditorium, Fairchild Theatre or Pasant Theatre:

These productions receive priority for rehearsals in Room 12. When two Main Stage shows are in rehearsal at the same time, the show opening first will receive priority.

Main Stage shows performed in the Arena or Studio Theatre:

These productions receive priority in the Arena Theatre or Studio when it is not reserved for an Open Stage show during its production week. When two Main Stage Arena shows are in rehearsal; the show opening first will receive priority. Room 144 is held for the other Main Stage Arena show.

Second Stage shows performed in the Studio in Arena Theatre:

These productions receive priority in the Arena or Studio when not used by a Main Stage show or during a Second Stage show only during its production week. Please note that Main Stage shows shuttle between Arena and Studio based on design needs in either theatre.

Second Stage rehearsals:

Second Stage rehearsals will be given priority in the Arena Theatre or Studio the week of performances (from Sunday to Sunday). Second Stage Rehearsals must relinquish any rehearsal room should a Main Stage or class that needs the space. Second Stage rehearsals may only sign out a week before their rehearsals will take place.

Class rehearsals:

Students wishing to rehearse for classes may sign out any room for rehearsals when not being used by the Main Stage. Please note that a Second Stage does not fall under the classification of “class rehearsals”.



ACTORS

Congratulations on getting cast in a Second Stage production! You have the chance to create unique work with your peers. Since you are not under the purview of department Main Stage productions, we wanted to offer you some tips for success as you start the rehearsal process.

Some Tips For Success as a Second Stage Actor:

- Make sure you have clearly looked at your schedule. For BFA students your responsibilities to department productions come first as part of your BFA policies. Absences, conflicts and missed rehearsals related to Second Stage cannot be accommodated.
- When working with newer directors, they are also learning and you can assist them by being patient and supportive throughout the process.
- Offer feedback when asked.
- Speak with directors and Stage managers if you feel that your time is not being used effectively in rehearsal.
- Ask for a clear outline of rehearsal and other expectations at the start of the process.

When working on new projects, conflicts may undoubtedly arise. Your first response should be to talk to your Director or Stage manager about the issue. Should you not get the resolution you seek, and then contact the Faculty Mentor on the project. Following that you may also speak to the Second Stage Committee and Faculty Advisor to assist.



STAGE MANAGERS

Thank you so much for your willingness to Stage Manage a Second Stage production! You have the chance to create unique work with your peers. Since you are not under the purview of department Main Stage productions, we wanted to offer you some tips for success as you start the rehearsal process.

Securing a Crew is entirely the responsibility of the director. You may assist in this task.

Some Tips for Success in Stage Management and Crew:

- A production needs a highly organized and compassionate Stage Manager especially when all are beginners in the process. Try to assist in maintaining a respectful and positive atmosphere where collaboration can thrive.
- Work with the Director to create a rehearsal schedule that respects the time commitment for all involved.
- Find a crew that is free from conflicts especially department shows.

Since it may be your first time stage managing, please consult with the current professor in charge of stage management for tips and access to the Stage Management guide. Although you won't have access to the resources of the department stage managers, this guide can help you with organization and protocol.

If a Main Stage production, a class, a class related project, or other events (such as Haunted AUD) require the space, you must find another space to rehearse in. They have priority, you may not ask them to leave. For this reason, we recommend communicating with the Assistant to the Chairperson to make room reservations to avoid this potential conflict. If the space is in use, you can request another space to rehearse in. It is you and your director's responsibility to ensure you can get access to the spaces you've reserved; the Assistant to the Chairperson can assist you with this.



FACULTY MENTOR

Thank you for serving as a Faculty Mentor on a Second Stage production. This is an important service to the students in the Department of Theatre. With this position we wanted to outline the hopes of the Second Stage Board related to Faculty Mentorship.

Our hope is that:

- You will offer guidance to the director and the entire production when asked.
- You will meet with the director prior to rehearsals to discuss the expectations and approach to the production.
- You will offer feedback from attending at least one rehearsal.
- You will be the moderator for any disputes within the production that cannot be handled between the cast, director, or creative team.
- You will assist in guiding the director to an optimal audience experience regarding things like running time, content, or other issues.

Again, we thank you for your willingness to offer guidance to this important extra-curricular activity.



DESIGNERS

Congratulations on being selected as a designer in a Second Stage production! You have the chance to create unique work with your peers. Since you are not under the purview of department Main Stage productions, we wanted to offer you some tips for success as you start the rehearsal process.

Some Tips For Success as a Second Stage Designer:

- Make sure you have clearly looked at your schedule. For BFA students your responsibilities to department productions come first as part of your BFA policies. Absences, conflicts and missed rehearsals related to Second Stage cannot be accommodated.
- When working with newer directors, they are also learning and you can assist them by being patient and supportive throughout the process.
- Offer feedback when asked.
- Speak with directors and Stage managers if you feel your time is not being used effectively.
- Ask for a clear outline of rehearsal and other expectations at the start of the process.
- Collaborate with your director(s) and fellow designers as early as possible. Providing renderings, sketches, models, and other visual aids, early on gives everyone a higher understanding of the production as a whole. This allows for better communication.

When working on new projects, conflicts may undoubtedly arise. Your first response should be to talk to your Director or Stage manager about the issue. Should you not get the resolution you seek, and then contact the Faculty Mentor on the project. Following that you may also speak to the Second Stage Committee and Faculty Advisor of the committee to assist.

Listed below are policies and guidelines of each design area, created by the design faculty in charge of that area. If you have questions or concerns on any of these, please see the corresponding faculty member. Your director(s) have been provided with a contact list of the current faculty, current Second Stage committee members and their faculty advisor. Please ask your director for this list if you have questions.

DESIGN POLICIES

This document outlines policies for each design area. These rules are not meant to inhibit your creativity, but to allow a safe, shared space and a healthy respect for the department's equipment. These rules were created by the design faculty. If you feel your production needs something that is not available, please speak with that design faculty member in charge of the area you need first.

SCENIC/PROPS:

- Request for scenic pieces and/or props must be made at least 2 weeks in advance of the production's technical rehearsal. To schedule a time to pull anything, they must contact scene shop technical directing faculty.
- Only faculty, scene shop employees, or graduate students (with a valid driver's license) may use the scene shop vehicles for transportation. This request must be made in advance and is never assumed or guaranteed.
- Second Stage productions can use one van load of furniture, no more.
- Scenic paint from scene shop stock must not be used without prior approval; it will be approved on a case by case basis.
- Reimbursement for shop materials (such as paint used) will be handled by scene shop technical directors on a case by case basis. It is the designer's responsibility to create this conversation and include the Second Stage committee, the director, and the scene shop technical directors, so that it can be handled and accounted for on all ends.
- Independent contraction projects are generally not allowed due to liability issues. However projects can be considered on a case by case basis dependant on the student's skill level, the scene shops schedule and material availability.
- Any aesthetic or structural alterations of scenic pieces or properties need to be approved in advance (painting, distressing, upholstering, etc.)
- All pieces borrowed for Second Stage Productions must be checked out and the director or designer must have them signed back in at the TD office for inspection. Pieces must be returned on the next open business day following the closing of the production.

COSTUMES:

- Any requests to borrow costumes must be made to the costume shop supervisor at least 24 hours in advance of the need or the request will not be granted. A pull time must be scheduled in advance. No one will be allowed to walk in and pull without an appointment. Employees are not exempt from this rule.
- No one will be allowed to pull costumes outside of the regular shop hours.
- Only shop employees are allowed to have shop or storage keys in their possession; non-employee borrowers will be accompanied to storage by an employee.
- All costumes must be signed out on the proper forms by a shop employee and signed back in by an employee. Specific dates must be given.
- All costumes will be properly laundered before return. This is determined by the employee in discussion with the costume shop supervisor when appropriate. The clothing must be restored to the same state it was checked out - no blood or distressing.
- All costumes must be restocked appropriately by the borrower.
- The costume shop requests that you utilize the actor's wardrobes as much as possible, if you need to make the request, an emailed list to the Costume Shop Supervisor must be made at least 24 hours in advance. Actor's measurements will be required for pulling efficacy.

LIGHTING:

- All lighting requests must be pre-approved by the lighting design faculty. They should email the lighting design faculty to set up an appointment.
- Designers are to use the current rep-plot, in either space they are assigned. This is not to be any refocusing of the rep plot of any kind.
- You may change gels, but they must be restored to their original state at strike. Gels are in Room 2 and the designer must be accompanied by the lighting design graduate student working in the electrics shop that semester.
- There is in ETC Express lighting console in both the Studio and Arena space, this is the only console available to you. You may not request an additional console or to change consoles.
- The designer may use up to four specials for gobo work or other needs. The extra instruments must be used from room 3 (taking any inventory from room 10 is not allowed). Again, the designer must be accompanied by the electrics shop graduate student for that semester.
- Both the Studio and the Arena have discs saved with the generic plot. You may not write over this disc. To save your show, please (either you or your lighting designer); request a floppy disc for saving from the lighting design faculty.

SOUND:

- All sound requests must go through the sound design faculty prior to use.

MEDIA:

- Any requests to use projection or media equipment must be made to the media design faculty member at least one week in advance of the need for media installment, or the request will not be granted. An emailed list detailing the request is preferred. A training and equipment pick-up time must be scheduled in advance. No one will be allowed to walk in and take equipment without an appointment. Employees are not exempt from this rule.
- No one will be allowed to pull media equipment without the media design faculty present.
- Only shop employees are allowed to have media shop or storage keys in their possession; non-employee borrowers will be accompanied to storage by an employee.
- All equipment must be returned in the same condition it was borrowed in. All elements checked out MUST be returned (adapters, cables, connectors, etc.)
- All equipment must be restocked appropriately by the borrower.
- You must have a dedicated, individual designer as the media designer in order to use media in your show.
- Media equipment must be returned in the same state it was checked out, no tapes, marks, distress or destruction.
- The media designer is responsible for cleaning and restocking the equipment back after the production has closed.