

# Studio Production Handbook

Revised 2009

A play should appear to be a seamless and coordinated event to the audience. In order to accomplish this feat, it is important to know and remember what each individual's job is in the company. Knowing this, being familiar with proper production procedure, and maintaining a sense of company, are some of the most important aspects to success. While it is also important to experiment with new ways of doing things, it is also important not to waste time by reinventing the proverbial wheel. It is also important to remember that theatre is a collective art form that requires the input and the diverse skills of a sizable number of contributing artists and craftsmen. Respecting each of these important jobs and the people who fill them will make for a more enjoyable, sane, and successful production.

This handbook is not designed to answer all questions, include all aspects and details of production, nor contain all possible scenarios. It is a guide. Please direct any questions to the Faculty Studio Production Manager, or other appropriate personnel.

Changes for the year 2009 are:

- \* Tracking of the show budget by the Assistant Production Manager instead of the Director
- \* Collection of all receipts by the Assistant Production Manager
- \* Concrete preliminary design due dates
- \* Even earlier concrete final design due dates
- \* Inclusion of chapters for the Dramaturg, Actor, and Assistant Production Manager
- \* The deletion of the House Manager chapter

Changes for the year 2008 were:

- \* Earlier and concrete final design dates
- \* Required weekly meetings between the director and the Faculty Production Manager
- \* The Faculty Studio Production Manager is to proof and approve all program and poster material
- \* Formalized and documented Studio selection process
- \* Wednesday night dress rehearsal will be an announced preview performance
- \* Studio ticket prices are to increase to \$6.00

Changes for the year 2007 were:

- \* The use of contracts for all Studio personnel
- \* Hard dates for final designs
- \* Application for all Studio positions, except director, through the Faculty Studio Production Manager
- \* Refinement to the Technical Rehearsal Schedule
- \* Refinement of the Student Production Manager's budget process
- \* The inclusion of an Opening Night reception

Changes for the year 2006 were:

- \* Opening night is Thursday night
- \* There is a \$5.00 ticket price

\* House Managers will distribute a performance report  
During the 2006 - 2007 academic year, the following rules were adopted by the GMU Players with the regards to reforming Studio Productions procedures:

- \* *Student playwrights will not direct their own work*
- \* *Student written shows must have a dramaturg*
- \* *Rehearsal and production schedules must be posted on the call board in the lounge AND sent to the company, Faculty Studio Production Manager, and staff over e-mail*
- \* *The next show will not have production meetings or rehearsals during the put-in week and tech week of the show at hand*
  
- \* *Post-mortem is required of not only for personnel of the show just struck but of the production staff of the next show*

### **The Selection Process:**

Inclusion of the play selection process is to codify the process and to insure it is an open and fair process.

Dates for the selection of plays for the next season will begin early in the Spring semester. Exact dates will be set by the Faculty Production manager and the GMU Player's President.

This year, the due date for proposals is **February 1, 2010 at 17:00**.  
Voting will be completed by **February 26, 2010 at 17:00**.

The voting will be tallied by the Theatre Department Office Manager. The Faculty Production Manager will tally the vote if the Office Manager cannot. Eligibility for voting will be set by the GMU Players.

Submissions of proposals and voting dates are hard deadlines that will not be extended. Copies of the proposals are to be submitted to the Faculty Production Manager and to the GMU Players. The Players' copy will reside in the Lounge for perusal by the student body. Submissions must be complete at the time they are submitted or they will be denied.

Proposal submissions are to include the following:

A statement of the director's concept

Itemization of any special needs

A rough cost analysis

A proposed rehearsal calendar that follows the prescribed timeline found in this manual

The script in its entirety

If the play is student written, the name of the student dramaturg

## **TITLE: Director**

(these lists are not to be considered all inclusive)

### **TYPICAL WORK SCHEDULE:**

- Pre-production
- Production meetings
- Auditions
- Rehearsals
- Technical rehearsals
- Dress rehearsals
- Performances
- **STRIKE!**
- Post-mortem

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION:** Create and develop the overall artistic content of your show. Be the leader of all aspects of the production. Delegate responsibilities to appropriate personnel. Provide fiscal oversight. Provide a quality work atmosphere.

### **SPECIFIC DUTIES:**

- **Read and sign your Studio Contract and return it to the Assistant Production Manager**
- Provide artistic vision and leadership to the entire production
- Act as production manager
- Assemble and lead the design team
- Seek approval of the production plan from the Faculty Studio Production Manager and all other shop supervisors and all associated faculty/staff personnel
- Keep the Faculty Studio Production Manager and all appropriate shop/staff personnel apprised of changes in the physical production
- Interpret the script
- Schedule rehearsal space
- Audition and cast the actors
- Block the actors
- Rehearse the play
- Mesh the technical aspects of the play with the actors
- Be present during performances
- Assist in the **STRIKE** and clean up of the production
- Post-mortem
- Report the budget to the Faculty Production Manager

Congratulations! Your play proposal has been selected to be part of the Studio Series by the GMU Players. The faculty has scheduled your play into the upcoming season. In less time than you realize, your proposal will have blossomed into a production, and then will have been struck to make way for the next production.

The list above is only a small sample of what you have to do in order to mount a successful production. While this sounds like a do everything job, it is not. It is your responsibility to

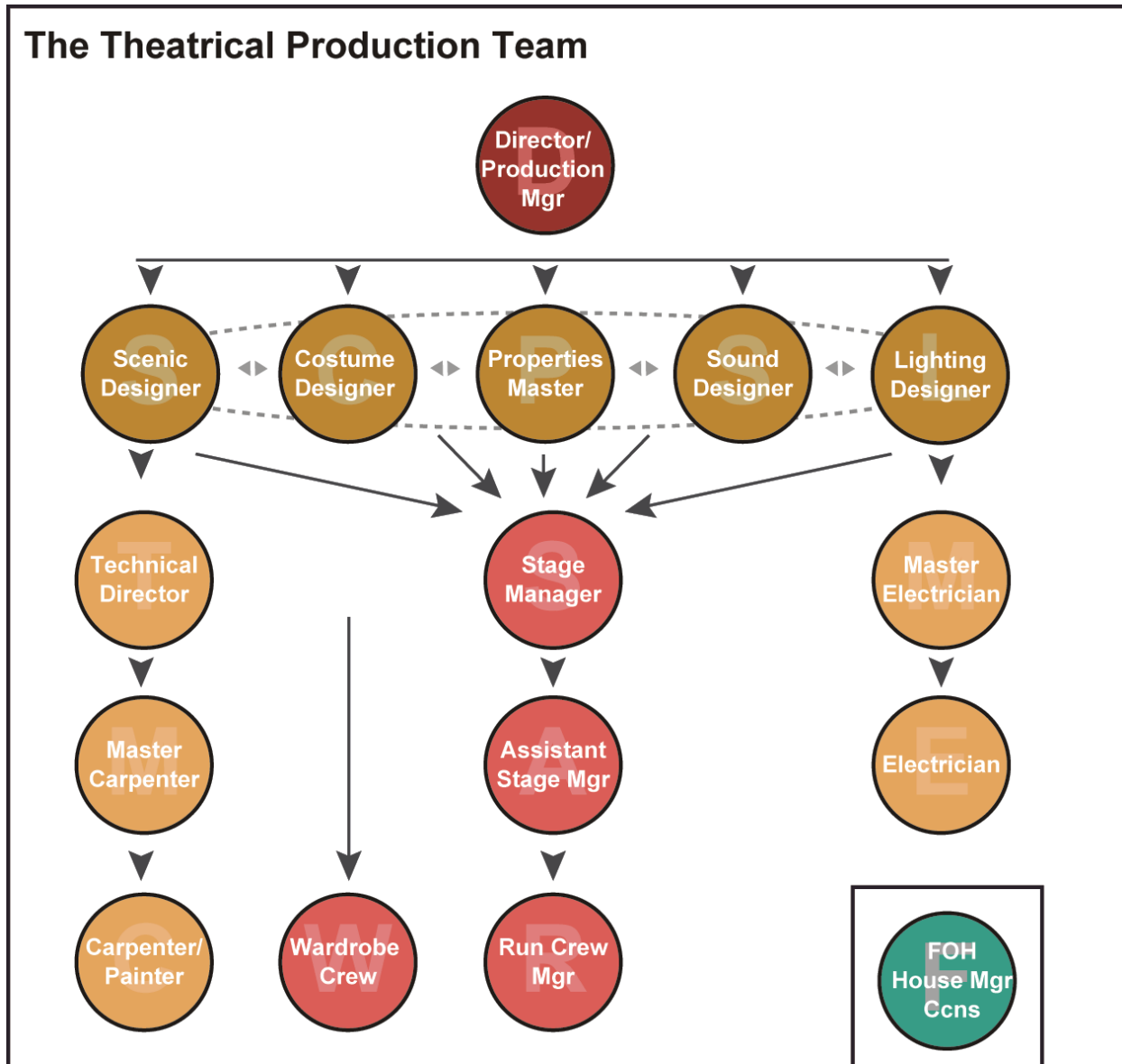
assemble your cast and production team. These are the people that will assist you and your production in becoming a success. Choose them wisely. Remember to give opportunity to those who may not have a lot of experience. This is okay as the studio series is a learning ground for all participants, including yourself. Remember that dependability rather than talent may be the key attribute to look for in those that you cast or include on your production team. This is so, as no matter how talented a person is, that talent is wasted if they do not show up or do not do their jobs as needed. While it is true that you are responsible for all aspects of your show, you cannot do all the jobs yourself, nor is it wise to try. *Delegation* is the key to success. When properly done, with dependable personnel, the work load will be more evenly distributed for all participants, including yourself. In some cases, the faculty may assign students to specific jobs on your production. These will generally be craftsmen, not artists. There may also be instances where student artists and/or craftsmen may have their work graded. You should be conscious of this and attempt to set them up to succeed.

One of the most important things you must do as the director is to maintain a professional and pleasant work environment. One way to do this is to foster the idea of the *company*. A healthy sense of the *company* will help bring all participants into a working unit. Remember that everyone working on or advising your show, including faculty members and the Studio Faculty Production Manager, is invested in the success of the production, and therefore part of the *company*. Thus, this is not *your* production, it is the *company's* production; ownership belongs to every one in the *company*! It is imperative that you remember that you set the tone of each and every production meeting and rehearsal. The entire *company* will look for you to set the example for the day's work. By maintaining a professional demeanor, you will make for a more productive time within the theatre. When conflicts arise (and they will) you must demonstrate fairness and good judgment. Keep the good of the production and the good of the *company* at the forefront. Maintain your sense of humor. Also, remember that you will be respected when you show respect for every member of the *company*.

A production, and its *company*, are living entities. They will evolve and seem to take on a life of their own. To some degree, this is to be expected and in many ways encouraged. After all, your vision, as well as the vision of the other artists, will alter with the passage of time and as you incorporate the contributions of the *company*. While creativity is encouraged, there must be a sense of purpose and a some modest restraint. Once the vision and plan are relayed to the Faculty Studio Production Manager and other faculty and staff, a plan of action and distribution of resources are established. Changes to the physical production must be approved by the Faculty Studio Production Manager and the various shops and staff that have control over resources. *Do not* make changes to these aspects without approval!

At the top of the preceding chart is the Faculty Production Manager. This is not to say that this individual cares to dictate your artistic vision, however, that individual is there to see that the standard model and schedules are followed. The Faculty Production Manager is also there to attend rehearsals to ensure safety and quality standards are in place. As the director and student production manager, you are to report on a regular basis to the Faculty Production Manager.

Refer to the Theatrical Production Team graphic below:



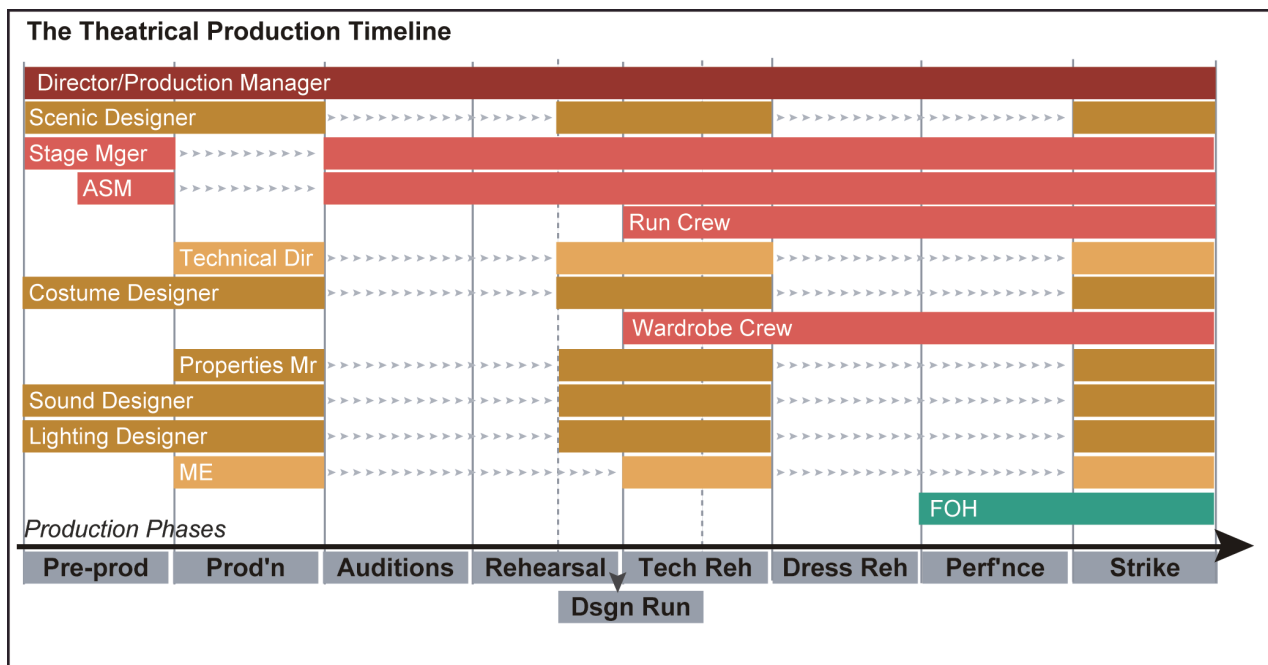
As Director, you are responsible for the coordination of your entire production schedule. While some of this may be delegated to others, you must keep an eye on all schedules and plan accordingly. Each Studio production follows basically the same model of organization and technical rehearsal schedule. While there is some flexibility, be prepared to follow the tried and tested model and schedule as some classes depend on this model and schedule. This model and schedule assures that all Studio productions get the same fair and equal treatment of human and material resources. Occasionally, holidays, school schedules, Main Stage productions, outside

events, or other intervening situations may arise and force the Faculty Studio Production Manager to alter the typical production schedule. We try very hard not to let this happen but sometimes it is necessary.

### Post-mortem

Pursuant to the reforms adopted by the GMU Players regarding Studio procedures, a post-mortem is to be held for each Studio production. All production staff of the show just struck and all production staff of the next Studio show to be mounted are required to attend. In addition, any other *company* member is encouraged to attend. Post-mortem are open meetings to any faculty, staff, or student interested in participating. They will be scheduled by the Faculty Studio Production Manager and will happen within a few days of STRIKE, typically the following Wednesday.

Refer to the Theatrical Production Timeline graphic below:



Day to day operations, especially in the technical and rehearsal areas must conform to operational hours set down by the Faculty Studio Production Manager and the various shop personnel. Plan to do work within the allotted time for the appropriate spaces. Due to safety and supervision considerations, the proverbial "all nighters" are not allowed. The shop schedule are set by the staff persons in charge of those shops. *All* work in the Black Box Theatre must end by **midnight**. If you cannot complete your original plan within the allotted time, you must scale your project down to fit the available resources, both material and human, and within the schedule.

Your *typical Calendar* will start approximately four weeks before your opening night:

<b>Before Week #1</b>	Auditions, Call Backs, Casting, Final Set and Costume Designs are due
<b>Week #1</b>	Rehearsals and Build
<b>Week #2</b>	Rehearsals and Build
<b>Week #3</b>	Rehearsals, Designer Run Through, Final Light and Sound Designs are due, Sound Load-in, Light Load-in, Set Load-in, Properties Load-in, and Costume Load-in
<b>Week #4</b>	Technical Rehearsals, Dress Rehearsals, Performances, and <b>STRIKE!</b>

The *standard Technical Rehearsal* and **Production Schedule** are as follows:

<b>Friday or Saturday:</b>	Designer Run Through
<b>Monday:</b>	Light Plot Due
<b>Wednesday:</b>	Light Hang and Troubleshoot
<b>Thursday:</b>	Set Load-in
<b>Friday:</b>	Light Focus
<b>Saturday:</b>	First Technical Rehearsal
<b>Sunday:</b>	Second Technical Rehearsal
<b>Monday:</b>	First Dress Rehearsal
<b>Tuesday:</b>	Second Dress Rehearsal
<b>Wednesday:</b>	Third Dress Rehearsal / <b>Preview</b>
<b>Thursday:</b>	<b>OPENING NIGHT</b>
<b>Friday:</b>	Evening performance
<b>Saturday:</b>	Matinee and evening performances
<b>Sunday:</b>	Matinee and <b><u>STRIKE!</u></b>

**Technical Rehearsals** will follow a standard schedule below:

<b>10:00</b>	The <i>Company</i> is called
<b>11:00</b>	Start Tech
<b>15:00</b>	Lunch (Tech work may happen)
<b>16:00</b>	Resume Tech
<b>20:00</b>	End Tech
<b>20:15</b>	Production Meeting (not to be held in the Black Box Theater) (A <i>short</i> period for actor notes may be added but not in the Black Box Theater)
<b>21:00</b>	Tech Work (this may begin once Tech has ended and the theater is ready for a work call)
<b>00:00</b>	End all work, the theatre and shops are <b><u>CLOSED!</u></b>

Additional break times, within each time block, may be scheduled.

The rehearsal period is a set amount of time. All Studio productions will receive the same amount of time to mount their productions. Once a show is cast, table work may begin. No other types of rehearsal may be done before the beginning rehearsal date.

See the sample production calendar below (except for production week, no times are imposed and weekend rehearsal/work may be altered or added):

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>September, 2008</h1>						1
2	3 Auditions  Set & Costume Final Design Due	4 Call Backs  Set & Costume Go to Shops	5 Build	6 Cast List Posted  Build	7 Build	8
9	10 First Rehearsal  Build	11 Rehearsal  Build	12 Rehearsal  Build	13 Rehearsal  Build	14 Rehearsal  Build	15
16	17 Rehearsal  Build	18 Rehearsal  Build	19 Rehearsal  Build	20 Rehearsal  Build	21 Designer Run  Build	22
23	24 Rehearsal  Build  Light & Sound Plots due	25 Rehearsal  Build	26 Rehearsal (Off Site)  Build  Light Load- in	27 Rehearsal (Off Site)  Set & Sound Load-in	28 Rehearsal (Off Site)  Light Focus	29 First Technical Rehearsal
30 Second Technical Rehearsal						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<h1>October, 2008</h1>						
	1 20:00 First Dress Rehearsal	2 20:00 Second Dress Rehearsal	3 20:00 Preview	4 20:00 <b>OPENING NIGHT</b>  Reception	5 14:00 Matinee  20:00 Show	6
7 14:00 Matinee  <b>STRIKE!</b>	8	9	10 Post-mortem	11	12 Submit budget ledger	13
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday

The Production Schedule *is* to be followed and *not* amended without the expressed permission of the Studio Faculty Production Manager. The Technical Rehearsal Schedule may be amended only to accommodate an early ending to the day's work. The start time for Tech and a one hour lunch is to be maintained! This will require you to formulate a plan to best use your Tech time.

As Student Production Manager, you are also responsible for the budget for your show. Money in the arts is almost always tight! You will be given a dollar amount that you may spend for your entire production. This includes the cost of building materials and resources for sets, lighting, properties, costumes, the cost of maintenance and consumables, publicity, and any other incidental expenditures necessary for your play. You must account for all of your expenditures to the penny and report this information to the Studio Faculty Production Manager by **the Friday following STRIKE!** You will be given a ledger to track your expenditures which is to be returned to the Studio Faculty Production Manager. All monies spent must be for the production. Parties, food and drinks (other than prop food), or other nonessential expenditures will not be allowed to come out of your budget, unless already provided. If you have questions about allowable expenditures, ask the Faculty Studio Production Manager; otherwise denied expenditures will come out of your pocket. Remember to look for hidden costs, such as dry cleaning, that may be done after **STRIKE** before submitting your report. Consult the different shop personnel and Studio Faculty Production Manager as to what might be hidden. All labor *must* be volunteer, student labor, with the exception of any help need by qualified shop personnel, which will not be billed to your budget. Staff assistance in configuring the Black Box theatre will also be provided without charge to your budget. See your Studio Faculty Production Manager for any questions regarding your budget.

This year's budget is \$500.00 for your production. As noted above, royalties, scripts, posters, programs, and production benefits (meaning the Opening Night Reception and STRIKE! food) are provided and not charged to your budget. All other production related expenses must be accounted for in the ledger according to code and are subject to approval by the Studio Faculty Production Manager. Receipts are to be included. Any reimbursements will occur *after* the budget has been submitted.

## **STRIKE!**

***All*** members of the *Company* (cast, crew, design team, technical director, properties master, master electrician, stage manager, assistant stage managers, wardrobe crew, and director) are required and expected to perform the **STRIKE!** The Front of House Manager and ushers are responsible for striking and cleaning the lobby area. **STRIKE!** will commence after the final performance and continue until all disassembly and clean up is finished! The Black Box Theatre must be clean, well lit, and returned to a classroom condition. Any exceptions to this must be cleared with the Studio Faculty Production Manager. Refreshments will be provided by the Department after **STRIKE!**

## **The Classroom**

Remember that the Black Box Theatre is also a daily classroom for Theater Department classes. You *share* this space. While the faculty is aware that you are in production, and they are quite accommodating, no aspect of your production may interfere with normal classroom activities. Keep this in mind when developing your production concepts and remind all of your designers, stage managers, crews, and cast to this imperative. Be sure the Black Box Theatre and lobby is ready for classes after each rehearsal and performance!

**Finally**, this handbook is not intended to answer all questions or settle all issues that might arise. Each production is a complex and unique entity. You have a Studio Faculty Production Manager. This person is there to help you. Use this person as a resource and a guide. The same is to be said of the rest of the faculty and staff, each with their own expertise and view point.

## **TITLE: Assistant Production Manager**

(these lists are not to be considered all inclusive)

### **TYPICAL WORK SCHEDULE:**

- Pre-season planning
- Pre-production
- Production meetings
- Auditions
- Rehearsals
- Technical rehearsals
- Dress rehearsals
- Performances
- **STRIKE!**
- Post-mortem

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION:** To assist the Faculty Production Manager in allocating resources for the Studio productions. Maintain professional standards for the company. Assist in the overseeing of the budget for each production. Monitor quality of each production element. Assist the scheduling and execution of production events. Provide other assistance to the Faculty Production Manager as deemed necessary.

### **SPECIFIC DUTIES:**

- Meet regularly with the Faculty Production Manager
- Assist with scheduling
- Facilitate communications between the Faculty Production Manager and each production
- Monitor compliance of the Studio Handbook
- Distribute and collect Studio contracts to each company
- Collect receipts and track the budget of each production
- Gather the program information and create the program
- Attend audition, call backs, technical and dress rehearsal on a schedule with the Faculty Production Manager
- Read each day's rehearsal or production report and follow up on the information within
- **STRIKE!**
- Post-mortem
- Other duties as prescribed by the Faculty Production Manager

You are the go-to person for the Faculty Production Manager. As you are a part of the resource allocation for all the Studio season, you will recuse yourself from taking an active part in any artistic position. This does not mean you cannot lend a hand to those needing labor, or give advice to those who ask, but you are to refrain from making artistic decisions. Always remember that you are part of the *company*. At all times, treat your *company* members with dignity and respect. This type of behavior is to be reciprocated. You will be responsible for allocation of contracts, creating the program, and tracking the budget for each production. There will be many different tasks that arise during each production. For this reason, daily contact with the Faculty Production Manager will be necessary.

Budget codes to be used in the ledger are as follows:

<b>Expense</b>	
500 – Royalties	PROVIDED
503 – Script/Music	PROVIDED
570 – Graphics and Programs	PROVIDED
580 – Production Benefits	PROVIDED
510 – Set Construction	ITEMIZED LINE
512 – Set Painting	ITEMIZED LINE
514 – Set Decoration	ITEMIZED LINE
520 – Costume Construction	ITEMIZED LINE
522 – Makeup and Hair	ITEMIZED LINE
524 – Wardrobe/Cleaning	ITEMIZED LINE
530 – Lighting	ITEMIZED LINE
540 – Sound	ITEMIZED LINE
550 – Properties	ITEMIZED LINE
560 – Special Effects	ITEMIZED LINE
590 – Production Miscellaneous	ITEMIZED LINE

## **TITLE: Dramaturg**

(these lists are not to be considered all inclusive)

### **TYPICAL WORK SCHEDULE:**

- Pre-production
- Production meetings
- Auditions
- Rehearsals
- Technical rehearsals
- Dress rehearsals
- Performances
- **STRIKE!**
- Post-mortem

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION:** Provide assistance to the director on all aspects of the production. To give notes to the director, or at the director's behest, to subsequent personnel. To provide research to the director as requested. If requested, provide moderation at pre or post performance discussions.

### **SPECIFIC DUTIES:**

- **Read and sign your Studio Contract and return it to the Assistant Production Manager**
- Meet with the director on a regular basis
- Provide research on as requested on various topics
- Advise the director during the pre-production and rehearsal process
- Give notes on all aspects of the production to the director, or if requested to appropriate personnel
- Follow up with the director or playwright on notes
- Lead pre or post-performance discussions or moderate if the director or playwright is leading the discussion
- **STRIKE!**
- Post-mortem

You are the extra set of eyes for the director during the rehearsal process. Based on your research of the literature, time period, production history, and other pertinent research, you are to advise the director on all aspects of the production. Remember, this is only advise. The director may choose what to include or exclude with regard to the production. Regular communication is the key. Scheduled meetings with the director is essential. A good rule of thumb is twice a week during the pre-production and rehearsal process and once a week during the technical and dress rehearsal period. The purpose of these meetings is to ensure the director, playwright, and dramaturg are unified in their approach to the play. At all times, you should strive to ensure your work is in support of the needs of the production. Attendance during the rehearsal process is desirable and may or may not be mandatory. Attendance during technical and dress rehearsals is encouraged and is often mandatory. Notes are to be given directly to the director unless you are asked to disseminate the notes to the Stage Manager or other personnel. Should there be pre or

post-performance discussions with the audience or a class, you may be asked to lead, facilitate, or moderate the discussion. There is no set format for this type of event.

Finally, remember that as part of the *company* you are part of a collective art form. At all times, treat your *company* members with dignity and respect. This type of behavior is be reciprocated.

## **The Classroom**

Remember that the Black Box Theatre is also a daily classroom for Theater Department classes. You *share* this space. While the faculty is aware that you are in production, and they are quite accommodating, no aspect of the production may interfere with normal classroom activities. Be sure the Black Box Theatre and lobby is ready for classes after each rehearsal and performance!

## **TITLE: Actor**

(these lists are not to be considered all inclusive)

### **TYPICAL WORK SCHEDULE:**

- Pre-production
- Production meetings
- Auditions
- Rehearsals
- Technical rehearsals
- Dress rehearsals
- Performances
- **STRIKE!**
- Post-mortem

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION:** Put into action the dialogue of the playwright and the blocking of the director. To exist as your character within the “world of the play” as created by the director and artistic team. Provide other production support as instructed.

### **SPECIFIC DUTIES:**

- **Read and sign your Studio Contract and return it to the Assistant Production Manager**
- Create your character within the style and genre as the director dictates
- Attend rehearsals in accordance with the rehearsal schedule as provided by the Stage Manager
- Be on time to all rehearsals and maintain a professional work ethic during rehearsals
- Attend costume fittings as directed by the Costume Designer and/or Costume Shop foreman; this information may be disseminated by the Stage Manager
- Have your lines and blocking memorized on the date(s) prescribed by the Director and Stage Manager
- Attend additional rehearsals, including but not limited to, fight calls, music, or choreography rehearsals
- Provided production support, including but not limited to, acting as run crew
- Be on time for show calls
- Be prepared for “curtain” time by being in costume and make-up, have checked your properties, and fulfilled any other pre-show duties
- Be part of curtain call and perform all post-show duties
- **STRIKE!**
- Post-mortem

As the most visible part of the *company*, it is important to remember that your actions reflect upon the rest of the *company*. Actors risk much by this personal exposure. Likewise the rewards may be even more lavish. You are the first to accept the accolades or rejection by the audience. And, you do this, during the curtain call, not just for yourselves, but for the entire *company*. This whole is greater than the sum of the parts. In other words, from auditions, through the rehearsal process, and even after the production has ended, the value of all these efforts are less than the eventual end product. To achieve this greater whole, you must invest much. Countless hours of

time, mental resources committed to characterization and memorization, physical exertion, and emotional exhaustion will all take its toll. To get through this exacting process remember to treat yourself well. Pay attention to nutrition and get plenty of sleep. Always remain disciplined with your interactions with the entire company. Treat everyone with respect, and be treated with respect. And, always remember that you are only one member of a vast *company* that has produced this art.

As a *company* member, you are required to participate in **STRIKE!** The question often arises as to why actors are required to participate. The answer is simple: You are part of the *company*. Just as you have spent countless hours in preparation for the production, so have most of the rest of the *company*. The work of the actor, the director, the artistic team, the management team, the pre-production personnel, and the running crews are not mutually exclusive. All have participated in creating this art; all will participate in its disassembly.

## **The Classroom**

Remember that the Black Box Theatre is also a daily classroom for Theater Department classes. You *share* this space. While the faculty is aware that you are in production, and they are quite accommodating, no aspect of the production may interfere with normal classroom activities. Be sure the Black Box Theatre and lobby is ready for classes after each rehearsal and performance!

## **TITLE: Stage Manager**

(these lists are not to be considered all inclusive)

### **TYPICAL WORK SCHEDULE:**

- Pre-production
- Auditions
- Rehearsals
- Technical rehearsals
- Dress rehearsals
- Performances
- **STRIKE!**
- Post-mortem

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION:** Provide organization and communication throughout the pre-production and rehearsal period. Run the technical and dress rehearsals. Ensure consistent presentation of the production from opening through closing. Supervise Assistant Stage Managers and delegate responsibilities in fulfillment of duties.

### **SPECIFIC DUTIES:**

- **Read and sign your Studio Contract and return it to the Assistant Production Manager**
- Establish and maintain channels of communication throughout the entire process. This includes a management role in production meetings, auditions, rehearsals, technical rehearsals, and dress rehearsals
- Provide and keep current: production calendars, contact sheets, telephone hotline, and rehearsal/performance reports
- Ensure the Faculty Studio Production Manager and all other associated faculty and staff are apprised of changes
- Maintain order in rehearsals and keep the rehearsal process moving efficiently
- Set rehearsal schedule and spaces with director
- Set fitting schedules with costume designer and costume shop supervisor
- Collect rehearsal props
- Create and update a prompt book including all blocking notes and cues for use in rehearsal and performance
- Create preliminary paperwork for run crew including lists of props, set pieces, etc, and order of scene changes, etc.
- Set calls for the Assistant Stage Manager(s) and run crew
- Meet with lighting and sound designers to establish preliminary cue locations prior to technical rehearsals
- Run technical rehearsals
- Work with director, designers, and technical personnel to establish and carry out the technical rehearsal and dress rehearsal process
- Create sign-in sheets for performers
- Use check lists to verify readiness of set/props prior to house opening
- Collect valuables from performers prior to show

- Maintain the Director's and designer's artistic visions through the run, giving notes and calling rehearsals as necessary
- All duties necessary to ensure the smooth running of the rehearsal and production process
- **STRIKE!**
- Post-mortem

You are the *communication hub* of the theatre. Establishing, keeping, and maintaining a good line of communication may be the most important part of your job. To do this, you must be meticulously organized, demonstrate level headedness, and always be fair to others. You are the director's right hand person and you are the chief crew person for the production. You must lead by example and, in my experience, the best stage managers never have to raise their voice. Remember to always act with the up most professionalism. Always treat others with respect and respect will be returned to you.

As a **Rehearsal Stage Manager** you are responsible for creating the prompt book, the bible of your production. It must contain all aspects of the production, the script with blocking, contact sheets, all of the technical cues, and an archive of the production designs. It must be clear in its intent and readable by another in case of emergency.

As a **Production Stage Manager** you must lead the production through performance. You must call the cues of the show with clarity. You must maintain the discipline of the performers and the crew. It is your responsibility to maintain the director's and designers' artistic intent. And, most of all, you are to ensure a quality production for the audience by all means within your power to do so.

As both **Rehearsal** and **Production Stage Manager**, you must submit rehearsal and production reports after each event. These reports should be distributed to all appropriate company personnel. This may include faculty and/or shop staff personnel as necessary and *always* to the Studio Faculty Production Manager. It is imperative to highlight all changes to the physical production and draw attention to these changes to the Faculty Studio Production Manager and the appropriate shop managers. Such changes may require approval!

### **Scheduling**

The rehearsal schedule should be hammered out between the director and yourself, based on the availability of the cast and other *company* members needed for each rehearsal. Remember that time is the most valuable commodity and should never be wasted. Do not call *company* members needlessly. Be sure that rehearsals begin on time and end on time! Be sure to alert the various technical crews as to stage availability once rehearsal has ended. The Technical Rehearsal schedule is dictated by the Faculty Production Manager and can be found in the Director's chapter of this manual. Any desired changes to this schedule must be approved by the Faculty Production Manager, or in the case of this person's absence, by the professional staff on call. Be sure to alert the professional staff that is on call when rehearsal has ended and when technical work is to begin.

Day to day operations, especially in the technical and rehearsal areas must conform to operational hours set down by the Faculty Studio Production Manager and the various shop personnel. Plan to do work within the allotted time for the appropriate spaces. Due to safety and supervision considerations, the proverbial “all nighters” are not allowed. The shop schedule are set by the staff persons in charge of those shops. All work in the Black Box Theatre must end by **midnight**. Furthermore, in accordance to the reforms adopted by the GMU Players: *Rehearsal and production schedules must be posted on the call board in the lounge AND sent to the company, Faculty Studio Production Manager, and staff over e-mail*

## **The Classroom**

Remember that the Black Box Theatre is also a daily classroom for Theater Department classes. You *share* this space. While the faculty is aware that you are in production, and they are quite accommodating, no aspect of the production may interfere with normal classroom activities. Be sure the Black Box Theatre and lobby is ready for classes after each rehearsal and performance!

## **TITLE: Assistant Stage Manager**

(these lists are not to be considered all inclusive)

### **TYPICAL WORK SCHEDULE:**

- Pre-production
- Auditions
- Rehearsals
- Technical rehearsals
- Dress rehearsals
- Performances
- **STRIKE!**
- Post-mortem

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION:** Work at the direction of the Stage Manager to organize and oversee the audition, rehearsal and performance process.

### **SPECIFIC DUTIES:**

- Assist the Stage Manager in the performance of her/his job
- Rehearsal reports, calendars, contact lists, etc.
- Running rehearsals, taking notes, being on book, collecting rehearsal props, etc.
- Organizing and supervising backstage run crews and scene/prop shifts
- Verify readiness of set/props backstage prior to house opening
- All duties as necessary to ensure the smooth running of the rehearsal and performance process
- **STRIKE!**

You are the right hand person of the Stage Manager. You must be familiar with the Stage Manager's duties and be able to take over for the Stage Manager in case of emergency. You will probably be the leader of the deck running crew. As both a leader and a follower of orders, remember to behave in a professional manner at all times. Treat those you interact with respectfully and that respect will be returned.

## **The Classroom**

Remember that the Black Box Theatre is also a daily classroom for Theater Department classes. You *share* this space. While the faculty is aware that you are in production, and they are quite accommodating, no aspect of the production may interfere with normal classroom activities. Be sure the Black Box Theatre and lobby is ready for classes after each rehearsal and performance!

## **TITLE: Run Crew**

(deck crew, board operators, fly crew, props crew, wardrobe crew, etc.)  
(these lists are not to be considered all inclusive)

### **TYPICAL WORK SCHEDULE:**

- Technical rehearsals
- Dress rehearsals
- Performances
- **STRIKE!**
- Post-mortem

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION:** At the direction of the Stage Manager/Assistant Stage Managers, provide consistent completion of the technical component of the production, including pre-show set up, performance, and post-show storage.

### **SPECIFIC DUTIES:**

- **Read and sign your Studio Contract and return it to the Assistant Production Manager**
- Carry out tasks in a consistent, professional manner
- Report as scheduled by Stage Manager before each rehearsal/performance and prepare for the event
- Perform run crew duties as assigned
- Create and maintain cue sheets, when applicable
- Go over check lists prior to house opening
- Post show, strike props and scenery as necessary to secure the stage
- Do not leave stage or associated areas until released by Stage Manager
- **STRIKE!**

There are no small jobs in theatre. If a job has to be done, then it is important. Being on time for all calls, being quiet back stage, in the control booth, or in the dressing room, and being attentive to your duties are paramount to completing your tasks. The execution of your job reflects not on just you, but on the entire *company* as well. Maintain a professional attitude at all times. You report to the Stage Manager and/or the Assistant Stage Manager. You must sign in at the start of the day and wait until you are released before leaving the theatre.

Often members of the Running Crew are participating as a fulfillment of laboratory hours for technical theatre practicum. While no one expects all students to be familiar with all stage etiquette, those unfamiliar with their Running Crew positions are expected to learn their jobs and execute them with the best of intention. Always act with professionalism. Treat all of the *company* with respect and be treated with respect. The faculty may inquire of the Stage Manager as to the quality of the student's work habits and deportment while performing their tasks.

## **TITLE: Scenic Designer**

(these lists are not to be considered all inclusive)

### **TYPICAL WORK SCHEDULE:**

- Pre-production
- Production
- Designer run through
- Technical rehearsals through opening
- **STRIKE!**
- Post-mortem

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION:** Develop design component and provide aesthetic oversight through completion. Design approach must be approved by Director, and be achievable within production resources (time and budget). Meet design deadlines. Provide the necessary technical drawings for construction. Provide hands-on support as necessary to ensure completion of project.

### **SPECIFIC DUTIES:**

- **Read and sign your Studio Contract and return it to the Assistant Production Manager**
- Meet with director and work up design approach
- Attend production meetings
- Meet design deadlines
- Provide preliminary and final design information
- Present final designs to the director, production team, and the Faculty Studio Production Manager
- Provide a definitive house count to the Faculty Studio Production Manager
- Ensure the Faculty Studio Production Manager and all other associated faculty and staff are apprised of changes
- Meet with shop supervisor to work out construction schedule
- Modify designs as necessary to meet schedule and budget constraints
- Be available to provide information as necessary to production personnel through opening night
- Attend designer run-through
- Attend technical rehearsals, dress rehearsals, and post-rehearsal production meetings
- Solve issues that arise during technical rehearsals
- **STRIKE!**
- Post-mortem

**Final design dates are concrete.** Failure to meet the Final Design Date will result in the Faculty Production Manager making final decisions regarding your design. All Scene Shop time must be approved by the college Technical Director. Use of tools, building materials, paint, and other expendables must be approved by the college Technical Director and/or his staff. Replacement of expendables will be charged to your budget. The ordering of building and painting supplies must be done in conjunction with the college Technical Director. Safety is the prime concern of

the college Technical Director. He and his staff have the right to alter, cut, or otherwise change any item or procedure they deem unsafe.

It is important to remember that theatre is a collaborative art form. You must work with the director and other designers to create an aesthetic and unified design approach. Compromise is part of this job. The director, not the designer, has the final say as to the design concepts and final look and feel of the show. Remember that the director's and cast's needs for a design will evolve over the rehearsal period. You must keep in touch with what transpires during the rehearsal process. Remember the Stage Manager is the communication hub of the production and may be informing you of changes or modifications to your design work. If there is a need for clarification, you have every right to meet with the director to ensure the need and specifications of any changes. Do not, however, waste the director's time with unnecessary confrontation. Remember, while you are the scenic designer and your work should be respected, the director is the leader of the design team and the final arbiter for the production. The Technical Director is your right hand person. This person will lead the building and installation of the set with the help of the Scene Shop staff, student carpenters, and painters. While you are responsible for making the appropriate technical drawings, the Technical Director may assist you with this endeavor. You should assist the Technical Director in the building and installation phases. If for any reason the Technical Director cannot or fails to do his job, you are responsible for the execution of your design.

### **The House**

As part of the overall scenic design, you will have to design, with council of the director, the seating arrangement of the house. This is important as this will determine the exact count of seats for the audience and will affect the box office. The final number of seats must be reported to the Faculty Studio Production Manager so this information can be passed on to the college Box Office. Consult with the college Production Manager as to riser and chair resources.

## **Studio Production Scene Designer Guidelines**

The following guidelines are intended to outline the scene design process for students working as scenic designers for GMU Studio productions.

### **Preliminary Work**

Read the script and familiarize yourself with the world of the play and its characters.

Meet with the director, as well as others designers, to discuss the overall vision for the play and then the scenic concept for the production.

For the most part, most of the set pieces for Studio productions are pulled from the GMU stock and are not constructed. This is due to budget and time parameters. The director may make certain ground plan demands for blocking purposes and you are obliged to render a solution to these problems. In other words, the director, other designers, and actors should respect your role

as scenic designer and primary decision-maker for the set and set pieces of the production. However, the director has the final say over the design process.

### **Research and Planning**

Scenic designers should research styles of the appropriate time period for the play and/or other general style factors, including the social status, or specific locales. This can be done either through books (see GMU library) or the internet.

Search our library catalog under either scenery or architecture. Books are also available through the interlibrary loan exchange of Washington area university library consortium.

The internet has lots of resources for researching a play, location, architecture, or artistic style. Also search under Google Images for your topic or even a specific place. For instance, if you enter “Hamlet” under Google Images, you will see photos and other graphics of sets and can get some concept of a wide range of scenic styles.

After you have collected some images or even have developed or sketched your own ideas, confer with the director again for approval of your ideas.

Then make up a list of what you will need for the set including walls, levels, doors, windows, furniture, and any other scenic pieces. You then must create the specific technical drawings necessary for the completion of the task. Keep in mind for a Studio production, the plan should be *modest*, but effective since resources are not unlimited. Also, keep in mind that the Black Box Theatre is also a classroom and classroom activities must be respected. Consult with the Studio Faculty Production Manager as to any restrictions you must observe.

### **Stock**

Before you can procure set pieces, you must reconnoiter the stock. Make an appointment with the Scene Shop Manager to go through the stock areas to see what is available and start listing pieces. You may be accompanied by a scene shop staff person to assist you in this process. Be mindful and realistic about what is to be pulled so you do not over pull items that then have to be returned to stock. Keep in mind some items may not be used because they are already reserved for another production or have other restrictions placed on them. Expect to return to stock several times while refining your scene design. Remember, you may be required to return the stock in its original condition. Any alterations to stock may have to be undone.

### **Organize Your Scenery**

After the design process, discuss any changes with the director. Be sure to keep your Faculty Production Manager informed.

If scenery is to be moved during the production, you must create a shift plot to organize how scenery is to be moved and where it will be stored back stage. The Black Box Theatre is small and wing space is generally limited. There is access to the TheatreSpace, but this access must be

approved by the Studio Faculty Production Manager as there may be other rehearsals or events in TheatreSpace that prohibits its use.

About midway through the rehearsal process, the production design staff attends the designer run through to see the play in action, in its entirety, and to access any problems that scenery might present either for movability, quick changes, blocking, etc.

### **Changes to the Plan**

A production is a living entity. It will evolve and seem to take on a life of its own. To some degree, this is to be expected and in many ways encouraged. After all, your vision, as well as the vision of the other artists, especially the director, will alter with the passage of time. You must address these evolutions. While creativity is encouraged, there must be a sense of purpose and a some modest restraint. Once the vision and plan are relayed to the Faculty Studio Production Manager and other faculty and staff, a plan of action and distribution of resources is established. Changes to the physical production that could impact the classroom or the shop must be approved by the Faculty Studio Production Manager and the various shops and staff that have control over resources. *Do not* make changes to these aspects without approval!

### **Tech Week and Production Run**

During the tech/dress rehearsal week, the set designer attends rehearsals to see their work in action, to address any issues and to train the shift crew on how to perform quick set changes and to provide any assistance for the maintenance or changes to the scenery. See the Scene Shop Manager for how to maintain set pieces, paint treatments, and how to prepare the set for each performance.

Expect changes or additions to be made to scenery – this is a basic part of the dress rehearsal process.

### **After the Show Closes**

All scenery is to be struck after the final performance. The theatre must be returned to a clean, classroom condition. Stock must be returned to the appropriate areas and in the condition required by the college Technical Director. The scene shop must be left in a clean condition with all tools returned to their places and the paint area and gear clean.

Again, the purpose of supplying you with these guidelines is to outline the design process so you know what is expected of scenic designers and what each step along the way entails. These are basic guidelines and have not taken into consideration other steps scene designers perform for larger Main Stage productions, such as set renderings, set construction, props, and more. Extensive descriptions of what scenic designers do can be found in books on the topic and on the internet.

We hope you will enjoy your scenic design opportunity and please feel free to ask lots of questions of either the scene shop staff or the appropriate faculty overseeing the Studio Productions.

### **Scheduling**

Day to day operations, especially in the technical and rehearsal areas must conform to operational hours set down by the Faculty Studio Production Manager and the various shop personnel. Plan to do work within the allotted time for the appropriate spaces. Due to safety and supervision considerations, the proverbial “all nighters” are not allowed. The shop schedule are set by the staff persons in charge of those shops. All work in the Black Box Theatre must end by **midnight**.

### **The Classroom**

Remember that the Black Box Theatre is also a daily classroom for Theater Department classes. You *share* this space. While the faculty is aware that you are in production, and they are quite accommodating, no scenery may prevent classroom activities. Please keep in mind that the vast majority of your scenery must be struck each night for classes the following day. Consult with the Faculty Studio Production Manager about possible problems and solutions to scenic problems.

## **TITLE: Technical Director**

(these lists are not to be considered all inclusive)

### **TYPICAL WORK SCHEDULE:**

- Construction phase
- Installation phase
- Designer run through
- Technical rehearsals through opening
- Maintenance
- **STRIKE!**
- Post-mortem

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION:** Provide oversight and use a hands on approach to the construction and painting of all scenic elements, installation, strike, and clean up of all technical aspects of the production. Cost out the set design with the help of the Scene Shop staff. Solve practical problems of scenic carpentry as well as other technical areas. Oversee and assist the Properties Master in the building of hand props and set dressing. Oversee the installation of soft goods and assist the staff in the installation and strike of seating risers and seats. Maintain a safe working environment for student labor in the shop and the theatre. Assist any other technical element when needed.

### **SPECIFIC DUTIES:**

- **Read and sign your Studio Contract and return it to the Assistant Production Manager**
- Act as lead carpenter/painter for construction
- Prepare the theatre for set installation
- Ensure the Faculty Studio Production Manager and all other associated faculty and staff are apprised of changes
- Provide scheduling oversight for *all* technical aspects
- Deliver scenery and other technical elements for the production on time
- Provide show maintenance
- Be available to provide information as necessary to production personnel through strike
- Attend designer run-through
- Attend technical rehearsals ,dress rehearsals, and post-rehearsal production meetings
- Solve issues that arise during technical rehearsals
- **STRIKE!**
- Post-mortem

You are the “go to person” for the Scenic Designer during the execution and installation phases of the scenic design, and for the Stage Manager for maintenance during the run phase of the production. You must be familiar with all aspects of the construction and painting of the set and constructed properties. You must be able to read technical drawings and may be asked to assist the Scenic Designer in the creation of some of these drawings. While your primary concern is

the scenery and properties, you will be called on for creative solutions to technical problems for nearly all aspects of the technical production, including but not limited to the set, props, sound,

and lights. You must be aware of safety concerns. You are responsible for enlisting the aid of student carpenters, painters, and electricians.

Remember that when enlisting the aid of your peers, it is important to maintain a good and safe work environment. It is also important manage your manpower. The quickest way to lose your crew is by not keeping them busy. If there is not enough work for the crew you have assembled, either pass some labor on to other areas (if possible) or let some of the crew go. Remember not to always pick the same people to stay. It is your responsibility not to over use some personnel and not to play favorites among the volunteers. Everyone should get a chance to participate. Unfortunately, the problem is often too little manpower to complete your tasks for the day. When planning your build, remember to plan your manpower needs. Enlist help early and keep those who are helping you informed as to changes in the build schedule. No one likes to have their time wasted.

Also remember to act professionally at all times. All will come easier if you treat everyone with respect no matter if it is in production meetings, in the shop, or in the theater. This respect will be returned to you by those with which you interact. Such an environment will facilitate a positive experience by all.

### **Changes to the Plan**

A production is a living entity. It will evolve and seem to take on a life of its own. To some degree, this is to be expected and in many ways encouraged. After all, your vision, as well as the vision of the other artists, especially the director, will alter with the passage of time. You must address these evolutions. While creativity is encouraged, there must be a sense of purpose and a some modest restraint. Once the vision and plan are relayed to the Faculty Studio Production Manager and other faculty and staff, a plan of action and distribution of resources is established. Changes to the physical production that could impact the classroom or the shops must be approved by the Faculty Studio Production Manager and the various shops and staff that have control over resources. *Do not* make changes to these aspects without approval!

### **Scheduling**

Day to day operations, especially in the technical and rehearsal areas must conform to operational hours set down by the Faculty Studio Production Manager and the various shop personnel. Plan to do work within the allotted time for the appropriate spaces. Due to safety and supervision considerations, the proverbial “all nighters” are not allowed. The shop schedule are set by the staff persons in charge of those shops. All work in the Black Box Theatre must end by **midnight**.

### **The Classroom**

Remember that the Black Box Theatre is also a daily classroom for Theater Department classes. You *share* this space. During the installation and production phases, keep all technical aspects in a neat and orderly fashion. No technical aspect may interfere with normal classroom activities.

## **TITLE: Costume Designer**

(these lists are not to be considered all inclusive)

### **TYPICAL WORK SCHEDULE:**

- Pre-production
- Production
- Designer run through
- Technical rehearsals through opening
- **STRIKE!**
- Post-mortem

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION:** Develop design component and provide aesthetic oversight through completion. Design approach must be approved by Director, and be achievable within production resources (time and budget). Provide the necessary renderings, with swatches, and patterns, if applicable, for construction. Meet design deadlines. Provide hands-on support as necessary to ensure completion of project.

### **SPECIFIC DUTIES:**

- **Read and sign your Studio Contract and return it to the Assistant Production Manager**
- Meet with director and work up design approach
- Attend production meetings
- Meet design deadlines
- Provide preliminary and final design information
- Present final designs to the director, production team, and the Faculty Studio Production Manager
- Ensure the Faculty Studio Production Manager and all other associated faculty and staff are apprised of changes
- Meet with shop supervisor to work out construction schedule
- Make a fitting schedule with the actors
- Modify designs as necessary to meet schedule and budget constraints
- Be available to provide information as necessary to production personnel through opening night
- Attend designer run-through
- Attend technical rehearsals, dress rehearsals, and post-rehearsal production meetings
- Solve issues that arise during technical rehearsals
- **STRIKE!**
- Post-mortem

**Final design dates are concrete.** Failure to meet the Final Design Date will result in the Faculty Production Manager making final decisions regarding your design. As Costume Designer, you must ensure that all clothing is ready for performance by the first technical rehearsal. Costumes may be acquired by building, buying, or pulling from stock with the approval of the Costume Shop Manager. Any alterations to existing stock must be approved. As the Costume Shop is a very busy space, all scheduling of fittings, alterations, or build must be approved by the Costume Shop Manager. Use of the wardrobe facility must also be scheduled.

Maintenance of costumes is the responsibility of the Wardrobe Crew. Costumes should be clean and in good repair before each performance. Costumes that are pulled from stock or to be added to stock must be cleaned in the appropriate manner before being returned to stock. Any alterations that the Costume Shop Supervisor requires to be undone must be addressed before returning the costume to stock.

You, not the Costume Shop personnel, are responsible for the completion of all costumes. Likewise, you are responsible for recruiting the labor necessary for your build. Should either your build labor or the wardrobe crew fail to do their jobs, you are responsible for the completion of these tasks.

It is important to remember that theatre is a collaborative art form. You must work with the director and other designers to create a aesthetic and unified design approach. Compromise is part of this job. The director, not the designer, has the final say as to the design concepts and final look and feel of the show. Remember that the director's and cast's needs for a design will evolve over the rehearsal period. You must keep in touch with what is transpiring during the rehearsal process. Remember the Stage Manager is the communication hub of the production and may be informing you of changes or modifications to your design work. If there is a need for clarification, you have every right to meet with the director to ensure the need and specifications of any changes. Do not, however, waste the director's time with unnecessary confrontation. Remember, while you are the scenic designer and your work should be respected, the director is the leader of the design team and the final arbiter for the production. This respect does not end there. Treat with dignity and respect all of the members of the *company* and have that respect returned to you.

## **Studio Production Costume Designer Guidelines**

The following guidelines are intended to outline the costume design process for students working as costume designers for GMU Studio productions.

### **Preliminary Work**

Read the script and familiarize yourself with the world of the play and its characters.

Meet with the director, as well as others designers, to discuss the overall vision for the play and then the costume concept for the production.

For the most part, the clothes for Studio productions are pulled from the GMU Costume Stock and are not constructed. This is due to budget and time parameters. If the director suggests that actors supplement the production with their own clothes, this should be a free will decision for the actor (not an imposition) and subject to your approval as the costume designer. In other words, actors and directors should respect your role as costume designer and primary decision-maker for the clothes of the production. However, the director has the final say over the design process. A general, professional rule of thumb is that actors do not wear their own clothes. (However, on occasion we have had Studio productions that were either completely or partially costumed from non-GMU sources.)

## **Research and Planning**

Costume designers should research fashion styles of the appropriate time period for the play and/or other general style factors, including the social status or specific personae of the characters. This can be done either through books (see GMU library) or the internet.

Search our library catalog under either fashion or costumes. Books are also available through the interlibrary loan exchange of Washington area university library consortium.

The internet has lots of resources for researching costume/fashion images. A good place to start is the website **costumes.org**, which is dedicated to costume research and was developed and is maintained by a costume historian/designer.

Also search under Google Images for your topic or even a specific character. For instance, if you enter “Hamlet” under Google Images, you will see photos and other graphics of actors who have played Hamlet and can get some concept of a wide range of costume styles for that character.

After you have collected some images or even have developed or sketched your own ideas, confer with the director again for approval of your ideas.

Then make up a list of what you will need for each character including clothes, accessories (such as hats, shawls or jewelry) and shoes. We call this step the costume plot – essentially this is a list of what each character wears in each scene of the play and includes notations for quick changes. Keep in mind for a Studio production, the plot should be modest, but effective since resources are not unlimited.

## **Stock**

Before you can procure the costumes, you must take actors’ measurements. In many cases, actors may have already been in a GMU production and the costume shop will have their measurement sheet on file; check with the Costume Shop Manager for working copies of these measurements. Usually, the best time to take new measurements is at the first rehearsal; the costume shop has blank measurement sheets for this purpose, though in most cases you only need to get basic measurements (height, bust, waist, hip and shoe for women and height, chest, pants, shirt and shoe for men). It is helpful to make up a summary spreadsheet of all the actor’s measurements to refer to when pulling costumes from stock.

Make an appointment with the Costume Shop Manager to go to the costume stock rooms to see what’s available and start pulling costumes. You will be accompanied by a costume shop staff person to assist you in this process. Be mindful and realistic about sizing so you don’t over pull items that then have to be returned to stock. Keep in mind some items may not be used because they are already reserved for another production or have other restrictions placed on them. Expect to return to stock several times while refining your costume design.

Visit the shoe room if you are providing specific shoes for the production. Sometimes actors wish to wear their own shoes, but you should reserve the right to approve them.

## **Fittings**

Once you have pulled your costumes, organize them on a rack. We have rack tags you can make up for each actor as well as accessory bags to assign to them and keep with each actor's group of clothes.

Arrange to show the costumes to the director for approval. Keep in mind this is a preliminary process, since you have not tried the clothes on the actors yet.

Arrange for costume fittings. With the director's approval, fittings can often be done within the context of a rehearsal. You will have to arrange to get access to the costumes for fittings through the Costume Shop Manager. Sometimes individual fittings can be arranged with actors as well. Or you can arrange with the Costume Shop Manager to have actors sign up for fittings during the day in the costume shop.

Fittings should include pinning clothes wherever they need to be taken in (or sometimes out), marking hems and making notes on things to be done to the clothes as well as any additional items you may need to find to complete each actor's costume ensemble(s). Some alterations may be made by the costume shop, but we do not have the staff resources to do extensive changes to costumes. The goal here is to complete the production within the resources we already have available. Studio production costumers should be willing to both be creative with those resources and to learn any basic sewing needed to make changes (under the guidance of the costume shop staff).

## **Organize Your Costumes**

After the fitting process, discuss any changes with the director. Be sure to keep the Faculty Production Manager informed.

Because of security concerns, Studio production costumes will not be stored in the dressing rooms except during the run of each show itself (after each performance they must be removed from the dressing rooms). The storage area will be determined with the Costume Shop Manager.

About midway through the rehearsal process, the production design staff attends the designer run to see the play in action, all the way through, and to access any problems that a costume might present either for movability, quick changes, etc.

## **Changes to the Plan**

A production is a living entity. It will evolve and seem to take on a life of its own. To some degree, this is to be expected and in many ways encouraged. After all, your vision, as well as the vision of the other artists, especially the director, will alter with the passage of time. You must address these evolutions. While creativity is encouraged, there must be a sense of purpose and a some modest restraint. Once the vision and plan are relayed to the Faculty Studio Production Manager and other faculty and staff, a plan of action and distribution of resources is established. Changes to the physical production that could impact the classroom or the shop must be approved by the Faculty Studio Production Manager and the various shops and staff that have control over resources. *Do not* make changes to these aspects without approval!

## **Tech Week and Production Run**

During the tech/dress rehearsal week, the costume designer attends rehearsals to see their work in action, to address quick change issues and to train the wardrobe crew on how to perform quick changes, provide dressing assistance and care for the clothes. See the Costume Shop Manager for how to care for the costumes and how to prepare them for each performance (steaming, ironing, pre-setting, etc.).

Expect changes or additions to be made to costumes–this is a basic part of the dress rehearsal process.

The wardrobe crew cares for the costumes during the production run, however costume designers should be available for the strike of the show after the final performance. Check with the Costume Shop Manager for the specifics of how the costume strike should be conducted.

## **After the Show Closes**

*All* costumes are to be struck after the final performance. The week following the strike of the show, costumes must be laundered! This is an integral part of the costume process and the responsibility of the Studio production costume designer. The Costume Shop Manager will assist you in performing this duty. Sometimes items will need to be dry cleaned and this is done by the costume shop staff.

After everything is clean, then the costumes must be restocked or returned to their owners. Stock items must have any size tags put back on them and organized on racks for return to the stock rooms. The costume designer makes an appointment with the Costume Shop Manager to restock and will be accompanied by a costume shop staff person to complete this process. Restocking should occur no later than the first week after laundering since we have very limited storage options for costume racks.

Again, the purpose of supplying you with these guidelines is to outline the design process so you know what is expected of costume designers and what each step along the way entails. These are basic guidelines and have not taken into consideration other steps costume designers perform for larger Main Stage productions, such as costume renderings, costume construction, crafts and more. Extensive descriptions of what costume designers do can be found in books on the topic and on the internet.

We hope you will enjoy your costume design opportunity and please feel free to ask lots of questions of either the costume shop staff or the appropriate faculty overseeing the Studio Productions.

## **Scheduling**

Day to day operations, especially in the technical and rehearsal areas must conform to operational hours set down by the Faculty Studio Production Manager and the various shop personnel. Plan to do work within the allotted time for the appropriate spaces. Due to safety and

supervision considerations, the proverbial “all nighters” are not allowed. The shop schedule are set by the staff persons in charge of those shops. All work in the Black Box Theatre must end by **midnight**.

## **The Classroom**

Remember that the Black Box Theatre is also a daily classroom for Theater Department classes. You *share* this space. While the faculty is aware that you are in production, and they are quite accommodating. All costumes must be struck from the Black Box Theatre and stored in the dressing room or any other space the Costume Shop Manager requires.

## **TITLE: Wardrobe Crew**

(these lists are not to be considered all inclusive)

### **TYPICAL WORK SCHEDULE:**

- Costume preparation
- Dress rehearsals
- Performances
- **STRIKE!**
- Post-mortem

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION:** Provide consistent preparation, costume changes, laundry, and maintenance of costumes during dress rehearsals and performances.

### **SPECIFIC DUTIES:**

- **Read and sign your Studio Contract and return it to the Assistant Production Manager**
- Work with costume designer and costume shop manager to prepare costumes and move them to dressing rooms prior to dress rehearsals
- With costume designer, plan and carry out costume changes
- Set out costumes prior to each dress rehearsal and performance
- Assist actors with their costume which may include quick changes
- Collect costumes after each dress rehearsal and performance
- Laundry of costume items as assigned
- Provide general maintenance of costumes
- Report major maintenance problems to costume shop supervisor
- **STRIKE!**

Your job is to prepare, maintain, and track each costume during the rehearsal and performance stage of the production. Costumes must be performance ready for every show. You may also have to facilitate quick changes during the performance. Remember to treat with dignity and respect all of the members of the *company* and have that respect returned to you.

## **The Classroom**

Remember that the Black Box Theatre is also a daily classroom for Theater Department classes. You *share* this space. While the faculty is aware that you are in production, and they are quite accommodating. All costumes must be struck from the Black Box Theatre and stored in the dressing room or any other space the Costume Shop Manager requires.

## **TITLE: Properties Master**

(these lists are not to be considered all inclusive)

### **TYPICAL WORK SCHEDULE:**

- Construction and/or acquisition phase
- Installation phase
- Designer run through
- Tech rehearsals
- Maintenance
- **STRIKE!**
- Post-mortem

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION:** Provide oversight and use a hands on approach to the construction and painting of all properties, provide rehearsal properties, installation, and strike. Deliver rehearsal and production properties on time. Cost out the property design with the help of the Scene Shop staff. Solve practical problems of property carpentry. Maintain a safe working environment for student labor in the shop and the theatre.

### **SPECIFIC DUTIES:**

- **Read and sign your Studio Contract and return it to the Assistant Production Manager**
- Meet with director and work up design approach
- Attend production meetings
- Meet design deadlines
- Present final designs to the director, production team, and the Faculty Studio Production Manager
- Provide preliminary and final design information
- Ensure the Faculty Studio Production Manager and all other associated faculty and staff are apprised of changes
- Meet with shop supervisor to work out construction schedule;
- Provide rehearsal properties
- Deliver production properties on time
- Modify designs as necessary to meet schedule and budget constraints
- Be available to provide information as necessary to production personnel through opening night
- Attend designer run-through
- Attend technical rehearsals, dress rehearsals, and post-rehearsal production meetings
- Solve issues that arise during technical rehearsals
- **STRIKE!**
- Post-mortem

**Final design dates are concrete.** Failure to meet the Final Design Date will result in the Faculty Production Manager making final decisions regarding your design. Properties, including both hand props and set dressing, may be acquired by building, buying, borrowing, and/or pulling from stock. Any alterations done to stock properties must be approved by the college Technical Director. Should the college Technical Director require the alterations to stock properties must

be undone, you are required to do so before returning the properties to stock. Any use of consumables in the building of properties will be charged to your budget. Any ordering of building materials is to be done with the college Technical Director. It is your responsibility to be sure any borrowed properties are returned to their rightful owner in a timely fashion. You are also responsible for any program credit for borrowed properties.

The running of properties during the show may be the responsibility of the Stage Manager, Assistant Stage Managers, and running crew. However, if for any reason they are not properly executing their tasks, or for any other unspecified reason, you may be responsible for setting up prop tables, setting out the properties, striking the properties after the show, and in any other way, running props.

It is important to remember that theatre is a collaborative art form. You must work with the director and other designers to create a aesthetic and unified design approach. Compromise is part of this job. The director, not the designer, has the final say as to the design concepts and final look and feel of the show. Remember that the director's and cast's needs for a design will evolve over the rehearsal period. You must keep in touch with what is transpiring during the rehearsal process. Remember the Stage Manager is the communication hub of the production and may be informing you of changes or modifications to your design work. If there is a need for clarification, you have every right to meet with the director to ensure the need and specifications of any changes. Do not, however, waste the director's time with unnecessary confrontation. Remember, while you are the scenic designer and your work should be respected, the director is the leader of the design team and the final arbiter for the production. Also, remember to treat all of the *company* with dignity and respect and have that treatment returned to you.

## **Studio Production Properties Master Guidelines**

The following guidelines are intended to outline the prop design process for students working as scenic designers for GMU Studio productions.

### **Preliminary Work**

Read the script and familiarize yourself with the world of the play and its characters.

Meet with the director, as well as others designers, to discuss the overall vision for the play and then the scenic concept for the production. The Scenic Designer may have some say as to set dressing.

For the most part, the prop pieces for Studio productions are pulled from the GMU stock and are not constructed. This is due to budget and time parameters. The director may make certain plan demands and you are obliged to render a solution to these problems. In other words, the director, designers, and actors should respect your role as props master and primary decision-maker for the properties and prop pieces of the production. However, the director has the final say over the design process.

## **Research and Planning**

Properties designers should research styles of the appropriate time period for the play and/or other general style factors, including the social status or specific locales. This can be done either through books (see GMU library) or the internet.

Search our library catalog under either scenery or architecture. Books are also available through the interlibrary loan exchange of Washington area university library consortium.

The internet has lots of resources for researching a play, location, architecture, or artistic style. Also search under Google Images for your topic or even a specific place. For instance, if you enter “Hamlet” under Google Images, you will see photos and other graphics of props and can get some concept of a wide range of scenic styles.

After you have collected some images or even have developed or sketched your own ideas, confer with the director again for approval of your ideas.

Then make up a list of what you will need for props including hand props and set decoration. You then must create the specific technical drawings necessary for the completion of the task. Keep in mind for a Studio production, the plan should be modest, but effective since resources are not unlimited.

## **Stock**

Before you can procure set pieces, you must reconnoiter the stock. Make an appointment with the Scene Shop Manager to go through the prop stock areas to see what is available and start listing pieces. You may be accompanied by a scene shop staff person to assist you in this process. Be mindful and realistic about what is to be pulled so you don't over pull items that then have to be returned to stock. Keep in mind some items may not be used because they are already reserved for another production or have other restrictions placed on them. Expect to return to stock several times while refining your scene design.

## **Organize Your Properties**

After the design process, discuss any changes with the director. Be sure to keep the Faculty Production Manager informed. Provide any necessary rehearsal properties.

If props are to be moved during the production, you must create a prop plot and prop tables to organize how properties are to be moved and where it will be stored back stage. The Black Box Theatre is small and wing space is generally limited. There is access to the TheaterSpace, but this access must be approved by the Studio Faculty Production Manager as there may be other rehearsals or events in TheatreSpace that prohibits its use.

About midway through the rehearsal process, the production design staff attends the designer run through to see the play in action, all the way through, and to access any problems that props might present either for movability, quick changes, etc.

### **Changes to the Plan**

A production is a living entity. It will evolve and seem to take on a life of its own. To some degree, this is to be expected and in many ways encouraged. After all, your vision, as well as the vision of the other artists, especially the director, will alter with the passage of time. You must address these evolutions. While creativity is encouraged, there must be a sense of purpose and a some modest restraint. Once the vision and plan are relayed to the Faculty Studio Production Manager and other faculty and staff, a plan of action and distribution of resources is established. Changes to the physical production that could impact the classroom or the shops must be approved by the Faculty Studio Production Manager and the various shops and staff that have control over resources. *Do not* make changes to these aspects without approval!

### **Tech Week and Production Run**

During the tech/dress rehearsal week, the prop master attends rehearsals to see their work in action, to address any issues and to train the shift crew on how to perform quick set changes and to provide any assistance for the maintenance or changes to the properties. See the Scene Shop Manager for how to care for the properties and how to prepare them for each performance.

Expect changes or additions to be made to props – this is a basic part of the dress rehearsal process.

### **After the Show Closes**

*All* properties are to be struck after the final performance. The theatre must be returned to a clean, classroom condition. Stock must be returned to the appropriate areas. The scene shop and stock areas must be left in a clean condition with all tools returned to their places and the paint area and gear clean.

Again, the purpose of supplying you with these guidelines is to outline the design process so you know what is expected of scenic designers and what each step along the way entails. These are basic guidelines and have not taken into consideration other steps prop masters perform for larger Main Stage productions, such as prop renderings, prop construction, and more. Extensive descriptions of what properties masters do can be found in books on the topic and on the internet.

We hope you will enjoy your prop design opportunity and please feel free to ask lots of questions of either the scene shop staff or the appropriate faculty overseeing the Studio Productions.

## **Scheduling**

Day to day operations, especially in the technical and rehearsal areas must conform to operational hours set down by the Faculty Studio Production Manager and the various shop personnel. Plan to do work within the allotted time for the appropriate spaces. Due to safety and supervision considerations, the proverbial “all nighters” are not allowed. The shop schedule are set by the staff persons in charge of those shops. All work in the Black Box Theatre must end by **midnight**.

## **The Classroom**

Remember that the Black Box Theatre is also a daily classroom for Theater Department classes. You *share* this space. While the faculty is aware that you are in production, and they are quite accommodating, no properties may prevent classroom activities. Please keep in mind that the vast majority of your properties must be struck and stored each night for classes the following day.

## **TITLE: Sound Designer**

(these lists are not to be considered all inclusive)

### **TYPICAL WORK SCHEDULE:**

- Pre-production
- Production
- Designer run through
- Tech rehearsals through opening
- **STRIKE!**
- Post-mortem
- **GENERAL DESCRIPTION:** Develop design component and provide aesthetic oversight through completion. Design approach must be approved by Director, and be achievable with-in production resources (time and budget). Meet design deadlines. Provide sound clips for review by the director. Provide the necessary technical drawings for sound plot installation. Engineer sound on media devices or any reinforcement devices. Have cues ready to give to the Stage Manager at the first Technical Rehearsal. Provide hands-on support as necessary to ensure completion of project.

### **SPECIFIC DUTIES:**

- **Read and sign your Studio Contract and return it to the Assistant Production Manager**
- Meet with director and work up design approach
- Attend production meetings
- Meet design deadlines
- Provide preliminary and final design information
- Present final designs to the director, production team, and the Faculty Studio Production Manager
- Ensure the Faculty Studio Production Manager and all other associated faculty and staff are apprised of changes
- Provide rehearsal sound if necessary
- Meet with the technical director to work out installation schedule
- Provide and install necessary communication gear prior to the technical rehearsals and the production
- Deliver all music, sound effects, and design materials on time
- Modify designs as necessary to meet schedule and budget constraints
- Write cues
- Be available to provide information as necessary to production personnel through opening night
- Attend designer run-through
- Attend technical rehearsals, dress rehearsals, and post-rehearsal production meetings
- Solve issues that arise during technical rehearsals
- **STRIKE!**
- Post-mortem

**Final design dates are concrete.** Failure to meet the Final Design Date will result in the Faculty Production Manager making final decisions regarding your design. Sound is the fastest changing

technical field. New sound media and reinforcement devices are being developed continually in the field. Sound re-enactment (live sound effects) is also a viable and creative choice. You are responsible for finding, recording (as applicable) and, if necessary, securing the rights for the use of any copyrighted sound or music used in production. Any music or sound expense will be billed to your budget. You are responsible for providing any headsets required for the running of the production. It is essential that the Sound Plot be installed *before* Light Focus as to not interfere with the Lighting Designer's work. The procurement of sound equipment is to be scheduled with the college Production Manager. A sound check is required before the House may open and should be done in such a timely fashion that any reasonable repairs might be made without delaying the opening of the House. If for any reason the sound operator is unable to execute his job, you are responsible for sound operation.

It is important to remember that theatre is a collaborative art form. You must work with the director and other designers to create a aesthetic and unified design approach. Compromise is part of this job. The director, not the designer, has the final say as to the design concepts and final look and feel of the show. Remember that the director's and cast's needs for a design will evolve over the rehearsal period. You must keep in touch with what is transpiring during the rehearsal process. Remember the Stage Manager is the communication hub of the production and may be informing you of changes or modifications to your design work. If there is a need for clarification, you have every right to meet with the director to ensure the need and specifications of any changes. Do not, however, waste the director's time with unnecessary confrontation. Remember, while you are the scenic designer and your work should be respected, the director is the leader of the design team and the final arbiter for the production. Also, remember to treat all of the *company* with dignity and respect and have that treatment returned to you.

## **Studio Production Sound Designer Guidelines**

The following guidelines are intended to outline the sound design process for students working as scenic designers for GMU Studio productions.

### **Preliminary Work**

Read the script and familiarize yourself with the world of the play and its characters.

Meet with the director, as well as others designers, to discuss the overall vision for the play and the sound concept for the production.

For the most part, the sound hardware for Studio productions are pulled from the GMU Stock and are not borrowed from other spaces. This is due to budget and time parameters. The director may make certain demands for sound effects or music and you are obliged to render a solution to these problems. In other words, the director, designers, and actors should respect your role as sound designer and primary decision-maker for the sound of the production. However, the director has the final say over the design process.

## **Research and Planning**

Sound designers should research styles of the appropriate time period for the play and/or other general style factors, including music, or specific environmental sound. This can be done either through books (see GMU library) or the internet.

Search our library catalog under either theatrical sound or sound effects. Books are also available through the interlibrary loan exchange of Washington area university library consortium.

The internet has lots of resources for researching a play, location, period music, or artistic style. Also search under Google Images for your topic or even a specific place. For instance, if you enter "Hamlet" under Google Images, you will see photos and other graphics of past productions, perhaps even sound clips, and can get some concept of a wide range of sound styles.

After you have collected some clips, or even have developed and recorded your own ideas, confer with the director again for approval of your ideas.

Then make up a list of what you will need for the sound design including the types recording and mixing hardware, recording media, speakers, live sound effects machinery, music, and communications gear such as head sets. You then must create the specific technical drawings necessary for the completion of the task. Keep in mind for a Studio production, the plan should be modest, but effective since resources are not unlimited.

## **Stock**

Each theatre at GMU has a sound unit inventory. You will receive a copy from the Studio Faculty Production Manager. Any use of stock outside of the Black Box inventory must be approved by the Studio Faculty Production Manager. Be prepared to have these requests denied and have a back up plan as to how to achieve your desired effect with stock sound gear.

## **Organize Your Sound**

After the design process, discuss any changes with the director. Be sure to keep the Faculty Production Manager informed.

About midway through the rehearsal process, the production design staff attends the designer run through to see the play in action. Your sound plot is due at the same time the light plot is due so hung speakers and lighting units do not conflict. Any sound installation must happen before light focus as to not harm the work of others.

Cues must be placed in your script prior to your level writing secession, or the first technical rehearsal if that is when it is agreed that cues will be written. The cue placement must be given to the Stage Manager in a timely fashion.

## **Changes to the Plan**

A production is a living entity. It will evolve and seem to take on a life of its own. To some degree, this is to be expected and in many ways encouraged. After all, your vision, as well as the vision of the other artists, especially the director, will alter with the passage of time. You must address these evolutions. While creativity is encouraged, there must be a sense of purpose and a some modest restraint. Once the vision and plan are relayed to the Faculty Studio Production Manager and other faculty and staff, a plan of action and distribution of resources is established. Changes to the physical production that could impact the classroom or the shop must be approved by the Faculty Studio Production Manager and the various shops and staff that have control over resources. *Do not* make changes to these aspects without approval!

## **Tech Week and Production Run**

During the tech/dress rehearsal week, the sound designer attends rehearsals to see their work in action, to address any issue, to train the sound board operator on how to perform the cues, and to provide any assistance for the maintenance or changes to the sound. Expect changes or additions to be made to sound – this is a basic part of the dress rehearsal process.

## **After the Show Closes**

*All* production sound equipment is to be struck after the final performance. The theatre must be returned to a clean, classroom condition. Stock must be returned to the appropriate areas. The sound areas must be left in a clean condition with all materials returned to their places. Any gear needing maintenance must be brought to the attention of the appropriate personnel.

Again, the purpose of supplying you with these guidelines is to outline the design process so you know what is expected of sound designers and what each step along the way entails. These are basic guidelines and have not taken into consideration other steps sound designers perform for larger main stage productions. Extensive descriptions of what sound designers do can be found in books on the topic and on the internet.

We hope you will enjoy your sound design opportunity and please feel free to ask lots of questions of either the scene shop staff or the appropriate faculty overseeing the Studio Productions.

## **Scheduling**

Day to day operations, especially in the technical and rehearsal areas must conform to operational hours set down by the Faculty Studio Production Manager and the various shop personnel. Plan to do work within the allotted time for the appropriate spaces. Due to safety and supervision considerations, the proverbial “all nighters” are not allowed. The shop schedule are set by the staff persons in charge of those shops. All work in the Black Box Theatre must end by **midnight**.

## **The Classroom**

Remember that the Black Box Theatre is also a daily classroom for Theater Department classes. You *share* this space. While the faculty is aware that you are in production, and they are quite accommodating, no sound equipment may interfere with classroom activities. Please keep in mind that the vast majority of your scenery must be struck each night for classes the following day. Consult with the Faculty Studio Production Manager about possible problems and solutions to scenic problems.

## **TITLE: Lighting Designer**

(these lists are not to be considered all inclusive)

### **TYPICAL WORK SCHEDULE:**

- Pre-production
- Production
- Designer run through
- Tech rehearsals through opening
- **STRIKE!**
- Post-mortem

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION:** Develop design component and provide aesthetic oversight through completion. Design approach must be approved by Director, and be achievable with-in production resources (time and budget). Meet design deadlines. Provide the necessary technical drawings and associated paper work for light plot installation. Have cues ready to give to the Stage Manager at first Technical Rehearsal. Provide hands-on support as necessary to ensure completion of project

### **SPECIFIC DUTIES:**

- **Read and sign your Studio Contract and return it to the Assistant Production Manager**
- Meet with director and work up design approach
- Attend production meetings
- Meet design deadlines
- Provide preliminary and final design information
- Present final designs to the director, production team, and the Faculty Studio Production Manager
- Ensure the Faculty Studio Production Manager and all other associated faculty and staff are apprised of changes
- Provide house and classroom lighting
- Provide appropriate running lights
- Meet with the technical director and Studio faculty supervisor to work out installation schedule
- Modify designs as necessary to meet schedule and budget constraints
- Write cues
- Be available to provide information as necessary to production personnel through opening night
- Deliver all design aspects and effects on time
- Attend designer run-through
- Attend technical rehearsals, dress rehearsals, and post-rehearsal production meetings
- Solve issues that arise during technical rehearsals
- **STRIKE!**
- Post-mortem

**Final design dates are concrete.** Failure to meet the Final Design Date will result in the Faculty Production Manager making final decisions regarding your design. The Lighting Designer is the

last of the design team to be able to do his work. It is imperative that you have a complete understanding of the script, the blocking, and the director's intent. You must provide not only the lights for the play, but house lights, running lights, exit lights, and orchestra lights (when applicable). Upon seeing the designer run through, you have a limited amount of time to draw your light plot and generate any supporting paper work such as a Channel Hookup and/or Instrument Schedule. An inventory of lighting units and control equipment will be provided to you by the Faculty Studio Production Manager or the college Production Manager. These are to be delivered to your Master Electrician at least one full day before Light Hang so they may dissect your work. You are to be available to your Master Electrician during Light Hang. You are to be present and in charge of Light Focus. Depending on the wishes of the director, cues may be written in advance or at technical rehearsal. When written in advance, you must give the cues to the Stage Manager before the first technical rehearsal. Regardless, your script should have your cuing intent written in it before the first technical rehearsal. In the event that your Master Electrician or your board operator fail or are unable to do their jobs, you become responsible for the execution of these tasks.

It is important to remember that theatre is a collaborative art form. You must work with the director and other designers to create a aesthetic and unified design approach. Compromise is part of this job. The director, not the designer, has the final say as to the design concepts and final look and feel of the show. Remember that the director's and cast's needs for a design will evolve over the rehearsal period. You must keep in touch with what is transpiring during the rehearsal process. Remember the Stage Manager is the communication hub of the production and may be informing you of changes or modifications to your design work. If there is a need for clarification, you have every right to meet with the director to ensure the need and specifications of any changes. Do not, however, waste the director's time with unnecessary confrontation. Remember, while you are the scenic designer and your work should be respected, the director is the leader of the design team and the final arbiter for the production. Also, remember to treat all of the *company* with dignity and respect and have that treatment returned to you.

### **The House**

As part of the overall lighting design, you will have to design lights for the house. This must include any egress areas. Appropriate exit signs must be in use and compliant to fire code.

## **Studio Production Lighting Designer Guidelines**

The following guidelines are intended to outline the scene design process for students working as scenic designers for GMU Studio productions.

## **Preliminary Work**

Read the script and familiarize yourself with the world of the play and its characters.

Meet with the director, as well as others designers, to discuss the overall vision for the play and then the lighting concept for the production.

For the most part, the lighting units for Studio productions are pulled from the GMU Stock and are not borrowed from other spaces. This is due to budget and time parameters. The director may make certain demands for blocking purposes and you are obliged to render a solution to these problems. In other words, actors, and directors should respect your role as lighting designer and primary decision-maker for the lighting of the production. However, the director has the final say over the design process.

## **Research and Planning**

Lighting designers should research styles of the appropriate time period for the play and/or other general style factors, including light sources, or specific locales. This can be done either through books (see GMU library) or the internet.

Search our library catalog under theatrical lighting. Books are also available through the interlibrary loan exchange of Washington area university library consortium.

The internet has lots of resources for researching a play, location, architecture, or artistic style. Also search under Google Images for your topic or even a specific place. For instance, if you enter "Hamlet" under Google Images, you will see photos and other graphics of past productions and can get some concept of a wide range of lighting styles.

After you have collected some images, or even have developed or sketched your own ideas, confer with the director again for approval of your ideas.

Then make up a list of what you will need for the light design including the types of units you will need, gel, gobos, and other lighting effects items. You then must create the specific technical drawings necessary for the completion of the task. Keep in mind for a Studio production, the plan should be modest, but effective since resources are not unlimited. Also, remember that the Black Box Theatre is also a classroom and sufficient classroom lighting must exist for classroom activities. Consult with the Studio Faculty Production Manager for necessary specifications.

## **Stock**

Each theatre at GMU has a lighting unit inventory. You will receive a copy from the Studio Faculty Production Manager. Any use of stock outside of the Black Box inventory must be approved by the Studio Faculty Production Manager. Be prepared to have these requests denied and have a back up plan as to how to achieve your desired effect with stock lighting gear.

## **Organize Your Lighting**

After the design process, discuss any changes with the director. Be sure to keep the Faculty Production Manager informed.

About midway through the rehearsal process, the production design staff attends the designer run through to see the play in action. From this point you have a limited amount of time to create your Light Plot. This is basically a map of where each lighting unit is to be hung or placed. Your plot is to be done in ½ inch = 1 foot scale. The plot should contain all relevant information for the execution of the design, such as focus notes, gel color, channel number, unit number, gobo placement, and any other relevant information. Appropriate paperwork such as a Hookup, Instrument Schedule, Color Schedule, etc., must be generated as well. The plot and paperwork are to be delivered to the Master Electrician at least one calendar day before the hang so the Master Electrician may dissect the plot in preparation for the light hang and focus and order any materials necessary for the completion of the task.

After light hang and troubleshooting the set and sound plot will be installed. After that you will focus the lighting units. You must be sure as to the function of each lighting unit and call the focus clearly to the electricians crew.

Cues must be placed in your script prior to your level writing session, or the first technical rehearsal if that is when it is agreed that cues will be written. The cue placement must be given to the Stage Manager in a timely fashion.

## **Changes to the Plan**

A production is a living entity. It will evolve and seem to take on a life of its own. To some degree, this is to be expected and in many ways encouraged. After all, your vision, as well as the vision of the other artists, especially the director, will alter with the passage of time. You must address these evolutions. While creativity is encouraged, there must be a sense of purpose and a some modest restraint. Once the vision and plan are relayed to the Faculty Studio Production Manager and other faculty and staff, a plan of action and distribution of resources is established. Changes to the physical production that could impact the classroom or the shop must be approved by the Faculty Studio Production Manager and the various shops and staff that have control over resources. *Do not* make changes to these aspects without approval!

## **Tech Week and Production Run**

During the tech/dress rehearsal week, the lighting designer attends rehearsals to see their work in action, to address any issue, to train the light board operator on how to perform the cues, and to provide any assistance for the maintenance or changes to the lighting. Expect changes or additions to be made to lighting – this is a basic part of the dress rehearsal process.

## **After the Show Closes**

All production lights are to be struck after the final performance. The theatre must be returned to a clean, classroom condition. This may include the restoration of classroom lighting. Stock must

be returned to the appropriate areas. The lighting areas and gel stations must be left in a clean condition with all materials returned to their places. Any gear needing maintenance must be brought to the attention of the appropriate personnel.

Again, the purpose of supplying you with these guidelines is to outline the design process so you know what is expected of lighting designers and what each step along the way entails. These are basic guidelines and have not taken into consideration other steps lighting designers perform for larger Main Stage productions. Extensive descriptions of what lighting designers do can be found in books on the topic and on the internet.

We hope you will enjoy your lighting design opportunity and please feel free to ask lots of questions of either the scene shop staff or the appropriate faculty overseeing the Studio Productions.

### **Scheduling**

Day to day operations, especially in the technical and rehearsal areas must conform to operational hours set down by the Faculty Studio Production Manager and the various shop personnel. Plan to do work within the allotted time for the appropriate spaces. Due to safety and supervision considerations, the proverbial “all nighters” are not allowed. The shop schedule are set by the staff persons in charge of those shops. All work in the Black Box Theatre must end by **midnight**.

### **The Classroom**

Remember that the Black Box Theatre is also a daily classroom for Theater Department classes. You *share* this space. While the faculty is aware that you are in production, and they are quite accommodating, no lighting gear may prevent classroom activities. Please keep in mind that classroom lighting must be provided for classes the following day. Consult with the Faculty Studio Production Manager about possible problems and solutions to lighting problems.

## **TITLE: Master Electrician**

(these lists are not to be considered all inclusive)

### **TYPICAL WORK SCHEDULE:**

- Installation phase
- Tech rehearsals
- Plot changes
- Maintenance
- **STRIKE!**
- Post-mortem

**GENERAL DESCRIPTION:** The Master Electrician is responsible for all electrical needs of a production. This includes the preparation of the theatre for a lighting package, installing the lighting package, procuring expendables, light focus, pre-show channel check, and maintenance.

### **SPECIFIC DUTIES:**

- **Read and sign your Studio Contract and return it to the Assistant Production Manager**
- Work with the lighting designer to understand his intent
- Oversee light hang and focus
- Dissecting the light plot and paper work in advance of light hang
- Ensure the Faculty Studio Production Manager and all other associated faculty and staff are apprised of changes
- Procure expendables and equipment in advance of light hang and focus as applicable
- Execute the design on time
- Ensure the safety of the crew and audience during light hang and focus
- Performing pre-show channel checks and maintenance
- **STRIKE!**

You are the right hand person of the Lighting Designer. All electrical needs of a production are your responsibility. It is essential that safety is at the forefront of your thought. Many hazards are associated with lighting including working with heights, fire safety, audience safety, and theatre personnel safety. Be prepared to have your work inspected by the lighting faculty. Also, remember to treat all of the *company* with dignity and respect and have that treatment returned to you.

### **Scheduling**

Day to day operations, especially in the technical and rehearsal areas must conform to operational hours set down by the Faculty Studio Production Manager and the various shop personnel. Plan to do work within the allotted time for the appropriate spaces. Due to safety and supervision considerations, the proverbial “all nighters” are not allowed. The shop schedule are set by the staff persons in charge of those shops. All work in the Black Box Theatre must end by **midnight**.

## **Changes to the Plan**

A production is a living entity. It will evolve and seem to take on a life of its own. To some degree, this is to be expected and in many ways encouraged. After all, your vision, as well as the vision of the other artists, especially the director, will alter with the passage of time. You must address these evolutions. While creativity is encouraged, there must be a sense of purpose and a some modest restraint. Once the vision and plan are relayed to the Faculty Studio Production Manager and other faculty and staff, a plan of action and distribution of resources is established. Changes to the physical production that could impact the classroom or the shop must be approved by the Faculty Studio Production Manager and the various shops and staff that have control over resources. *Do not* make changes to these aspects without approval!

## **After the Show Closes**

*All* production lights are to be struck after the final performance. The theatre must be returned to a clean, classroom condition. This may include the restoration of classroom lighting. Stock must be returned to the appropriate areas. The lighting areas and gel stations must be left in a clean condition with all materials returned to their places. Any gear needing maintenance must be brought to the attention of the appropriate personnel.

## **The Classroom**

Remember that the Black Box Theatre is also a daily classroom for Theater Department classes. You *share* this space. While the faculty is aware that you are in production, and they are quite accommodating, no lighting gear may prevent classroom activities. Please keep in mind that classroom lighting must be provided for classes the following day. Consult with the Faculty Studio Production Manager about possible problems and solutions to lighting problems.