

Timothy Murphy Playhouse - Production Team Manual

Thank you for your interest in being part of a production team with Timothy Murphy Playhouse. This manual was designed to help you better understand the many roles that make a production possible. Please contact us with any questions at timothymurphyplayhouse@gmail.com. We would be happy to put you in touch with someone who has previously held any of these positions who may be able to assist you with any concerns. Please note that in the past people have shared some of these positions or taken on an assistant to help make the job(s) more manageable. The TMP Executive Board is here to help you in the process of building a team, proposing a show, and throughout the rehearsal and performance process. It is to be understood that each role will stay within the constraints of the production budget and monies allocated for specific areas of the production.

Roles included in this manual-

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Producer

The Producer is the overall head of the production team and is ultimately responsible for the smooth and efficient flow of the project from proposal to postproduction. The Producer may delegate specific tasks to committees or individuals, but must continue to oversee each task. One of the Producer's primary responsibilities is to deliver a production with a balanced budget. The Producer should keep a detailed and complete record of every financial transaction and expect to meet with the Auditing Committee, as laid out in TMP's By-laws. This is a paid position; a salary must be agreed upon prior to submitting a proposal.

Responsibilities:

Pre - Production:

1) Assist stage director with proposal. This may include:

- locating scripts/scores
- requesting quotes for rights/royalties
- requesting quotes for other rentals

2) Secure audition, rehearsal and performance space. This may include:

- filling out request forms
- providing proof of insurance

3) Secure contracts/vendors. This may include:

- contracts for rights/royalties
- rental agreements
- contracts with independent contractors (in conjunction with directors)
- assigning a responsible party for all rented materials, equipment, etc.

4) Assist with auditions. This may include:

- Sending out audition announcements
- Overseeing sign-in and paperwork (audition contract, emergency form, liability waiver, photo/video release waiver audition form, membership form), and collecting dues/audition fees

5) Collect paperwork and fees.

- Waivers and membership forms to be given to the TMP secretary
- Contracts, emergency forms and audition forms to be kept by the production staff
- Audition fees to be recorded and given to TMP treasurer for deposit

Production:

5) Act as a liaison. This may include:

- Communicating schedules/timelines and deadlines with all parents/committees, cast, crew and production team
- (in conjunction with directors)
- Acting as or assigning a liaison to each committee
 - Ensuring that cast and parents/guardians (if necessary) understand the responsibilities (laid out in the contract)

6) Secure advertisers/sponsors. This may include:

- Distributing sales sheets to those soliciting for ads
- Writing requests for support
- Collecting ad/sponsor money (should be recorded and given to TMP treasurer for deposit)
- Following-up with sponsors where necessary (thank yous, ticket vouchers, etc.)

7) **Oversee fundraising** (if necessary). This may include:

- Organizing
- Publicizing
- Collecting funds (should be recorded and given to TMP treasurer for deposit)

8) **Coordinate publicity.** This may include:

- Poster Design/Layout, Printing, Distribution
- Writing and distributing press release and online publicity
- Purchasing advertising space
- Arranging for promotional appearances of cast members

9) **Oversee Playbill.** This may include:

- Content
- Design/Layout
- Proofreading
- Printing

10) **Oversee tickets, track sales, and collect money (should be recorded and given to TMP treasurer for deposit).**

This may include:

- Ticket layout
- Ordering/making tickets
- Organizing tickets
- Selling tickets (pre-sale and at the door)

11) **Coordinate front of house activities / oversee House Manager.**

12) **Oversee miscellaneous tasks.** This may include:

- T-Shirts (finding vendor, coordinating order/fulfillment)
- Videographer (securing services, coordinating order/fulfillment)
- Coordinating parent volunteers to supervise children in the cast during performances

13) **License and Contracts:**

- Reading and adhering to the language of the license and contracts

Post-Production:

14) **Work with the TMP treasurer.**

- Pay bills/reimburse receipts and assign expenses to a budget item
- Count and deposit any remaining incoming funds
- Pay independent contractors

15) **Follow-up to be sure all contracts/vendors are resolved.** This may include:

- Collecting and returning scripts/scores
- Returning other rented material/equipment
- Following-up with the assigned responsible party for contracts/vendors

16) **Strike.**

- Collecting scripts and scores from directors
- Organizing the clean-up of front of house and house
- Ensures that front of house and house are left in pre-show conditions

Stage Director

The stage director guides the actors in their portrayals, oversees the details of the overall design, and works to create a piece of theater that fulfills the vision of all involved. This is a paid position; a salary must be agreed upon prior to submitting a proposal.

Responsibilities:

Pre - Production:

1) **Assist producer with proposal.** This may include:

- locating scripts/scores
- requesting quotes for rights/royalties
- requesting quotes for other rentals

2) **Coordinate auditions.** This may include:

- Creating audition forms
- Copying and distributing sides
- Assembling casting committee (if appropriate this should include the musical director, choreographer - an uneven number is recommended)
- Communicating with casting committee to have a plan for how auditions will run smoothly
- Casting show with committee and communicating roles to cast members

Production:

3) **Artistic Facilitator.** This may include:

- Overseeing and collaborating with Designers (Costume, Scenic, Lighting, Sound)
- Overseeing and collaborating with Stage Manager, Prop Master, and Run Crew
- Overseeing and collaborating with Technical Director
- Collaborating with Choreographer/Music Director/Producer

***NOTE:** If any of these roles are not assigned to other people that area would be the director's responsibility (ie: if there is no prop master all those tasks fall to the director unless other arrangements are made). It is recommended to have a plan for who will fulfill as many of these roles as possible before submitting a proposal.

4) **Schedule (working closely with musical director and choreographer).** This may include:

- Write-up of schedule or calendar
- Communicating with cast and parents (**it is highly recommended that schedules be communicated at least a week in advance**)
- Communicating with cast and/or parents about absences, and adhering to cast contract

5) **Blocking.** This may include:

- Write-up of where characters will enter/exit for every scene
- On-stage direction for all spoken scenes and musical numbers not choreographed
- Working with the choreographer/musical director to decide which musical numbers will be choreographed/blocked by the choreographer (prior to the beginning of production)

- Character development

6) **Organizing rehearsals and performances.** This may include:

- Overseeing the flow and progress of the entire production within each domain
- Giving feedback to cast/crew (specifically, throughout runs and dress rehearsals)
- Helping cast/crew prepare before on the day of a performance
- Making or facilitating a recording of show announcements (exits, no flash photographer etc.) to be presented prior to curtains-up

- Ensuring that all duties of the "run crew" are covered
- Helping producer to organize supervision backstage for underage participants

Post-Production:

7) **Strike.** This may include:

- Ensuring that cast members have erased scripts
- Collecting and return scripts to producer
- Overseeing cleaning of backstage area and dressing rooms
- Ensuring that sets, props, and costumes are returned to proper storage facilities
- Ensuring backstage area, dressing rooms, and the stage are left in pre-show condition

Music Director

The music director conducts the orchestra, if one is used, and rehearses with the actors to help them learn the music in the show. This is a paid position; a salary must be agreed upon prior to submitting a proposal.

Responsibilities:

Pre - Production:

- 1) **Coordinate music for auditions.** This may include:
 - Choosing vocal audition pieces or requirements
 - Communicating requirements to those interested in auditions
 - Accompanying auditions or recommending a pianist to accompany
 - Serving on the casting committee

Production:

- 2) **Vocal Direction.** This may include:
 - Warming-up the cast before rehearsals and performances
 - Supervising all singing rehearsals
 - Coaching and rehearsing all vocal and instrumental music in the production
 - Choosing a reference recording for the production, and addressing any potential idiosyncrasies with the score.

- 3) **Accompaniment.** This may include:
 - Ensuring appropriate accompaniment for all necessary vocal and choreographic rehearsals (options include playing piano, supervising a hired pianist, or utilizing digital accompaniments).

- 4) **Stage Collaboration.** This may include:
 - Discussing any potential alterations to dance music with choreographer and/or stage director
 - Discussing pit orchestra setup and space needs with stage and/or technical director
 - Reorchestrating music to accommodate necessary alterations (i.e. dance breaks, scene changes)
 - Communicating regularly with production team regarding scheduling and other production needs

- 5) **Pit Direction.** This may include:

If music is live:

- Determining the most appropriate orchestration for the production (full or partial)
- Securing commitments from pit musicians and notifying the Board and playbill creator of the choices
- Maintaining communication with orchestra musicians regarding scheduling and any changes to the score
- Arranging and setting-up orchestra seating, electric, and lights
- Conducting the orchestra during dress rehearsals and performances (if the musical director chooses not to conduct the pit make sure a pit conductor is found and budgeted for)

If music is prerecorded:

- Overseeing set-up of accompaniment amplification system
- Running or finding someone to run the accompaniment amplification during performances
- Conducting or finding someone to conduct singers from the pit (this person may expect to be paid for conducting depending on their association with TMP or other parts of the production team)

Post-Production:

- 6) **Strike.** This may include:
 - Collecting, erasing, and returning all instrumental and vocal scores to producer
 - Overseeing the strike and cleaning of the pit orchestra area

Choreographer

The choreographer is the person who creates the dance steps in the production. He/she also helps the actors find their characters' physicality. This is a paid position; a salary must be agreed upon prior to submitting a proposal.

Responsibilities:

Pre-Production:

- 1) **Coordinate dance for auditions (if necessary).** This may include:
 - Planning a short routine to be taught and evaluated at auditions (more than one routine may be needed, if the musical requires specific dance styles)
 - Working with director to see that auditions run smoothly and in a timely manner
 - Serving on casting committee

Production:

- 2) **Choreographing.** This may include:
 - Creating dances for specific musical numbers using movement conducive to cast's abilities
 - Researching dance specific an era or time period in accordance with production
 - Blocking specific musical numbers using movements conducive to cast's abilities
 - Working with the stage director/musical director to decide which musical numbers will be choreographed/blocked by the choreographer (prior to the beginning of production)
- 3) **Instruction.** This may include:
 - Teaching dances to the cast
 - Choosing a dance captain to instruct the cast and run dances
 - Providing feedback during dress rehearsals
 - Providing a reference recording
- 4) **Stage Collaboration.** This may include:
 - Discussing any potential alterations to dance music with music director and/or stage director
 - Communicating regularly with production team regarding scheduling and other production needs

Technical Director

The Technical Director must be a leader capable of initiating and sustaining the building and installation process of the set as well as organizing a group of other people while monitoring the safe and steady flow of work. This is usually a paid position and is sometimes combined with the scenic designer, sound designer, and/or lighting designer. A salary must be agreed upon prior to submitting a proposal.

Responsibilities:

Production:

1) Building. This may include:

- Collaborating with set designer, stage director, and TMP properties committee
- Building set
- Organizing crew to build and strike set
- Ordering materials
- Obtaining materials

2) Scheduling builds. This may include:

- Organizing a schedule for building crew
- Communicating with stage director and facilities manager (Producer) about building
- Overseeing and communicating schedule with set designer, lighting designer and sound designer

Post-Production:

3) Strike. This may include:

- Overseeing demolition of set
- Returning set pieces to set barn
- Discarding set pieces (cardboard, foam, small pieces of wood, etc.)
- Overseeing the cleaning of the stage and wings

Scenic Designer

The Scenic Designer is responsible for developing the overall look of the stage environment after working with the director to establish an overall aesthetic concept from which to proceed. This is usually a paid position and is sometimes combined with lighting designer, sound designer, and/or technical director. A salary must be agreed upon prior to submitting a proposal.

Responsibilities:

Production:

- 1). **Design.** This may include:
 - Collaborating with stage director
 - Creating a model of scenic design
 - Communicating design to the Technical Director
- 2). **Facing.** This may include:
 - Facing/Painting the scenery once it has been built
 - Facing the front of the stage

Lighting Designer

The Lighting Designer is responsible for using light in support of the stage director's vision while enhancing and completing the environment created by the scenic designer. Once the set design is complete and approved, the lighting designer will use those plans to create his/her light design. This is usually a paid position and is sometimes combined with scenic design, sound designer, and/or technical director. A salary must be agreed upon prior to submitting a proposal.

Responsibilities:

Production:

1) **Design.** This may include:

- Collaborating with stage director
- Planning and writing lights for each scene

2) **Order lights (if needed).** This may include:

- Ordering gels/gobo/etc.

3) **Program lighting board**

4) **Set and focus lights**

5) **Organize light crew.** This may include:

- Assigning volunteers to specific tasks (ie running spot lights, running lighting board)

Post-Production:

6) **Strike.** This may include:

- Returning lighting equipment to designated area
- Cleaning the lighting area

Costume Designer

The costume designer is responsible for designing and selecting the costumes used in the show. This is usually a paid position; A salary must be agreed upon prior to submitting a proposal.

1). **Design.** This may include:

- Collaborating with stage director and TMP properties committee (we have a large collection that should be checked before making/purchasing/renting)
- Planning and writing-up costumes for the cast
- Planning and writing-up hair/make-up for the cast

2). **Costuming.** This may include:

- Facilitating measurements of cast
- Facilitating sewing of costumes
- Organizing a costume crew
- Ordering costumes (for purchase or rental)
- Checking all costumes for authenticity
- Communicating with cast/parents
- Organizing hair/make up crew
- Providing specialty makeup
- Organizing crew to help with any quick costume changes that need to be managed during performances
- Watch at least one dress rehearsal to give cast feedback and make needed changes/adjustments
- Being present during performances to mend, fix, iron or otherwise keep costumes "show ready"

Post-Production:

3). **Strike.** This may include:

- Collecting costumes
- Assigning a committee to clean costumes
- Returning costumes to appropriate lenders

Sound Designer

The sound designer is responsible for designing the sound system and sound effects required for each show. This is usually a paid position and is often combined with the scenic designer, lighting designer, and/or technical director. A salary must be agreed upon prior to submitting a proposal.

Responsibilities:

Production:

- 1) **Design.** This may include:
 - Writing-up mic usage for each scene
 - Obtaining sound effects
 - Collaborating with directors

- 2) **Program and hook-up mics/sound board (if mics are not rented).**

- 3) **Hook-up speakers and monitors (if mics or not rented).**

- 4) **Microphone rentals.** This may include:
 - Obtaining a contract with vendor
 - Communicating with the directors and producer regarding schedule and expectations

- 5) **Facilitating mic usage.** This may included:
 - Communicating with cast about mics
 - Sound checks before dress rehearsals and shows
 - Replacing batteries before every show
 - Obtaining batteries
 - Setting hanging mics
 - Operating or training someone to operate the sound board

Post-Production:

- 6) **Strike.** This may include:
 - Collecting and return sound equipment to specified area
 - Cleaning the sound area
 - Returning rented mics to vendor

Stage Manager

Stage managers keep things running smoothly, both during rehearsals and while the show is in production. At times, the stage manager is involved for the whole summer (this is ideal) but it is possible to have a stage manager who participates solely in the last few weeks of the production. Sometimes this is a paid position and sometimes these duties are performed by a volunteer or an intern. If this is to be a paid position then a salary must be agreed upon prior to submitting a proposal.

Responsibilities:

Production:

1) **Assisting at rehearsals.** This may include:

-Filing rehearsal reports to keep all involved aware of any changes or developments (taking attendance, collecting paperwork for the producer, distributing schedules, relaying important reminders, keeping track of conflicts).

-Prompting

-Calling the show in conjunction with the stage director

-Organizing crew

2) **Dress Rehearsals/Performances.** This may include:

-Running the backstage area

-Calling the show (cues: lights, sound, curtain, set, actor)

House Manager

The House Manager acts as an agent of the Producer. The House Manager is responsible for the safe passage and conduct of the audience during the entire time that the audience is on the premise of the theater. Sometimes the Producer acts as the House Manager, or covers part of these duties. This is usually a volunteer position.

Responsibilities:

Production:

- 1) **Concessions (flowers, food/drink, raffles).** This may include:
 - organizing and overseeing volunteers to run each concession when appropriate (during intermission, before/after show)
 - organizing and overseeing delivery of supplies for each concession
- 2). **Collect, record and deliver money from concessions to the Producer**
- 3) **Ushers.** This may include:
 - organizing and overseeing volunteers to take tickets/hand out programs prior to show
- 4) **Hallway.** This may include:
 - Checking cleanliness of hallway before and after each performance
 - Communicating any issues with Producer and/or Building custodian
 - Lowering hallway lights once curtain has gone up / bringing lights up for intermission and after the performance
- 5) **Auditorium.** This may include:
 - Checking cleanliness of house before and after each performance
 - Opening the house when directors are ready or at a predetermined time
- 6) **Assisting Producer with ticket sales (if necessary)**

Post-Production:

- 7) **Strike.** This may include:
 - Overseeing cleaning of house, hallway and any areas used for concessions.

Properties Master

The Properties Master will work closely with the Set Designer, Stage Manager, and Director in identifying and collecting the properties needed for a production. This is usually a volunteer/intern position or is combined with another role on the production team.

Responsibilities:

Production:

- 1). **Manage props.** This may include:
 - Creating a props list
 - Compiling props
 - Collaborating with stage director and technical director
 - Creating a personal props list for cast
 - Organizing a prop table

- 2). **Creating Props.** This may include
 - Designing and make specific props

Post-Production:

- 3). **Strike.** This may include:
 - Collecting and returning all props to appropriate lenders
 - Cleaning of props and prop area

Run Crew

The crew is responsible for running the light and sound boards, helping with scene changes and supervising the wardrobe.

Some of these duties may be covered by the actual designers or the technical director. These tasks are usually done by volunteers, the cast members themselves, or members of the production team.

Responsibilities:

Production:

1) **Checks.** This may include:

- Testing technical equipment before dress rehearsals and shows
- Placing sets and props in correct locations for the start of the dress rehearsals and shows

2) **Operation.** This may include:

- Running specified area during dress rehearsals and performances

Post-Production:

3) **Strike.** This may include:

- Assisting the producer/directors and designers

Interns/Volunteers/Assistants:

-Occasionally, TMP has student interns who work with our organization for college credit. Student interns may be used however the production team sees fit, but their duties should be made clear to them as early in production process as possible.

-If a main production team role (Producer/Stage Directors/Music Director/Choreographers/Designers) is held by someone who would like to volunteer, he/she will still be asked to sign a contract that states his/her duties

-If an "assistant" is needed or desired in any area (Producer, Director, Stage Manager....) that person will assist with all duties that fall under that category and may be paid or volunteer depending on the circumstances. A salary must be agreed upon prior to submitting a proposal.

- Teams of two people may split a large production team role (ie. co-producers)