Tech Week

The week leading up to the opening night performance is referred to as Tech Week. The main purpose of tech week is to incorporate all of the technical elements of the show (set, props, costumes, lights, and sound) into the actor's performance. Actors need time to become accustomed to performing alongside these elements before opening because they may need to make some adjustments. Just as actors need to rehearse to be prepared, whoever is responsible for running the tech elements of the show needs to rehearse in performance conditions prior to opening night.

NASCENT

Set: Due to space availability, rehearsals often take place in a classroom or space other than the performance space. However, all rehearsals in tech week should take place in the performance space. This allows actors to adjust to the characteristics of the performance space that may be different than the rehearsal space. For example, they may need to adjust to the dimensions of the stage after rehearsing in a smaller classroom space. They will also have a better understanding of where the audience is and that they will need to "play toward" the house so that the audience can see their faces. The performance space may also have a very different acoustic quality, requiring actors to speak louder and enunciate more clearly than they have while in rehearsal. It is helpful to sit toward the back of the house to listen for quiet actors.

Set and props: Any moving set pieces and props should be in their final places and marked (or "spiked" with tape). Theatres use a special tape called gaff tape for this purpose. Gaff tape comes in different widths and colors, tears easily, and can be easily pulled up without leaving adhesive residue. A simple and efficient way to spike a set piece is to place tape around the two most upstage corners of the item. Spiking set pieces and props ensures those items that are removed from the stage between scenes or between performances get placed exactly where they need to be.

Costumes: Tech week includes dress rehearsals, which means actors are wearing their costumes rather than personal clothes. Actors will need to get used to wearing shoes and clothing that affect their movement. If possible, actors should wear pieces that take more getting used to (boots, high heels, etc.) well before tech week.

Lights and Sound: Whether you are working with light and sound boards or with wall switches and a CD player, it is important to have technical cues clearly marked in a script. If lights and sound are being run by two different people, each should have their own script with their specific cues noted to avoid confusion. If one person is running both lights and sound, it is helpful to develop a color code to help you quickly distinguish light cues from sound cues. Note whether the cue happens after a certain line, or after a visual cue from an actor (e.g., the lights go out after she exits). It may be helpful to place "standby cues" a few lines in advance that serve as a warning for complicated or multiple rapid cues coming up.

ADVANCED

Set: Nothing can bring an otherwise successful production to a grinding halt like long, cumbersome scene transitions. If your production includes scene transitions that involve changes in set pieces, tech week is the time to rehearse these scene changes. Make note of any scene changes that are particularly difficult, as you may need to stop during a rehearsal to go over the transitions a few times. Scene changes can be achieved by cast or crew, depending on the students you have available and the style of show you are going for; in other words, some directors can very successfully tell a story within scene changes that have to be done by cast members. Regardless of who is responsible for scene changes, during tech week you should determine who is doing what for every scene change. In this way, highly intricate scene changes are choreographed just as much as any scene in the production. Rehearse these scene changes multiple times. Time your run crew and push them to be more smooth and efficient each time.

Props: When you have a lot of props, it is important to have at least one crew member organize them on props tables easily accessible in the wings. A props table should be neatly labeled with what prop goes where, making it easy to quickly notice any props that are missing. The crew member in charge of the props table should ensure before and after every performance that all props are accounted for on the props table. Note: any weaponry props (guns, knives, swords, etc.) should be locked up in a secure place after every performance. Impress upon all students—cast and crew—that these props

Lights and Sound: Each board op should have their own script with their cues clearly marked. It is also important for these members of your crew to observe some rehearsals prior to tech week, in order to get a better sense of the show and its technical moments beforehand. Early in tech week it is often helpful to have a "Cue-to-cue" run, the sole purpose of which is to skip to the moments in the script that call for a technical cue. For especially complicated cues, these moments may have to be rehearsed several times before moving on to the next. In this case, you, a stage manager, or the board ops will have to call "hold" before making any adjustments and running through the moment again.

Costumes: All costumes and accessories should be organized on racks, clearly labeled for each actor. During tech week, note what moments in the script require quick changes, where actors have to change costumes in a short amount of time. In some cases, members of the wardrobe crew will need to be waiting in the wings ready to assist actors with these changes. In extreme cases, costumes may need to be altered to expedite these changes. For example, button-down shirts may be altered to have snaps. Work with your wardrobe crew to make these quick changes as fast as possible, but it may be necessary to create a bit of stage business for your actors to do to help cover this transition—sometimes, 20 seconds are enough to help the change happen.

MUSICAL THEATRE

Musicals typically include much more technical elements—several locations requiring different set pieces to come on and offstage, several lighting and sound cues, multiple costume changes, and a mountain of props to keep track of. While many "straight" plays will also have these technical challenges, it is common for musicals to take these challenges to the next level.

Because musicals involve live musicians, it becomes more and more imperative to use microphones in order for audience members to hear the actors speak and sing their lines. The ideal setup would involve body mics for each of your performers that have solos. If the budget allows for fewer mics than actors, determine which absolutely must have a microphone. During tech week, go over how to properly put on body mics with the actors and the crew members responsible for the microphones. Determine the order in which actors should be mic'd (those who go on stage first to those who go on last).

If your school is unable to use body mics, look into other options to amplify their sound. Note that floor mics, however, are liable to pick up sound of dancing and feet pounding the stage more than they are to pick up the sound of voices singing.

The crew member in charge of the sound board becomes more important for a musical, as each actor will need his or her microphone set to different levels depending on how loud they are. Prior to each performance, the sound board operator should do a soundcheck with each mic'd actor, setting levels to make sure each actor sounds at the same volume as one another. Remind actors that they should still project, and that microphones won't pick up everything. During tech week, the sound board op will be able to rehearse adjusting the sound levels of each mic as necessary within scenes. Even more important, they will need to remember to mute the mics of actors that exit offstage, or else anything actors say backstage will be broadcast to the audience over the monitors.

Like the advanced drama club, a musical will benefit from holding a cue-to-cue rehearsal early in tech week to allow every technician the opportunity to practice their cues prior to full run-throughs.

During run-throughs, organize your notes by the people they are for. For example, keep your acting notes separate from your technical notes for the crew. If you have a technical director, he or she will have the responsibility of taking tech notes, but be sure to write down any notes or questions you may have in order to discuss with them.

RESOURCE 1: Design and Tech

The technical aspects of a play production help with the overall design and style of the show. The set helps clarify the world of the characters; costumes help actors fill out their roles; and lighting and sound helps establish mood and environment. Design and technical elements also provide involvement opportunities for students who are too shy to perform.

NASCENT

SET AND PROPS

➤ NASCENT ACTIVITY

For this activity, you'll need the following resources found as addendums to this document.

- **Addendum 3:** Props list
- **Addendum 5:** Scene Tracking sheet

- Keep set pieces simple and minimalistic. Look through the script to determine the locations for each scene. What set items and props are necessary for the action of the play? What set pieces will help clarify the setting for the audience?
- Borrow as many set pieces and props as you can: chairs, tables, etc. Be sure to keep track of where you got each item so they can be returned promptly after the production is finished.
- Consider ways to construct or create any other set pieces out of simple materials. For example, a castle can be constructed out of cardboard boxes; an undersea location can be suggested through blue fabric with green tissue paper dangling like seaweed; a park bench can be suggested by sticking a few chairs or large blocks together. Use your imagination when creating the set, and your audience will do the same.
- After all rehearsals and performances, lock up all props that are more likely to be stolen. This includes valuable props and props that look like weapons.
- NEVER use real weapons as props on stage.

COSTUMES

➤ NASCENT ACTIVITY

For this activity, you'll need the following resources found as addendums to this document.

- **Addendum 4:** Costume plot
- **Addendum 5:** Scene Tracking sheet

- In many cases, costumes can be clothing the students have at home. Simple costume or prop choices can often help clarify who a character is. For example, a student may not have a princess dress, but by wearing a toy tiara the audience understands she is a princess.
- Make sure any borrowed costume pieces are tracked so they can be returned later.
- Use masking tape and permanent marker to label all the clothing tags to indicate which costume pieces are to be worn by which student.

SOUND

➤ NASCENT ACTIVITY

For this activity, you'll need the following resources found as addendums to this document.

- **Addendum 1:** Cue sheet
- **Addendum 5:** Scene Tracking sheet

- Go through the script and note any sounds effects needed. Mark these cues in a copy of the script for the person in charge of sound cues.
- Sound effects are available for download online. Many libraries may still have CD's of sound effect collections.

- You can use a smartphone or computer with a microphone to record your own sound effects or voiceovers.
- Sound cues can be played from a CD or mp3 player plugged into speakers.

LIGHTING

➤ NASCENT ACTIVITY

For this activity, you'll need the following resources found as addendums to this document.

- **Addendum 1:** Cue sheets
- **Addendum 2:** Sample magic sheets
- **Addendum 5:** Scene Tracking sheet

> » If you do not have stage lights, consider these ways you could use the regular lights in your performance space. For example, if you are able to make the performance space brighter than the audience space, you will help direct attention to the performers.
> » Are there any moments in the play—such as scene changes, nighttime scenes, etc.—that require a blackout or for the lights to be dimmed? Be aware that full blackouts make it difficult and less safe for cast and crew to change scenes.

INTERMEDIATE

SET AND PROPS

➤ INTERMEDIATE ACTIVITY

For this activity, you'll need the following resources found as addendums to this document.

- **Addendum 3:** Props list
- **Addendum 5:** Scene Tracking sheet

- Borrow as many set pieces and props as you can: chairs, tables, etc. Be sure to keep track of where you got each item so they can be returned promptly after the production is finished.
- If your play takes place in multiple locations, consider different options for changing scenes. One option would be to have multiple locations onstage the whole time in different playing areas (e.g., a living room on stage left and a bedroom on stage right). Scene changes would then be as simple as actors going to the different space and perhaps a shift in lighting. Alternatively, you could have set pieces brought on and off with each transition. Determine who will move which pieces and rehearse it consistently to minimize time spent changing the scene.
- Keep all props on a table backstage. Use masking tape or a large piece of bulletin board paper to clearly mark where each prop should be located. At the end of a rehearsal or performance, a quick glance should tell you if any props are missing.
- After all rehearsals and performances, lock up all props that are more likely to be stolen. This includes valuable props and props that look like weapons.
- NEVER use real weapons as props on stage.

COSTUMES

➤ INTERMEDIATE ACTIVITY

For this activity, you'll need the following resources found as addendums to this document.

- **Addendum 4:** Costume plot
- **Addendum 5:** Scene Tracking sheet

- Many costumes can be created from clothing the students have at home. Early in the rehearsal process, discuss with your actors what kind of clothes their characters would wear and ask them to bring in some clothing items that they think might work.
- For clothing items students may not have, reach out to local theatres to see if they will lend or rent out costume pieces. Thrift stores are great places to find a wide variety of affordable clothes from different eras. Bring student clothing sizes with you when you shop.
- Make sure any borrowed pieces are tracked so they can be returned later.

- Use masking tape and permanent marker to label all the clothing tags to indicate which costume pieces are to be worn by which student. Hang all costumes on racks when they are not in use.

SOUND

➤ INTERMEDIATE ACTIVITY

For this activity, you'll need the following resources found as addendums to this document.

- **Addendum 1:** Cue sheet
- **Addendum 5:** Scene Tracking sheet

- Go through the script and note any sounds effects needed. Mark these cues in a copy of the script for whoever will be in charge of sound cues.
- Sound effects are available to download online. Many libraries may still have CD's of sound effect collections.
- You can use a smartphone or computer with a microphone to record your own sound effects or voiceovers.
- Sound effects can be played from a CD or mp3 player plugged into the sound system of your performance space.

LIGHTING

➤ INTERMEDIATE ACTIVITY

For this activity, you'll need the following resources found as addendums to this document.

- **Addendum 1:** Cue sheets
- **Addendum 2:** Sample magic sheets
- **Addendum 5:** Scene Tracking sheet

- Consider ways to incorporate other types of lighting into your play.
- Floor lamps can add a sense of reality to a living room set.
- The use of flashlights can be quite dramatic in a dim performance space.
- Overhead projectors can be used to cast shadow puppets on walls and other flat surfaces.
- Real flames should never be used on stage without supervision of a licensed pyrotechnician. Instead of candles, used LED candles. A campfire can be simulated with flashlights and orange and yellow tissue paper or gel.
- Consider the power source for the lighting and tape down any extension cords used to prevent tripping hazards, and keep extra batteries on hand for any battery-powered lights.

ADVANCED

SET AND PROPS

➤ ADVANCED ACTIVITY

For this activity, you'll need the following resources found as addendums to this document.

- **Addendum 3:** Props list
- **Addendum 5:** Scene Tracking sheet

- For larger sets, make sure you have a qualified person with carpentry experience working as your Technical Director. Safety should ALWAYS be your top priority when it comes to creating sets.
- More advanced sets require more people to build them. Recruit a student crew to work under the supervision of the Technical Director while the director rehearses with the actors. Typically, the actors will rehearse in a classroom or other space in the first few weeks of rehearsal while the crew builds the set in the theatre space. If you do not have a committed crew of students, enlist your actors or parent volunteers to assist—but be aware of budgeting plenty of time for both rehearsal and set construction without overwhelming your students.
- Keep all props on a table backstage. Use masking tape or a large piece of bulletin board paper to clearly mark where each prop should be located. At the end of a rehearsal or performance, a quick glance should tell you if any props are missing.
- After all rehearsals and performances, lock up all props that are more likely to be stolen. This includes valuable

props and props that look like weapons.
- NEVER use real weapons as props on stage.
- If your theatre has a counterweight fly system (a series of ropes, pulleys, and weights to "fly in" scenery and lights) it is imperative that a professional trains you before using it yourself. Fly systems are a great boon to theatres, but they can be incredibly dangerous if not operated properly.

COSTUMES

❯ ADVANCED ACTIVITY

For this activity, you'll need the following resources found as addendums to this document.

- **Addendum 4:** Costume plot
- **Addendum 5:** Scene Tracking sheet

- Advanced drama clubs may have a stock of costume clothing accumulated over time. Begin by going through and determining which costumes can be pulled from stock, and which will need to be rented, purchased, or created.
- Take clothing measurements of actors early on and keep them handy when shopping or looking for clothing options.
- Keep in mind the colors being used in the set. If the colors and patterns of the costumes are too similar to the colors and patterns used in the set, the actors may appear camouflaged in the set.
- Use masking tape and permanent marker to label all the clothing tags to indicate which costume pieces are to be worn by which student. Hang all costumes on racks when they are not in use. Make note of any quick changes actors will need to make and make sure there is a private space in the wings for them to change.

SOUND

❯ ADVANCED ACTIVITY

For this activity, you'll need the following resources found as addendums to this document.

- **Addendum 1:** Cue sheet
- **Addendum 5:** Scene Tracking sheet

- Free programs such as Audacity can be used to edit sound effects to meet your needs (trimming, looping, fading, layering multiple sounds together, etc.)
- Sound cues can be played directly from a sound board or through a computer program such as QLab.
- Be aware that using copyrighted music in performances without permission or purchasing a license is illegal and can result in a heavy fine. When looking for music to use in a performance, search for music that is royalty free or listed under a Creative Commons license.
- If you are using microphones to amplify voices, do a soundcheck with the actors to make sure their voices are being picked up. If each actor has individual body mics, adjust the volume levels for each microphone so that the actors sound equally loud.

LIGHTING

❯ ADVANCED ACTIVITY

For this activity, you'll need the following resources found as addendums to this document.

- **Addendum 1:** Cue sheets
- **Addendum 2:** Sample magic sheets
- **Addendum 5:** Scene Tracking sheet

- Go through the script and determine the time of day for each scene.
- Use gels (color filters similar to cellophane) to color the stage lights and to establish different looks for the scenes. For example, the use of pale blue lights is effective for a night scene, dim amber lights indicate late evening, and a bright combination of pale blue and amber together create a daytime sunlight appearance.
- Note any blackouts called for in the script. Use glow tape (a tape that absorbs light energy and glows in the dark) to line any edges of stairs and platforms to help actors safely navigate the stage in the dark.

- Keep a cue sheet to track shifts in lighting, and create your own magic sheet to make adjustments easier. Make sure that all cues are programmed into the light board and that cues are clearly marked in an extra copy of the script for the student operating the lights.

MUSICAL THEATRE

SET AND PROPS

> MUSICAL THEATRE ACTIVITY

For this activity, you'll need the following resources found as addendums to this document.

- **Addendum 3:** Props list
- **Addendum 5:** Scene Tracking sheet

- Musicals tend to have several scene changes between multiple locations, making set changes a particular challenge. However, many musicals are written in such a way that a curtain can be used to hide scene changes without stopping the flow of the show. For example, a scene with a more complicated set is usually followed by a scene in a simple, nondescript location that can take place downstage of the curtain while the set is being changed out of sight.
- Consider using wagons (platforms with casters) to quickly bring larger set pieces on and off the stage. Once a wagon is in position, the casters should be locked in position to prevent the wagon from rolling around unsafely.
- Scene changes can often be effectively integrated into the action of the scenes. Consider how characters and ensemble members can move set pieces "in character," essentially making the scene transitions part of the storytelling.
- Keep all props on a table backstage. Use masking tape or a large piece of bulletin board paper to clearly mark where each prop should be located. At the end of a rehearsal or performance, a quick glance should tell you if any props are missing.
- After all rehearsals and performances, lock up all props that are more likely to be stolen. This includes valuable props and props that look like weapons.
- NEVER use real weapons as props on stage.
- If your theatre has a counterweight fly system (a series of ropes, pulleys, and weights to "fly in" scenery and lights, it is imperative that a professional trains you before using it yourself. Fly systems are a great boon to theatres, but they can be incredibly dangerous if not operated properly.

COSTUMES

> MUSICAL THEATRE ACTIVITY

For this activity, you'll need the following resources found as addendums to this document.

- **Addendum 4:** Costume plot
- **Addendum 5:** Scene Tracking sheet

- Advanced drama clubs may have a stock of costume clothing accumulated over time. Begin by going through and determining which costumes you can pull out of stock, and which will need to be rented, purchased, or created.
- Take clothing measurements of actors early on and keep them handy when shopping or looking for clothing options.
- Keep in mind the colors being used in the set. If the colors and patterns of the costumes are too similar to the colors and patterns used in the set, the actors may appear camouflaged in the set.
- Use masking tape and permanent marker to label all the clothing tags to indicate which costume pieces are to be worn by which student. Hang all costumes on racks when they are not in use.
- Make note of any quick changes actors will need to make and make sure there is a private space in the wings for them to change. Some costumes may need to be altered to make them easier to change quickly. For example, buttons can be replaced with snaps or Velcro, shoe laces replaced with colored elastic, and neckties replaced with clip-ons.

SOUND

➤ MUSICAL THEATRE ACTIVITY

For this activity, you'll need the following resources found as addendums to this document.

- **Addendum 1:** Cue sheet
- **Addendum 5:** Scene Tracking sheet

- With musicals, you will probably need to use microphones to hear voices over the music. Do a soundcheck with the actors to make sure their voices are being picked up by the microphones. If actors have individual body mics, adjust the volume levels for each microphone so that the actors sound equally loud.
- If you are playing music from a recording, adjust the volume of the music and the volume of the microphones appropriately.
- If you have live musicians, you will need to experiment with the acoustics of your performance space and how the musicians sound with the amplified voices from the speakers. Just as important is how well the actors can hear the music. Even a slight delay can throw off the music entirely.

LIGHTING

➤ MUSICAL THEATRE ACTIVITY

For this activity, you'll need the following resources found as addendums to this document.

- **Addendum 1:** Cue sheets
- **Addendum 2:** Sample magic sheets
- **Addendum 5:** Scene Tracking sheet

- As musicals are generally non-realistic by nature, play around with the lights to achieve different effects.
- Explore different colors to match the mood of a scene or song. For example, pink lights for a romantic song, red lights for an intense moment, or blue lights for a sad scene.
- Consider using gobos (steel cut-out patterns that can be inserted in some stage lights to cast shadow patterns). For example, a gobo of a city skyline could be projected on the back wall to establish an urban location, or a subtle leafy breakup on the actors could suggest sunlight streaming through tree branches.
- Consider the speed of your lighting cues and the effect they have. For example, notice the difference in a slow, dramatic fade to black versus a quick, snappy blackout.
- Keep a cue sheet to track shifts in lighting, and create your own magic sheet to make adjustments easier (see resources). Make sure that all cues are programmed into the light board and that cues are clearly marked in an extra copy of the script for the student operating the lights.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

BOOKS

Technical Theatre for Nontechnical People by Drew Campbell, 1999.

The Prop Building Guidebook for Theatre, Film, and TV by Eric Hart, 2013.

Stock Scenery Construction Handbook by Bill Raoul, 1990

The Paint Effects Bible: 100 Recipes for Faux Finishes by Kerry Skinner, 2003.

WEB

www.ControlBooth.com – an online forum of people in the performing arts industry. If you are not sure how to make something or achieve a certain effect, this is a great resource where you can read threads about similar design challenges or create your own thread to ask a question.

SOFTWARE

Audacity – a free audio editing software, compatible with both Windows and Mac. Comes with online documentation to learn how to use it.

QLab – a program for playing and controlling sound cues. Only compatible for Mac.

MultiPlay – a program for playing sound cues. Only compatible for Windows

ADDENDUM 1: Cue Sheet

Show: _____   **Page**: _____

Below is a sample cue sheet. Use the sheet to track light and sound cues, noting the page the cue takes place, the type and number of the cue, the line or action that cues the lights or sound, a description of the light or sound cue, and a count of how long the cue should run. The following page has a blank copy.

PG	CUE #	CUE LINE OR ACTION	CUE DESCRIPTION	COUNT
1	Light 1	Curtains open	Lights up, indoor, well lit, table lamp on, nighttime visible through the window.	3 seconds
1	Sound 1	Curtains open	Jazz music plays on curtain open	7 sec.
1	Sound 2	Jane enters	Crossfade: jazz music fades out, faint crickets fade in.	4 sec. crickets loop
2	Sound 3	Alejandro: "I never knew!"	Phone rings	loop
2	Sound 4	Al. picks up phone	Cut phone ring	0 sec.
3	Light 2	Jane: "What was that?"	Power outage. Table lamp out, interior light to dim blue, moonlight through the window.	0 sec.

ADDENDUM 1: Cue Sheet

Show: _____   **Page**: _____

PG	CUE #	CUE LINE OR ACTION	CUE DESCRIPTION	COUNT

ADDENDUM 2: Creating a Magic Sheet

CREATING A MAGIC SHEET

During tech week, lighting cues need to be recorded for each scene. But how do you know which lights to bring up? What if you need to go back and fix a cue? The more stage lights you have, the more difficult it is to remember which Channels control which lights. Referring to a "Magic Sheet" makes this process simple. A Magic Sheet has a thumbnail sketch of the ground plan of the set. Written over the different areas of the set are the numbers of the channels that light up those areas.

**How to create your own Magic Sheet:**

1. Draw a rough sketch of the set from a bird's eye view.

2. Divide the sketch into your main acting areas (up, down, left, right, center, etc). More complex sets may have more specific lighting areas.

3. Make a few copies of the sketch. One for any light coming directly from the front, one for any back or top lighting, one for any side lighting, and one for any specials or practicals.

   » A "**special"** is a light focused for one specific purpose. For example, a spotlight downstage, or a light with a gobo that casts a certain shadow on the wall.

   » A "**practical**" is any non-stage light that can be controlled from the light board. For example, if you are able to plug a table lamp, wall sconce, string lights, etc. into an outlet controlled by the light board, you can turn it on or off as a practical light.

4. On the light board, bring up each channel individually. Write down the number of the channel on the appropriate sketch in the area illuminated by the light.

5. If the stage lights have gels to color the lights, you can color code the numbers as you write them down. Most often, there will be a color for warm light and cool light.

6. Repeat until you have written where every light points.

Using the sample Magic Sheet on the next page, if Channel 01 were brought up, a cool front light focused down center would light up. Channel 76 would add warm back light to anyone standing stage left, and so on.

Example:

If during rehearsal you notice that an actor standing downstage right isn't getting enough light on their face, the Magic Sheet lets you know which lights can possibly fill in the shadows (Channel 02, 12, 22, or 52). If the cue for a night time scene accidentally has warm sunlight coming through the upstage window instead of cool moonlight, checking the Magic Sheet will quickly let you know that you should take out Channel 99 and add Channel 89.

SAMPLE MAGIC SHEET
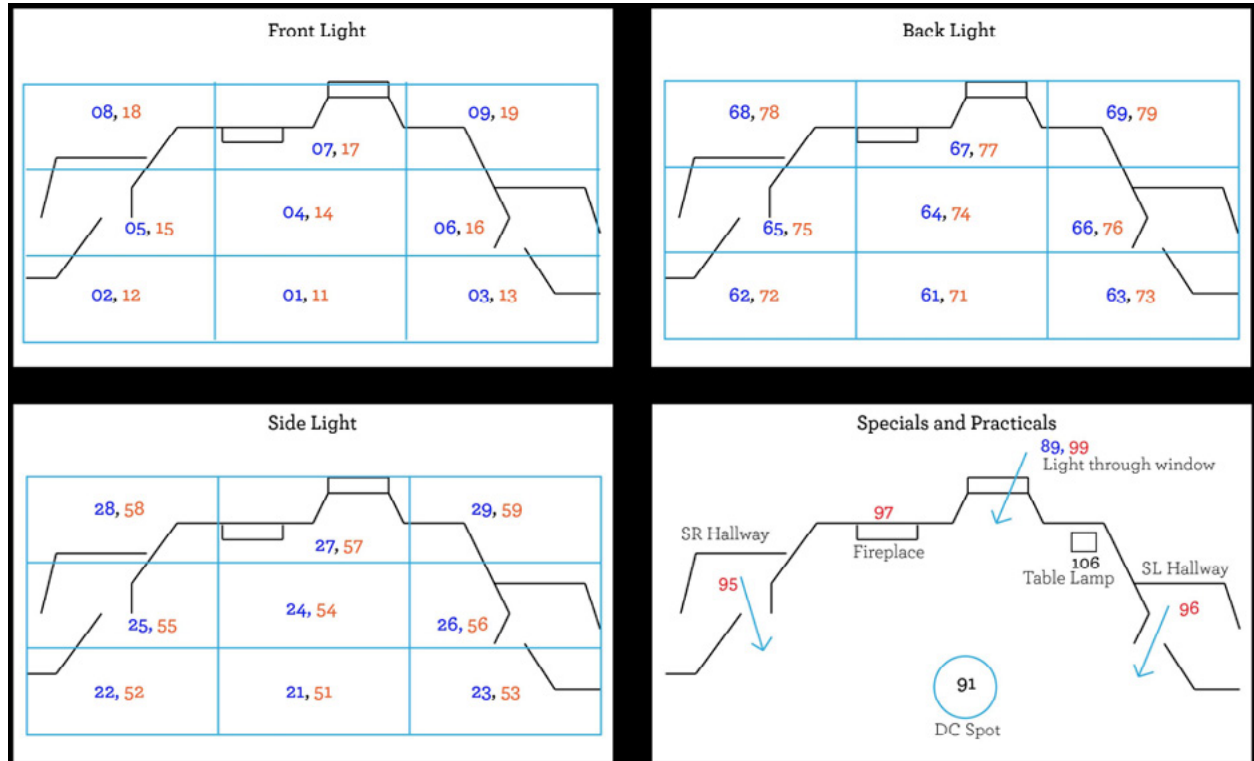
ADDENDUM 3: Props List

Show: _____   **Page**: _____

Below is a sample sheet to track props used throughout the show. Note the page, act, and scene numbers in which the prop appears. Indicate the prop and a description based on what the text calls for, or any additional notes from the director. Indicate the character who will bring it onstage, or if it is to be preset on stage. Once rehearsals start, you can indicate which side of the stage the prop needs to be brought "on" or "off" (in the example below, Mr. Smith brings the book in from stage left, and later somebody exits with it on stage right. The vase is preset "on" stage already, but is eventually brought off stage right by a character.) Tracking where props start and end helps ensure props are set in the appropriate wings prior to the show. Finally, add any notes about how the prop will be procured (borrowed, bought, built, or pulled from stock). Also indicate any notes that pertain to how the prop will be used (e.g., will be destroyed each performance, requires batteries, needs to bear weight or withstand physical force, etc.)

ACT/ SC.	PAGE	PROP	DESCRIPTION	CHARACTER	ON	OFF	NOTES
I, 1	1	Book	Large, old, leather-bound	Mr. Smith	SL	SR	Borrow – Ms. Jones
	2	Bench	Old looking, wooden	set	On	On	Build – actors will stand on it
	4	Vase	Filled with roses	set	On	SR	Buy vase Pull roses from stock
I, 2	5	Letter	Written on old parchment	Henrietta	SR	On	Make for each performance – gets torn to pieces
	5	Letter Opener	Ornate, rusted metal	Mr. Smith	On	On	Borrow
II, 1	10	Flashlight	Needs to be practical (lights up)	Mr. Smith	SL	SL	Pull Buy spare AA batteries
II, 2	14	Telephone	Rotary style	set	On	On	Pull, receiver slammed down, use sound effect for ring

ADDENDUM 3: Props List

Show: _____   **Page**: _____

ACT/ SC.	PAGE	PROP	DESCRIPTION	CHARACTER	ON	OFF	NOTES

ADDENDUM 4: Costume Plot

Show: _____   **Page**: _____

This is a sample costume plot, which helps track the different costume pieces worn by each character for every scene. In order of the play, indicate any new costume pieces worn by characters in each scene. If no change is made, simply write "same." A scene is crossed out if a character is not on stage.

CHARACTER	SCENE 1	SCENE 2	SCENE 3	SCENE 4	SCENE 5
Little Red Riding Hood	White Dress with blue trim Blue stockings Black saddle shoes Red hair ribbon	Same Add red cape and hood	X	Same	Same
Mother	Brown and white gingham dress Brown shoes Necklace with Golden locket	X	X	X	X
Wolf	X	Gray wool jacket Headband with wolf ears Navy pinstripe pants	Same	White bonnet Polka dot night gown Glasses Pink Slippers	Same
Grandmother	X	X	White bonnet Polka dot night gown Glasses Pink Slippers	X	X
Hunter	X	X	X	X	Brown pants Red flannel shirt Leather boots

ADDENDUM 4: Costume Plot

Show: _____   **Page**: _____

CHARACTER	SCENE 1	SCENE 2	SCENE 3	SCENE 4	SCENE 5

ADDENDUM 5: Scene Tracking Sheet

Show: _____   **Page**: _____

SCENE	PAGES	TIME/WEATHER	LOCATION	NOTES
1	1 - 5	Summer, early afternoon, sunny	Interior living room, Bennie's house	Modest bachelor pad. Table and chairs SL, couch and fireplace DR, window UC, door SR. By end of scene, sunlight through window shifts from afternoon to early evening.
2	6 - 10	The same day, night time.	Same	Moonlight through UC window. Red glow of coals in the fireplace.
3	11 - 13	Two days later. Summer, morning, sunny.	Exterior café patio.	Italian café, metal table and chairs DC. Brick wall backdrop UC. Faint sound of birds chirping.
4	13 - 16	Later that night. Thunderstorms.	Interior living room, Bennie's house	Same as scene 2, but dark outside, with intermittent flashes of lighting through window. Sound of rain and thunder.
5	17 - 25	The next morning. Overcast.	Same	Same, but with tables and chair overturned. Debris of a break-in litters the floor. Early morning dawn through the window.

ADDENDUM 5: Scene Tracking Sheet

Show: _____   **Page**: _____

SCENE	PAGES	TIME/WEATHER	LOCATION	NOTES

RESOURCE 2: Working with Designers

Many drama club directors wear multiple "hats" when it comes to their responsibilities for a show. However, working with one or more designers will lighten your burden and provide a rich artistic opportunity for collaboration that may take your production to the next level. The designers you work with may often be fellow faculty or parents of students. Alternatively, you may hire professional designers from the community or even take on a student designer.

Regardless of who your designers are, here are a few important principles to observe:

Give your designer(s) a copy of the script at least a few weeks prior to your first rehearsal. Designers need time to read and reread the script, conduct research, and get their ideas together. The decisions they make have a direct impact on the decisions you make in directing your students. For example, having a floor plan of the set will help you accurately block where the actors should move.

Before rehearsals begin, meet with your designer(s) to go over your vision for the show. This gives them a shared goal to work towards and starts them in the direction you want.

Things change. You will make discoveries during the rehearsal process that will require changes in the placement of a prop, the color of a light, the fitting of a costume. Most designers are not at rehearsals until it is close to tech week. Having regular production meetings with your designer(s) keeps them in the loop.

When collaborating with others on an artistic project, their feelings may potentially be hurt when their ideas are rejected or changed. Make it clear that the decisions you make are what is best for the project as a whole. The decisions made are professional—not personal. When differences in artistic opinion occur, be respectful. Be willing to consider other ideas before making a decision.

WHEN YOUR DESIGNER IS A TEACHER OR STAFF MEMBER

Teachers are busy enough being teachers without all the extra work they do. Try to keep your work as teachers separate from your work as drama club advisors. If you need to meet, establish a time other than their planning period. If differences arise between you as coworkers, it is imperative to set these differences aside in the theatre.

As co-advisors, you both share the responsibilities of the drama club. Come up with a list of tasks that need to be accomplished and determine who will be responsible for each.

You don't have to go it alone! Get the students involved in the technical elements when possible. Whether you have a dedicated student crew or actors who also help with tech, this can be a great learning experience for the student, and a valuable resource for you. As educators, you are in the position to supervise students in these types of positions.

WHEN YOUR DESIGNER IS A PARENT

Clarify responsibilities and expectations including whether the parent is a volunteer or being paid. Your school or district may also have specific rules when it comes to what parents are allowed to do in the school building and how they are to interact with students. This can include how parents are to check-in, whether a teacher must be present with them at all times, to whether or not parents can drive students other than their own.

Keep Boundaries clear boundaries. Your work as an educator is separate from your work as a director. What happens in the theatre should not impact what happens in the classroom and vice versa. This is especially important when you are working with the parent of one of your students.

In many cases, parents are volunteering their time, labor, and energy. Always treat them with respect and show your appreciation to maintain a good relationship with them and other potential parent helpers.

WHEN YOUR DESIGNER IS A PROFESSIONAL

If you've hired somebody from the professional community, chances are they may be used to being paid more for their work than what the school can pay them. Establish at the beginning how they will be compensated. This

should be agreed upon in a written contract with the school.

Clarify a budget for them at the beginning so they can avoid wasting time on a design that you cannot afford. Do not let this deter you; a good designer will see a tight budget as an artistic challenge rather than a hindrance. With good direction and design, less sometimes really is more.

Professional designers—especially if they are part of a union—often have specific rules for how their work is used. For example, pictures of their work may be taken by the school for advertisement, yearbook, etc., but may not be taken by audience members. Establish early on what their expectations are for their creative property.

WHEN YOUR DESIGNER IS A STUDENT

Keep in mind that this is an educational experience for the student, who may have no experience in this area. Set them up for success by clarifying their responsibilities and establishing specific deadlines. At the same time, check your own expectations; a student (who is in class all day and has homework in the evening) may not be capable of the same level of work as someone with many more years of experience.

Offer support and feedback. A student designer will need more supervision and guidance than an adult. This does not mean you need to micromanage them, but you will need to check in with them throughout the process. Be prepared to offer them support or point them to resources when they do not know what to do. Be prepared for frustration when they have to make adjustments. Provide them with encouragement and affirmation for their successes.

Establish roles and boundaries. Collaborating with a student designer elevates them to a level separate from the actors. This means that they may become privy to information they otherwise would not be, such as finances or issues you are having in rehearsals. Never share confidential information. If a student designer must be given sensitive information, only give them what they need to know, and explain the reason they are not to share that information with their peers.

WHEN YOU ARE WORKING WITH MULTIPLE DESIGNERS

Congratulations on having a design team! This is a great asset to a drama club. However, the more people you have, the more complex the collaboration becomes. Trust the designers, but do not be afraid to advocate for your vision. True collaboration is a give and take, but at the end of the day you are the one making the decisions. Demonstrating your willingness to collaborate throughout the process will establish respectful relationships.

We have often been warned about "too many cooks in the kitchen." But we also know that a functional team is capable of far more than one person alone. By clarifying your vision and goals for a production early on, you give the designers some parameters to work within and a better sense of cohesion. Throughout the process, your job is to ensure that each designer's vision works in concert with the others. This is easier to accomplish when the design team is able to meet regularly as the production evolves.