

Technical Theater Roles Overview

Videos to accompany each role can be found on Mrs. Pratt's website, pratt.kwoods.org.

Set

The set is what the actors act upon. It can be minimal or elaborate and can include backdrops, furniture, platforms, built objects, etc. . Sets can be abstract, highly realistic, or anything in between, and they are a chance for a designer to showcase interesting concepts, new techniques, and unusual materials.

Set design is an important part of almost any theatre production, as almost every show will utilize some sort of set, however minimal. The primary function of a set, of course, is to provide the audience with some context for the play, but it can also be a chance to create something stunning to draw in the audience.

Set designs do not have to be hyper realistic and true to “reality”. It is the set designer’s job to create something that helps convey the mood and story, but by the set, other tech elements and actors’ performance, the audience can accept a lot of imagination and abstraction.

Set Designer

Designs set (with drawings) for each scene, to match mood of play/scene. Works with director to consider actors’ movements. Works with Set Engineer to plan for building. Works with Set Decorator to plan for decoration (surface).

Set Engineer

Lead builder of set, uses Set Designer’s plans to execute the set.

Set Decorator

Lead decorator of set. Plans and helps execute visual elements to bring show to life on the set.

Set Builders

Executes Set Designer/Engineer/Decorators plans. Includes building, painting, decorating, etc.

Lighting

Lighting plays both a purely functional role (we need to see!) but also an incredibly creative one. The lighting design must take into consideration the script and the set as well as the actor's movements.

Objectives of Stage Lighting:

1. Provide visibility -- let the performers and other elements be seen
2. Help establish time and place
3. Help create mood and tone
4. Reinforce the style of the production
5. Provide focus onstage and create visual compositions
6. Establish rhythm of visual movement

Lighting designers take into consideration color, direction of the light, intensity of the light, shape of the light and movement of the light when designing.

Lighting Designer & Engineer

Based off of the set designer's plans, the director's wishes and script, lights the set to convey mood and make sure actors are seen when needed. Responsible for finding light sources and hanging.

Responsible for running lighting during show (or training those needed to run during show).

Sound

Sound design conveys mood through the use of sound effects and music. It includes anything that is heard during the production. This includes any live or recorded music and sound effects as well as the vocal projection of the actors, both speaking and singing.

Things a sound designer might do:

- Acquire pre-recorded sound effects and decide where they go during the production.
- Record his or her own sound effects.
- Design parts of the set that can be used to create sound as "organic" sound effects.
- Choose previously recorded music for scene changes, underscoring, or featured moments during the production.
- Compose music and recruit musicians to play it (if the sound designer has that sort of ability).
- Make sure the actors can be heard
- Set up sound system for the space
- Works closely with the director in deciding what is appropriate for a show.

Sound Designer & Engineer

Based off of the set designer's plans, the director's wishes and script, creates sound effects convey mood and story. Responsible for finding/making sound effects. Responsible for music choices for pre, during and post show to convey mood and story. Responsible for running sound during show (or training those needed to run during show). Also responsible for amplification if needed.

Props & Special Effects

Props are the things the actors use during the production (does not include costume pieces). It also includes objects placed on the set to help convey the story and the setting (like a dining room table setting, even if the actors don't sit and eat). Props can be made or found and they are imperative to convincing the audience. Special effects are used to further convey mood and information to the audience.

Properties Master

Based off of script and director's wishes, plans, makes and sets props needed for show. Plan and execute special effects if needed

Costumes

Costumes are the clothes that the characters wear, along with any other accessories. They are vital to creating a time and mood for the show.

Costume Designer's Objectives:

1. Help establish tone and style of the production
2. Indicate the historical period of a play and the local in which it is set
3. Indicate the nature of individual characters or groups in a play: their stations in life, their occupations, their personalities
4. Show relationships among characters: separate major characters from minor ones, contrast one group with another
5. Meet the needs of individual performers: make it possible for an actor or actress to move freely in a costume; allow a performer to dance or engage in a sword fight, for instance; when necessary, allow performers to change quickly from one costume to another
6. Be consistent with the production as a whole, especially with the other visual elements

Costumes can be rented or bought ("***pulling costumes***"), built from scratch, or rebuilt, or borrowed.

-clothes must be "right" for the character.

-comfortable to actor (within reason) and usable.

-aesthetically pleasing - can make a big difference to actor's character.

Costume Designer

Based off of script and director's wishes, plans, organizes, makes and sets costumes needed for show.

Makeup & Hair Design

Theatrical makeup can range from simple makeup, designed to just make sure the actor's facial features can be seen on stage to elaborate makeup design including prosthetics. As in every other tech theater element, makeup must be designed to fit the needs of the show and help convey the mood and story.

Makeup & Hair Designer

Based off of script and director's wishes, designs and executes makeup and hair designs for the show.

Publicity and Front of House

In charge of making sure people know about the production, come and enjoy their experience! The publicity should match the tone of the production, and the design and other publicity elements should reflect the artistic choices created by the director and technical theater staff.

Publicity Manager

Responsible for advertising, marketing and publicizing show. Includes posters, tickets, press releases, social media and other possibilities. Also responsible for headshots, programs and documenting (photographing) the show.

Graphic Designer

Responsible for designing print and web materials to promote the show (like posters, tickets, programs, etc.)

Photographer

Responsible for production photographs to use in advertising as well as head shots of actors and crew.

Front of House

Responsible for running and setting up the front of the house.

Videographer

Responsible for filming and editing the show into one movie. Also responsible for a short (2-3 minute) recap video of project

Director

The director has the challenging task of bringing together the many complex pieces of a production—the script, actors, set, costuming, lighting and sound and music—into a unified whole.

To accomplish this task, a director needs to:

- Interpret the script
- Cast the production
- Collaborate with designers
- Plan the rehearsals
- Guide the actors in their work during rehearsals.

The director's work is most often based on a detailed study and analysis of the script to be produced. Many careful readings of the script help the director develop an individual vision of the playwright's intentions, which will form the core of his or her interpretation. This sense of "what the play is really about" will shape a director's thinking about every other aspect of the production.

Directors also study the characters in the script, gathering as much information as they can about their physical and psychological traits. This is vital preparation for casting, when the actors who are best able to bring the characters to life in performance need to be chosen.

Director

Responsible for the show. They create the vision. Interpret the script, plan blocking, lead rehearsals, collaborate with cast and crew.

Technical Director

The director of the crew. In charge of making sure the technical theater aspects of the show run smoothly and in place.

Artistic Director

The director of the designers. Works with the Director to create an artistic vision and communicates that through the designers.

Stage Management

A stage manager's job is mainly one of organization; the stage manager keeps many aspects of the show running smoothly. During the rehearsal process, they keep track of cast conflicts, take blocking notes at rehearsals, and help keep rehearsals running on schedule. They are also be the point of contact between directors, staff, and cast. During tech rehearsals, they will play a large role in helping integrate the technical aspects of the show into the performance. They will call the show during performances, as well as making sure the stage is set and the actors are in places. They keep track of everything that happens at rehearsals and generally act as an assistant to the director.

Stage Manager

Responsible for running the show during rehearsals and performances, in conjunction with the director. Records blocking.

Stage Hands

Responsible for moving set and other required duties given by the director, stage manager and other roles during rehearsals and performances.

References:

Harvard's Tech Theater Handbook:

<http://www.hcs.harvard.edu/~htag/handbook/>

American Association of Community Theater:

<http://www.aact.org/people>

<http://novaonline.nvcc.edu/eli/spd130et/designers.htm>