

FESTIVAL AND EVENT PRODUCTION

Stage Manager Guide

The Stage Manager is one of the most important jobs at events and festivals. The SM is in charge of ensuring all related parties in a stage production - be it theater or concert - are communicating effectively, on the same page, and able to work together to pull off the performance flawlessly.

Looking to become a stage manager or wish to learn more about stage management? Below we have split up the two main types of stage managers and dive into the details for each.

Theater / Convention Stage Managers

Primary Roles for a Theater Stage Manager:

- Backstage lighting set up
- Green room set up and management
- Keep shows running on time
- Creating and posting day of show schedule
- Scheduling load in and load out times
- Planning and informing all crew of change over procedures
- Managing backstage security
- Addressing immediate medical concerns
- Escorting artists to and from the performance area
- Ensuring stage is clean and swept before artist arrival
- Calling cues / following the script
- Managing riser use and placement

Essential items for a theater stage manager

View our **“What’s in Your Bag”** article

Clear-Com type communication device for interaction with the Technical Director and calling cues

Visit this link for the theater **Stage Manager’s Checklist**

Essential items for a convention stage manager

View our **“What’s in Your Bag”** article

Clear-Com type communication device for interaction with the Technical Director and calling cues

Countdown clock for speech timing

Teleprompters if needed

Essential reading



The Backstage Handbook - *an “illustrated almanac of technical information”, this book is essential for any theater stage manager, and is quite useful for concert stage managers as well. Includes sections on knot tying, pictures of stage related tools, shop math, and much more.*

Use of teleprompters

For events with speeches, often there will be a teleprompter service set up. Prior advancing of the script and run of show Clear-Com communication with the teleprompter operator is essential in order to keep everything on time.

Use of timers

Some events will also have countdown timer software that can be reset at the click of a button every time there is a new cue / speech / script change. Usually a Stage Manager will have an assistant handle this.

Working with stage cues

Stage cues are simply a predefined number of actions occurring on the stage; every time there is a new cue, there’s a new call to action, including:

The start of a video

A VOG talking to the crowd to tell them to take their seats

The start of a speech

The end of a speech with a brief set change

The start of a band

Stage Managers are normally responsible for ensuring that all cues are executed on time within the predetermined script parameters - but for larger events, this responsibility may fall to a Technical Director, who will coordinate with the Stage Manager, Video Team, Sound Team, Lighting Team, Teleprompter, and Countdown Clock assistant to ensure a smoothly running show.

Special Feature: **Jason Tremblay's** Online Theater Production & Stage Management Lectures

This is a six part YouTube video series that goes in to detail on how to properly production and stage manage in a theater setting.

Topics discussed include:

Theater Jobs

Finding Material

The Venue

Starting a Company

Finances

Schedule and Process

Concert / Festival Stage Managers

Essential items

View our **"What's in Your Bag"** article

Essential reading

View our [Production Guide](#)

Stage Manager Checklist

[Download our pre-show, run of show, post-show, expendables, and hospitality checklists for stage managers](#)

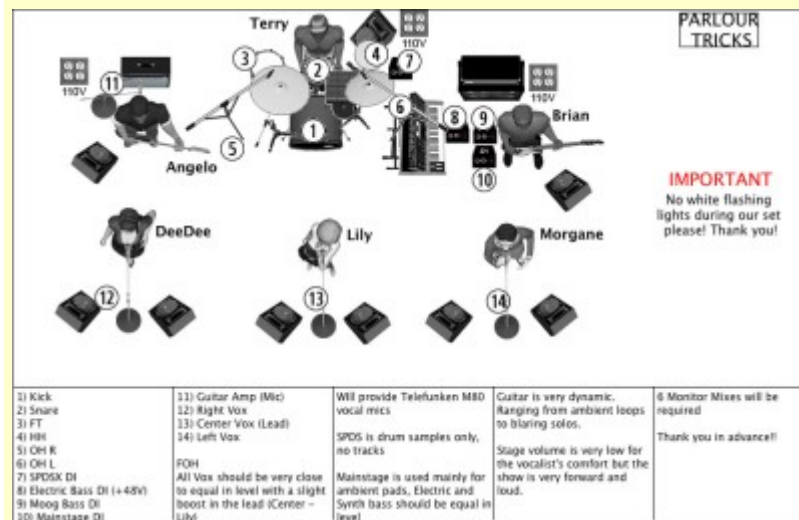
General Stage Manager 101

Your primary role

The Stage Manager is the chief liaison between the artists, production vendors, the venue, and /or the festival promoter. Your job is to make sure the artists arrive on time, load-in, sound/line check, play the proper amount of time, load out, and go on their way. And while they're on-site your job to ensure all of their needs are met (for larger events, there can be an Hospitality Manager or Artist Relations Manager that takes over the non-production needs of the artists away from the Stage Manager so they can focus just on production).

Information you'll want to get from bands

Stage plot / input list - below is an example from the band **Parlour Tricks**



Note it clearly shows where each band member, instrument, microphone, and monitor wedge are supposed to be placed on the stage. It also has a list of inputs for the FOH engineer to base his mix from.

in band / crew that day

of vehicles coming / what type

Are they sharing backline?

Do they need / want an intro?

Do they have any merch to sell?

Information you'll want to get from the venue / festival promoter:

What all is the venue providing in terms of:

Production

Audio

Lighting

Stage

Backline

Video

Offices / Internet

Labor (Stagehands)

Hospitality

Green rooms / dressing rooms

Lounge

Meals / Catering

Ground Transpo

Hotels

Rider requests

Media / Merch

Any meet and greets?

Any interviews?

Photo policy?

Merch policy? Who sells? Split? Where do they set up?

General Band Needs:

Needs of smaller bands

Often, they may not have a stage plot or input list and will look to you for guidance

Rarely will they have a formal rider with any specific technical or hospitality requests, so the best way to advance is to let them know what production and hospitality you will have for them and see if there are any concerns.

They will likely want to bring their own gear, but sharing backline may make more sense if it's a festival style situation with quick set changes and multiple bands per day.

Needs of medium sized bands

They usually have stage plots, input lists, and a couple of touring crew with them

They will usually have light hospitality needs based on their rider, and some may have some specialized technical needs.

They may need some coordination with labor depending on how much gear they're bringing in (some will bring in their own lighting package, consoles, or risers, for example).

Needs of nationally touring bands

They will have a formal technical and hospitality rider and will likely request items such as rigging plots, site maps, backstage accommodations (dressing rooms, production offices, etc), security details, and sponsorship tie-ins

They will be usually very turnkey and only turn to you for venue related issues / questions. But that doesn't mean you have less work to do - it's very important they don't run into any hiccups because, for example, there's suddenly no power and the electrician is nowhere to be found. Knowing where your key vendors / players are and keeping track of load-in / run of show / load-out is vital to ensuring a successful performance.

Basic Run of Show List:

Mojo gaffed

Signage up

Trash bins

Coolers / ice / drinks

Show sheets posted

Stage plot / input list binders given to FOH/MW

Meals for labor / staff

Creds for labor / staff

Packets for artists

Video /photo production advance

Security advance

Collect signage / scrim after event

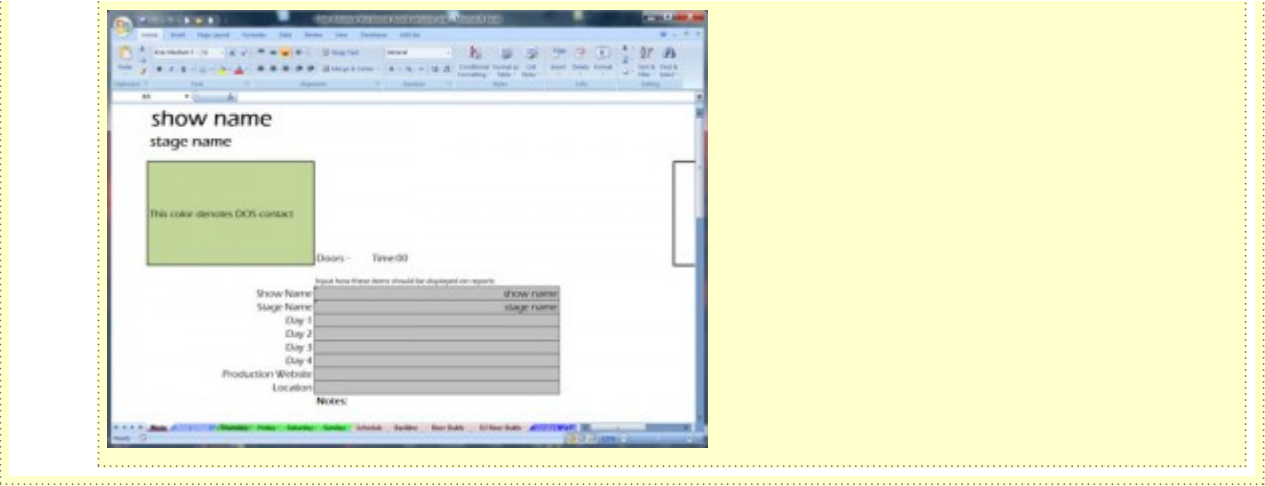
Clean up backstage area, coordinate with local site crew or vendors to pick up all infrastructure

Run of Show Script - [download .xls version here](#)

Thursday, March 26th			
1	4:00	Event Open Announcer: Welcome to Auditorium Shows for 100th 2018! We are happy you're here, and want to fill you in on some important information. For those of you who have been here before, you may have noticed a few changes. The art market, and food court are now on the west side of the park (point in that direction), along with a second parking lot, exit a restroom, and another entry and exit gate. Stairs are now positioned to the left and right of you (point toward them). There are still plenty of restrooms located on the south east corner of the park as well (point towards them). This year we have some excellent food and hand-stuffed goods for you to enjoy, and don't forget to tip your bartenders! We would like to thank the following sponsors:..... Thanks to each of them for supporting these concerts and keeping them live. God bless Little Hurricane!	Set Canon Music Via Sponsor Logos Looped
2	5:00		Set Canon Music Via Sponsor Logos Looped
3	5:45	Little Hurricane Stairs	Set Live Via Stage AMP
4	6:25	Little Hurricane Food	Set Cannon Music Via Sponsor Logos Looped
5	6:40	Announcer: Thank you to Little Hurricane! For those of you just joining us, welcome to Auditorium Shows. We wanted to remind you that the art & food markets are now on the west side of the park (point in that direction). Be sure to check out all of the excellent food options and hand-stuffed goods. Next up is M'bad!	Set Canon Music Via Sponsor Logos Looped
<h1>Page 1</h1>			
6	6:45	M'bad Party	Set Live Via Stage AMP
7	7:40	M'bad Ends	Set Cannon Music Via Sponsor Logos Looped
8	7:55	Announcer: Thank you to M'bad! For those of you just joining us, welcome to Auditorium Shows. We wanted to remind you that the art & food markets are now on the west side of the park (point in that direction). Be sure to check out all of the excellent food options and hand-stuffed goods. Next up is The Shirts...	Set Canon Music Via Sponsor Logos Looped
9	8:00	The Shirts Start	Set Live Via Stage AMP
10	8:30	The Shirts End	Set Canon Music Via Sponsor Logos Looped
11	8:35	Announcer: Thank you to everyone today for a wonderful first day out at the 100th! Special thanks to 100th, the City of Austin, Austin Park Department, Austin Police & Fire, and the hard working staff and volunteers that make all of this possible for you. When exiting, you can proceed out towards the gates along Flowside or west towards Lamar. Travel safely and we'll see you back here tomorrow for more live live music!	Set Canon Music Via Sponsor Logos Looped
12	8:40		Set Canon Music Via Sponsor Logos Looped

Download the [Uber Advance Workbook xls version](#)

- an .xls document with everything a stage manager needs to organize his contacts, create day of show schedules, and more. Screenshot below; courtesy of **LFJ Partners**



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