



<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15812034>

The Crucial Roles of a Stage Manager in Music Performance

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ABSTRACT

This paper examined the crucial roles of a stage manager in music performances, pointing out their important roles to the success and integrity of musical productions. Enlightened by academic literature and practical real-world experiences, the article outlines profile key duties like rehearsal management, prompt book preparation, discipline enforcement, technical control, and maintenance of the director's and designer's artistic objectives. The paper also examines the significance of formal education, training, and practical experience in raising competent stage managers skilled in managing the intricacies of live music performances. This discourse from a conceptual view offers valuable angle on the often undervalued but important role of stage managers in ensuring the success of music performances.

Keywords: Stage Management, Music Performance, Stage Manager Skills, Rehearsal Coordination, Production Management, Artistic Integrity, Live Music Performance

INTRODUCTION

In modern theatrical and musical production, the role of a stage manager has evolved beyond that of an unskilled and untrained worker trying to oversee a performance. Instead, it now demands an educated and dedicated individual who must possess a comprehensive understanding of the theatrical process, surpassing the knowledge required for almost every other position in the theater world (Schneider, 1997). Such a change shows the increasing sophistication of music performance environments, in which the stage manager must skillfully manage both the artistic vision and backstage operations. In the highly disciplined environment of music performance, the stage manager's role is important in maintaining the required precision and coordination. This articles emphasize the roles, skills, and attributes of the stage manager in music performance. Informed by academic literature and practical experiences, It insist that the stage manager's role is naturally complicated, demanding a healthy combination of technical thoroughness, organizational competence, and interpersonal discernment. These elements are essential for upholding artistic vision while managing concurrently the logistical and temporal challenges of live performance. What was once seen as a backstage role, stage management is now recognized as an important leadership role in production environments. The change is way more significant in musical settings, where navigating the complex relationships between musicians, conductors, technical crews, and performance space logistics is very important.

According to Adeboye (2023), contemporary stage managers are no longer limited to managing props or calling cues. Their job involves maintaining the ingenious intent of the director or conductor and managing every aspect of the performance into a united whole. This has to do with having good and effective communication with the lighting, sound, and set designers to maintain steadiness with the calculated musical and theatrical result. Stage management education has also

improved significantly. Institutions now offer exclusive studies in stage management or allow specialization within broader theatrical studies (Schneider, 1997). This modification reveals the progress of stage management as a professional discipline, that requires proper training and academic grounding.

Who is a Music stage Manager?

When it comes to musical performances, the stage manager serves as the focal point in management. Gruver (1972) describes the stage manager as in charge of overseeing all backstage operations, ensuring that both artistic and technical components correspond. While smaller performances may depend on a single stage manager, larger musical events normally involve a team including a production stage manager, deputy stage manager, and assistant stage managers to cover the broad range of duty. A stage manager's work begins well before the performance. From initial rehearsals through to the final performances, the stage manager makes sure that the production environment is organized, disciplined, and focused on achieving the planned artistic outcomes (Hajnci & Vučenović, 2020). To guarantee smooth transitions between scenes and musical numbers, stage managers work meticulously with the music director or conductor, technical crew, and performers to guarantee smooth transitions between scenes and musical numbers.

Major Roles of a Music Stage Manager

Rehearsal and Performance Coordination

The stage manager sets up and maintains rehearsal room, ensuring they are conducive for productive work. They record blocking, musical cues, and technical transitions in the prompt book, which serves as the master guide for performances (Ionazzi, 1992). During performances, the stage manager signals the lighting, sound, and stage movements, ensuring accurate performance in arrangement with the musical score, maintaining Artistic virtue. One of the stage manager's most important job is safeguarding the artistic vision. As Maccoy (2004) notes, stage managers are responsible for ensuring that all production elements are in the right place at the right time, preserving the quality and consistency of each performance. They monitor the show to ensure that any deviations from the plan whether due to performer Inaccuracy or technical drawback are promptly treated.

Discipline and Team Management

Stage managers administer discipline at the backstage and during rehearsals, creating a respectful and focused environment (Maccoy, 2004). They handle communication amongst departments and are always the key problem solvers when conflicts or challenges come up. Technical and Logistical Oversight stage managers are deeply involved in the organizational execution of performances, both coordinating setting up and packing up of equipments/instruments to overseeing technical rehearsals. Their work ensures that complex musical productions run smoothly despite the unpredictable nature of live events (Kelly, 1999).

The Stage Management Skills

Communication: In stage management effective communication is essential and critical. Stage managers must relay information clearly to the production team and performers, ensuring that everyone is aligned on cues, changes, and expectations (Stern & O'Grady, 2010). Must be an astute communicator, sending out information and communicate clearly and effectively with the crew during performances through the help of an audio device.

Organizational Ability: Given the sophistication of musical performances, organizational skill is mandatory. Stage managers maintain comprehensive programmes, prompt books, and records that pilot the performance from rehearsal through final performance. Making sure everyone has what they need throughout the performance. Must possess an Organizational Skill. A good stage manager must

be in his/her best frame of mind to be able to succeed as a stage manager. He must possess organizational prowess.

Crisis Management: Live music performances are prone to unexpected challenges, ranging from technical problems and malfunctions to performers' issues and complaints. The stage manager must be calm and strong-willed under pressure, addressing the matter without interrupting the flow of the performance (Holland, 2015). While the stage manager handles a number of responsibilities, success in this role extends beyond technical skills, which includes qualities such as responsibilities, communication, and curiosity. Which are often inherent traits rather than classroom-taught skills. A stage manager must understand what works best during a crisis.

Multitasking and Versatility: Stage managers manage various duties simultaneously: calling cues, monitoring performer safety, communicating with technical teams, and managing audience worry when necessary. They must understand different aspects of production, including lighting, sound, and set design, to coordinate effectively (Olson et al., 2020).

Furthermore, research indicates that personality traits; extraversion and conscientiousness enhance a stage manager's effectiveness. Extraversion upholds communication and team leadership; conscientiousness encourages attention to detail and reliability; and resilience helps in coping with stress and crises management (Hogan & Holland, 2003). While official degrees are not compulsory, training and practical and real-world experience are vital. Many stage managers build their skills through formal study in theatre or music performance, internships, and working across different departments (Fazio, 2000).

CONCLUSION

The stage manager in a music performance handles a crucial, multifaceted role that extends beyond technical coordination to artistic management and the leadership of the team/ensemble. As performance becomes more intense, the requirements on a stage manager increase, requiring a blend of skills, traits, and experience to ensure success of the performance. This paper points out the importance of acknowledging and supporting the work of stage managers as key actors to the integrity and quality of musical performances. Describing the role of a stage manager to those unfamiliar with performance proves challenging due to the wide array of tasks involved, with the job's unique traits stemming more from personality than classroom-acquired skills.

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