

Stage Management

Session 1

Who's who?

What are our aims?

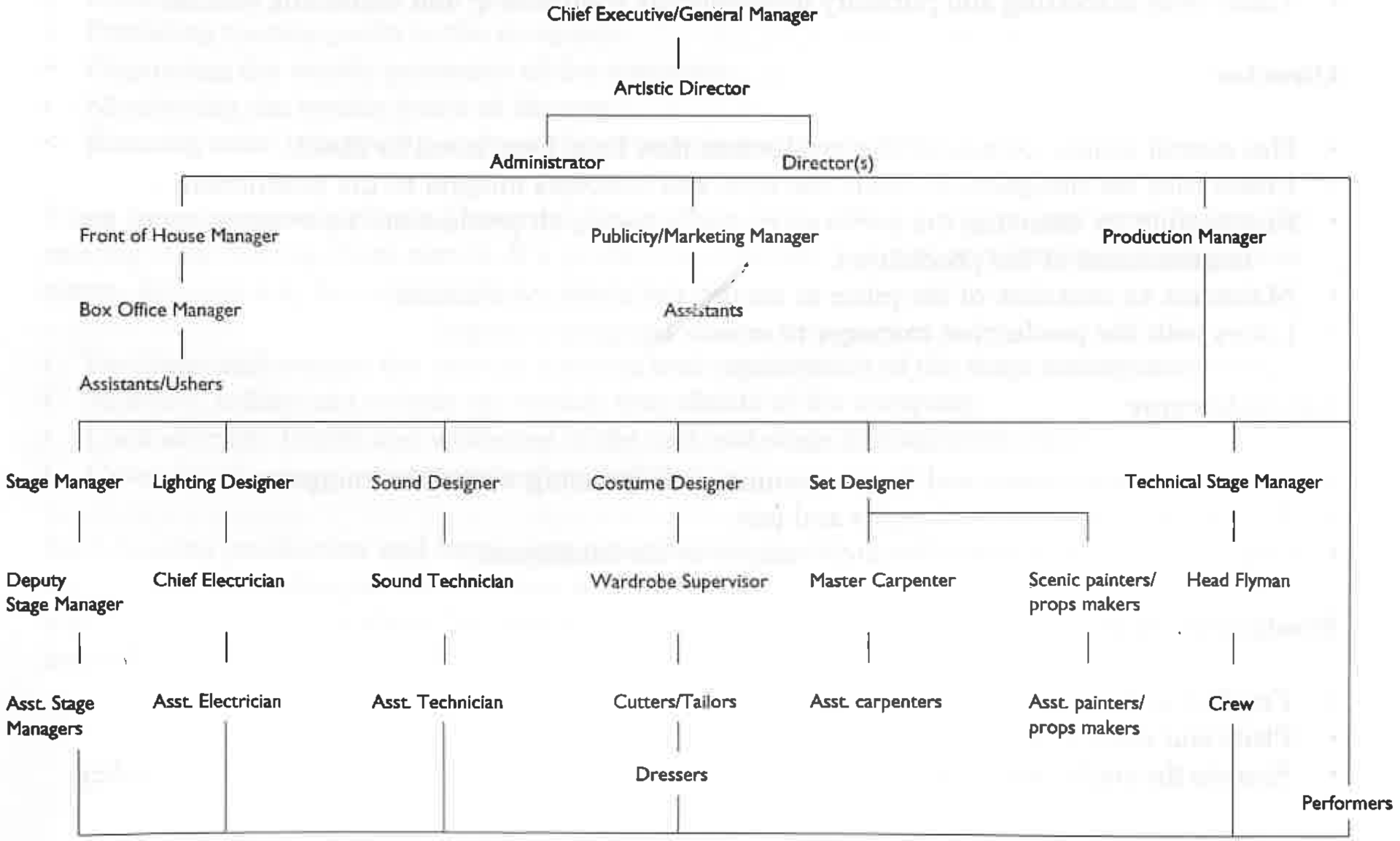
- To develop students' knowledge and understanding of established backstage structures and methodologies.
- To introduce students, within the above context, to the variety of roles within the Stage Management structure.

What are your objectives?

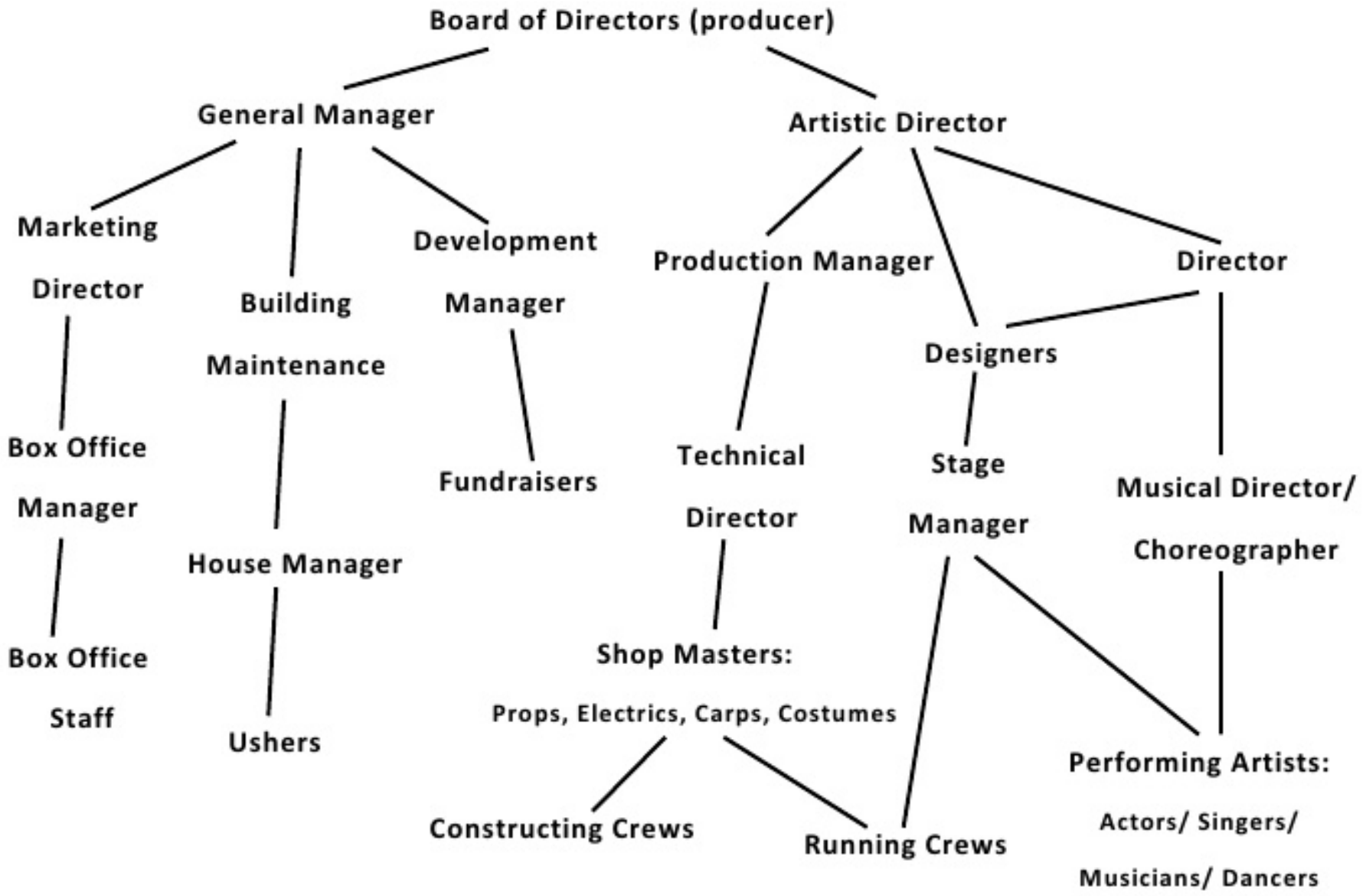
- Display knowledge and understanding of the methodology and responsibilities of the stage management team.
- Complete specific stage management tasks considered essential to good practice.
- Communicate with clarity in written and verbal tasks.

How many roles can you think of within theatre?

The Production Team



The Production Team



Producer

Oversees several aspects of the production. Lots of phone calls, emails, and meetings. Responsible for marketing, meetings of investors and sponsors, attending rehearsals and meetings with the production team.



Production Manager

Responsible for ensuring all aspects of the production are completed within budget, according to the designers and directors wishes, and in time for the public performance. Oversees the cost effectiveness and planning of the entire production process.



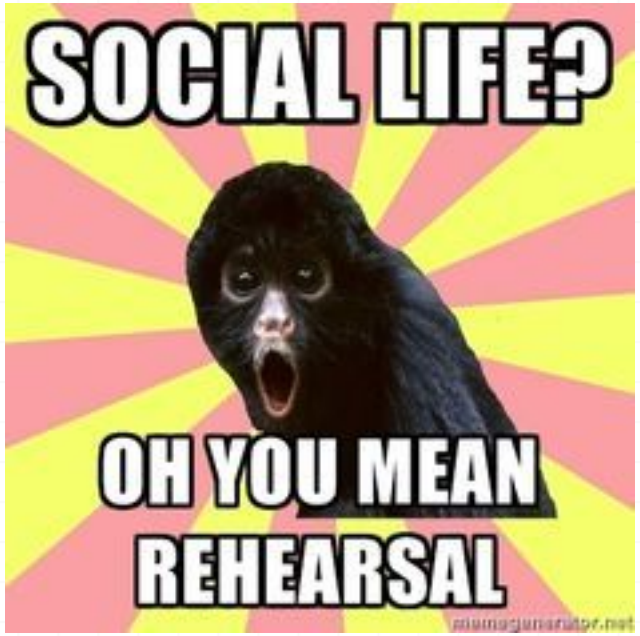
Technical Manager

Combines technical expertise with safety knowledge to oversee all the technical elements of a production. Typical day involves attending meetings, overseeing fit ups and get-ins/outs, designing, budgeting, and solving any problems that crop up.



Company Stage Manager

Combined work of company manager and stage manager for a production. Typical day involves supervising the get-in, checking any publicity engagements for the cast, payroll, call sheets, and time sheets.



Director

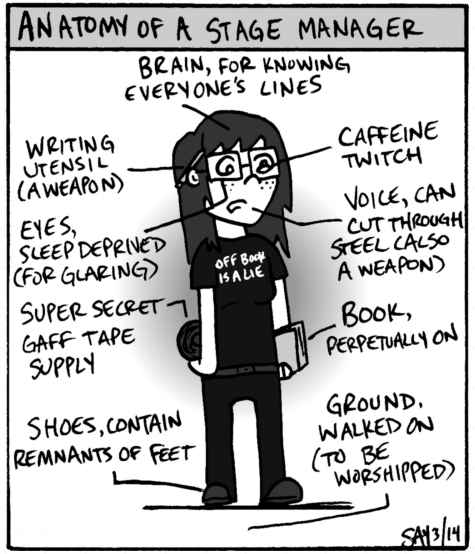
Responsible for taking script to stage using their own creative vision. Works with actors during rehearsals to help them understand and develop their roles. Incredible communication skills and creative skills to draw performances from the actors.



Stage Manager

'mum or dad to the company'

Depending on the production they're working on – typical day might involve daily problem solving, communication with all departments and dealing with any problems as soon as they occur, sweeping and maintaining the stage, and prepping the set.



Deputy Stage Manager

'eyes & ears of the stage'

Sitting in on rehearsals, get-in/outs, light and sound rigging, calling the show. Days are long and there are always production meetings to attend, props to make, and sets to build.



Assistant Stage Manager

'prop gremlins of the theatre'

Days are long and you need to be a master of multi tasking. Set and sweep the stage before a show/rehearsal, mark-up props tables, and be in charge of props on a show.



Set Designer

Works with the director/company to sketch designs, make scale models and produce drawings which are then constructed by the set builder.



Costume Designer

Works with the director to sketch designs, creates appropriate drawings/designs, source materials and fits costumes for the characters in a performance.



Sound Designer

Plans and mixes a soundscape or cue list to support a performance.



Lighting Designer

Creates an effective lighting plot to enhance a live event or performance.



Technicians

Set ups, operates and maintains the technical equipment and systems in a theatre, and for the duration of the show.

Etiquette & Rules



- Respect, respect, respect!
- Abide by the hierarchy.
- First impressions count. (it can be hard to change it!)
- Be clean and tidy.
- Listen!
- Communication!
- Appropriate clothing
- If you're early; you're on time. If you're on time; you're late.
- Never cross the stage without asking.
- Always use the stairs - never jump off the front of the stage.
- Be careful what you're saying on stage – relay and cans systems could be on!

Qualities to have & things to have done before rehearsals

1. Reliable & focused
2. Calm & approachable
3. Good time-keeping
4. Organised
5. Able to multitask
6. Able to read a ground plan/drawings
7. Basic first aid

1. Read the script!!!
2. Plots - props, costume changes, fight scenes etc.
3. Know who's in what scenes
4. DSM will prepare folder with the script
5. Get to know cast & crew

10 Golden Rules of Stage Management

1 - **Safety First!** The cast shouldn't set foot on the stage or rehearsal area unless you would walk on it barefoot. Inspect the area daily for potential problems. Are all stairs and platforms/levels secure? Are all escapes adequately lit and glow taped? Do you know where the first aid kits and fire extinguishers are located? Who is certified in CPR and First Aid? The SM should be!

2 - **Don't Panic!** Always remain calm, cool and collected. Never, Never yell. All Stage Managers should know the difference between raising their voices to be heard and yelling. If the Stage Manager loses it, everyone will panic.

3 - **Plan & Think Ahead.** What can be done to avoid problems? How can the Stage Managers make life easier for everyone?

4 - **Learn From Mistakes**. No one is perfect. We all make mistakes as we learn our job. The best thing anyone can do is to analyse these situations and learn how to avoid making the same mistake again.

5 - **There Are No Dumb Questions**. It is better to ask and feel silly for a few seconds than to cause a problem later.

6 - **Prioritise Tasks & Delegate Authority**. One person can't do everything. Delegate to other crew members or cast members when necessary.

7 - **Early Is On Time**. The SM should always be the first person in and the last person out of the theatre/room for meetings or rehearsals. Always try to show up about 15 minutes before you really think you need to be there, just in case traffic is bad or any problems or delays occur.

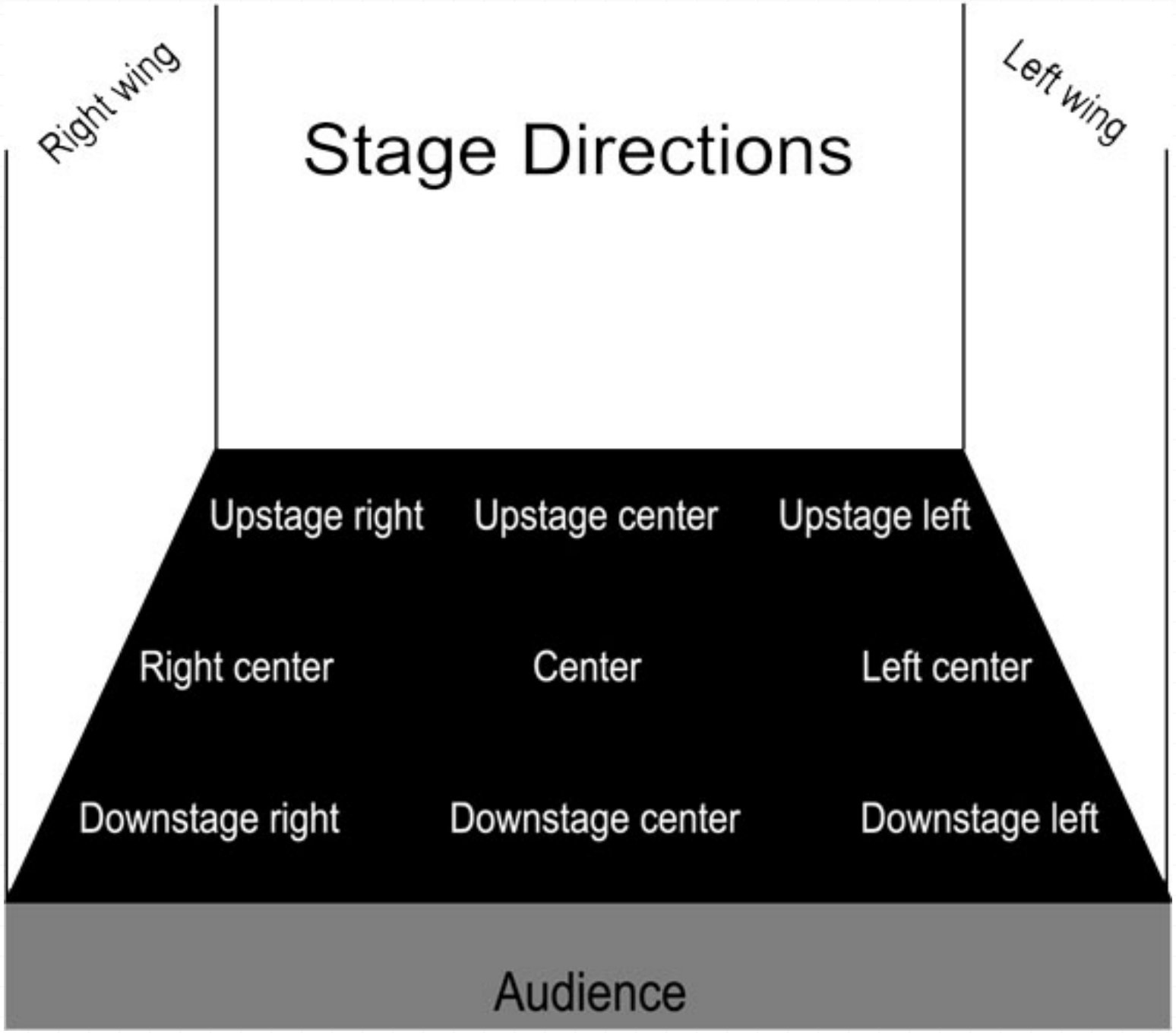
8 - **Put Everything In Writing**. In other words, be a communicator! Dated daily rehearsal notes aid in communication and help to avoid conflicts over when requests or changes were made. (Voice mail, email & calenders are also great forms of communication!)

9 - **Please & Thank You**. Use these words everyday!!!

10. **Stage Managers DO Make Coffee**. They also do a million other menial tasks that are meant to make people happy and boost morale. Buy donuts, bake brownies, make sure birthdays are recognised, and organise all paperwork. These little things are really appreciated by everyone.

Where am I?

Stage directions



Theatre Terminology

- Front of House Calls – half, quarter, five, beginner
- Blocking – shorthand version of the stage directions given to each actor.
- House lights – Main lights
- Cans – Head sets
- Libretto – script of a musical
- Clearance – when everyone is in theatre
- Cue to cue
- Dress rehearsal – final run through before actual show
- Flies (fly space, fly floor)- area above the stage used for flying scenery
- Proscenium Arch - The picture frame of the stage dividing the house and stage.
- Apron - The front portion of the stage, in front of the curtain and proscenium arch.
- Marking out – specific tape for specific floors
- Prompt book – script with all cues, blocking, notes, general info.
- Prompt corner – where SM sits
- Prompt desk
- Show report
- Technical rehearsal/run
- Walk-through
- Dressers - those crew members who assist in quick changes or complicated costume changes for cast.
- Company - all persons involved with the production. Cast, crew, alternates, directors.

What order should the process be in?

Read the script

Tech rehearsal

Evaluate

Pre-production meeting (crew)

Show time

Meet & greet with actors

Fit up & fittings

Get out

Walk-through

Build & make

Commitment

Rehearsals

read through

Dress rehearsal

Get in

Analysis

The Process

1. Commitment
2. Read the script
3. Analysis
4. Pre-production meeting (crew)
5. Meet & greet with actors
6. read through
7. Rehearsals
8. Build & make
9. Fit up & fittings
10. Get in
11. Walk-through
12. Tech rehearsal
13. Dress rehearsal
14. Show time
15. Get out
16. Evaluate







Figure 7.3 The Creative Process—big picture view. It is an admittedly messy proposition.

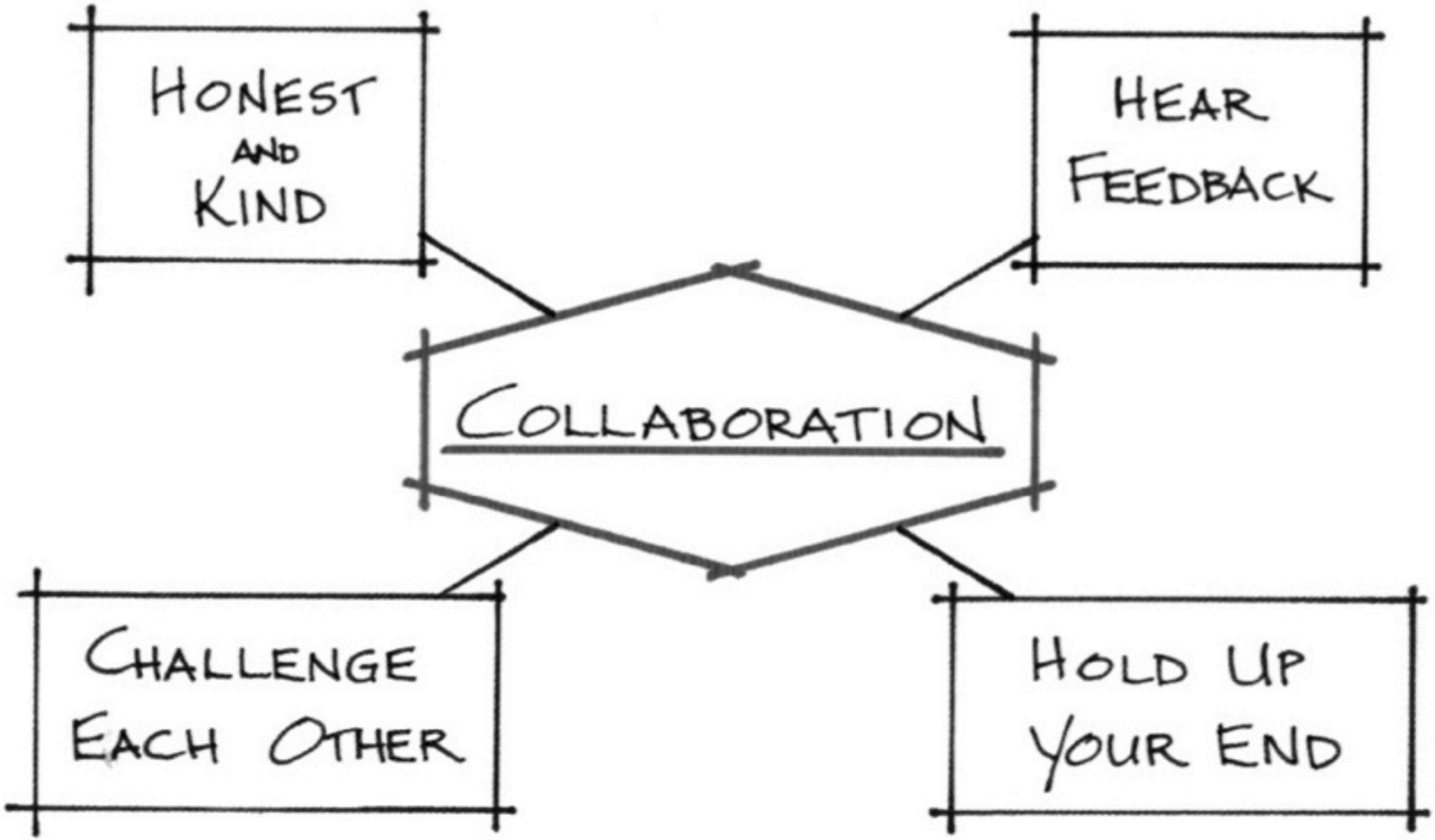


Figure 18.1 Elements of collaboration.

Study task

1. Document work from this session
2. What equipment would you expect a Stage Manager to have/Use? (Reference your sources and include images)



What items do you think should be in a stage manager toolkit?

Videos to watch …

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Sj6tvqQR5iw

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0t5LdMxwChg

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4dU3RlYQIVM - wicked SM

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QTlMBAqJvc - kinky boots SM