

# Directors' and Choreographers' Guide or, How the Hell to Put on a Show

Obviously, no one can tell you how to direct or choreograph. We can, however, go through the Second Stage process step-by-step. We can also impart a few pearls of wisdom learned—the hard way—by various directors through the years. Hopefully some common pitfalls can be averted, and you'll sail through your show worry-free. Well, we can dream anyway.

**Step 1.** Choose a script. Duh. (Not necessarily easy, but duh.)

**Step 2.** Pick an ideal space.

If you think you'd like to use the '92 Theater, first make sure that your show needs it. Some shows not only *can* go up in alternative spaces, but would be *better* there. If you definitely want the '92, make sure you have some experience working with Second Stage. This could involve being board operator, assistant stage manager, electrician, carpenter, stage crew, assistant director, even actor—anything (or, better yet, things) that will show Second Stage that you are committed, capable, and reliable. Before you're trusted with lots of expensive resources (many of which are well-suited to kill and maim you), Second Stage staff just wants to know who you are, and that you appreciate the collaborative nature of student theatre.

If you decide on an alt space (any space that isn't the '92 Theater), it's good to get some idea of what that space's capabilities are. Fire codes have gotten stricter, so you'll have to find out what kinds of set pieces and lighting are allowed in that space. You don't need to know everything at this point—just make sure you'll be happy with the space. NB: Second Stage does not control alt spaces, so you'll have to find the appropriate people to talk to about booking and other policies.

**Step 3.** Find a production team.

Most productions require a stage manager, a light designer, a set designer, a costume designer, a props designer, and a sound designer. Musicals may also require a musical director and a choreographer. Some productions go without one or two of these, depending on the show's technical demands—**but be careful not to underestimate the importance of these roles**. Generally, they make things easier for you. As opening night approaches, you won't want to be the one running around collecting props or going through people's closets, even if that seems like “not a big deal” when you first find the script in your hands.

Once again, if you want to use the '92, your production team needs to have experience. Not all of them have to be experienced, and they don't necessarily have to have a lot experience, but it's worth repeating from Step 2: RESOURCES THAT KILL AND MAIM. Your chances for getting the '92—and, more importantly, putting on a good show—are better if you have designers who have demonstrated that they're up to their tasks.

That being said, the best way to learn it is to do it. That's why we have student theatre—to gain experience. Don't stress out about getting the most experienced team around—just find people who can do, and want to do, what the show needs. See the sections on the various production positions for more information on what you'll need, and give them to your prospective designers/stage manager.

**Step 4.** Choose your ideal weekends.

You'll probably have to fiddle around with this as you build a production team, since everyone will have different schedules and commitments. If one of your designers has a big commitment near the show (another show, a thesis, etc.), try to figure out together how much time he or she will actually need to do the job. Remember to check that your chosen weekends are available in your chosen space.

**Step 5.** Check rights availability.

This is a very simple, very important step: call up whoever owns the rights to your script (Samuel French, Dramatists, Inc., etc.) and ask if the rights are currently available for your weekend(s) and location. If they've already been sold to Hartford Stage, better to find out now.

While you're on the phone, find out the cost of rights (and, if applicable, score rental). On your sponsorship application, remember to take into account how many performances you plan to do (4 with matinée or late night, 3 without). This can be changed up until the time your rights are paid for.

**Step 6.** Submit Second Stage sponsorship application.

Not as scary as it might seem, once you've done steps 1-5. Explain why you need the space you want and give good-faith estimates of how much it'll cost.

**Step 7. Secure rights.**

AS SOON AS Second Stage notifies you as to your weekend and space, apply for the rights. Second Stage has forms for Samuel French and for Dramatists, Inc., the two most commonly used. If your rights are owned by someone else, make contact with them and find out their procedure.

**SECOND STAGE WILL NOT GET YOUR RIGHTS FOR YOU.**

You have to do it yourself, but it's entirely simple. Fill out the simple form and fax or mail it in (fax is preferable, you can use the machine in the Theater Office or the WSA). You do NOT need to spend any money, as the fee will be billed directly to the Theater Department.

We have had trouble in the past with shows realizing at the last minute that they don't have the rights. Second Stage cannot allow unlicensed performances, so remember: just because you sent in the form doesn't mean you have the rights. If they haven't sent you confirmation (via Jennifer Marco in the Theater Office), make contact with them and find out what's up.

**Step 8. Director/Stage Manager Meeting**

At the beginning of each semester, representatives from Second Stage will contact all directors and stage managers to set up individual show meetings. At these meetings you will meet your Second Stage technical advisors (TAs)—the staff members assigned to field questions for your particular show. You will also be given materials explaining the various details of the Second Stage process. **READ THESE MATERIALS.** They contain valuable information which you'll be expected to know later on. You will also receive a tour of The '92.

This meeting is **MANDATORY**, and anyone absent from the meeting will not be given funding by Second Stage.

**Step 9. Get to work!**

Now begins the exciting part: auditions, rehearsals, production meetings. This will involve wonderful and fun activities like competing for rehearsal space with your fellow directors, spending 8-hour stretches in the Theater Studios, and cursing your actors' scheduling conflicts. Stay strong, stay organized, and communicate often with your designers to minimize unpleasant surprises down the road.

PHOTOCOPIES can be made for free at the WSA. The WSA is open Wednesday-Thursday 9:30-9:00 and Monday and Friday 9:30-6. The

machine there is designed for large copy jobs, but leave time in case there's a wait.

**Helpful Hint #1:** There's a deli near the CFA! Go down Washington and take a left onto Pearl. It's two blocks in, and looks seedy but is well stocked. The sandwiches and deli items remain untested, but there are plenty of snacks for those nights you're rehearsing through dinner ('snacks' may or may not include cigarettes and beer, both of which can be purchased here.)

REHEARSAL/AUDITION SPACE can be found in many places. The most popular place to rehearse is in the CFA Theater and Dance Studios (the East and Jones Rooms). These can be reserved by signing out blocks of time using the books on the door of the Theater Office (as they are outside the office itself, they can be accessed at any time). Remember to use pencil, and to write your name, extension, show title, and the times you're reserving. Be forewarned that faculty productions have the right to kick you out, but they will normally try to give you notice.

Book these spaces early as they fill up, but be nice—don't sign out more than you think you'll need, and if your schedule changes erase your reserves.

There are also many other places to rehearse on campus. The Campus Center has two Meeting Rooms and a Multi Purpose Room that can be booked for any occasion. These can be signed out in the main office of the Campus Center. The squash courts are an increasingly popular place to rehearse, and can be signed out on the Dance call board (though most people just show up). If you need a piano, don't forget about the small music studios, in the basement of the CFA Music building, which are on a first-come, first-serve basis. Once again, be nice; don't sign out large, much sought-after spaces for a production meeting that could happen anywhere.

### **Step 10.** Design, design, design...

By now you have a wonderful cast, the beginnings of a wonderful show, and a slew of wonderful designers. Don't underestimate the importance of design to most productions—even if the show is low-tech, your actors will most likely have to deal with practical issues during performances. Most shows only have 5 nights and 4 days in the space before opening, during which lights and masking must be hung, sets built and painted, risers set up, cues built and run with actors, etc. When talking with your designers it is important to know what is feasible—whether the designers have great expectations or you do. It's a good idea for designers to attend rehearsals occasionally, and for you to meet with them regularly so that both sides can share their evolving ideas.

One important thing to think about, even this early on, is man-power: for tech week you'll need electricians, board ops, and perhaps ASMs, set change crew, dressers, and a spot op. It is the responsibility of your designers and Stage Manager to find all these people, but it's in your interest that they do—if your LD has no electricians, you may find yourself up a ladder with a c-wrench much of the week instead of focusing on your actors. Worse yet, your actors might find themselves up there with you.

Sometimes, at Wesleyan, technicians are thin on the ground. That's just how it goes. But do your best to find people early on. Even getting a friend to help paint can end up being a huge relief.

### **Step 11. Monday Meetings**

At various intervals you and your production team will be attending Monday Meetings with Second Stage. These are your 4-Week (or sometimes, due to vacations, 3-Week), 2-Week and 1-Week. The 1-Week is the same week as your show; i.e., three days before opening night. They take place in the Green Room of the '92. You will have received your meeting schedule at the Director/Stage Manager Meeting.

These meetings have very specific purposes, and time is short—we see as many as three or four production teams. In order to keep shows from waiting, it is important not only to be on time, but also fully prepared. We make sure to tell you well in advance what is expected of you at these meetings, so be sure not to show up with blank expressions and empty hands. Furthermore, questions not directly related to Monday Meeting approval process may have to wait—if it's something you can ask your TAs later, or better yet earlier, please do so in order to keep the meetings running smoothly.

Here's a quick run-down of who and what you'll need to bring:

**4-Week:** 2 copies of your preliminary ITEMIZED budget, 3 copies of your show's contact info, and a preliminary set design—not just a sketch, but a DESIGN that the Building/Maintenance Liaison, and Ed Chiburis (the Facilities and Events Manager), can sign off on. The director, stage manager, and all designers are expected to attend.

**2-Week:** Any budget changes, any set design revisions, and your light plot. The director, stage manager, and all designers are expected to attend.

**1-Week:** Any budget changes and 2 copies of your poster. The director, stage manager, and all designers are expected to attend. You are not

expected to acquire a House Manager, as the Staff Representatives for each show will perform those duties. However, you must obtain 2 Ushers for each performance, who must show up at least 1 hour before the show.

### **Step 12. Load-in**

Saturday night, after the previous show ends, you, your stage manager, your designers, and your entire cast are expected to help strike the previous show. You will be told what time to arrive at your 2-Week Meeting. Stress to your cast and crew that appropriate attire is required: closed-toe shoes **MUST** be worn, and of course comfortable clothing to work in. Also stress that no alcohol may be consumed prior to or during any work in a theater space—if we find that a member of your cast or crew has consumed alcohol your show will receive a Strike (see below).

### **Step 13. Tech week**

Now the space is yours. Hooray! The pace at which you tech your show is up to you; you may begin as soon as the previous show is struck. If in the '92 you will now have a set of keys to the theater, but be aware that there may be classes there during the day, during which you may not be upstairs or enter through an upstairs door. Class schedules will be available at the start of the semester.

**Safety:** No one may work in the theater alone. If you are using power tools someone must be with you in case of an accident. Appropriate safety gear (goggles, masks) must be worn where applicable. **ANYONE** working in the shop must be trained on the equipment by the Building/Maintenance Liaison or by Ed Chiburis.

**'92 Lock-Up Policy and Strike System:** Every night that you leave the theater, make sure that all lights, boards, and equipment are turned off, and that **ALL TOOLS ARE LOCKED AWAY**. Lock all doors (excepting the green room and office, none lock automatically). Check that all outer doors are locked. Then call Public Safety (x2345) to tell them you are done and that they can put on the alarm. You are technically allowed to be in the '92 until 2 AM, at which point Public Safety may ask you to leave.

Any violation of these policies will earn your show one of three “Strikes.” The first Strike is a warning. If you receive a second Strike, Second Stage will only reimburse half your total expenditures. If you receive a third, your show is cancelled. This system was implemented as a safety and security measure, and we strive to uphold it fairly and equitably.

**Alt. Space Lock-Up Policy:** Ask the space's House Manager or other leader; Second Stage does not keep this information on file.

#### Step 14. Publicity

Getting the word out is crucial, but in the hurlyburly of tech week, advertising your show can easily fall through the cracks. Consider getting a publicity person, if possible. In any event, make sure your posters have all pertinent information (including the playwright's name and Second Stage's sponsorship). Make copies at the WSA, where the machine is designed for bulk jobs (unlike the Theater Office machine). Poster in legal places (not on campus center doors, they will be taken down speedily). Consider supplementary advertisements, such as MoCon announcements and Wespeaks. Be sure to put together a program in time for the show—those who wait until the last minute often encounter computer meltdowns.

#### Helpful Hint #2:

Remember that the WSA is closed on weekends! You will have to copy programs for your Saturday show(s) on Friday, lest you find yourself pumping coins into the Olin machines.

#### Step 15. Risers

At 4:30 on the Wednesday before you open, typically, we convene to set up risers for your show. All of your cast and crew, in addition to Second Stage staff, are required at your riser call. Remember closed-toe shoes. **MEASURE AND TAPE OUT YOUR RISER LAYOUT THE NIGHT BEFORE.** It will save everyone a large amount of time to decide ahead of time, and it is a courtesy to us.

If you're in the '92, this is also the time to count seats for the box office, and to give your TAs (or the Managing Liaison) your ticket reserves for Thursday. Don't forget to reserve a ticket for yourself!

For all spaces, each member of your cast and crew is entitled 4 reserves per performance (this is an average—they may of course be differently distributed if you choose). Remember that seats may not be reserved for Wesleyan students, but only for visitors, faculty and staff.

#### Helpful Hint #3: Do a

photo call. BUT you cannot do it after your final performance, so plan accordingly. If you do it before a show, make sure to leave plenty of time. To save time, plan what shots you want in advance, and work backwards from the end of the show so the costumes and set are ready for showtime when you're done. The CFA will reimburse you for film and development IF you take them as tungsten slides, but then getting prints becomes expensive. If you go digital, donate a CD to the CFA for posterity.

#### Step 16. Another opening, another show

You're here! Congratulations on getting this far (both in putting up your show and in reading this guide). Show up early—the typical call is 2 hours before showtime for actors, and you might want to arrive even earlier on opening night. Your

ushers should arrive at least 15 minutes before the house opens, but preferably a half hour. House usually opens a half hour before the advertised start time. Your Second Stage SRs (Staff Representatives) will arrive an hour before showtime, an hour and a half on opening night. They are not your ushers—they are there to answer questions, to make sure fire codes are observed, and to help out in a pinch—so make sure you find ushers for each show, and that these ushers are told what to do. One of the SRs will also act as your House Manager, and will be responsible for handling the pre-show announcement.

### **Step 17. Strike**

You're done! What a great show. Once everyone's out of costume and has bid farewell to their families and admirers, it's time to strike. Before Saturday (for example, Friday), remind your cast that they need to have closed-toe shoes at strike. And once again, **NO ALCOHOL MAY BE CONSUMED BEFORE OR DURING STRIKE**. Alcohol consumption will prohibit you from participating and is thus disrespectful to those working with you.

### **Step 18. Cast Party.**

The real reason we do theatre. Have fun—you've earned it. And don't do anything we wouldn't do.

# Rules of the '92

The following rules apply to anyone working in the space. If any of these rules are violated by a show, the show may incur a strike (see page 17).

- NO ALCOHOL IN THE THEATER AT ANY TIME.
- Set plans, light plots and budgets must be approved by the 2-Week Meeting.
- All safety regulations must be adhered to.
- All fire codes must be adhered to—this includes respecting the show's seating capacity and not obscuring fire exit signs without approval by Ed.
- All doors must be locked, and all tools locked away, at the end of every night.
- No show may load in or begin to hang lights without confirmation from Second Stage.
- No one may work in the theater alone.
- All work in the theater requires closed-toe shoes.
- No equipment may be removed from the theater without express permission from one of the staff Liaisons.
- No lasting damage may be done to the walls or floor of the building (this includes paint on the floor and drilling or screwing into either).
- Nothing may be taped to the walls, INCLUDING BACKSTAGE, as the paint will peel.
- No food or drink in the booth.
- Photo Call may not be held after the final performance.
- IN GENERAL: Respect the space, and those who maintain it.

# How to Spend Money

## (and Eventually Get it Back)

Though Second Stage funds your show, we do not have access to any Petty Cash. Thus most of what your show purchases will be with your own money up front, followed by reimbursement by the school. Here are the important things to know:

- Get all spending approved

### BEFORE YOU BUY

At your 4-Week meeting you are expected to hand in an itemized budget listing each specific item you plan to buy and how much it will cost (see sample budget). Once Second Stage approves it you can start buying. The inevitable changes to the budget must be approved at subsequent meetings or by your TAs. **SECOND STAGE WILL NOT REIMBURSE UNAPPROVED EXPENDITURES.**

- Save receipts

### BEFORE YOU BUY

Valid receipts must have the vendor's name officially printed on them or the University will not process them. If you've purchased something online simply print out the receipt—making sure the vendor logo is on the sheet you print.

- Provide legible information

**NB:** We cannot reimburse points—pay cash!

Put the receipts in an envelope with your full name, WesBox number, WesID, extension, and a general description of what was purchased ("props" or "make-up" for example). If some items on the receipt were not purchased for your show, cross them out; Second Stage has a firm policy against paying for your cat food. If you are graduating within a month you may put your home address in lieu of your WesBox.

- Return items to us

If we pay for it, we keep it. Make sure we get everything you bought at strike.

- Submit receipts promptly

Give the labeled receipts to Managing Liaison, or to one of your TAs, AT STRIKE. At our discretion, late receipts may only be reimbursed by half.

- Wait patiently

Your receipts will change hands several times on their way to the University accountants (all the more reason to hand them in on time). Expect a few weeks to elapse before you get the reimbursement check in your WesBox.

**NB:** Some big-ticket items can be bought with **Purchase Orders**. See the Scenic Design and Set Construction info sheet for details.

# Lock-Up Policy

NB: Second Stage will charge a show's stage manager for any missing tools.

- Make sure all tools and materials are locked away, and remove all personal items and valuables from the house (which is unlocked during the day).
- Lock all inner doors (Green Room, office, etc.)
- Turn off all lights.
- Lock the outer doors when you leave.
- Call Public Safety at x2345 and notify them that the theater alarm can be set for the night.

Technically, Public Safety can make students leave the theater at 2 a.m. However, they most likely will just make sure that everything's all right and allow you to keep working.

# The Outlaw Barber of Living Proof 4-Week Budget

## **Props**

Clay poker chips (in wooden case)	\$29.70
Straight razor	\$11.50
Barber shears (3)	\$13.49
Sterilizer jar	\$13.99
Hat rack	\$16.89
Fake moustache	\$14.95
Wooden hand mirror	\$20.25
Razor strop	\$37.96
Breakaway bottles (6x\$14)	\$84.00 (+ s&h)
<b>Props Total</b>	<b>\$242.73</b>

# Light Design Guide

Written by: Greg Malen, '07

## HOW TO MAKE AN EFFECTIVE LIGHT PLOT:

- Know Your Space.

Make sure you understand the dimensions of the space and the set you are working with. Find a time to get into the space and have a good look around. It's never a bad idea to bring a tape measurer and a person of average height along with. The better you know the space, the more accurately you can plan your placement of instruments, and the less fidgeting you have to do during load-in.

- Drawing the Plot

More than anything, the light plot is there to help your load-in go as smoothly as possible. So it needs to be clear and legible. There's always the old fashioned method: with a pencil and paper. If you choose to draw by hand, clarity and labeling are extremely important. Although it's not absolutely necessary, the more "to scale" your plot is, the easier it is to read. When drawing the grid, make sure to use a straight edge, and label the pipes in a way that makes sense (to you, but hopefully to people helping you too). Also, in the '92 you probably won't be using the entire space, so you may want to leave off areas of the grid that you are not using to save space. Make a legend so that you can shorthand the lights on the plot with an asterisk or whatever is easiest. Only the '92 and the MPR have actual lighting grids. If you are not using either of these spaces, simply draw the layout of your space with the set layout and where you want your lights to be.

The other thing you can do is use Vectorworks. Vectorworks is a computer aided design program found on any Mac in any of Wesleyan's computer labs. If you would like to use it, the Lighting/Rigging Liaison can send you a Vectorworks copy of the '92 layout, and will explain how to use it for anyone who doesn't know how.

## ALTERNATE SPACES:

### – Lighting Instruments

For lighting in an alternate space, there are three types of lights available to you. First you have the actual light fixture(s) in the room you are using. Then you have footlights, which are 3” fresnels with stands that put the light about 6 inches above the ground. And lastly you have a small number of hanging lights available to you. Other than the MPR, no alt. space has a natural spot to hang lights from. If you wish to use hanging lights, you must use lighting trees. A lighting tree is short horizontal pipe that gets attached to a collapsible tripod with an extendible neck. Second Stage has two lighting trees that we lend out to shows, each of which can hold a max of four hanging lights (although the norm is two). All lights on the trees must have safety cables attached. Those are the three basic types, but alt. spaces are also great places to use things like Christmas lights and the clip-on lights normally used backstage.

### – Light Board

Second Stage has two lighting boards for alternate spaces. A show can use one or both if necessary, depending on availability. They are both 6 channel, 2 scene manual preset consoles. What that means is there are two separate sets of six sliders, labeled one through six, with one set directly above the other. The sets will be labeled either A or B. To the right, there will be 2 more sliders. One of those will be labeled Master, and the other will have an A at the top and a B at the bottom. The A/B slider controls which set of sliders will actually control what the stage looks like. When B is at 100%, A is at 0. The Master slider overrides everything, so when it is at 0, everything is at 0 no matter where the other sliders are.

Each channel has two edison outlets labeled in the back and can handle 1000W (the boards can handle 4800W max a piece). Make sure you know the power of the lights you are using and where they are plugged in. If you blow a fuse, contact the Lighting/Rigging Liaison and ask for help. In addition to the twelve channel outlets in back, there are two male edison outlets which are the power outlets for the board. They must be plugged into the wall for the board to work. And they must be plugged into separate outlets. If only one is plugged in, the board will only be able to support half the power.

### – Cabling

Cabling can be a huge issue in alt. spaces. All the outlets on the boards are edison, but not all the lights have edison plugs. The 3” fresnels, Christmas lights, and clip-ons have edisons, but everything else has stage

pin plugs. Second Stage has plenty of adapters, though, specifically for these situations. Because of the number of outlets on the board, or the number of available adapters, it can also be useful to two-fer lights, using Y-shaped cables to run them into the same outlet. Planning and efficiency are key. There are also two different types of Edison outlets. Many of the old buildings have circular openings for the third prong, but many of our cables have trapezoidal third prongs that won't fit. Making sure you have the proper cords can be confusing, so don't hesitate to ask the L/R Liaison for help. All cords running along the ground must be taped down, and carpeted if they are likely to be stepped on.

#### – Load-In

Using the above information and what you know about your space and your design, you should try to come up with a list of things you will need to borrow. That includes instruments, gels, gel frames, cables, adapters, etc. Cabling is probably the hardest thing to plan out, but if you know the dimensions of your space well, then you should have a rough idea of what you need. Then you will need to set up a time to meet with the L/R and officially sign everything out. **You cannot take anything from the '92 without having the L/R there to sign it out.** So the better you plan, the less time you have to spend coordinating with the L/R. Usually, it is a good idea to sign out more than you need. Like if you are unsure as to exactly which gels you want, pick several options and then try them out in the space. Also, the L/R is not responsible for transferring the equipment to your space. Make sure you have people to help you move stuff, or possibly a car, at the time of your load-in. The equipment cannot be left alone somewhere that is not locked up at any point in time.

#### – MPR

The MPR is the only alt. space with a built in lighting system. It has a T-shaped lighting grid with 36 circuits. There is a small closet that has dimmer boxes and labeled plugs running from the circuits in the grid. There are twelve dimmers, which are run one-to-one to twelve channels on a board (dimmer 1 goes to channel 1, dimmer 2 to channel 2, etc.), which the MPR provides. Be aware that not all the channels and circuits work. You may have to do some testing to see which ones work and which ones don't.

## SECOND STAGE MEETINGS:

### – Four-Week Meeting

This is the “getting to know you” meeting. Make sure the Lighting/Rigging Liaison knows who you are, and get his/her contact info. You do not need a finished plot for this meeting. You need to have questions. Lighting questions are generally not discussed in meetings, because it such a specialized area. If you have pressing questions, you and the L/R can go off in a corner or even leave the room to discuss them. Or you can set up a time later to meet and go over stuff. **If you have any concerns at all, discuss them with the L/R! That person is there specifically to help you!**

### – Two-Week Meeting

By the two-week meeting, you do need to bring in a copy of your light plot and have it signed. This does not mean that once the L/R signs your plot, you cannot change it. You can change anything at any time as long as you let the L/R know about it. If for some reason you cannot complete the plot by this meeting, make sure to inform a staff member before hand (the L/R if possible). Staff will try to be as understanding as possible, but we ask that you be respectful of us in return. The two-week meeting is also the time to ask questions about load-in. If you are working in an alt. space, it is the time to make arrangements to borrow all your equipment. The more organized you are, the faster you will be set up and have time to deal with any problems. Again, the L/R is there to help you, so ask away.

### – One-Week Meeting

The “one-week meeting” is really more of a half-week meeting. It’s the Monday before your show, which is after your load-in, but before your riser set-up. It’s a time to check up and make sure that your load-in went well. By now, your job should be pretty much done. And if you are having any problems, you probably have been in contact with the L/R already. But, as usual, these meetings are times that staff has already set aside to work with you, and you should take advantage of them.

## THE '92

Load-in for a show in the '92 usually takes place the Saturday night after strike for whatever show was just in the space. The Lighting/Rigging Liaison will be there for the strike of the show coming down, and will help organize everything being struck in order to make it most accessible to you. The L/R, however, is not responsible for your load-in. Once strike is called, all of staff is free to leave. You must provide your own crewmembers. It is highly suggested that you make arrangements for someone to be your Master Electrician. Whether or not you find anyone technically capable to help you, **you are not permitted to work alone in the space.** There must be someone else with you at all times. Even if this person is not actively helping, it is a safety precaution that must be complied with. Hanging an entire plot by yourself is a horribly tedious process. Find somebody; anybody you know that can either hold a wrench or carry a light. It will help a lot.

In some cases, the theater will be dark the week prior to your show (no show going up). If you are so fortunate, you can begin working in the space at your convenience. Do not, however, simply walk into the theater and start hanging lights. First tell the L/R when you are planning to begin working, so everyone is on the same page.

There will be a toolbox with a yellow top and a lock. You will be asked at one of the meetings what you would like the code for the lock to be. Taped to the inside of the top of the box is an itemized list of what should be in it. Anything not accounted for at the end of strike will be billed to your stage manager . . . who will not be happy. All the gels, gobos and gel frames will be in the booth in cabinets. The L/R should show you exactly where everything is when you begin your load-in. You may cut gels from the full sheets if we are out of the desired color and size.

The key to the cherry-picker (the big hydraulic thing you will be using to hang lights) is on the ring of keys which your stage manager will have. There is also an A-frame ladder, which can be used to hang lights. But it is much more difficult to use and should be avoided if possible. If you are using the pipes above the stage to hang lights, you must have the L/R instruct you on how to use the rigging system.

## Scenic Design and Set Construction with Second Stage

Written by: Nick Weiss-Richmond, '07

*Here is the rough timeline that Second Stage set designers are expected to adhere to:*

<b>Weeks/days before show:</b>	<b>Progress:</b>
Week 6	Meetings with director, other designers to brainstorm, conceptualize overall 'look' of the show.
Week 5	Completed rough floor plan of the stage/acting area. This is a birdseye view of the set showing general configuration of furniture and scenery, i.e. flats, platforms, stairs, doors, windows, masking, etc.
Week 4	Completed blue-prints/schematics: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•floor plan is drawn to scale with exact dimensions of set pieces and their relative distances indicated.</li> <li>•blue-prints for all items being built: top and side views delineate every individual piece of wood, carriage bolt, length of rope, etc.</li> </ul> Note: These plans must be detailed and comprehensive enough so that a stranger using them would build <i>exactly</i> the set you would build.
Week 4	Blue-prints/schematics are submitted for approval to facilities manager Ed Chiburis. His office is located in the basement of the chapel. His extension his x2787.
Week 3	Once the designs have been approved by Ed, a materials list is compiled. Indicate quantity and type of each item, i.e. "three pieces of eight-foot 2x4." <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Submit this list to Second Stage Building/Maintenance Liaison Zac Bruner:  <a href="mailto:zbruner@wesleyan.edu">-zbruner@wesleyan.edu</a>                -585.230.0194</li> <li>•Call Zac and set up a time to visit the '92 and determine which of the materials we already have.</li> <li>•The rest of the materials are turned into a budget proposal (see Week 2). Call retailers for price estimates:                -For lumber, <i>Lyon and Billard</i>: 860.267.2565                -For everything else, <i>Home Depot</i>: 860.346.3007</li> </ul>
Week 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Submit for approval detailed budget proposal to Second Stage. (Must include prices)</li> <li>•Purchase materials*</li> <li>•Arrange shop-training for all power tools, with Zac.</li> <li>•Begin construction in the '92 shop.</li> </ul>
Week 1	Complete set-building

## **Purchasing**

For any item you would like to purchase, the first step is calling the store and finding out how much it costs. Put all of these requested purchase figures into an organized list, called a budget proposal. Second Stage must approve all budget proposals before any purchases are actually made. Once approval is granted, there are two ways to actually buy the items...

## **Reimbursements**

- 1) Buy the items with your own cash.
- 2) Save the receipts—labeled with name, show, wes ID number, and box number
- 3) Submit all the receipts to the Managing Liaison at your show's strike
- 4) You will receive your reimbursement from the university as a check made out to you in your box. It usually takes around a month to get your money.

***Purchase Orders (Only possible through vendors with whom Wesleyan has an account. A few of the vendors we often use purchase orders with are “Lyon and Billard,” “Ace Hardware,” and “National Paint and Wallpaper.”)***

- 1) Find Jennifer Marco at the Theater office in the CFA
- 2) Give her your approved budget and explain that you'd like to buy the items using a purchase order for whichever vendor (Lyon and Billard, etc.)
- 3) She will give a paper form (the purchase order) which is approved for the amount of money stipulated in your budget.
  - a. With vendors that deliver: call the vendor from the theater office; explain which items you'd like to buy; explain that you'd like to purchase them using Wesleyan's account; give them the purchase order number (located on the form); arrange a time for delivery when you'll be available to receive the items—alternately you could arrange for Charlie or Ed to receive them for you.
  - b. With vendors that don't deliver: bring the purchase order with you to the store and use it to buy your items.
- 4) The items you buy will come with an invoice. Give this invoice to Jennifer at the theater office for her records.

## ***General Shop Policies***

- You are not allowed to use the shop until Ed or Zac has walked you through the space and explained the policies.
- Absolutely no working in the shop alone
- Put away all tools at the end of every work session
- Keep the red and black cabinets locked when you're not in the space
- You may only use the power tools for which you have been specifically certified by Ed or Zac.
- Shop must be totally clean by the end of your strike
- Use of the shop is a privilege—it may be revoked in the case of any violations of policy
- Your student account will be charged for any missing tools

## PROPS Crew Head

Props Head must discuss with the Director and Scenic Designer the Specific Prop Requirements for the show, from furniture to pencils. Then search through our storage areas to determine how many props can be pulled from there, and determine how many can be built or borrowed before going out to buy new items. Props can be a very detailed job. One thing to remember about props is that new items may be required right up to the last minute, unlike most other technical areas.

You must attend Production meetings as scheduled each week.

### Detailed info:

- The Props Head should read through the play to make a rough list of what is needed. Bear in mind that the Director will not always use every prop listed, and will often come up with Props NOT listed in the script.
  - Meet with the Director, Stage Manager, Costumer, and Scene Designer to determine what EXACTLY your responsibilities are as far as Props for the production.
  - Be sure to check the prop room, shop, and CFA collection for furniture and props you need. **Do not purchase anything until you are certain we do not have it.**
  - Check with Second Stage staff for places to BORROW, RENT or BUY Furniture or Props.
  - **KEEP ALL RECEIPTS.** If you spend your own money, and you lose your receipt, you've made a generous donation to the production.
  - Meet with the Director, Stage Manager regularly to update what they need. Show them what is already in your possession.
  - Set up a Props table backstage with a clearly marked space for every prop that is needed on stage during the show.
  - By the time Tech Week begins, the Saturday before the production, you must have acquired ALL PROPS (save ones that are suddenly needed during Tech Week).
  - Each night when the show is over, you and your Crew must check that all props are in their proper places and any which need to be locked (such as firearms) are secured.
- When the show's run is finally over, you and your crew are first to strike. You clear all Props from the stage. Then you can decide which Props can get thrown out, which return to storage, and which go back to their rightful owners.

IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO RETURN ANYTHING YOU BORROW, AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER THE PLAY. THE LAST NIGHT OF THE SHOW IS NOT NECESSARILY YOUR LAST TIME WORKING ON IT.