

## **STAGE AND PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT THESIS**

The Thesis in Performance: Stage and Production Management is composed of the planning process, the rehearsal and performance process, and a Casebook.

### **1. Planning Process**

Stage managers are assigned in the junior year to a faculty show, which can take place during either semester of the senior year; on some occasions, they may be assigned to a Senior Thesis in Performance: Directing production, scheduled during the Senior Thesis Festival in the spring semester. The dates of the thesis rehearsal and production period will be provided to the Stage and Production Management thesis student when the thesis is assigned.

The thesis stage manager's preparation work (script analysis, scene breakdown, etc.) can start as soon as the assignment is made or closer to the start of rehearsals, but in no case less than two weeks before the first rehearsal. The stage manager will work with the Production Manager and Technical Director to budget the production elements during the first two weeks of the assigned semester. The stage manager attends all sessions of auditions and call-backs for the assigned production and assists the director of the production as necessary.

### **2. Rehearsal and Performance Processes**

Stage managers manage and coordinate the rehearsal process in collaboration with the director of the production, and attend at least 5 out of 6 weekly rehearsals during the rehearsal period. At the end of the fifth week of regular rehearsals, tech rehearsals continue for five days, over the course of which the stage manager works with the director and design team to develop the final form of the production by adding design and technical elements. Performances are Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings, with a Saturday matinee. The stage manager's work is evaluated on initiative and follow-through, effective management of the cast and crew, and technical execution of calling cues in tech rehearsals and performances.

### **3. Casebook**

The Casebook is a chance to document and analyze the development of the production. The Casebook is composed of two parts, **(a) an essay** and **(b) the prompt book, an organized collection of documents and materials showing the stage manager's work over the rehearsal process, including all preparatory and final paperwork and the daily rehearsal reports, plus a weekly reflection on the process to date.** The essay is much like the kind of critical paper you have written in theatre studies and performance studies courses. The prompt book should be accompanied by commentary/context to situate the process for readers who have not been directly involved. A draft of the Casebook is due on Monday of the third week of rehearsal, and the completed Casebook is due, without exception, at noon on the Friday following the final performance.

## **a. Essay**

Write an essay in which you develop a critical claim, advanced through an interpretive argument, about one dimension of the play. This essay might be focused on a single dimension of the playtext or text-in-performance, but it need not; it could, for instance, take a broader, more thematic approach. Here are some questions/approaches you might use as a starting point.

How might features of the text (its rhetoric, the demands of its language, the actions given to actors to perform) be considered in the context of:

**Theatre/history:** in relation to the moment of the play's initial composition and performance? To the style and rhetoric of the play's contemporary theatre? Other plays with which it is contemporary; to the playwright's body of work?

**Theatre/comparative:** across the history of stage production? To specific productions nationally or internationally? To contemporary productions in New York or elsewhere?

**Theatre/political:** specific dimension of the cultural, political, and social context of the play's initial composition and performance, or to the contexts of a significant later production?

**Theatre/theoretical:** How might categories of event in relation to the play's casting, location, sphere of activity—gender, ability, race, ethnicity, sexuality, class, mobility, social status, geopolitical location, technicity, etc.—be addressed through a critical or theoretical analysis?

**Length:** 10-12 pages, double spaced, 12-point font. Citation format: MLA or Chicago Manual of Style

**Schedule:** The complete draft of the essay must be submitted to the Stage and Production Management Thesis Adviser prior to the first rehearsal. Final revisions can be undertaken during the rehearsal period and prior to submission.

## **b. Prompt Book**

The stage manager's prompt book is a binder containing all of the information recorded during the rehearsal process and is the essential document in running the live performance. The contents are organized into sections; where appropriate, original documents should be provided rather than photocopies. Contents should include:

1. Production contacts
2. Calendar and schedules
3. Scene breakdown
4. Script analysis
5. Blocking script

6. Calling script
7. Props lists
8. Design information
9. Backstage paperwork and checklists
10. Rehearsal reports and commentaries
11. Production budget

Each section should include a sheet of commentary/context as noted above, except for the section on rehearsal reports; in the latter, a weekly reflection, to be reviewed at regular meetings with the adviser, will be posted in place of the commentary.

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### **Deadline**

The completed Casebook is due, without exception, by noon, on the Friday following the final performance.

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### **Evaluation**

Your Senior Thesis in Performance Stage and Production Management will be evaluated by the Stage and Production Management Thesis Adviser and a second reader/viewer, who will consult on a final grade. The essay will be evaluated on the basis of a clearly conceptualized thesis, a well-developed and clearly-structured argument, and the sophisticated and original analysis and interpretation of evidence. The overall grade is given holistically, taking into account the artistic and critical goals of the production, the evolution of those goals, and how your collaboration and management process contributed to their development and achievement. While the final performance is weighted more heavily in deciding the grade, the paths to performance and the Casebook, which includes both the essay and the Prompt Book, are given significant weight in the final grade as well.