Annotated Capstone Bibliography


This article is about a stage manager’s dramaturgical contributions to productions and what more they can bring to the table. This article challenges how creative a stage manager can be and how valuable they can prove themselves to be beyond the regular responsibilities expected of them. This is useful to me because it reflects the experiences of three seasoned stage managers and emphasizes that a stage manager can be more than runner of show and schedules, but can also be a creative partner to the overall process, something I’ve always enjoyed trying to accomplish through my own stage manager positions.


This article gives a comprehensive look into job opportunities, income potential, and training needed for stage management, also giving advice about this certain career. The author writes how a good way to start on this career path is to become a production assistant and work up towards becoming the stage manager, this way a production team can gain confidence in you; also advice is given to be very careful not to burn bridges in the theatrical community. This piece discusses the job opportunities associated with stage management, advising that there are different avenues to consider rather than just shooting for one particular stage management position.

Gold, Jill. Interview with author. February 3, 2017. E-mail.

She is an LA area stage manager who got her start in stage management during her freshman year of college and didn’t look back. She has provided insight for me about internships and the true importance of learning from experience, giving me aspects to ponder about for my own starting path. She has given me advice about using even “small” connections as a resource and never believing you’re too good for a job when it can you give you something so valuable: experience.
Nikki actually attended USC to pursue acting but when she returned home over the summer and was offered a stage management position, she ended up loving it and focused the rest of her college career on management. After college, she accepted a fellowship from the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland and soon discovered she wanted to pursue stage management full time. Nikki is now an LA-based stage manager who has done a variety of different productions. She advises to try out as many aspects of theatre as possible, from hanging lights to sewing costumes, because all the experience gained will in turn make you a better stage manager. I personally love trying out all different positions in theatre and will certainly heed her encouragement to use all I can learn to better my own stage management skills.


Ionazzi gives a comprehensive look into a stage manager’s job starting from pre-production into performance and details the duties and technical knowledge necessary to create an overall successful production. This handbook clearly illustrates what the stage manager should be involved with and orders its chapters from research needed all the way to performance, creating a guideline to follow on how to have organized success. Ionazzi not only provides the tools and documents vital for success, but also includes insight on human behavior and how to deal with the needs of those that work with and around you.


Kelly’s book also informs about the whole of the stage manager process and everything in between, as well as referencing his own experience in the field. He starts with a what a stage manager actually does and builds upon that, weaving in not only cut and dry responsibilities, but also his own advice to emphasize how important this information is and why it is. Kelly’s writing conveys how stage managers are able to establish the creative environment necessary for everyone involved and even lists Equity work rules to ensure one creates a fair environment as well.

This article showcases a study done on undergraduate stage management training in the U.S. and analyzes all the contributing factors to whether a student has been properly trained or not. By comparing the different surveys taken, it is easy to see what other schools believe in for their stage managers and who they each believe is best fit to teach a stage manager. This article allows for comparison with my own stage management experience and may help me determine how prepared I feel to start my journey outside of school.

Knox, Leila. Interview with author. February 1, 2017. E-mail.

Leila Knox is the head of stage management at The Old Globe who started her experience freshman year of college when she realized she wanted to be close to the action of a production but wanted to stay off stage. Leila has shared with me the significance of nurturing your connections and recommends taking a smaller job at a bigger theatre rather than the opposite in order to get to know more people because, as she emphasized, this business is all about who you know. Leila feels privileged to be a stage manager and has even become a teacher for stage management. I would love to have her temperament in the future.

Nichols, Ash. Interview with author. February 9, 2017. E-mail.

Ash began her journey in stage management at age 15 when someone explained different jobs in theatre to them; they instinctively knew that they wanted to be a stage manager above all else, and hasn’t looked back since. Ash studied Technical Theatre at SFSU and went to work as a stage manager for the American Conservatory Theatre after interning there. Ash eventually became a member of the artistic ensemble at Cornerstone in L.A. Currently, they are working as production manager for an experimental opera group call The Industry in L.A. Ash advises to take risks because it’s worth it to invest in new and different things and to remember that taking work for the sake of a paycheck is not always worth it. I definitely want to possess Ash’s accepting attitude as I try out my own opportunities and see if they can work for me.

This book unfortunately doesn’t exactly fit into the scope of my project. My project goal has changed and now I’m really focusing on the different journeys one can take to pursue a career in stage management compared with how ready I feel to do so at this moment in time considering the work I’ve accomplished. This book discusses a range of historic moments throughout the U.S. and theories about such fields as women’s studies, economics, and literature, as well as how workers’ identities are shaped by what they do. While I did enjoy reading about these subjects, I realized I had a lot of trouble trying to relate it into my project and stage management especially.

Saraffian, Andrea. Interview with author. February 1, 2017. E-mail.

Andrea Saraffian is a Broadway stage manager who actually started her theatrical journey as an actor but then fell into stage management halfway through college and eventually moved her career to New York where she landed a PA position for Broadway and worked her way up. Andrea has advised to try your best to say yes to everything when you are first starting out and meet everyone you can to expand your circle, as well as to make certain you arrive to work on time and with a good attitude. She has shared how stage management not only makes her happy in her career, but also has made her a better parent and the skills one learns as a stage manager can definitely translate into better dealing with real life situations.


Lawrence and Alice’s book go into more detail as they discuss the journey stage managers go through from pre- to post-production and they share about actually understanding the play at hand, budgeting, and even working with unions. This book provides real-life examples of how to deal with certain situations as a stage manager and gives advice about everything from designer/ tech director conflicts to timing sound effects to fixing cueing problems during a performance even if it counters final design looks. Included throughout this piece are different classroom exercises to try, advice from many different stage managers on how they have dealt with issues in the past, and finally examples of documentation for one’s prompt book.

This book strays a little away from my main topic of stage management since I now have changed my focus. It discusses American theatre history and identifies those who have worked for commercial Broadway as well as the shifting factors that inevitably pushed workers out. These topics throughout this piece don’t exactly fit into my goal of analyzing the different paths to best practice of stage management.