



Producer's Manual

Introduction

This manual is to help you be a confident and competent producer, an effective mentor and leader, and to help you have fun! It will guide you, help you solve problems, save you time and perhaps some grief. We want you to happily produce shows here at Langham, again, and again!

This manual is not intended to tell you every detail of how you do every task as a producer. Each production will have different challenges. Instead, it serves as a guide for tasks that must be completed at specific times and in specific ways to ensure other Langham activities (there are many!) run smoothly.

Some Producers are very much behind the scenes organizers, and others like to be more visible. How you do your work is up to you and the rest of your production team. If everything gets done and someone assumes responsibility for each task, there is considerable flexibility in how you choose to produce your show.

The Role of Producer

Whereas the Director and Stage Manager work mainly with the performers and running crew, the Producer works mainly with the offstage members of the Production Team and oversees the physical and technical aspects of the production. You will have interactions with all members of your production team, but it is advisable to communicate concerns that affect the cast and the company through the Stage Manager. It is the SM who will communicate the day-to-day concerns that arise during rehearsal to the appropriate department and the Producer.

Responsibilities:

This section outlines the tasks which **MUST** be done to produce a successful show. How these tasks are done may take various forms. As a Producer at Langham the following areas of responsibility are most important. They are:

Help Build the Production Team

The usual Production Team at Langham Court Theatre is composed of:

Director	Lighting Designer
Music Director	Lighting Board Operators
Musician(s)	Sound Designer
Choreographer	Sound Board Operators
Assistant Director (optional)	Properties Design/Procurement
Producer	Properties Running Crew
Assistant Producer (optional)	Intimacy Coordinator (<i>contracted by the Board for the Season – currently Treena Stubel</i>)
Stage Manager	Combat Coach (if needed)
Assistant Stage Manager(s)	Lead Scenic Carpenter
Running Crew	Set Builders
Set Designer	Painters
Set Dressing and Decor	



Costume Designer
Hair/Wigs Designer (optional)
Makeup Designer (optional)
Programme Coordinator (*currently Holly McGimpsey*)

Publicity Chair (*currently Kathy Macovichuk*)
Photographer (*currently Terry Stitt*)
Video Operator
Projections Designer (if needed)
Technical Director (*currently Jason King*)

As you assume the role of Producer, see which roles still need to be filled. Use your contacts and connections to suggest people to the director, SM, etc. The Administrative Services Coordinator has a list of volunteers and the areas in which they have expressed interest. Encourage mentorship by bringing in volunteers with less experience to assist those on your production team but recognize not everyone is up to the task of being a mentor. The Production Chair(s) may also assist with finding people to fill roles. Network with previous Producers, the Admin Coordinator, and the Production Chair(s). You are not alone!

Budgeting

The season has a maximum budget set by the Board and each production's share will be communicated to you by the Production Chair(s). The Producer is responsible for managing the show's budget and it is imperative to keep the cost of the production within this budget. Shows with simple sets, minor technical requirements, and small casts will have lower budgets than complicated shows and musicals, as they are often the most expensive shows to mount. There is a set amount of \$300 included in each show's budget for Volunteer Appreciation. It can be used for anything the producer sees fit; such as augmenting the cast party, the Meet and Greet, or refreshments for rehearsals.

At the first Production Meeting, present the total budget and clarify with each Department Head/Designer how much of the budget is allotted to their department. It is imperative that you work within your budget. If you have issues, consult with the Production Chair(s). The following expenses are paid directly by the Board, and do NOT come out of your show budget: Licensing fees, script rental or purchase or copying (when permitted by the license), Opening Night reception, programme design/printing, promotion/marketing.

The Board will provide you with a production expense sheet. Give each department head an Expense Sheet to be filled in outlining their purchases with attached receipts. They should submit this to the Producer after all purchases have been made. The Producer submits all expense sheets and receipts to the Board's Finance Committee for payment. Langham's Lead Scenic Carpenter will itemize costs to build and paint the set and will send that info to the Board -- but you should ask them to keep you informed so that you can track expenses against your budget. *Note: Castle Hardware on Cook St. provides a discount for purchases of materials needed for LCTS set décor/props. The production name must be noted on the receipt.*

Timeline

Pre-Audition Production Meeting

This is your opportunity to bring all the members of your Production Team together. Do around-the-table introductions so everyone knows who everyone else is and where they fit into the team. Find out who may need help with their area. At that time, problem solve if you can and, if not, arrange times for department heads to meet separately. The Producer does not need to attend interdepartmental meetings.



Circulate a draft Contact List of the production team's emails and phone numbers for people to approve or correct. Make any corrections later and circulate the list to everyone on the team.

Set audition dates with the Director and SM and check the Langham Court Room Booking Calendar online langhamtheatre.ca to confirm those dates are available. Email the Admin Coordinator gm@langhamtheatre.ca to book the space. *Note: As LCT is in demand as a rental venue, the Production Chair(s), in collaboration with the Lead Scenic Carpenter, have "held" space in the Calendar for each show, according to LCTS' established minimum time between auditions and rehearsals and length of rehearsal period. Ask the Admin Coordinator to release whatever dates/times you wish to change.*

Auditions are usually held over a weekend: Friday evening and Saturday afternoon with the Callbacks on Sunday afternoon. However, the availability of the Director/SM and the space are the deciding factors. Get the character synopses from the Director (and vocal requirements from the Music Director in the case of a musical) and any other requirements they deem necessary for the auditions and draft an Audition Announcement that includes "Langham Court Theatre welcomes performers of all levels of experience". Send the audition notice to the Newsletter Editor newseditor@langhamtheatre.ca, Publicity Chair kmakovichuk@hotmail.com, the Administrative Services Coordinator gm@langhamtheatre.ca, and the Box Office boxoffice@langhamtheatre.ca.

Each Director will have their own way of running auditions. Find out what they require. Ensure there are enough Audition Forms and supplies (name tags, pens etc.) in the Audition Box which is found in a cupboard in the Rehearsal Room. The Director decides the composition of the audition panel. A "best practice" is to limit numbers on the audition panel to maximize the comfort of the auditioner (auditioning is stressful). One individual (Producer or ASM) remains stationed outside the audition room to welcome people, collect audition forms, and ensure that they are comfortable while they wait.

Auditions

Before the auditions, post the signs from the Audition Box outside around the theatre so they are easily visible to direct people to the Stage Door.

The Producer phones auditioners after the auditions for call-backs and then again to let people know if they have been cast or not. Everyone is called. An assistant Producer or the SM may assist with the calls. Pay special attention to the areas on the audition form that indicate when people are unavailable for rehearsals and, if not cast, if there is interest in working in any other areas of the production. Follow up and try to find spots for these people.

First Rehearsal/Readthrough

This *usually* takes place the weekend following auditions. Get scripts from the box office or from the Production Chair(s) for distribution. The Production Team and crew are invited to attend for introductions and to listen to the readthrough.



Everyone involved on the cast, production team, and crew, are required by LCTS to complete a Vulnerable Sector Record Check. The process is free, online, and simple, and overseen by gm@langhamtheatre.ca. Contact the Administrative Services Coordinator for instructions to pass along to everyone and provide the Administrative Services Coordinator with your full Production Contact List.

Rehearsal Schedule

Once again, each Director has their preference for how the Rehearsal Schedule is drawn up. Some Directors do it themselves or prefer the Stage Manager to do it. Make sure there is a Rehearsal Schedule available, and everyone is given a copy.

Use the Rehearsal Schedule to make sure all rehearsals get booked in the theatre's on-line Booking Calendar. Contact gm@langhamtheatre.ca to discuss outside events in advance of booking to make sure there are no conflicts with your show's required dates. At this time also check for parking lot conflicts with other events. The current production has priority over the theatre parking facilities. Provide the Administrative Services Coordinator with a copy of the Rehearsal Schedule when booking space, carefully noting all rooms to be used (rehearsal room, lounge, green room, if simultaneous rehearsals are required for music, combat etc.) and the exact times needed.

There is a tradition at Langham that the entire theatre is reserved for a cast's Opening Night. Ensure that your show does not rehearse at the theatre during another cast's Opening Night. If a rehearsal is needed that night, you can secure rehearsal space elsewhere, but the cost (if any) will come from your show budget. Complimentary space has been provided in the past by Canadian College of Performing Arts and Oak Bay High School. The Production Chair(s) can provide contact info.

Production Meetings

Call Production Meetings as needed to keep everyone updated. If everything is running smoothly, Production Meetings may not be necessary as often but sometimes it's less work than trying to keep everyone updated via email.

Trouble Shooting

It is essential to be available to your Production Team for trouble shooting issues that arise. Problems should be dealt with as quickly and efficiently as possible. If there is an issue you are unsure of or unable to solve, contact the Production Chair(s). Conflict resolution must follow Langham's Code of Conduct.

Deadlines

The show programme is published by the Programme Coordinator. Provide production information as requested and ensure that you know the deadline for final changes. Give a list of anyone who has assisted with the production to the Programme Coordinator for the Grateful Acknowledgements list.

Production Perks

LCT offers everyone involved with a production two free tickets to a performance of their choice. They must contact the box office to book. Three complimentary beverages from the bar, during the run, are also offered. Ensure that the bar has a copy of the show program so that they can cross-reference with



drink orders. Everyone involved in a production is encouraged to become a member, which comes with additional benefits.

Meet and Greet

The move from the Rehearsal Room to the stage is a milestone in the production's journey and is celebrated with a Meet and Greet in the Lounge. The Meet and Greet is a gathering of the Cast, Crew and Production Team. Members of the Board of Directors and Life Members are also invited to attend.

Get this date from the Production Chair(s) as it was arranged with Langham's Lead Scenic Carpenter and included on the Build Schedule. When the date is confirmed with the Director, send an invite to the members of your Production Team and ask the Admin Coordinator and Box Office Manager to send invitations to the Board and Life Members. The Producer should check with the Front of House Manager (foh@langhamtheatre.ca) to arrange a bartender for this event.

The Producer arranges the set up and clean up of this event. It's a potluck meal and everyone is asked to bring food to share; preferably finger foods to eliminate a huge cleanup.

The Producer will introduce themselves, say a few welcoming words and make general announcements and ask each person in the room to introduce themselves, say what their role is, or their connection to the theatre. It is an important part of the gathering as it gives everyone a chance to see how many people it takes to put on the production and the support it takes to keep the theatre going. In most cases, this may be the first time the cast meets everyone who is supporting them backstage.

The Programme Coordinator organizes the photographer and photo shoot as, during the Meet and Greet, headshots and group shots of the cast and crew are taken for the programme. There may be other group or publicity shots done as required, organized by the Director and Costume department.

Rehearsals

All rehearsals are at the discretion of the Director and Stage Manager, and it is not necessary to attend rehearsals on a regular basis -- but it is essential to communicate with the Director/Stage Manager regularly so any issues that arise can be dealt with asap. A visual presence also lets the cast and crew know that you are there for them. It is suggested that the Producer attend at least one rehearsal per week. The SM prepares rehearsal reports for distribution to members of the production team.

Technical Preparation and Technical Rehearsals

It is essential to provide space in the Production Schedule for on-stage time required by the set construction crew and the lighting and sound designers and their crews. At Langham, set construction happens during the day, so there is no conflict with clearing time for builders. Lighting and sound work needs to be scheduled around rehearsals so there is no conflict accessing the stage. Although the Producer has no direct role in the technical rehearsals, it is again a good idea to check with the SM to see if your assistance is required.



Technical Rehearsals include:

- **Dry Tech (also called Paper Tech)**

A cue building session offstage with the Director, Stage Manager, Lighting and Sound Designers and any other departments, such as special effects, projections, follow spot, etc. to work through the script as the Stage Manager plots where all the cues happen. Some shows may have less than a dozen cues and others may have over a hundred. Dry Techs can happen bit by bit throughout the rehearsal process or be done towards the end of the rehearsal schedule.

- **Cue to Cue without Actors**

This is usually done a week or so before a show opens and the purpose is to physically go through all the cues in the script, in order, then stop and fix anything that isn't correct. This event requires the Director, Stage Manager, Lighting and Sound Designers, plus any other required departments, equipment operators (light board, sound board, follow spots), ASM's. "Stage walkers" are often used to assess how things look under the lighting and to make sure the actors have sufficient lighting and support for safely getting on and off stage during scene changes and blackouts. The Stage Manager oversees this session with the Director.

- **Cue to Cue with Actors**

This is generally done on the Sunday prior to show opening and is the point at which the actors see how the technical aspects of the show work and how it affects them. Any corrections to the timing of cues are adjusted at that time. The Stage Manager oversees this rehearsal.

The Cue to Cue with Actors can be followed by a Tech/Dress Rehearsal the same afternoon or evening. If so, a Potluck lunch or supper could take place in the lounge between the two runs. Everyone takes a break, has some food, then runs the Tech/Dress Rehearsal as if it were a performance. This could be a long day and help from the Producer and their assistant is welcome.

Final Dress Rehearsal

The final Dress Rehearsal happens on Monday evening the week of Opening and has a small, invited audience. This helps the company get a sense of an audiences' reactions to the play. It is the Producer's job to invite people to attend the Dress Rehearsal. People who are working the show are invited to bring two friends or family members. Production teams from other shows may be invited and bartenders are invited as they don't get a chance to see the show when they are working, whereas ushers are required to watch the show during their shifts. If there are individuals or groups who have contributed to the production, the invitation may be extended to them. If the next production is currently in rehearsal at the time of your dress, they are also invited. **Tickets are not required.** Guests must enter through the Lounge doors and be reminded that no parking is available in the theatre lot. Let everyone know that there will be a photographer taking archival shots during the performance and cast and crew shots will be taken after the show. Ask department heads to forward the invitation to all their crew members. The Producer contacts the photographer to arrange their attendance to shoot stills of the show during the dress rehearsal, additional promo photos if requested by the director, and cast and crew shots on stage afterward.



Opening Night Reception

The Board hosts an Opening Night reception in the lounge after the performance. The pre-show announcement, delivered by the FOH Manager, includes an invitation to the audience. The Producer is expected to attend the show on Opening Night to troubleshoot any last-minute issues that may arise. Cards or flowers can be exchanged on Opening Night or at the closing party.

Archival Video

During the run, usually in the final week, the Producer arranges for someone to film a performance. Liaise with the SM on the date and notify the box office so appropriate seats can be blocked off.

After the Last Performance

Immediately after the final performance, the cast changes out of their costumes and preliminary work to “strike” the show begins. The stage is cleared of props, set dressing, and furniture under the direction of the Props and Set Dressing people. The cast leave their costumes where instructed by the Costume Designer and clear the dressing rooms and Greenroom of their belongings and leave the spaces clean and tidy for the next Production. The Lighting Designer *may* come in at that time to strike/rehang lights. The stage should be emptied of all movables for the builders coming in the next day to strike the set and start the next build. The construction crew will strike the set during the day on the Monday after the close of the show.

Any rented scripts and music must be collected from cast and crew and production team members. The materials, in addition to single printed copies of a program, a poster, and a promotional “business card” should be given to the Admin Coordinator who will be combining with a box office report and forwarding to the production’s rights holder.

Closing Party

The cast and crew can decide where they would like to hold their party. It may be held in the Lounge after the stage and common areas are cleared following the final performance, or at someone’s home, or both. The Producer and assistants organize it and can utilize funds from the Volunteer Appreciation line of the show’s budget.

If a cast party is planned in the Lounge, check with the FOH Manager to make sure there is a bartender on duty for the party. The Producer arranges set up and clean up of the event.

Gift giving for the director and/or other members of the Production Team at the closing party is customary, although optional, and is arranged by the cast and crew.

Post-production Budget Report

The Producer is responsible for sending a post show finance report to the Board.

Make sure all departments have turned in expense forms with receipts and have reported the final amounts to you. The last expense to come, often a few weeks after closing, will be for dry cleaning if required. When you have received this amount, add to the budget then submit your final report to lctsboard@langhamtheatre.ca.



Post-Production Survey

The Production Chair(s) will provide the Producer with a questionnaire for distribution by email. After each production we request feedback from anyone connected with the show who wishes to offer it. The Producer emails the questionnaire to everyone to be filled out and returned to the current Production Chair(s). It helps identify any issues that occurred and find out what did or did not work, either personally or in a specific department, to assist with planning and improving future productions. All responses are Confidential. Data is gathered for the Season Report, but the forms are destroyed. If action is required due to concerns or a complaint, the information is forwarded in confidence to the Board's HR Committee.

We hope this manual helps you navigate through all the steps required to produce your successful show at Langham Court Theatre. Enjoy your role as Producer.

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