

General Theatre Manager - Handbook

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Role Definition

Definition

The role of the General Theatre Manager is defined in the South London Company Membership by-laws (appendix B) as:

Duties of the General Theatre Manager

1. Have care and control of all stage equipment (including lighting and sound).
2. To liaise with the Theatre Directors and Technical Co-ordinator regarding the technical feasibility of productions.
3. To ensure that the Stage Manager of each production effectively carries out the 'Get in' and 'Get out.'
4. To ensure that stocks of consumables are maintained.
5. To maintain an up-to-date inventory of all non-consumable stock.
6. To advise annual Financial meetings called by the Financial Director of expenditure requirements for the projected Season and to administer the allocated budget.

In essence, the General Theatre Manager is responsible for ensuring that SLT productions have the resources and support to be performed in the Old Fire Station theatre space (and other rooms within the building). The General Theatre Manager is also responsible for the Health & Safety of all productions in the building from get-in to get-out, including the performances themselves. The General Theatre Manager may also advise on technical and health and safety issues for SLT performances performed outside the building.

Responsibilities

Aspects of Role

The following is a non-exhaustive list of responsibilities and tasks that the General Theatre Manager is in charge of:

- Communication with BPT Building Manager regarding hires.
- Training and management of Stage Managers.
- Training and management of Operators.
- Oversight of all set-designs and technical requirements of productions.
- Main technical liaison for external company productions.
- Health & Safety of productions from get-in to get-out, including undertaking risk assessments.
- Correct construction of auditorium seating.
- Lighting grid rigging and wiring.
- Sound and visual system rigging and wiring.
- Flats, door frames, doors, blocks, steps and all scenic blocks/items.
- Adequate supply of fixings and materials for set construction.
- Supply of matt black and white paint.
- Ensuring that backstage, auditorium and technical gallery are tidy and safe.
- Equipment maintenance, e.g. ladders, scaffold tower, tools.

NOTE: It is NOT a requirement that the GTM have in-depth knowledge of all aspects of the role. There are many members who can be delegated to given their skills. However, the GTM is required to have oversight of all aspects and is ultimately responsible.

Skilled Members

There is a folder in the bar that can be used as a catalogue of people within SLT with various skills, e.g. lighting design, show operation, stage management. The GTM will also need to keep a separate list as some people will not want to enter their details in this catalogue. The GTM is often the point of contact for directors searching for backstage/technical support for a show.

Where possible, it is best to encourage a Director to have a “Production Designer” as part of their team. This person should understand the requirements of a show plus generally what is capable given SLT’s resources.

Health & Safety

The Health & Safety policies are available on the South London Theatre website for download: <http://www.southlondontheatre.co.uk/policies-documents/>

The GTM is required to have read these and to make appropriate amendments with review from the General Council.

The GTM is responsible for ensuring that Stage Managers and those participating in get-ins, (set builds, rigging, etc) and get-outs understand their responsibilities under Health & Safety, risk assess activities, and comply with any safety measures put in place. This includes (but is not exhaustive) the enforcement of wearing appropriate shoes and clothing and hard hats, if required, plus the use of drills, powered or manual saws, hammers and working at height.

Safeguarding

BPT has a dedicated Safeguarding officer, for all matters within the Old Fire Station plus designated Officers for Youth Theatre. They are the point of contact for any issues and are responsible for ensuring that the Safeguarding policies are kept up-to-date. However, they will not be available to oversee all aspects of a production. The GTM is in charge of the stage management crews for every production, as well as the construction/technical teams; the GTM must have read and thoroughly understood the Safeguarding policy and be DBS checked. The document is available here: <http://www.southlondontheatre.co.uk/policies-documents/>.

Final Oversight

Finally, the GTM is responsible for the oversight of all productions at South London Theatre. This means that they are able to stop any aspect of a production at any stage and it will remain stopped until it is safe to resume. This can happen for the following reasons:

- Person breaking the Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding issue
- Reckless behaviour, e.g. during set construction
- Set design. If a set is not possible or dangerous.
- Any time a set/technical aspect is not safe.
- Seating layouts.
- Fire safety and access.

Budget

The General Theatre Manager has a separate budget of £3,000 per annum, which is to be used for ensuring that productions are able to put on. This is generally used for the following:

- Lighting maintenance and upgrades.
- Materials for use over multiple productions (e.g. wood, sheet materials, doors)
- Matt black paint (for floors and walls)
- Matt white paint (for base coats)

Expenses are to be claimed through the normal SLT process of completing a form and submitting receipts to the SLT Paymaster. Mostly these expenses can be paid directly into a bank account, however in some cases of large payments (>£500) the monies can be paid in advance with sign-off from General Council.

Yearly Plan

The General Theatre Manager is an elected member of the South London Theatre Company General Council. At the South London Theatre AGM a member vote is taken to elect new members to the council. It is from this night that the new GTM takes over the role and is now responsible for the next year.

As the outgoing GTM you will be required to spend some time in handover so that the newly incumbent GTM is prepared for the year ahead. Part of this will be to handover the document pack, working through any changes that have been implemented in the previous year. Usually this handover period is short as the new GTM should be an existing member who has already spent a lot of time working on productions.

The SLT General Council year normally runs from May to May (AGM to AGM). During this time there are regular items that the GTM needs to attend and/or work towards.

Monthly

- General Council meetings. Usually held on the second Monday of the month (in between shows).
- Production Get-In & Get-Out. Every two weeks SLT puts on a new production. The GTM will need to check the set, access and seating for safety.
- Communication with Building Manager. Although this is more a weekly line of communication, the GTM must appraise the Building Manager of works and changes happening as part of a show. This is to ensure that there are no clashes with any BPT hires.
- Supplies and maintenance.
- General tidiness.

Six Monthly

- Season Announcement. The Theatre Committee will read and put together the new SLT season. The GTM should be consulted regarding complex sets or technical requirements during this process. The GTM must contact each new director regardless to confirm these requirements. Suggested questions are:
 - What is your proposed seating layout? End-on, traverse, thrust, in-the-round, other.
 - Do you have a complex set in mind (specifically in regards to construction)
 - Will any parts of the set be at height? How will this be accessed by cast and made safe against slips or trips?
 - Are there any technical manoeuvres in the performance that need to be risk assessed, e.g. fight scenes, 'flying', falling, hanging, etc.
 - Do you have a large cast that will be required to be backstage most of the time?

- Does your set have a large amount of props? Any dangerous props, e.g. guns, swords, etc.
- Lots of costumes that need to be backstage for quick changes?
- Do you have a band?
- Maintenance. There is a standing maintenance week scheduled for the end of August each year. This is very important as it allows a complete strip and check of the lighting grid and sound system. However, there is often space during December (Christmas break) for a small window of maintenance as well.

Annual

- Maintenance. The annual August maintenance slot must be used as it is the only guaranteed time to check all equipment. PAT Testing. The GTM must ensure that all electrical equipment is PAT tested (this can be undertaken by an external qualified contractor):
 - Computers and monitors.
 - All sound equipment; amps, speakers, mixers, etc.
 - All lighting. The entire grid must be de-rigged and PAT-tested.
 - Tools.
- Review of Health & Safety policies, procedures and risk assessments.
- Re-election / Hand-over.

Cycle of an SLT Show

This section is a recommended schedule for how a SLT production should generally run during run-up and production weeks.

Pre-Production

In advance of the get-in, the GTM will have discussed the show's requirements with the Director and/or Production Designer. In some cases it may be that additional materials and/or construction will need to have taken place. In these cases, the GTM will have organised in advance with the show production team for this to have taken place.

Run-Up Week

A Director is ultimately in charge of how their production run-up week is scheduled, however, here is a recommended schedule that works well for most shows:

- Sunday - Get-In - 12noon until 7pm.
 - Advise against a cast rehearsal as it is often a long and late day.
 - **GTM to check on seating and general set construction.**
- Monday - Cast rehearsal on set.
- Tuesday
 - Lighting rigging, additional set construction, other tech.
 - **GTM to assist with tech.**
- Wednesday
 - Technical rehearsal with cast and all backstage crew.
 - Cue to cue including set-changes.
- Thursday
 - Additional set-construction and tech.
 - Cast and crew rehearse difficult scenes.
- Friday - Full rehearsal with cast, crew and tech.
- Sunday - 12noon.
 - Dress rehearsals and photography of show.
 - **GTM to perform final checks of auditorium, backstage and set.**
- Monday - Final Dress Rehearsal.
- Tuesday-Saturday - Show!
- Sunday - 10am. Get-out.

Equipment

South London Theatre is fortunate to have a large supply of equipment for use in the production of shows. The GTM must ensure, where possible, that this equipment is in good condition for use. Some of the below is duplicated in the Operators Manual.

All equipment if made of wood or fabric should be flambarded to ensure fire retardancy.

Lighting

- Lighting Rig
 - The lighting-rig itself is powered via various **3-phase Commando Sockets** in the auditorium.
 - All fixtures and items attached to the rig **must be secured with a safety-chain.**
- Dimmer Packs - **4-channel DMX** controlled dimmer packs. The packs are wired to **ABB 16A** connectors, which in turn are balanced across the 3-phase system in the theatre.
- Standard Fixtures - normal lights that have an incandescent or halogen bulb in them. These bulbs can blow and need to be replaced. The standard fixtures use **female IEC-C15** for power. These are plugged into dimmer packs for control.
- LED Fixtures - these are self-contained fixtures that take both power and DMX control. SLT adapts all small fixture power to **IEC-C15** connectors for ease of running extension cables. **LED fixture must NEVER be plugged into a dimmer pack.**
- DMX splitter - below the operators desk there is a DMX splitter allowing the rig to not have to be daisy-chained all the way round.
- Lighting desk - SLT uses a Zero-88 FLX-S24 desk. <https://zero88.com/control/flxs>

Sound & Vision

- Amplifiers - The amplifiers are mounted in the technical cupboard off the gallery.
- Speakers - SLT uses passive speakers powered by the amps. There are four speakers, one in each corner of the auditorium.
- Mixing desk - A **Yamaha MG166c** mixing desk is used for controlling sound levels. The group output is used to power the four passive speakers, with optional aux channels for more complex sound setups.
- Audio Interface - A **TASCAM US-16x08** audio interface is connected to the Operator Computer via USB. This needs to be switched on for sound to be sent from the pc to the system. **NOTE. The interface used the ASIO protocol.**
- Operator Computer - Windows desktop pc for running sound and projections.
- Projector - short-throw (0.5:1) HD projector with ceiling mount.
- Various microphones & stands - mostly XLR.
- Hearing-Loop - located under the Operator Computer.

Specials

- Fog Machine - currently in the small props room.
- Hazer - tbc.
- Winch
- Harness - body harness for suspending someone.

Staging

- Flats - a selection of metric flats stored in the flat-bay. SLT flats are as standard 3000mm in height and variously, 300mm, 600mm, 900mm, 1200mm and 1500mm in width.
- Blocks - large selection of blocks, some imperial, some metric.
- Treads
 - Small steps (1-2)
 - Large steps (5-6)
 - Full staircase (7+)
- Doors & door frames - a selection of doors and door frames. The frames fit inside special door-flats and clip into place.
- Screens - at least two clean-fabric-sprung screens for projections where useful.

Ladders & Towers

- Scaffold Tower
 - Stored in a cubby-hole backstage.
 - This the best, and safest, way to reach the lighting rig.
 - Erecting the scaffold tower must be done correctly:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ttsQoUZqm4o>.
 - **NEVER climb the outside of the tower.**
- Ladders

Curtains & Carpets

- Blackout curtains - a selection of blackout curtains stored in a wheeled chest. Various widths.
- Carpets & Lino - a selection of carpets and lino is rolled up tight and stored above the flat bay.

Tools

The SLT tool cupboard has a decent selection of hand and power-tools for use. It also stores some members personal tools as this is where they are used the most. However, the tools that belong to SLT are always on the top two shelves. **All power-tools are dangerous and should only be used if trained and if someone else is nearby.**

- Chop Saw - located at the bottom the tool-cupboard. Stand for it sits on top of the cupboard.
- Circular Hand Saw - located in box on top of tool-cupboard.
- Pillar Drill - located on top of the tool-cupboard.
- Table Saw - dismantled and lives above the doors in the flat bay.

Maintenance

In conjunction with Theatre Committee, there are two windows each year set aside for maintenance. These dates may change based on the scheduled season, but normally they are:

- late August, usually the week after Fest Norwood
- late December, in the Christmas break

During these windows, general maintenance to the theatre and backstage are to be undertaken. These include:

- Complete derig and check of all bolts and nuts. This includes the rig itself as well as lighting fixtures, dimmer packs, etc.
- Checking and testing of all power, dmx and sound cables.
- All seating rostra and seats to be checked for loose bolts & nuts, wear to fabric, etc.
- Check flooring for nails, loose board.
- Check of ladders and scaffold tower.
- Check flats, blocks, doors and frames.
- Check all tools.
- Clean and tidy backstage. Full sweep and vacuum.
- Throw out old paint, materials, etc. may need to order a skip.

It is also a good time to replace any faulty items and update the equipment list

Appendix A - List of Suppliers

BJ Hardware - Theatrical Chandlers. Black paint and theatre specific fixings.

<http://www.bjhardware.com/>

Flints Theatrical Chandlers - Theatrical Chandlers. Have everything, but are expensive.

<https://www.flints.co.uk/content/>

Selhurst Timber - Builders merchant. Good price, will do Saturday morning delivery.

<http://www.selhursttimber.com/selhursttimberorpington/>

Travis Perkins - Builders merchant. Based in West Norwood. Medium-expensive. Open Saturday for emergencies. Not open Sunday.

B&Q West Norwood - Good for quick emergency items. Expensive for timber.

Screwfix Direct - Good, cheap, next-day delivery. <https://www.screwfix.com/>

Castors Online - Castors and wheels. <https://www.castors-online.co.uk/>

Scaffolding Direct - <https://www.scaffolding-direct.co.uk/>

Unistrut and Channel - <https://directchannel.uk.com/unistrut-type-channel-and-accessories>

Thomann - Lighting and Sound. <http://thomann.de/gb/index.html>

Appendix B - Logins

- Operator Computer
 - SLT-Tech - PWD: showrunner
 - admin - PWD: slt!1967