STAGE MANAGEMENT & TECHNOLOGY

An Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis

by

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ABSTRACT

Stage Management and Technology (May 2013)

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Stage managers provide centralized communication, organization, and task coordination for all individuals in the production team. This study explores the advantages and disadvantages of different and new forms of technology implemented into various facets of theatrical production and the provisions of the stage manager outlined above. Technology will be compared to traditional methods to determine the differences in the efficiency of communication and documentation.

The purpose of this study is to determine if universal, user-friendly technologies are capable of achieving the desired tasks of the stage manager by reaching multiple points of reference. Three different forms of technology are utilized as tools to assess their efficiency: social networking, VirtualCallboard, and the iPad. These tools are employed to analyze communication across the production team. The intention is to eliminate the need for paper documentation and duplication while increasing the effectiveness of communication.

These findings will determine which segments and systems of the research are universally applicable. They will also suggest which technologies are a practical approach for assisting with the tasks and responsibilities of the stage manager. Analysis of this research will establish if these sources provide a reasonable advantage in a theatrical setting and if they are dependable enough to use in place of traditional methods.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A stage manager's tasks vary between community, academic, and professional theatre, although the foundation remains the same. This foundation includes methods of organization, documentation, and communication that are reliable and thus universal requirements throughout the field of theatre. In brief, a stage manager "is responsible for making the entire production run smoothly, on stage and backstage, in pre-rehearsal, rehearsal, performance, and post performance phases" (Stern, 1).

The stage manager is in charge of scheduling meetings and rehearsals and keeping these events in order. He or she is also an authority figure and problem solver for all members of the cast and at times, the design team; acting as the director's second in command. During rehearsal and meetings a stage manager is to…

> assist in getting the most productive results out of the time allotted […]. To do this well, it is important to maintain a clear understanding of the director's function and a working relationship that will help his or her aims to be carried out smoothly (Stern, 98).

This requires the stage manager to be a master communicator. Each piece of information, whether it is a costume fitting, a change in design, or a line change, must be passed through the stage manager and then distributed by the stage manager to those who need to be notified.

During rehearsal, the stage manager's main concerns are attendance, notes for designers and tracking the blocking, or movements on stage. In performance, it is the stage manager's duty to call cues, and if the director is not present to maintain the "director's artistic intent," by giving

notes to the actors (Stern, 199). These processes place the stage manager as an authority figure and the executive decision maker throughout much of the process.

Two of the primary tools a stage manager uses in traditional productions include the callboard and prompt book. The callboard is a bulletin board usually located next to the stage door so that members of the production can see it on a daily basis. The callboard is for the stage manager to post reports, sign-in sheets, and any announcements that those involved need to be aware of. It is the responsibility of the stage manager to keep this updated and the responsibility of those involved in the production to check for updates. Depending on the system of the respective theatre, this information is usually e-mailed out in addition to being posted in hardcopy form. The prompt book, often known as the bible of the show, is a crucial tool. It contains all the information a stage manager, substitute, or assistant would need to know in hardcopy form. Actors Equity Association defines it as, "the accurate playing text and stage business, together with such cue sheets, plots, daily records, etc. as are necessary for the actual technical and artistic operation of the production" (Kelly, 206). The prompt book is constantly changing and needs to be current in every area. It is also a rule of thumb that this book is kept legible and clear so others can interpret and run the show seamlessly and effectively should the stage manager be absent.

The role of the stage manager, which includes daily tasks and the required tools, is nearly universal, independent of the associations of the theatre or particular unions. Thus, templates and habits are formed and continued throughout a stage manager's career. Although these habits and templates are usually reliable and useful, the broader question becomes whether or not stage

managers are using the easiest methods possible to accomplish the tasks listed above. Technology is virtually unexplored in most contexts of theatre. In this study, it is my goal to explore the use of technology in stage management from pre-production to post-production. I will investigate technologies such as VirtualCallboard, the iPad, with a variety of applications, and social networking.

My intent is to find the most effective and efficient form of streamlining communication and documentation where technology and stage management are concerned. This includes creating, editing, receiving and distributing documents, as well as communicating with all members of the production. This research is confined to my work done in community and academic theatre. Although much information may overlap with professional theatre and union restrictions it is not my expertise at this time. Any assumptions I make about professional theatres are confined to interviews, research of the equity rules and short-term internships done in professional theatre.

This research was applied in the spring of 2012, during Texas A&M University's Department of Performance Studies production of *Prelude to a Kiss* by Craig Lucas. The processes and goals outlined in this thesis were implemented fully with the cast, crew and production team, which included faculty members, staff, and students of Texas A&M University. Applications and software downloaded and used on the iPad were found through online stage management forums on various topics and through friends and colleague's recommendations.   The results during the production process were outlined in the format of a day–to-day research summary on each rehearsal report, as discussed later, and a weekly summary paper that was submitted to my

faculty advisor. This path of in-production implementation was taken because it allowed for real-time experience and honest feedback about the uses of technology.

CHAPTER II

PRE-PRODUCTION

Role of the stage manager in pre-production

In pre-production, before rehearsals, a stage manager makes schedules, plots, documents, and prepares for challenges that might occur during the production process. Establishing paperwork before the rehearsal process begins will allow the stage manager to quickly document and distribute information or changes. This chapter will focus on paperwork in the pre-production phase.

Creating the necessary paperwork begins with reading the script. From the script the stage manager proceeds to make plots, a running list with detailed notes (usually a spreadsheet) about various items that need to track. Plots usually are needed for costumes, properties, scenery, actor's entrances and exits, and set changes. In some cases, the designers will provide a preliminary prop, sound, light, costume, and any additional needed plots. In such a case, the stage manager merely needs to obtain these documents and edit them for any additional information. The documents that the designer might provide do not always fit the needs of the stage manager and may need to be restructured. What may be an effective way of documenting or tracking props on a plot for one show may not be a useful format for another. Unless special exceptions for a person or specific show are made, the stage manager is allowed to format documents to his or her preference throughout the production. A sample prop plot is available in the appendix A-1.

Pre-production is a time to meet with the production team in a production meeting and address concepts or designs, depending on what stage of the process the production team is in (discussed more in chapter V). In these meetings, the stage manager is required to take and distribute notes in the form of a production meeting report. Report distribution, specific to production meetings, is usually only applicable to academic and community theatre. Report templates for rehearsal and performances should also be made during the pre-production time. Reports contain detailed information to refer back to at any point in the production process. A sample of a rehearsal report and a production meeting report are provided in appendix A-2 and A-3; the performance report is referenced in chapter III. For the purposes, of this research a section was included at the bottom of each report with the heading "Research Summary." This section was used to pose questions, problems, or comments encountered through the use of technology during each rehearsal.

Depending on how a stage manager prefers to make blocking notations and cue marks in his or her script, formatting of the script must occur before rehearsals to make this job easier. It is my preference to reduce the script to provide room for notes in the margins. Scanning this into the computer in different file types and document sizes ensures that the format holds true depending on the device or application being used. This also makes for easy distribution of the script to the production team, out of town actors, or designers who may not have access to a hardcopy. Formatting the script electronically can also be an easier and cleaner way to make line cuts before the rehearsal process on a Word document or PDF editor rather than scanning in a hand-edited script.

Pre-production is the time to collect design documents, whether in hardcopy or electronic format. These documents include ground plans, costume renderings, dramaturgy packets, and preliminary sound, lighting and special effects plots if not already made by the stage manager.

Rehearsal schedules differ with each production regardless of academic, professional, or community theatre. The director will sometimes arrange the schedule and require the stage manager to check and distribute. If the stage manager creates the rehearsal schedule, it is his or her job to coordinate who will be needed at that rehearsal, what scenes or pages will be rehearsed, and the block of time needed for these tasks. Some theatres coordinate this through a daily call, in which all the actors required to be present, "called actors," are listed. A daily call is not required for all types of productions and can sometimes be inconvenient since it only refers to the schedule of the following rehearsal day. A schedule is required for every production whether in an impromptu, calendar, or daily call format.

Lastly, the stage manager makes a master contact sheet (see appendix A-4). A sign-in sheet should also be created, which is a list of actor's names and a place for them to initial upon arrival to rehearsal. This allows for the stage manager to check who has arrived, who has not, or who was absent from rehearsal. An emergency contact/allergy sheet for each actor and production member involved in the performance process, this includes: backstage crew, board operators, and wardrobe crew. This policy varies with each theatre, but is a crucial safety protocol. Depending on the number of actors in a production, a flow chart is also helpful. A flow chart notes what actors are on stage on what page number so the stage manager knows who to call for scheduled rehearsals (see in appendix A-5).

Security

It is an understood rule in theatre that the prompt book is private property and should not be referenced by those outside of the stage management team unless given permission. A passcode can be set-up on the iPad to ensure this security and privacy.

Green initiative

A paperless production was implemented in conjunction with this research as a side effect to the total use of technology. The stage manager (myself) did not print any hardcopy documents and only referenced documents on an electronic device, including the script. This sets the standard of a paperless production. These standards did not eliminate a lot of paper usage in the full spectrum of the production thus the approach was focused individually. As an article about green practices in the university stated, "Being 'greener' does not always require massive alterations to operations or enormous financial and human resources" (Brunner, 22). Even though a paperless production for the stage manager was a small change to daily processes, its overall goal was for a greener environment and highlighted use of other unexplored processes such as technology.

Inevitably, research includes trial and error. Thus, some new processes explored did contain problems or minor setbacks. These problems and setbacks do not change the fact that a stage manager still needs to be able to complete tasks, answer questions, and run rehearsals and performances regardless of what may arise. Although my goal was to have a paperless production, this only applied to my tasks and myself. The assistant stage manager was required to have a full, up-to-date, hardcopy prompt book in case of any emergencies or system crashes. The documentation she printed and had in a traditional bound format was one that mirrored the

iPad documentation. This was only to be used if the form of technology needed to perform a certain task was unavailable and adequate troubleshooting time during the rehearsal or performance was unavailable.

iPad set-up

The iPad that was chosen to conduct this research was the iPad 2, 16GB, wifi capable device for $399.00. For budgetary and practical reasons I warranted that it would not be necessary to include 3G since this added extra costs and the space I primarily worked in was a wifi dead zone. The memory space was not a concern since only applications and documents would be stored on the iPad and the possibility of using the memory to its capacity was improbable. At the time the iPad 2 was the current, most up-to-date model available.

After each document or template listed above has been created electronically, there are several options for importing onto the iPad.

iCloud

To use iCloud the user uploads documents onto a remote server through an icloud.com account. You can then add documents to the iPad applications of Pages, Numbers, or Keynote when connected to the Internet by merely pushing the plus sign at the top right corner of the respective iPad application. This can be problematic if you do not have access to the Internet, and theatres are usually internet dead zones.

Dropbox

If internet access is not a problem, then a good central location to keep all the documents listed above is a Dropbox account. This can become over-crowded and problematic when sharing with the design team. It however, is a good central location to store files that are universally relevant to the production team and can be referenced from any device that is connected to the Internet. At the time of this research, the iPad did not support uploading documents directly to a Dropbox account from the Pages application.   Viewing them is possible through the Dropbox application; editing is not an option once the document is visible on the iPad, unless you open it in another application. Unfortunately, once edited it must be uploaded through a different application into Dropbox. In other words, the updated document cannot be placed back into Dropbox via the iPad.

iTunes

Regardless of the purpose for which you are using the iPad it is good practice to have it backed-up and registered to your iTunes account. Once this is done, you can connect your iPad to a computer and import documents by application. This connection can also be established without a hardwire connection if you are connected to an internet network and in range of the computer. Although convenient, I found it to be undependable because the connection would not always download all the needed files. However, being able to select the file and which specific application(s) you wish to import it to is helpful. Importing through iTunes also provides a list of documents that are already in the application, making it easy to delete or see files already on the device. This is demonstrated in the screen capture in Figure 1 below.
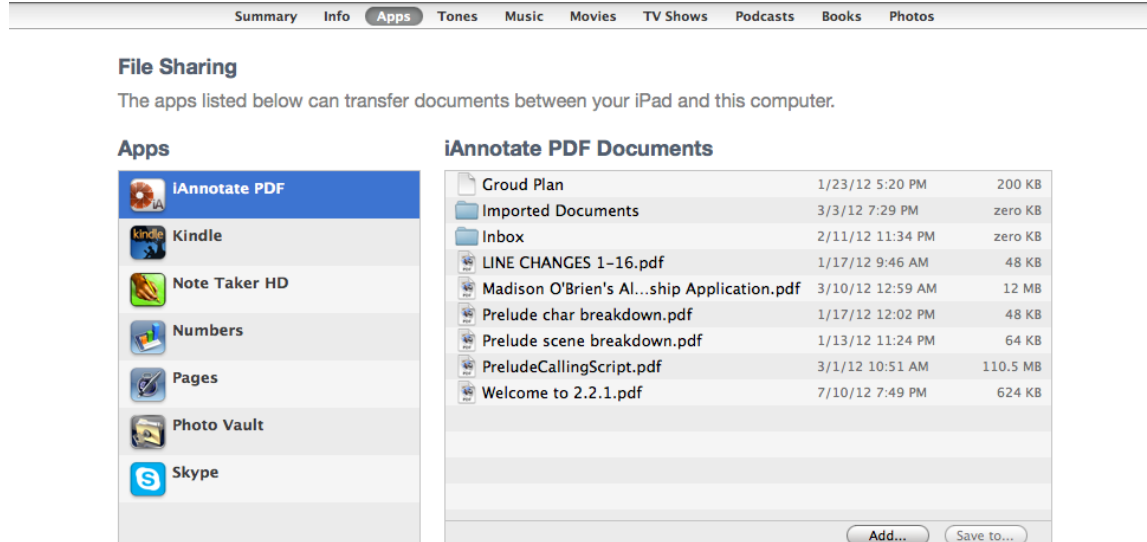
Figure 1. Importing Documents through iTunes

I created most of my documents using Word for word processing and Excel for spreadsheets on my MacBook. However, I also have access to Pages and Numbers, the equivalent Apple programs. Because I am more familiar with Word and Excel, I preferred to use this software to create templates and save them as such. When saving the files they need not be saved in a specific file format if you choose to import them from Word to Pages and Excel to Numbers respectively. However, you cannot import files from Excel to Pages or Word to Numbers. This did not pose a problem with document importation.

Regardless of what kind of importation you choose the document must be the most pertinent on the device or computer. This problem will be addressed further in chapter III. All importation options referenced above are available for download free of charge.

It is best to import your script or PDF documents into many different types of PDF readers in order to analyze which is easiest and works best for you. The two applications I used were iAnnotate and Note Taker HD, although the options are endless for PDF readers on the iPad.

iAnnotate (free version)

This application was not user friendly in its editing and organization. It was difficult to find imported documents and then to edit them in ways that are necessary and understandable. Another downfall is that the script and any other PDF documents for this application must be imported through iTunes and sometimes this would only import the first portion of the script and not the full file due to a defective application download.

Note Taker HD ($4.99)

Although not as confusing as iAnnotate, Note Taker HD was not a user-friendly PDF reader or note taking application. This application had a notepad that could be written on with a legal pad background using either a finger, stylus, or touch screen keyboard. I used this mainly for note taking by stylus. It allows you to write with your stylus on the script in PDF file format. Using the stylus can be easier and clearer than writing with a finger however it does not provide a drastic improvement to writing clearly and specifically on a document. It is not effective and neat enough to use for blocking notations. With more exploration this application could be the better choice of the PDF readers used. This application was effective in impromptu notes, where sloppiness did not matter and speed was crucial.

Kindle and iBook (free & pre-downloaded)

Both Kindle and iBook are traditional e-readers and have the ability to import PDF documents. These applications were not made for editing documents, but they are good for quick reference. Importing documents to these e-reader applications also has to be done over iTunes or for Kindle over amazon.com or iTunes. A document that is attached to an e-mail can be opened and saved in iBook from an iPad or iPhone, but an internet connection is required.

Showtool SM ($4.99)

This application is used for timing and for tracking props via a checklist. It does not need to be set-up before rehearsals begins. It was not helpful to me in the pre-production stage since it operated more as an impromptu checklist. Test entries revealed that the information added to one tab was copied on the "Marks," "Checklist," and "Props" tabs. This entry process made it confusing to determine the difference or use of different lists within the application.

Address Book (pre-downloaded)

In addition to making a contact list in an Excel spreadsheet for distribution, all contact information should be entered into the Address Book application that comes pre-downloaded onto the iPad. An e-mail address must also be set-up through the device's Mail application. Theoretically you should be able to e-mail those group contacts via the iPad's Mail application. Unfortunately, this process is not bug free when updating contacts from computer to iPad and vice-versa. Changes or additions to contacts from any device should update automatically through iCloud. If this process worked as intended it is the best way to send out e-mails to members of the production team from a portable device provided an internet connection is

available. These malfunctions were present during the production process of *Prelude to a Kiss* but were eliminated with future experimentation.

The software bugs experienced with Address Book during the production of *Prelude to a Kiss* led me to use a simpler method that I have used in the past, a Gmail account. Processes are virtually identical in that you import contacts (usually only names and e-mail addresses are needed since it will not be used for reference) and create groups. For this production, groups were based on distribution patterns of who needed to receive the same documents. For example, groups were labeled: production team, cast and crew. The use of this system added a step to the process since these groups could only be accessed through a computer and not the Mail application on the iPad. Ultimately, because this process was traditional it did not add any extra time or extreme measures.

AutoCad WS (free)

AutoCad WS is an application that makes it possible to view groundplans and scenic design plans in the document format they were designed in. First one needs to set up a free account with AutoCad WS this allows you to access and upload files on autocadws.com. Like iCloud, for example, you can sync uploaded documents through wifi from your computer to iPad. A perk is that it is compatible with DWG, PDF, DXF, PNG, CTB, SHX, TTF, JPG, and BMP files. This application allows you some editing capabilities such as text boxes, lines or photo insertion, but is usually unnecessary since it is mainly used as a reference point. Once the application is tied to an account you merely have to upload the file to the website and sync to be able to reference it on the iPad.

VirtualCallboard

The subscription purchased for the purposes of this research was the VirtualCallboard Basic. It

has the capability to manage two simultaneous projects (shows) at once and archive documents.

The cost of this program was $29.00 a month and is paid on a monthly basis.

Setting up VirtualCallboard takes commitment and time. Importing documents that have already

been created is not an option therefore most must be created from scratch using the templates

provided in VirtualCallboard. This applies to contact sheets, reports, and schedules specifically.

For example, it is impractical to only enter individual e-mail addresses and not also fill in their

role, access clearance, and phone number. Thus, if you have already put in time in creating other

documents, like a master contact sheet, this process seems long and time consuming. When all

the information is entered the continuation of production tasks is relatively simple once one

learns the system. Like any program, a knowledge of the structure and organization of the site is

helpful in managing it; one must learn the ropes of this program and how best to use it to your

advantage and needs.

As stated above, each individual contact must be entered, with title, contact information and

editing abilities/access. These editing abilities allow the stage manager (or whoever is

administrator) to control who can upload to what specific locations on the site. This can come in

handy when seeking to moderate ongoing discussions, but can also be a hassle. If the stage

manager is not the administrator of the VirtualCallboard account it can pose a problem in

managing multiple shows, inputting data, or editing data depending on the amount of access the stage manager is given.

Additionally, a report template for each respective type of report must be created. The stage manager again chooses who views/receives these reports and can label and designate specific fields for each template (i.e. props, costumes, etcetera). Once these templates have been created, problems with distribution were encountered and were resolved by creating a "report editor." A "report editor" is created by adding the contact information of the stage manager or administrator to each template. This then allows each report to have a source and editor. This took time and troubleshooting to identify the problem and was not found on any help websites on the date of occurrence.

The last thing to be set-up is the calendar. After creating a calendar for the show, each event, regardless if it is a rehearsal or a meeting, must be created under the header "daily call." I found this header to be quite deceptive and at times inaccurate. If one chooses to include the actors in the use of VirtualCallboard this opens up the options for methods of calling actors. I did not choose to do so. Fittings can also be created under the "Fittings" header and are not added to the calendar tab or a calendar. You can create several calendars for each show and monitor access to each, but viewing the events on a completed calendar was a step-by-step process of selecting the right calendar and viewing events that would sporadically appear. Since multiple types of calendars have to be made for each production it is difficult to make sure each event was visible to the right people. Types of calendars include not only the rehearsal calendar, but also a production calendar, that lists when design submissions or production deadlines are such as

photo calls, tech rehearsals, etcetera. In the end, I found rather than setting up multiple calendars in VirtualCallboard it was easier to upload a Word document calendar to the "File Sharing" header than to have an undependable source for events.

Conclusion

The procedure of establishing and creating templates in the pre-production process is one that must be completed regardless of the use of technology. Completing and examining this process thoroughly within the boundaries of technology made the production process run more smoothly and be more effective and efficient. Had this preparation process not been completed before the beginning of rehearsal, documentation, distribution and communication would have been unorganized and in all probability would have resulted in the removal of technology from the process. Anticipation and preparation are always key to a smooth process for any stage manager.

CHAPTER III

AUDITIONS AND CALLBACKS

Role of the stage manager in auditions

A stage manager's participation in auditions varies by type of theatre; in some cases the stage

manager is not hired before the production is cast. In professional theatre it is unusual to have a

stage manager contracted before the actors for a specific production or even the season.

Community theatres have the ability to mold their own processes, which vary greatly. In

community and academic theatre should the stage manager be present, several tasks are

universal. The audition sign-up sheet must be posted on the callboard and contains fields for the

audtionee's name, contact information, and the time that they wish to audition. Additionally, the

requirements for the audition are posted, such as: what to bring (i.e. head shot and/or a resume),

monologue type and length, and type of dress.

At the audition a stage manger either sits outside the room to check people in and gather

paperwork, or sits inside the room with the director keeping time and managing paperwork. This

all depends on the company, the production, and the director's preferences. For the production of

Prelude to a Kiss I sat inside the room introduced actors, kept time, and sorted headshots and

resumes for the director. Meanwhile, the assistant stage manager checked-in people outside the

room to maintain privacy and verify that the next auditionee was ready and present when called.

Callbacks are systematically the same as auditions except for the addition of a few more people

in the room and the usual performance of selected scenes or sides rather than monologues. The

stage manager must also plan to print sides, a portion of a scene, that the director would like to

see each actor perform. Distributing sides to each actor and making announcements to

auditionees of what characters are called next are all tasks related to callbacks.

Casting choices made from auditions or callbacks by the director are usually posted on the

callboard by the stage manager,. Actors are then contacted via e-mail to confirm their role in the

specific production. Those who did not receive a role are not usually contacted, in my limited

experience. After actors are cast they should receive all of the vital information before the first

rehearsal, including a script, contact sheet, emergency contact/allergy sheet (to fill out and

return), and if available, costume plots or other reference material.

Audition form

During auditions it is typical to have an audition form for each auditionee to fill out. This form

should include name, contact information, size, ethnicity, description (i.e. brown hair), allergies,

availability for rehearsals and performances, and any other information that could be vital to the

decision-making process/casting. During *Prelude* auditions, these forms were filled out and

handed to the director with the actor's headshot and resume. After the selection process was

complete, the documents were returned to me for archiving and retrieval of contact information.

Although this idea or solution was not used in *Prelude* auditions, it would be useful to have the

audtionees fill out and access the forms online. This process could then include posting a link on

the company/school's website or social networking page with the time slots so the actors can

schedule their audition. Moreover they can fill out and submit the paperwork prior to the

audition. However, this process would need to be made secure to protect actors' information and anonymity. Another solution would be to e-mail these forms out to all those who sign-up via the traditional callboard method and request to receive back in an e-mail from the actors to confirm audition slots and times. The possibility of both of these systems individually or even joined, as an automated system is plausible.

An automated system that you can schedule an appointment securely, submit documents and sends a confirmation e-mail would be ideal. Submitting documents could be done like an educational management site such as turnitin.com or Blackboard Vista which allows you to upload homework. However, this would pose problems if the director needed hardcopies during the audition.

A director's need for hardcopies during the audition depends entirely on his or her habits/preferences. While some directors like to reference headshots to remember people or sort documents into a stack for later decision-making, others like to only focus on the audition and not touch any paperwork pertaining to the auditionee. Still others would prefer to have typed out copies printed for their reference and sorting habits to ensure clarity. An additional option would be to import pictures of the documents into the iPad and sort these pictures in albums by desired subject. This would be very time consuming. Thus, there is no solution that is easier and as fast as hardcopies being provided for the director.

A poll of three directors (faculty members) in the Texas A&M University Department of Performance Studies stated that although they are willing to try technological solutions each

operate on a "pile" system. That is they sort the papers into piles pertaining to yes or no,

callback, characters, etcetera. Each director stated that they liked taking notes on the paperwork

from each actor and referencing them during callbacks to refresh their memory. Although

making notes is an option with just about any application, uploading would be another step in the

process that adds to the confusion of sorting and importation. The technology that one director

suggested would need to contain the following:

> (That all have been) submitted ahead of time and that I, or the assistant director or
> stage manager, has sorted them into character piles, conflict piles, skills piles,
> previous experience piles, etc. From there it would be easy to bring up each
> person's documents as they come into audition and I can make a note on the
> computer about whether or not to call them back (Guerin, 2).

Security would be an added and difficult step to the options listed above. In all of my research I

did not find any applications, websites, or sections on VirtualCallboard to assist in this process

other than creating this application from scratch.

Sides

To date I have found no better solution than giving printed sides to each auditionee.

Unfortunately, this does not maintain a paperless production. The only foreseeable option is e-

mail distribution of the sides when time is available for the actors to print and review them.

Even so, a good stage manager should have extra sides printed for back-up and replacements. E-

mail distribution shifts the burden of printing to the actor and still requires the use of paper. The

best green initiative option is to print on previously used sides and recycle the paper.

The end goal of callbacks is to determine the right actor for the character. In my opinion, given

what I have seen in application capability and audition processes, I do not think it is worth

veering away from printed-paper. I distributed printed sides of each scene during *Prelude*

auditions. This holds true for system implementation of electronic access to auditionee files. The

time it would take to upload headshots and resumes into an application or program and then sort

them so that the director can eliminate with a push of a button is not worth the work that the

stage manager would have to put into sorting and categorizing. This categorization would also

take knowledge of the categories a director prefers and what bins he/she would like to sort

documents into.

I would still encourage scanning these documents into the computer after the audition process,

making them electronically accessible, but it would not be helpful to have them in an electronic

format during auditions. Most directors operate on a pile system, eliminating this could add

confusion and also remove any note-taking that might occur for each actor. Canceling out paper

for the sides would also create confusion if someone forgot their side, changes needed to be

made, and of course passing out an iPad to each auditionee is not a practical or a budget

conscious option. The only perk of technology to the audition/callback process would be to have

a computer generated/typed form to ensure clarity and readability.

Archival

It is best practice for stage managers to save audition forms, resumes, and headshots for all those

who auditioned for the duration of the production at minimum. Occasionally, one character

needs to be re-cast or additional ensemble members are needed, as was the case for *Prelude*. If

files are already in hardcopy format one can save them as printed documents or choose to scan

them into the computer and save them as an electronic file.

If you choose to scan these images into a document then they can easily be saved as photos or PDFs on an iPad and referenced immediately. This may also be a good reference tool in the future if you create a file for each actor and can merely update information if you are working with a company or specific actors repeatedly. Scanning also places them in a safe place where they cannot be lost (unless the documents are not backed-up).

Conclusion

This research began as *Prelude to a Kiss* auditions were occurring and the electronic solutions suggested could not be implemented or tested. With future director's approval, this process is one that I would like to implement and test in future productions given the right resources and systems. However, the conclusions drawn about extreme effort and impracticality still stand for the processes necessary to have a complete and successful audition process. The use of technology can sometimes create unnecessary work, as is the case in the audition process, but rarely holds true in the other segments of this research.

CHAPTER IV

REHEARSAL

Role of the stage manager in rehearsal

A stage manager's role is to be the organizer, coordinator, and ultimate authority figure (aside

from the director) in rehearsals. As such, the stage manager must be "an encyclopedia" for the

show and everything that concerns it (Apperson, 41). The best way to describe what a stage

manager does in rehearsal is to explain a rehearsal. Although this example is extreme and not

typical for every run/rehearsal it proves the crucial importance of the stage manager's role and

tasks. I use myself as the stage manager in this situation and although all of these events have

occurred in my stage management experience, not all of them occurred during *Prelude to a Kiss*.

Rehearsal starts at 6:00 p.m. so I arrive 5:15 p.m. I start by unlocking the theatre, turn on the

lights and do a test of the sound system, cueing up the first sound cue needed for the scenes we

intend to rehearse. I then make sure the information listed on the callboard is accurate and posted

for actor's to see. Since run crew is not yet hired it falls to the assistant stage manager and I

make sure the stage is swept and free of any hazards. Once the stage is clean, we set-up the

furniture for the first scene the director wishes to rehearse.

The prop closet or road box is then unlocked and props set onstage and backstage for the

rehearsing scene(s). As setting props and furniture is complete actors start to arrive and begin

preparing for the start of rehearsal. At five minutes until start time the assistant stage manager or

I check the callboard, where a sign-in sheet is posted. A list is tallied of all those who may be late. If an actor is late by even one minute it is the stage manager's responsibility to call them and find out their estimated time of arrival and reason for tardiness. The actor is noted as late on the report. Rehearsal begins promptly at the scheduled start time.

While the director is blocking the scene the stage manager must take blocking notes for each movement or significant action that changes the image on stage. Most stage managers develop their own shorthand or key that they use for noting this in the blocking script. It is also necessary for someone to be on book, which is following along in the script and notifying the actor if something has been skipped or reading an absent actors line. In some cases, the stage manager must also run sound if the cues that are being played are crucial to the action occurring on stage.

The first scene on the scheduled is blocked, and the director would like to move to a different scene that requires a set change and prop re-distribution. Since the rehearsal is already at fifty-five minutes of rehearsing the stage manager decides to give a five-minute break to re-set. During this break the stage manager and assistant stage manager work quickly to re-set the stage and props. The stage manager sets a timer so that the break period is exact and calls the actors back to stage at exactly five minutes. Break time can also be used to answer any questions anyone might have; answers to these questions should be available quickly from the prompt book. Once the break is over, the start and stop time of each break is entered into the report. Notes are taken during the scene work to note any costume, set, property or other changes that a designer or production team member must be aware of. These notes are placed in the report according to relevance, importance, and need for others to know the information.

It is the stage manager's responsibility barring emergencies or extenuating circumstances to end rehearsal at the scheduled time. Once the rehearsal has ended the actors may leave but the stage manager must close down the theatre, submit the report for the night, and update any documents from the night's work. The stage manager must then check the callboard and post any changes or updates that need to be posted. Before submitting the report it should be proof-read for clarity and any erroneous spelling or grammatical errors; clear and concise is the goal. It should also include rehearsal time, break times, set, costume, prop, lights, sound notes and any other special announcements. The report must be sent out to the production team for reference.

Traditionally, sending out a rehearsal report in the form of an e-mail is the only use for technology in rehearsal. In my training and beginning experience all, notes were taken on a pad and paper and then typed and e-mailed to the team afterwards. In some theatres, a report was handwritten and posted on the callboard and technology was not used.

The rehearsal station

It is helpful for the stage manager to remain in one place, partially to keep everything in reach and not to be a distraction to the director or actors by moving continually. For the purposes of this research a table was the best option. A table was most beneficial because it allowed me to reference multiple things at once and also was more compatible to viewing the iPad on a stand and typing with a wireless keyboard.

When it was necessary to walk around it was more convenient with an iPad because of its compactness in comparison to a traditional, hefty prompt book. The same holds true for the stand alone, hardcopy blocking script, which will be discussed later in the chapter. I do not think that technology required me to use more space in my station or limited me in my movement. The use of technology allowed more movement and made me more organized because all of my tools were consistently in the same place and within compact devices.

Throughout the rehearsal and dress rehearsal process of *Prelude to a Kiss* my table included a hardcopy blocking script, an iPad with wireless keyboard, and a stylus. If needed the iPad was connected to a charger, but its battery life made this unnecessary because it was charged every night.
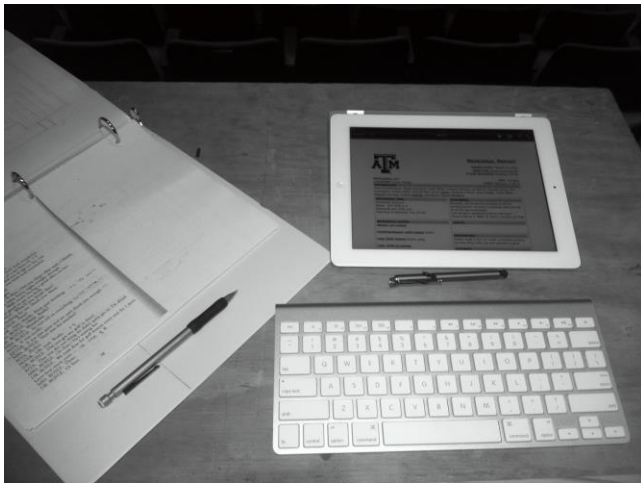
Figure 2. Rehearsal Station

The products featured in Figure 2 in addition to the iPad are an Apple Wireless Keyboard, Apple Smart Cover Case, and a stylus. This keyboard is operated through a Bluetooth connection and has a large range; it takes two AA batteries and just needs to be powered on and off ($69.00). I chose this wireless keyboard, mostly because of my trust in Apple products; it is seamless in its connection and was the best option with the iPad. The iPad case is an Apple Smart Cover Case that covers the front only, attaches magnetically to the side and folds in several places to easel the iPad ($39). The options for iPad cases are endless and completely based on personal preference. In the end, the most beneficial case was the case for the keyboard that opened and folded back to become an easel for the iPad. It is an Incase Origami Workstation ($32.00). This case was recommended by a friend and was perfect for calling the show and typing throughout the process (pictured in Figure 3).

Figure 3. Incase Origami Case/Performance Station

The stylus was the cheapest stylus I could find on amazon.com, in my research there was no need for an expensive stylus. All would have the same response time (virtually non-existent) and do not need to synced with the iPad ($10.00).

Like any electronic device you must ensure the sound to your iPad is turned off. Notifications will pop-up and might become a distraction. This is also a good policy to have because actors are required to have their electronic devices silenced as well. A self-reflective question that I continue to pose is if the use of the iPad during rehearsals was viewed as hypocritical since actors were not allowed to use their devices during rehearsal time. Although the work I was doing on the iPad was specifically related to the production this could have been seen as unfair or hypocritical. This question is addressed in chapter VIII.

The use of a passcode, mentioned in chapter II, is necessary when using the iPad in rehearsal because the station is in view and usually open to all of those in the rehearsal area. The ability to lock my station was a big perk of technology because it ensured that the only people referencing documents were those who I had personally given the passcode to. This also guaranteed that anyone who had a question was required to ask me and not look in an open prompt book and interpret the notes for themselves.

Sign-in

My use of technology excluded the use of a callboard at the rehearsal space, therefore sign-in was done by the stage manager electronically via the iPad. This added a personal element to the process requiring the actor or stage manager to approach each person in order to check-in. A

problem was encountered when an actor was present but not in the space or forgot to check-in. It was rare that this confusion caused a late start in rehearsal.

A benefit to this process was that it allowed the stage manager to come up with a key to log late or absent actors separate from rehearsal reports and retain the information for reference. For example, because initialing was not used the stage manager can note "L5" for "five minutes late" or "A" for "absent." Allowing the stage manager to see a combined tally of each actor's accrued tardiness or conflicts rather than reference back to each report. Although effective for the size of *Prelude to a Kiss* cast (20 members) I would not implement this system with a larger cast. This is impractical with a large cast, especially when added to the inevitable questions and notes taken during the pre-rehearsal time. It is also difficult for a stage manager to remain in one place and easily accessible prior to the start of rehearsals.

Reports

Rehearsal should begin with changing the date, time, and rehearsal number on the report. There is nothing more confusing then sending out a report that lists the same date, time and number as the previous rehearsal.

The biggest advantage to using an iPad during rehearsal is the ability to edit and finish the report during rehearsal. Traditionally, notes would be taken on paper and later transcribed into a report that would then be distributed; a very time consuming process. With the process of editing during rehearsal all you have to do is revise and distribute to complete the task. No distribution systems are seamless and several options are listed below.

Option 1

I usually saved the report on my iPad with the correct document name (i.e. Rehearsal Report 1)

and e-mailed it to myself via the iPad, once in range of wifi. I then saved the document to my

computer in both DOC and PDF formats. I then logged into my Gmail account, where I had

already created contact groups, include the PDF and distributed. When including the report, the

choice to attach as a file or cut and paste in the body of the e-mail must be made. Attaching a

PDF is a good policy to have since format is concrete and readability is universal. If you choose

to add a report in a DOC file you run into disruption of formatting as well as the ability of your

viewers to make additions or changes without your knowledge. I suggest including the PDF in

the body of the e-mail through cut and paste methods and attaching it if requested. DOC files can

be kept for your reference and need not be distributed. The use of report distribution in

VirtualCallboard will be discussed later in this chapter.

Option 2

This option was used towards the end of the rehearsal process when the process of using iCloud

was clearer. This option began with saving the document via the iPad and then syncing it (with

internet connection) with the iCloud account. I could then access all the documents in Pages,

Numbers, and Keynote via icloud.com and use the same process as described in option 1.

Option 3

This option would have been ideal had I not had any difficulties with seamless syncing in my

Address Book on the iPad. Theoretically, one should be able to update contacts and create

groups through Address Book and any changes sync seamlessly between computer and iPad when connected to the Internet. If this connection works in context all contacts are accurate and downloaded to the iPad ready to be used through the Mail application. The next step is to save the document in Pages or Numbers, select "Share and Print" and then "E-mail Spreadsheet" this will take you to the e-mail application in which you can select a group of people and successfully distribute. When choosing to share the document you have the option to send as Pages, PDF, or DOC file format. Like the other options it is only capable of distribution with internet connectivity. Although this option did not work during the production of *Prelude* I was able to implement this later in my research.

Option 4

If you are using a Dropbox account that is open access to all who need the report, uploading is also an option. However saving and transferring the report is still an issue because of the incompatibility of Pages to the Dropbox application. Uploading it from the files saved on the computer (the same process listed in Option 1) and syncing over the Internet to the device from the Dropbox account is easy. As this research was being written an application called CloudOn provided solutions for the problems encountered with Dropbox. CloudOn has the capability to access documents in your Dropbox or Mail application, open, distribute, save and edit the document through Word, Power Point, Excel and PDF processing systems. Should I use technology within a production again, this application paired with Dropbox will be a very nice addition to the device and vital in task completion.

Of course all of these options require Internet and not all worked successfully for me in the report saving, uploading, and distribution process of *Prelude*. If the unexpected drawbacks were worked out in each of these options, they are easier than transferring notes after a long night of rehearsals. I used option 2 fairly consistently throughout *Prelude to a Kiss* and it was moderately effective. Option 2 also worked seamlessly with the Gmail group contacts. In the future pairing CloudOn with the Address Book and Mail application might provide the most universal and compatible solution for importation, editing, saving and distribution of reports.

One important thing to note is that each report needs to be saved on the computer as a back-up regardless of the device or system you use. I do not think it is necessary to save each report as a document but merely as a PDF. If reports are used in the future it will be for reference not for editing.

VirtualCallboard also has an option for creating and distributing reports. This option was not used until late in the performance process because of technical issues previously described in chapter II. This report is a lot more straightforward and has less visual appeal than the template I have used throughout my career. Although this can be an advantage to some viewers because it eliminates unnecessary visual stimulus and only displays crucial information; it is not my preference. This opinion could have been predisposed due to the difficulties encountered with the template creation in VirtualCallboard. The document in Figure 4 is a VirtualCallboard performance report; the visual style is the same for each type of report generated.

Subject: Performance Report - 2/26/2012

Prelude to a Kiss

Performance Report

Submitted by: Madison O'Brien on Monday Feb 27, 2012 6:01 pm

Stage Manager:	Madison O'Brien	Date:		February 26, 2012
Space:	Forum			
House Count:	172		Report Number:	4

	Start	Total
Act 1:	2:07 pm	0:59
Intermission:	3:06 pm	0:15
Act 2:	3:21 pm	

Department Notes:

Actors Notes:	Front of House:
Peter-- check light for monologues next week (you were a little off), don't stutter so much in "dirtiest fantasy" was hard to understand, don't wrap the spoon, undress faster in Jamaica monologue, wait for lights to start your beach monologue. Exit faster at end of Act 1, don't put the phone to your ear unless you are ready to start the call (cue move), Rita-- don't cover your mouth when you talk, don't be so nice to waiter, don't say "thank you" only "please" Anna-- you suddenly got drunk at the end of the wedding, don't latch onto taylor quite so drastically,	Props: Sound: Makeup:
Scenic:	
Lighting:	
Costume:	
Taylor's belt loop in back is torn (not there anymore)	

This message was sent from at .
If it has reached you in error, please reply and inform the sender.

Figure 4: Performance Report

In my weekly summary I stated that the choice between reports, "at this point is merely a preference" (O'Brien, Week 6). The important thing is that a report with accurate information goes out; the format is irrelevant in most cases. The production team was asked in a survey

which report template, VirtualCallboard or my own, they preferred. The response was one hundred percent in favor of my format. In talking individually with a professor, he stated that he was more likely to read the reports on his phone because, "the info was plain text instead of an attached PDF. This allowed me (the interviewee) to receive any information or notes while I was out of the office and usually respond sooner" (Miller). As a result, reports were no longer attached but put in the body of e-mails and continued to be in the PDF format for as much universal readability as possible.

Another important factor in examining the useful implementation of technology in the rehearsal process is the timely distribution of rehearsal reports. Timely distribution is considered before the next rehearsal and preferably before the next business day begins. Although some do not read the report till a week later, others review it immediately after rehearsals; it is best to distribute the same business day as the rehearsal. In my opinion, the use of technology speeds up this process and makes it more effective and efficient.

Notes

Notes should be taken in addition to reports despite much of the information being similar in content and purpose. Reports are distributed to everyone and include information relevant to team members. Notes taken during rehearsal should not always be distributed to the production team, but merely be a reference tool or reminder for the stage manager. This includes pending discussions, items being saved for presentation at a production meeting, items that should be discussed privately, or personal tasks that should be done and only pertain to the stage manager. These notes are not taken on the report document but in a separate application or document.

During the rehearsal of *Prelude to a Kiss* I used the application Note Taker HD to take notes. I used this because it worked well with the stylus, did not take a loading time to open the application, and had a format/background of a legal pad. With this application I could attach several pages to make a string of notes for each rehearsal, allowing me to have the security of a pad and pen within the boundaries of an electronic device. This application was also useful because it had the ability to color code ink and erasing tasks. Color-coding became another way to organize tasks.

Another viable option would be the application Notes (pre-downloaded). This is also displayed as a legal pad and only uses typed texted from an attached keyboard or screen keyboard. I found its touch screen settings at times unresponsive and also had a loading time for the appearance of the touch screen keyboard. For example, sometimes I would have to click the screen several times for the curser or keyboard to appear. Trying to make a quick note and go back to blocking or the report can be inconvenient.

During the rehearsal I was already using Pages for the rehearsal report and could easily have switched documents and made another document for notes. However, I preferred having the report and notes in different applications for separation; merely a personal preference. No technical problems occurred while using two documents or switching between them within or outside of Pages.

The iPad is built for multitasking. Multitasking is a way to switch between applications by double clicking the home button, making switching between applications quick and easy. On the bottom of the screen a row will appear that can be scrolled through and the user can choose the application he or she wants to switch too. This is demonstrated by the screen capture in Figure 5.


Figure 5. Multitasking on the iPad

Some will ask if it is worth having another application open or if it would it be easier to have a pen and paper to take notes. In some cases and with some stage manager's preferences the answer would be yes. However, it is also another item that you would need to add to your station and lug around with you when walking around in rehearsal. In my opinion, I would rather use the iPad for multiple uses and have less clutter on my station than add another one-purpose item.

Blocking

The first two rehearsals I attempted to take blocking notation with Note Taker HD by writing directly on the script with a stylus. Next, I tried iAnnotate, creating individual textboxes and inserting blocking. Additionally, I tried inputting blocking into a Word document of the script on the computer by creating individual textboxes; this was also unsuccessful. Blocking using a stylus was unclear, messy, and did not make using shorthand possible or readable. Using text or textboxes often resulted in the description being too wordy and/or too vague for the movement that needed to be expressed. Using technology also renders a well-formed system of keys, abbreviations and symbols impossible for use. Methods such as symbols and keys, full text, and line markings were tried, and my system of blocking notations could not be changed enough to make technology a practical alternative. The goal of blocking is to describe the production movements accurately. My response to these processes during the production was that it "sacrificed a lot of needed detail" and "was unclear as to where the action specifically occurred" (O'Brien, Week 1). Each of these options proved unacceptable when making blocking notations.

As a result of these complications, the green initiative was sidelined in order to have a hardcopy blocking script. I returned to my use of short hand keys and notes in the margin of the script. No other notes were taken in the script other than blocking; all other rehearsal related documentation or notes were done on the iPad. This blocking script was by no means considered a prompt book.

An application discovered after the production of *Prelude to a Kiss* was StageWrite ($199.99). This application was made specifically for the purpose of stage blocking and was used in Broadway shows such as *The Producers* and *Wicked* (Hall, 82). After creating a production within the application to designate where the action takes place in the script (i.e. scene 1, act 2) a chart is added. A chart entails a diagram of the stage and any set pieces and actors within that chart. Set pieces can be pulled from StageWrite stock or created specifically for the production; colored shapes including names note the actors. To create a fluid movement charts can easily be,

> […] duplicated and the symbols for the performers rearranged to document their subsequent movements. By repeating these steps, a slideshow-like record of all entrances, exits, and movements of the performers (and scenery) is recorded (Hall, 82).

In a review of the application done by Delbert Hall, for *TD & T*, it is expressed that setting up each production is the hardest part of the application (82-85). It also states that, "Like any complex app, it takes a little practice to learn and get comfortable using. If you are like me, the more you use StageWrite, the more you like it" (Hall, 85). This application is something I would like to explore with future productions given the resources.

Plots

Plots that are updated during the rehearsal process via the iPad should only be edited through text and not format. Re-formatting or adding headers, columns, or rows becomes difficult and usually

ends with an incorrect, unclear format especially when the edit must be done quickly. When downloading to the iPad I would recommend having your format set and any additional changes be made and updated on the computer where accuracy can be ensured, as discussed in chapter II.

Schedules

Schedules in most cases are posted on the callboard, but since the Texas A&M callboard is not in close proximity to the theatre and any person in the building or on campus has access to viewing it, I chose not to post the schedule for security and anonymity purposes. This is something that I have chosen to do for each show I have stage managed in academia. In most cases, a schedule would be made in a document format and distributed. Due to the fact that *Prelude to a Kiss* schedule was made on a week-by-week basis and actors did not receive the rehearsal reports, the scheduling was sent out through the cast e-mail group. Therefore a complete rehearsal calendar was not distributed. As discussed in chapter I, VirtualCallboard had issues that could not be resolved during the process, so this form of scheduling was not a viable option and not used aside from testing.

Open access to online calendars such as Gmail or Outlook is always an option, but consistency was the problem in this production. I did not feel it was a needed step to have members of the production team check another website or networking space for updates since they were already checking e-mail and VirtualCallboard along with blogs for sound and Pinterest for design inspiration (referenced in chapter V). However this would have been a foolproof and user-friendly approach. Had scheduling been done in advance a Word document calendar would have

been most effective, but because the calendar was created on a weekly basis and changed daily this was impractical.

Most professional theaters have a rehearsal hotline. This hotline is pre-recorded by the stage management team in a "daily call" form and is available 24/7 to actors and team members alike. Recording a message that is error free is usually time consuming, but its accuracy and constant availability make it a dependable solution. It is usual and acceptable for these theaters to run on a day-to-day scheduling basis. I do not think a day-to-day system of scheduling is a viable option for students or community members that are involved in theatre as an extracurricular activity or hobby.

Having a text message alert system that sends out alerts to a listserv is another option. Although this would not be a good approach to in-advance scheduling; it is a great way to notify actors of last minute plans, changes, or cancellations without having to call each individual actor.

Twitter

Prior to choosing to research technology in stage management I implemented social networking via Twitter in two shows produced by Blueprint Theatre. Twitter was used to communicate with cast and other members of a production about schedule changes. Each actor was required to sign-up for a Twitter account, follow my Twitter feed, and then subscribe to mobile updates. Theoretically, this would send a text message or push notification to their phone every time I posted a tweet. This system was problematic because not everyone that subscribed would receive the mobile updates. For those that did receive these changes it worked as a good substitute

system, but not a complete replacement to the traditional system of phone calls, party-to-party texting, or e-mailing.

Creating motivation to get actors to sign-up for the updates outside of the rehearsal time was difficult and the most problematic step. When crucial scheduling changes were not an issue, it was helpful to post announcements as a tweet to ensure that they would see the announcement in addition to on an e-mail or report.

Professor Amy Guerin implemented the use of Twitter outside the purview of this research to advertise for the shows and "keep TAMUTheatre a part of the global daily theatre conversation" (Guerin, 1). Although, she did not use Twitter as a notification system it was used to build up the community by re-tweeting quotes or pictures from a specific show or event. "I would love to have our actors, crews, and audience actively tweeting about their TAMUTheatre experiences" (Guerin). However, with the use of Twitter and tweeting for the stage manager's purposes she stated that, "text messaging serves the same purpose" (Guerin, 1).

Please note that this was done in addition to e-mail and phone notifications; one should never base a system of running a production on an unproven method. This experimentation was not done as a part of this research, but as a self-driven experiment. Thus this system was not fleshed out to the fullest extent or thoroughness of the other technological research in social networking.

Keeping documentation current

One of the biggest and most frequent problems I encountered was being able to determine which document, the one on the iPad or the computer, was most current. This problem often occurred with plots. This is due to the fact that changes were made sporadically and unsystematically throughout the rehearsal process. If time allowed in the moment, the document could be updated in rehearsal. If this was not an option, it would be noted and updated later with whichever device was close at hand. This process provided little to no consistency because changes occurred on each device with different times and frequencies throughout.

I solved this problem by always using the iPad document as the default document or by adding a date and time to the header so that it was updated every time the document was edited. Consistency in your system is always the best option. Knowing that I always completely edited the rehearsal report on my iPad before sending it out via the computer guaranteed that the most recent and accurate information was on the iPad and any changes were made via that device. Other processes may be easier, but it is important to get a system into place and begin developing habits for future accuracy, and establishing ease in completion of the task by using technology.

Consistency must extend to each site or system used. VirtualCallboard, e-mail documents and iPad documents need to be accurate and up-to-date with their information in addition to the stage manager's personal reference files. This can be ensured by creating a to do list and sticking with the system that the list creates. If I were to redo this research I would only focus on one system at a time to make this process more individualized and guarantee accuracy. Updating

VirtualCallboard's document sharing became merely a hassle in addition to e-mails and iPad usage and exploration, rather than a viable reference tool.

When surveying the production team this verdict was mirrored and many expressed interest in having a singular Dropbox or source to check all information in one place instead of multiple systems. This singular approach would increase accuracy, decrease time, and lower confusion for all members involved. Once one system is implemented it is easy to become more familiar with its processes and use it to its full ability rather than using multiple systems with limited knowledge and implementation.

Emergencies

A stage manager must also be prepared for any emergencies that arise and know what to do to optimize safety. During any natural disaster theaters are not considered safe spaces due to the amount of heavy objects overhead, multiple entry and exit points, and the surrounding set that is stabilized for temporary installment. During a *Prelude to a Kiss* rehearsal one such emergency arose. A tornado and flash flood warning was issued and individuals were instructed to seek shelter until determined safe.

I would like to highlight that I was only aware of these weather warnings due to technology. Whether good habit or bad I choose to keep my phone on vibrate and in close range of me during rehearsals. At Texas A&M University our emergency alert system, CodeMaroon, notifies everyone subscribed by e-mail and text messages of any dangers such as weather, bomb threats,

or dangerous persons. The text messages in Figure 6 were the messages I received the night of

the tornado warnings.
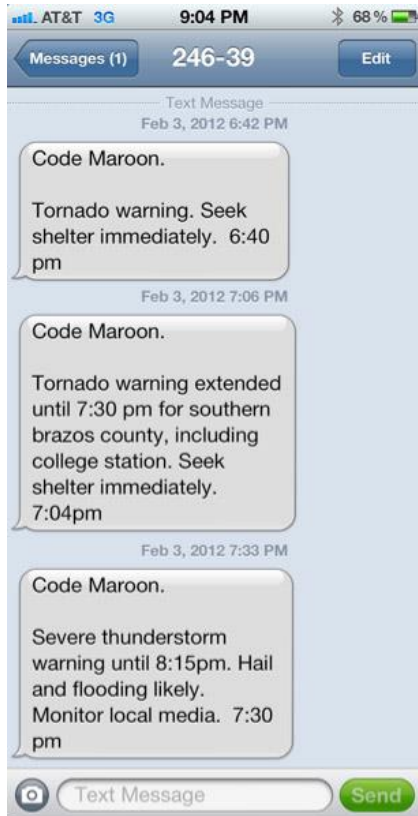
Figure 6. CodeMaroon Text Messages

If these educational system warnings are not an option, subscribing to your local news' Twitter

feed is an adequate alternative. I did this by subscribing to mobile updates from my Twitter feed

for KBTX's Twitter. Although at times it was distracting because I got a text message for every

news update, it was helpful in more ways than safety. For example, KBTX would tweet if a

major accident occurred on a main road that stopped traffic drastically. Therefore, when an actor

would call late due to "traffic" or an "accident" you could usually tell by news updates if this excuse was valid.

In a crisis the stage manager's job is to remain informed and active. I do not believe that the addition of technology had a negative affect on this job. The reaction to the situation depends on preparations made in advance and action taken to restore the normalcy of the production (Heiser, 42). If the stage manager is good at his or her job the normalcy of the production and safety of those involved will be insured regardless of the use of technology.

Other applications

Voice Memos (pre-downloaded)

Voice recording for foreign language lines or correct pronunciation of vocabulary is also a good use of technology within the field. In *Prelude to a Kiss* this was accomplished effectively by recording using Voice Memos. The audio file was then saved and imported into iTunes, and e-mailed as an MP3 file for actor's reference. Should the actors have a smart phone already this can be achieved individually and personally through their own device and application.

ShowTool SM

ShowTool SM contains four categories. First, the timer allows the user to keep time by starting, pausing, and resetting. Secondly, there is the marks category, which allows you to designate each act or screen with a spike color or glow tape mark. Within each designated spike color the user can list a piece of furniture or item. The third category is checklist, this category allows you to add items to check, but does not have a feature to allow you to check done or not done. The

fourth and final category is props. Props, allows you to add props but also adds tasks designated in the marks section and props to the marks and checklist section. This program was re-vamped as this research was being completed and many of these problems, no longer create an issue. Although this application might be handy as a quick reference for spike colors and even props the steps it takes to get to each page of information is not quick enough. I find the "Checklist" category most problematic because it doesn't allow you to check the items that are complete. I do not find it reliable, conducive, or user-friendly to solely depend on, however as stated above it is a good quick reference tool to have available.

Clock (pre-downloaded)

Two applications to keep, manage, and document time were used. This was the best way to keep track of breaks and rehearsal time periods through the Stopwatch tab and creating each rehearsal period as a "lap." With Clock you then have a list of all break/rehearsal times listed as "laps."

Conclusion

The rehearsal processes outlined in this chapter although expansive are easily determined by what tasks needs to be performed. The decision must be made as to what application, device, or process will be used. A stage manager must ask him or her self what tasks must be completed and then search for a device, system, or application to complete it in the most effective way possible. Applications are created to achieve the necessary tasks; not tasks created to use an application, device or system. This holds true for every production timeline and process discussed in this research. Approaching each task individually instead of the rehearsal process as a whole provided me with a more basic and fundamental understanding of the traditional

occurrences for each task. I was able to find new approaches to completing these tasks both with

and without the use of technology. When you find a system that you deem to be effective for a

specific task, experiment and explore with it individually rather than trying multiple systems at

once. As discussed above, it is more effective to use the full effects of one approach then the

minimal effects of multiple approaches.

CHAPTER V

PRODUCTION MEETINGS

A good way to describe stage management is as a "hub through which information flows and is rerouted to the places that need it;" a production meeting is the ideal time and space for this to occur between team members (Apperson, 41-42). It provides a structured time and place for a transfer of information between team members in the official context of a meeting. The production team includes the director, the designers, the assistant designers, the dramaturge, the technical director, the stage management team and anyone else whose decisions might affect the designer's decisions or the director's concept.

In academic and community theatre, production meetings are usually held once a week. In other types of theatre frequent production meetings are rare. This is more convenient for out-of-town designers or those who may not be available or contracted to participate regularly. When location is a problem, video sessions over Skype provide the option for live interaction using technology.

If meetings are being held on a regular basis finding a reoccurring time that everyone is available helps with consistency and attendance. I achieved this by using the website whenisgood.net. This site allows you to send out a link to invitees with selected times and dates. Your invitees respond by highlighting their available times. This process shows optimal times; where everyone is available highlighted in green and shows who is unavailable during certain times. I have found it extremely helpful when trying to schedule a meeting with more than three people, and a time

saver for all involved in scheduling and attending. This site is not yet translated into an application, but this option or something similar should be available soon.

Production meetings are often seen as a time to discuss documents that have been distributed in the time between or prior to meetings. Document sharing systems used by the production team should be kept up-to-date regardless of what site or system is being used. This is crucial before a production meeting because questions will stem from and about these documents. It is helpful to have all of these documents easily accessible for reference should clarification be an issue; with the use of the iPad this is an easy step. Having documentation available on your iPad eliminates any unnecessary paper and allows information to be referenced from one place regardless of distribution.

As each item or topic is discussed, a stage manager should take detailed notes of the overall discussion in the form of a production meeting report. Not all production meetings require that a report be made. It is smart for the stage manager to take notes since he or she is to "act as a conduit for information for the production staff" (Apperson, 39). Thus all information must be processed and retained by the stage manager for future reference.

Pinterest

During the concept stages of a production and even into finalizing a design, research images must be shared with the director and other designers. These images help make the design more cohesive and guarantee that everyone is on the same page. Printing out changes and inspirations every week can get expensive and be environmentally unsound. Therefore, the department,

separate from this research, has implemented the use of Pinterest to share visual research images. It allows for accessibility outside of the production meeting and presentation during the meeting. Provided that the equipment needed (i.e. projector and screen) is available for use in the location the meeting is held.

Pinterest has an application for the iPad and is also available for portable viewing with internet access. During the production of *Prelude to a Kiss* the application was not very user friendly. Recent updates to the application have fixed this issue and it is more conducive to viewing design images. This could be helpful by providing imagery when explaining to actors or directors a set or costume that will be used in a specific scene, and is universal through costuming, set design, properties, etcetera.

Blogging

Using Pinterest is not conducive to sharing all file types. Pinterest is primarily used for sharing images found on the Internet via link sharing. Sound files are not typically attached to images and new or commissioned work is often not shared publicly on the internet. A show blog was implemented as part of department's technology initiative for ease of file sharing with sound files. The sound designer for *Prelude to a Kiss* used the Performance Studies blog site as a place to upload preliminary MP3 or sound bites.

Blogging is also the social networking system I used to take surveys of the cast, crew, and production team. These were generated by polldaddy, but placed on my personal blog for ease and link accessibility through a WordPress blog provider. Although taking surveys was a part of

this research and a way to get feedback, this is still a good tool for stage managers. Inevitably there will be times of disagreement among the production team and it could be used as a good way to tally votes anonymously and accurately.

VirtualCallboard

The problems outlined in chapter IV related to scheduling and creating reports were experienced while creating production meeting reports as well. These technical issues for the reports were fixed as stated in chapter IV, however the internal calendar was never depended on for planning meetings.

Conclusion

This step in the production process although simple allowed for the most integral use of social networking in this research. Social networking has the capacity to make the designer's job more environmentally sound, but also create a common ground among those involved in the design process. This common ground aids in communication and is straight-forward in its presentation. Creating, editing, and distributing the reports in the production meeting process overlaps completely with the rehearsal report process discussed in chapter IV. Technology made the creation of these reports easier, because they were typed up during the meeting and notes were not transcribed to a document after the fact. This made notes clearer, more descriptive, and saved time in the creation and distribution of the production meeting reports.

CHAPTER VI

TECH/DRESS REHEARSAL

Rehearsals are meant for the actors and director; tech rehearsals are meant for the designers, crew and stage manager. Although the director is still involved through the tech and dress rehearsal process, it is common for the stage manager to take over rehearsals from this point on. Processes from theatre to theatre vary like any other steps in the production process. Steps include: paper tech, dry tech, cue-to-cue, full tech, and dress rehearsal, depending on the theatre the steps may be handled differently

The first step is paper tech. Paper tech is a way for the stage manager to receive all the cues before the cue-to-cue rehearsal actually begins. Although edits and changes to each cue are still being done at this point it is important for the stage manager to have them as a point of reference to build on later in the process. Paper tech is done without the actors.

Dry tech, like paper tech, is also done without the actors and is similar to paper tech in that it runs cues for each segment of the play. However, in a dry tech, set changes are practiced with fly or batten cues, or any other tasks done by a designer or member of the run crew. Essentially this is a test run or practice session for any back-to-back cue patterns or set changes that need to be choreographed for time and smoothness.

The next step is a cue-to-cue. A cue-to-cue is a run of the production from one cue to the next.

Cues can be anything from a lighting, sound, projection, set change, or special effect. Cues

usually signify some kind of change in the technical side on stage or off stage.

The next step is a full tech. Full tech includes running the show start to finish with all cues

rehearsed in the cue-to-cue. Holding, stopping the action on stage, is still allowed and if need be,

so is skipping ahead. Full tech usually does not include costumes or make-up for the actors and if

not rehearsed in the dry tech this is the place to run set changes with the addition of the actors.

Dress rehearsal is the final step before performance. It involves running the show in performance

conditions with actors in costume and make-up. During the dress rehearsal cues will be changed

and finalized, all of which should be noted.

Prompt book

The stage manager must do a certain amount of preparation especially with the added use of

technology throughout this process. My first preparation was to write the cues beforehand in my

script via the computer. Since this was time consuming and required fine-tuning I held paper tech

with designers before the actual tech rehearsal to ensure I would be ready. This process consisted

of the following steps: creating text boxes on an electronic version of the script, writing the cue

name/number, and color coding it to the specific department (i.e. lights, sound, projection). This

was more time consuming than a traditional paper tech with a pencil and paper script, but had a

certain amount of visual appeal, as well as clarity. This editing process cannot be done via the

iPad and required me to have my computer open in tech to make changes on the electronic

version of the script.
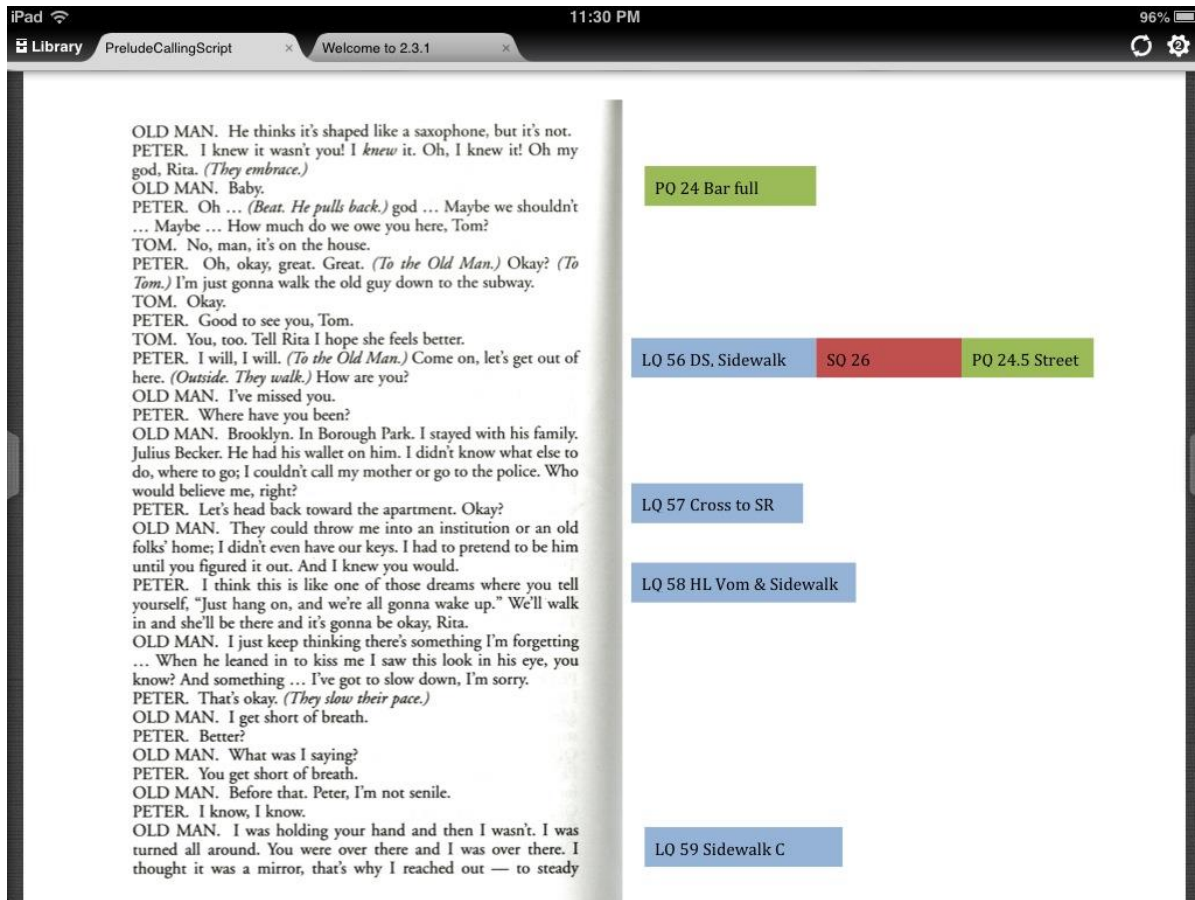
Figure 7. Calling script

In some cases, depending on preference of the stage manager, the calling script will be added to

the blocking script. I have always had a separate script for blocking and calling a show and

Prelude was no exception. Once rehearsals are complete and blocking changes have transpired it

is effective to scan the blocking script as a PDF file to have as a reference on the iPad. Good

practice is to have a completed blocking script as an electronic file for back-up and reference. In

professional theatre the prompt book, a cue and blocking script combined, are submitted for archival purposes. It is best to get in the habit of joining the two into a cohesive book of information about the production.

Although I used my computer to call the show until the last dress rehearsal this need not always be the case. Once major changes were completed I downloaded the calling script to my iPad and called the show from there. Minor changes were noted through Note TakerHD, revised on the computer, and re-downloaded to the iPad. This was more of an inconvenience than simply erasing text and replacing it in pencil on a hardcopy script.

Device multitasking

Like any rehearsal, changes and additions to blocking, cues or timing will be made. These changes usually concern updating the plot or other electronic documents previously created or edited on the iPad. I chose to only have my laptop, with current documents downloaded, during the tech/dress rehearsal process. I felt that multiple devices would be distracting. Therefore, if any changes to documents needed to be made I either updated them on my computer during rehearsal or made a handwritten note for later since in some cases the script could not be minimized on the screen. During tech rehearsal and often dress rehearsal some blocking changes may be made, unless major they should be noted and changed later because the main priority is coordinating and calling the cues.

Posting documents

Run sheets for the crew must be physically posted backstage. Each member of the crew should have a current hardcopy of any relevant documents in a format that is easily referenced. Technology does not provide a plausible solution that eliminates paper or a device without a backlight that will not be visible in the dark backstage area.

Going green in tech

The stipulation to not use paper in this production was included in the technical rehearsal process. As a backup and for educational purposes, the assistant stage manager was still required to have an updated prompt book with current documents in it. The process of maintaining a current calling script was impractical for each night of rehearsal, because so many changes get made on a daily basis. It was impractical and unnecessary for her to print a full calling script every night when it was likely to change in the first five minutes of rehearsal. As a result, the calling script I had on my iPad (or computer) was the universal point of reference and assumed accurate should a discrepancy arise. In this case, having the cues typed provided clarity because the clutter and ambiguity of handwritten notes were not a problem when the assistant stage manager called the show.

Dress rehearsal station

The dress rehearsal station stayed similar to the rehearsal station (see Figure 2 and Figure 3). The dress rehearsal is conducted in show format and the stage manager usually moves to the booth or backstage. For *Prelude to a Kiss* I called the show from the light booth at the front of the house.

The system in calling a show remained the same except that I was calling the show from my iPad.

Conclusion

With the implementation of any technology changes must be made to the usual habits of a stage manager. The only real inconvenience was that of paper tech and the process of cue writing within it. After exploring both options, it would be less time consuming and easier to edit if the prompt book was written on a hardcopy script with a pencil. Without this exploration, I would not have discovered the ease of my own systems or clarified that implementation of technology is not always effective. As previously mentioned, exceptions have to be made and systems changed to be able to explore the full usage of technology; tech and dress rehearsal are no exception.

CHAPTER VII

PERFORMANCE

As a production goes into performance the director passes on all authority to the stage manager; who essentially becomes the safeguard of the "artistic quality of the show," a quality that should remain unchanged (Kelly, 157). However, productions are "organic entities" that develop over time, it is up to the stage manager to determine whether this evolution changes the integrity of the original show and if it does so, to fix it (Maccoy 186). "It is the stage manager's job to maintain standards and company morale" (Maccoy, 187). As a safeguard, all decisions, changes, or notes should be given and enforced by the stage manager. Particular steps in the performance process such as creating reports or taking notes do not differ significantly from rehearsal to performance, and will not be outlined here. Overall, the tasks necessary for the performance stage of production usually become more systematic for all those involved.

Preparations for a performance begin at "call time," the set time actors and crew members are instructed to arrive (these may be different times). As in rehearsals, the stage manager must check each actor in and call those who are late. Each crew member must go about their tasks of preparing and setting for the night's performance, which are outlined on their run sheets. "The cast, stage management, and technicians should follow a routine that allows them to undertake their roles efficiently" (Maccoy, 169). Once tasks such as light and sound check, stage sweep, etcetera, are done the stage manager should be notified of their completion.

The stage manager's tasks are usually minimal at this point because the crew is given the tasks that the stage manager has been in charge of throughout the rehearsal process. Ideally, the stage manager checks everyone's completion of tasks and prepares to call the show. To list the tasks that are assigned to the stage manager, I used the pre-downloaded application Reminders. This application is equipped to create multiple lists such as: pre-show, intermission, and post-show. Within each list you can create tasks quickly and easily, and add a priority or notes if desired. Since this application was on both my iPad and iPhone it was portable and I was able to check off each item once completed. Before the next show these items were unchecked or marked as not completed and they were returned to my to do list.

A pre-show checklist is required for the stage manager and relevant crew members in charge of pre-setting props, furniture, and costume items to ensure they are in place for the top of show. This document can be in any format, although I find a spreadsheet works best. It should have the item, the location, and any notes specific to its setting. This checklist is also an added step to ensure that everything is correct for the start of show. Though this is considered a crew document, I use this checklist to verify completion of tasks. This pre-show checklist was referenced on my iPad using the Numbers application and can be referenced in the appendix (A-6).

Once the show begins the real action for the stage manager starts, he or she must call the show. Calling the show marks a change in lights, sound, set, projections, special effects, etcetera and is associated with two cues: a warn and a go. The warn is usually called 30 seconds to one minute before a cue is supposed to occur to ensure the technician is ready and paying attention for the go

cue. A go cue is called when the change or action is supposed to occur. The purpose of calling cues is to ensure that everyone is paying attention and following the direction of the stage manager. This process also ensures that one person is responsible for coordinating all the technical elements in conjunction with the run of the show, and problems should be fixed or addressed by him or her. Cues are usually written legibly in the prompt book with pencil so that a substitute can come in and call the show with the correct timings and placements.

The production of *Prelude to a Kiss* was called via the iPad. The document format was a PDF therefore making editing and changing cue placement impossible. All changes had to be done on a computer, in a Word document, and re-imported into the iPad. Notations could not be made for clarification or reference during the performance; this was the biggest drawback to calling a show on a device. Once a show opens cues are often shifted slightly so that placement becomes more accurate with the action on stage. This specification became a problem because notes would have to be made separately and then cues updated in the Word document post-show. Unless an application was made specifically for cue calling and editing, accurateness of the script is better achieved by using handwritten cues on a hardcopy script.

Another drawback to the use of technology in performance is the inability of the stage manager to take immediate notes on the script. In order to take notes using an iPad, a stage manager would need to open another application, which requires closing the calling script. This is unacceptable during a performance because it can result in missed cues or line skips that may not be noticed or noted. Impromptu reference notes regarding something that occurs on stage or a notation made with every performance unfortunately goes undocumented when using

technology. For example, it might be helpful to note if an actress has changed blocking consistently every show. Another example is a habit of writing the time elapsed in various places in the script for every show. This habit allows the stage manager to document if the show is running slow or fast on one particular night in relation to the other shows. This impromptu style of taking notes in the script during performances is made null and void by the addition of technology.

One perk to using iPad technology during performance is making reports during the performance. The problems encountered with switching applications to take notes apply to this as well. Switching applications while calling a show to take notes or make the report versus taking handwritten notes and transcribing to a report after the show is a choice of the stage manager. If this poses too big of a distraction handwritten notes may be best; if it is a show with few cues and actor notes, then documenting on the iPad may be easier.

Documentation/archival

All documents and reports should be kept up-to-date with the most recent and detailed information available throughout the production. This is not only important to the ongoing production, but these documents are also used for archival purposes. The archival process of a prompt book is helpful if a company does a show again or for portfolio display.

The blocking script should have a key that identifies all terms or symbols used so that anyone can identify a pattern or movement expressed. The calling script should be consistent, clear, and precise on placement of cues. If keys are used for calling the show a key definitions sheet should

also be made. Should one choose to join the blocking and calling scripts, as is the case in most archival documentation, the blocking notation and cues should be easily identifiable and separate from each other in some format. Joining these two scripts in handwritten format also allows for changes to be expressed as they occur and evolve in the production.

Ideally, an archival of the production by a stage manager would consist of a thumb drive that contains scanned versions of the script, reports, plots, and any other documentation. This not only eliminates the use of paper but also decreases the amount of storage needed for these scripts. Traditionally, the company archives a hardcopy file containing only the scripts, but if a stage manager could include other documents on a thumb drive it would eliminate paperwork, and physical file storage. This process would also make it easier for annual or repeating shows where the stage manager uses the past documents to prepare for the next production.

Going green in performance

The green initiative was maintained throughout the production of *Prelude to a Kiss*. When the assistant stage manager and I switched roles for a performance this changed the dynamics of how the show was called. The assistant stage manager chose to call via a hardcopy of the electronic script I had. This allowed me to reference my calling script via the iPad backstage while doing her tasks and she mine. While mistakes were made during this process; the use of technology was not a contributing factor.

Conclusions

This was the only step in the process where I did not like the implementation of technology. The use of technology made me, as the stage manager, feel constricted and restrained from allowing the show to evolve as discussed at the beginning of the chapter. In my opinion, allowing variations to go undocumented is a lack of thoroughness on the part of the stage manager in any scenario. I felt the use of technology caused the changes and patterns typical of an evolving production to go unnoted. Although it did not occur with *Prelude to a Kiss,* I believe that if the use of technology in performance would have continued over a longer performance period it would have resulted in the partial loss of the director's concept and accurateness of the show.

CHAPTER VIII

POST PRODUCTION

Survey responses

Throughout this research the production team, including the cast and crew, of *Prelude to a Kiss* were given three surveys. These surveys cover the effectiveness of VirtualCallboard, online systems and templates, and stage management with the use of an iPad.

Survey 1

The purpose of survey 1 was to measure the actual use and versatility of VirtualCallboard. Although 77% voted it user-friendly, when asked 88% of the total number of people surveyed recorded only checking it zero to three times a week and relying mostly on e-mail distribution for information. When asked if they found VirtualCallboard helpful 66% said it really did not make a difference. The majority of those surveyed preferred e-mail distribution for production information; reflected in Figure 8.

Which method do you prefer when referencing information for a production?

- VirtualCallboard
- E-mail
- Pinterest
- Blog

13% 12%
13%
62%
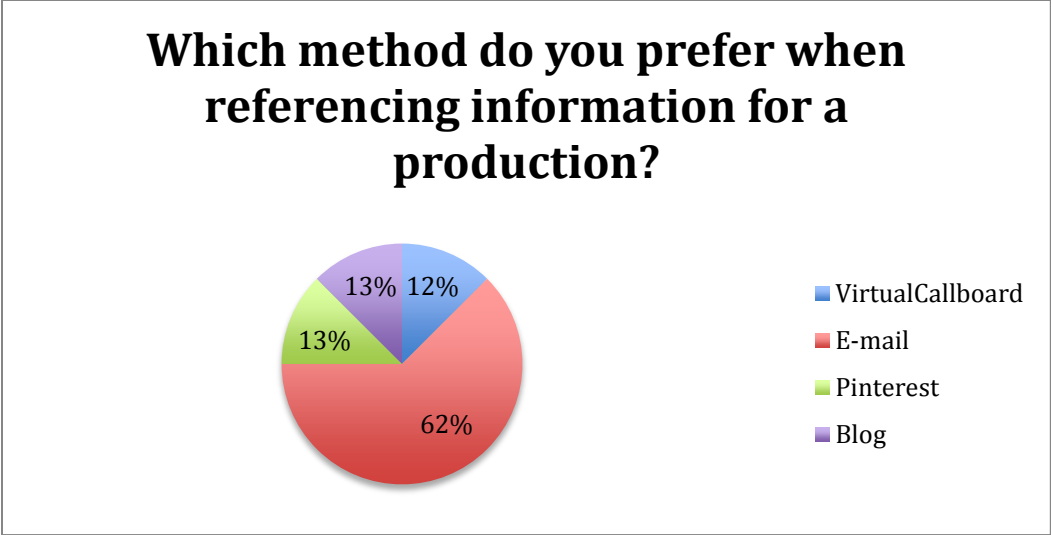
Figure 8. Preferred method

Survey 2

Survey 2 was a survey of those in direct contact with the stage manager (myself), and the implementation and use of technology throughout the rehearsal and performance process. This survey also focused specifically on the stage manager's use of the iPad. The questions included: Was information easily accessed on the iPad when you asked? Did you find the stage manager distracted by the use of an iPad? Did you find the stage manager unapproachable or impersonal due to the iPad or the use of technology? Was the stage manager organized? The responses are graphed in Figure 9. In each of these questions the response was almost universally positive. Whether this correlation is directly tied to technology or just merely to my stage management style is debatable.
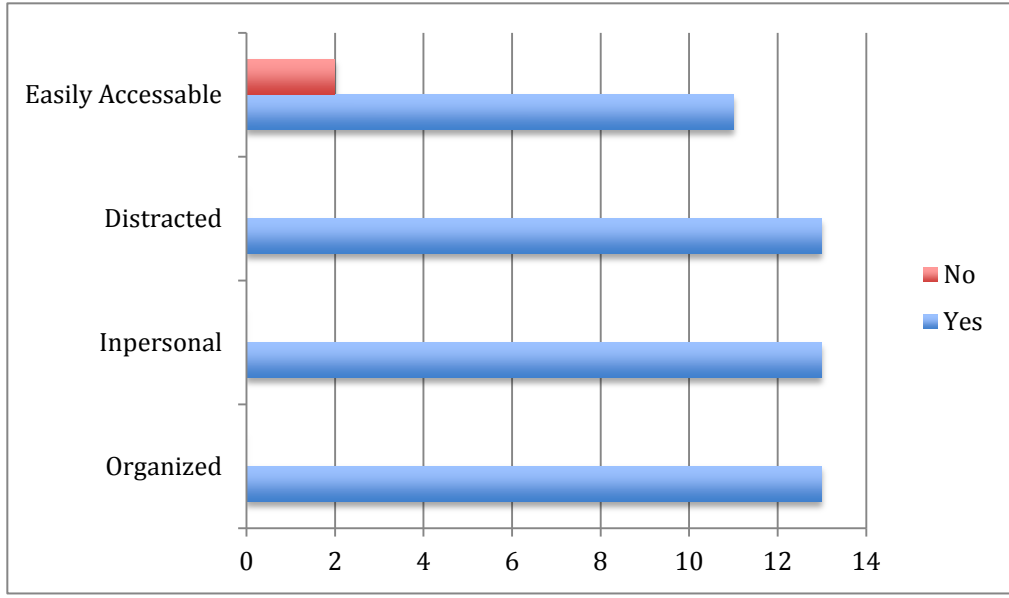
Figure 9. Survey 2 Responses

Survey 3

The third and last survey was directed at all those involved in the production, but primarily the production team. The purpose of this survey was to gauge how effective the use of technology was in this specific production and how members would like it to be implemented in the future. The most interesting response gleaned from this survey was the preference of the stage manager's template (see appendix 2) over VirtualCallboard's template. The stage manager's template received preference over VirtualCallboard's template in more smart phone friendly, reader friendly, and personal preference of the production members (see Figure 4).
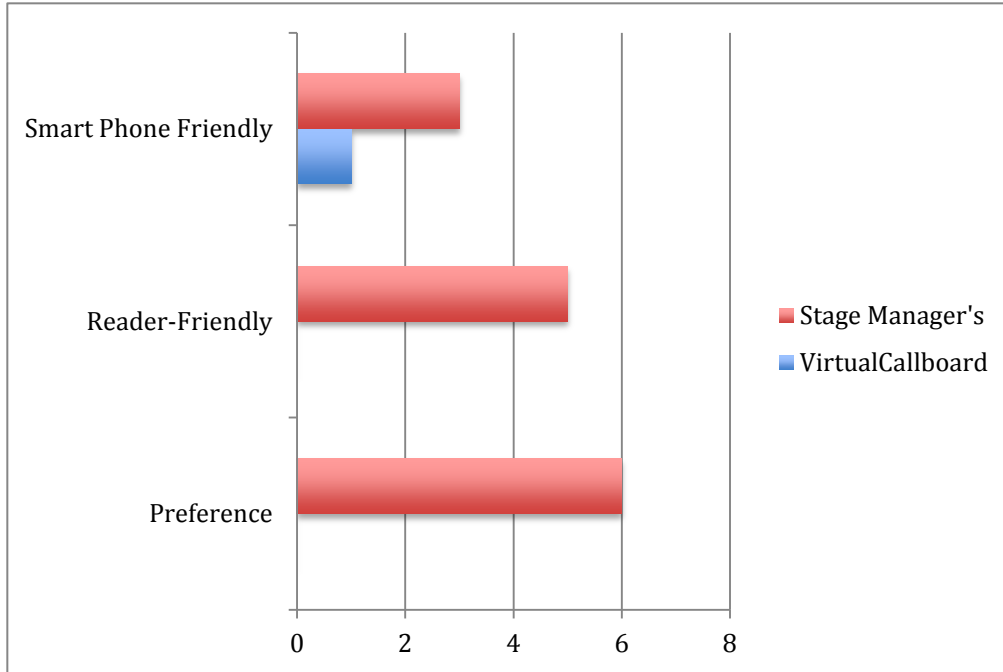
Figure 10. Report Template Responses

Despite ambivalent responses from the first survey, 60% of the people surveyed would like to use VirtualCallboard in the future. The remaining 40% were impartial to its use. However, when asked if they would like VirtualCallboard to be used in conjunction with e-mail the response was positive, as outlined in Figure 11.

Would you prefer the stage manager to use VirtualCallboard soley, e-mail soley, or both?

- 16% VirtualCallboard
- 17% E-mail
- 67% Both
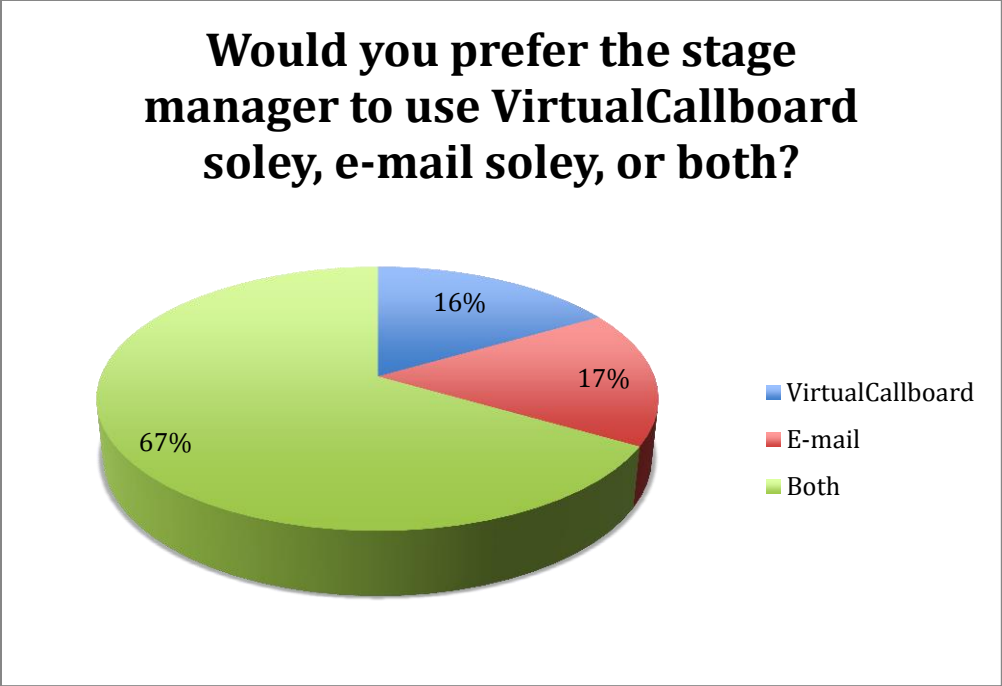
Figure 11. Future preference

Response from the director

Throughout this research one of my concerns was that the actors would find the use of technology by the stage manager hypocritical, because they were not allowed to use it themselves. After discussing this with the director, her opinion was that, "the various responsibilities of the SM (stage manager) are better supported by technology. One of these responsibilities involves taking staging notes during rehearsals, in order to free the actor to listen, move, react" (Quackenbush). One of the primary advantages for the director was faster distribution of reports.   Based on this research, changes to the processes of the stage manager did not negatively affect the director's process.

Equity stage management and technology

Technology is not universally applicable to all segments of theatre. Although equity stage managers share the same tasks and responsibilities, their application of technology is different given the rules of the union. In conjunction with this research I interviewed two equity stage managers to see what their personal technological uses were and where they would like to see improvements/changes in the field.

Current use of technology includes having a laptop in the room to keep documentation up-to-date. The responses varied in desire for increased use of technology. One interviewee stated that, "technology moves quickly and I feel that stage management is really the last department to catch up" (Zeljeznjak). Probability of running a paperless production was my next item to discuss. One respondent felt that nothing needed to be changed form the current system, and the other agreed that it was plausible given an electronic method to taking line notes (Smith) (Zeljeznjak). The response concerning programs such as VirtualCallboard or a file sharing site such as Dropbox outlined the same issues addressed in this research: the problem of having all company members check it and the system being established. One respondent felt it would be useful to add a newsfeed option to the production site (whether VirtualCallboard or another file sharing system) to notify users when they login of items that have been changed or updated (Smith). Another topic of discussion already examined in this research was whether or not technology makes the stage manager appear unapproachable. Zeljeznjak mirrored this feeling; "you lose a certain connection in the room if you're always looking at the screen."

Some stage managers are more welcoming of technology and others choose to stick to the basic

method that they were taught and have established over time. Neither is right or wrong, as long

as it get's the job done. One interviewee stated that she just, "loves paper" and it works for her

and how she chooses to accomplish her tasks as a stage manager (Smith). Much of these

interviews mirrored challenges that were discovered, and some solved, in this research.

However, the respondents were interviewed to provide perspective on the habits and preferences

of professional stage managers, not my research in the production of *Prelude to a Kiss*.

Post Mortem

The post mortem is a production meeting that is held either after the production has opened or

after the production has closed. This meeting's purpose is to discuss any improvements or

changes that could have been made or should be made in future processes. It is conducted and

documented in the same format as a production meeting. As such, the documentation and

importation does not change in process or in system options from the production meeting reports.

During the post mortem, no feedback was given about the use of technology as it pertains to this

research.

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSIONS

The goal of this research was to find the most effective and efficient form of streamlining communication and documentation where technology and stage management are concerned. The research unveiled both improvements and hindrances to the production process when technology was implemented. In sum, I would not recommend the use of VirtualCallboard in production. I would recommend the use of an iPad in production, although only in specific steps. The iPad was effective in replacing the use of a prompt book for creating reports and plots during the entirety of the production process. I would not warrant its use in the performance process as it pertains to updating the blocking and calling scripts. Based on this research I will implement the use of the iPad in future productions with the exclusion of the blocking and calling scripts. Social networking was effective and perhaps would be even more so if the use was limited to a single blog rather than multiple sites. My response to each of these research channels is described in more detail in this chapter.

VirtualCallboard

The use of multiple technological systems in one production was complicated and often times confusing, especially with the use of VirtualCallboard. The proprietary nature of the software and its structure made VirtualCallboard a resource that I would not use again. Processes, such as creating and distributing a report, traditionally simple tasks, were complicated in both the initiation and throughout its use as a reference. Scheduling was the most notable drawback; the

schedules' lack of consistency and cohesiveness made the events unclear and unreliable for others to reference.

The file-sharing portal was the only effective usage, and it became the main use of the site throughout the production of *Prelude to a Kiss*. However, this feature could be accessed by a cheaper, less complicated system such as Dropbox. These obstacles were faced throughout the pre-production, rehearsal, and production process. Use of this tool may be effective for some once a solid foundation is built on the systems, but it did not fit my stage management style or habits.

Social networking

Although the incorporation of social networking was minimal it was universally effective for each required purpose. Pinterest was effective in displaying images, as was blogging for the distribution of sound files or survey methods. Ultimately, a social networking site that combines elements of both Pinterest and blogging would be ideal. Unfortunately, users were forced to login to multiple sites to share resources, which was its major drawback. Twitter was an added bonus in terms of emergency notifications, and I highly recommend it if only for safety precautions.

iPad

Pre-production

Success in the pre-production process is dependent on the well-formed habits and templates of the stage manager, and will affect the rest of the production. It is worth stating that a methodical

and structured pre-production system is necessary whether implementing the use of technology in production or following a more traditional path.

Exploration and research is helpful when determining which applications the stage manager would like to use. It is also worth noting that some applications or software have a significant learning curve and may take more time than is warranted for a single production. Although the applications I chose were useful, they were researched and used based on my preferences. I also shaped them to my stage management style and this production of *Prelude to a Kiss*. The multitude of applications and systems available for the iPad and other devices should be tailored to the preferences, habits, tasks, and productions of individual stage managers and/or companies. If an individual company chooses to use technology a true exploration of the opportunities these systems support will expand on the traditional foundations already present in their management teams.

Auditions and callbacks

The effectiveness of the use of technology during the audition and callback process was determined moot by the extreme amount of time and effort required to incorporate it. The archival conversion of paperwork into an electronic file format would be the only helpful integration of technology within this process. If applications or systems were created for the audition process specifically, experimentation would be worth exploring in future productions.

Rehearsal, production meetings, tech/dress rehearsals

As mentioned above, preparation allows the implementation of technology to progress smoothly into the production process. I stress that technology should not be used simply for the sake of trying a new gadget or application. Technology should be implemented in order to more effectively accomplish tasks required of stage managers. These tasks overlap throughout the rehearsal, production meeting, and tech/dress rehearsal stages of a production. Approaching each task individually instead of combining multiple assignments provided me with a more basic and fundamental understanding of the specific duty. This realization can be described as a "back to basics" approach. The examination of all basic stage management tasks while implementing technology, allowed me to explore the effectiveness of the basic tools that I use in traditional and technological processes. Regardless of my choice to use technology in the future, I believe this research has made me a better stage manager by allowing me to explore and experiment with the fundamental tasks required in my field.

Performance

The process of cue writing with technology as discussed in chapter VI was proven ineffective and in the long term would hurt the performance process and the evolution of a production as a whole. Using technology was helpful in that it allowed me to discover the ease of my own systems and clarify that implementation of technology is not always effective. In future productions I will not use technology in this part of the process unless applications are created that prove to be more effective, reliable, and easily manipulated for the tasks required by a stage manager in performance. This pertains to my use of a blocking and calling script individually and collectively.

Structure

Personnel

In an article written in 1991and published by the United States Institute for Theatre and Technology, Mark Heiser wrote, "computer technology has reduced the number of personnel needed to run a production" (Heiser, 39). Although this might hold true in other fields of theatre, such as lighting or sound design, technology does not limit or reduce the amount of personnel required for stage management. The stage manager and his or her team is still a required force in the completion and successful end goal of a production. However technology can help the personnel as Kelly states,

> the advance of technology will not eliminate the incredible need for personal attention to detail or looking after the emotional and physical well-being of the performing and creative artists stage managers serve. Hopefully they will only enhance our ability to give those areas more attention by eliminating the mundane aspects of our job and allowing us fresher spirits to deal with the personal creative sides of theatre production (63).

Equity

Although technology does not change the personnel requirements in the field of stage management it can complicate the process. The processes in academic and community theatre are usually left up to the discretion of the stage manager, his or her habits and preferences taking precedence. This changes slightly in equity theatre, because the stage manager is under a specific contract and must fill certain requirements in a particular way according to the standard of the theatre company and its equity classification. These standards are requirements for the

professional field. It is my understanding that their goal is not to limit the capabilities but provide guidelines and standardization.

Education and future progression

This implementation of technology as it pertains to individual stage managers affects how others learn in all types and aspects of theatre. I learned from stage managers in the theatres around me. My habits, templates, preferences, etcetera are all developed from practices I learned from my teachers, mentors and through trial and error experiences throughout my career. A risk of including technology in the stage management educational or apprenticeship processes is adding a layer of technological complexity that may make the information difficult to translate or transfer from teacher to student. In my opinion and for my teaching and learning style, it does not.

Processes and tasks, whether accomplished traditionally or technologically, still need to be shared as part of stage management education or apprenticeship. If technology is a readily available and reliable option it should be taken because of our continuing dependence on it as a society. Like any other career, institution, or social establishment, stage managers must progress with the social movements of current culture. This progression is dependent on the environment and/or theatre the production takes place in. If this environment allows for production processes to be altered, adjusted, or elaborated on the incorporation of technology should be taken.

This exploration of technology should never interfere with the quality or quantity of work that is required of us. "Stage management should not be complacent when using this technology"

(Maccoy, 231). It should not be taken if extreme measures or exceptions need to be made in order to be a successful and effective stage manager. Financial, educational, and technological restrictions can place these new implementations in an unreachable position. "Lack of equipment, lack of funding, and inadequate time for learning were identified as the major obstacles to personal computer use" (Gill, 33).

We also need to realize that the incorporation of new technology will not occur unless we initiate it; like every other progressive field it is a slow process of integration. For example, the use of e-mail did not become a normative habit overnight. We must be aware of the current technology and introduce it within our own work, in hopes that it will become a staple among other's work as well. Further inclusion of technology must be introduced to the field and explored in small steps; one cannot reinvent a process and system that has been evolving for centuries, but rather our goal should be to push its involvement towards technological growth. Only when this exploration has occurred can we begin to see the incorporation of technology as the norm rather than the exception to traditional methods.

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APPENDIX A-1

PROP PLOT

Prop	#	Sc.	Character/Enter	Handoff #1	Handoff #2	Character/Exit
Tumblers	2	1	Taylor/Pre-set @ Bar	Rita/Peter	Rita @ Bar	Tom USR
Tumblers	2	1/2	CR & CJ/USL	Rita (Sc. 2)		Tom USR
Molson Bottle	2	2	Rita/Pre-set @ Bar	Peter	Rita	Tom USR
Bar Towel			Rita/Pre-set @ Bar			Tom USR
Molson Bottle	2	4	Rita/USL			Rita USL (2)
Bar Tray			Rita/Pre-set @ Bar			Tom USR
Spoon w/sauce		6	Peter/USL			Peter USL
Kitchen Towel		6	Peter/USL			Peter USL
Molson Bottle	4	7	Mrs. Boyle & Rita/USL	Peter & Dr. Boyle	Peter > Mrs. Boyle	Boyles & Rita USL (4)
Camera w/ Polaroid		9	Mrs. Boyle/USL			Mrs. Boyle USL
His Wedding Rings		9	Taylor/USL	Minister	Peter	Retrieve end of show
Her Wedding Ring		9	Mrs. Boyle/USL	Minister	Rita	Retrieve end of show
Tray w/14 flutes & 1 water cup		10	Caterer/USL			
Bouquet		10	Rita/USL	Minister		Minister USL
Cigar & Lighter		10	Uncle Fred/USL			Uncle Fred USL
Coffee Mug		10	Caterer/USL	Uncle Fred	Caterer	Caterer USL
Champagne Bottle		10	Aunt/USL			Aunt USL
Coconut drinks on tray	4	11	Bartender/USR			Bartender/USR
Magazine		11	Bartender/USR			Bartender/USR
Towels	2	11	Waiter/DSR	Peter/Rita		Strike at intermission
Sunscreen		11	Waiter/DSR			Waiter DSR
Case Histories Book		11	Waiter/DSR tucked in bottom towel			Waiter DSR
Waiters book w/pin		11	Waiter/DSR			Waiter DSR

APPENDIX A-2

REHEARSAL REPORT

PRODUCTION: _____
DIRECTOR: _____
STAGE MANAGER: _____

| REHEARSAL #: | DAY: |
| LOCATION: | DATE: |

DISTRIBUTION:	
Distribution of those receiving the report listed here.	

REHEARSAL TIME:	COSTUMES:
Rehearsal start: Break: Rehearsal end: Total time of rehearsal:	
REHEARSAL NOTES:	**LIGHTS:**
Absent: (no notice)	
Conflicts/Absent: (with notice)	**PROPERTIES:**
Late: (with notice)	
Late: (with no notice)	**SCENERY:**
Today's Schedule: Announcement:	
SCHEDULE:	**SOUND/MUSIC:**

Rehearsal Report Editor: Madison O'Brien

APPENDIX A-3

PRODUCTION MEETING REPORT

MEETING #:	DAY:
LOCATION:	DATE:

DISTRIBUTION:

Distribution of those receiving the report listed here.

MEETING TIME:	COSTUMES:
Meeting start: Meeting end: Total time of meeting:	
GENERAL MEETING NOTES:	**LIGHTS:**
	PROPERTIES:
PROJECTIONS:	
	SCENERY:
SCHEDULE:	**SOUND/MUSIC:**
Next Production Meeting	

PM Report Editor: Madison O'Brien

APPENDIX A-4

MASTER CONTACT LIST

Master Contact Sheet   Stage Manager: Madison O'Brien
Prelude to a Kiss

Production Team

Name	Position	e-mail	Cell Phone	Alternative
	Director			
	Assistant Director			
	Scenic Designer			
	Scenic Painter			
	Assistant Scenic Designer			
	Lighting Designer			
	Assistant Lighting Designer			
	Costume Designer			
	Assistant Costume Designer			
	Sound Designer			
	Assistant Sound Designer			
	Props Master			
	Stage Manager			
	Assistant Stage Manager			
	Technical Director			
	Assistant Technical Director			
	Dramaturg			

Cast

Name	Role	e-mail	Cell Phone	Alternative
	Rita			
	Old Man			
	Tom			
	Taylor			
	Peter			
	Mrs. Boyle			
	Mr. Boyle			
	Ensemble			
	etc.			

Crew

Name	Position	e-mail	Cell Phone	Alternative
	Sound Board Operator			
	Projection Operator			
	Wardrobe Crew			
	Wardrobe Crew			
	Light Board Operator			

FLOW CHART

Prelude to a Kiss by Craig Lucas
(Dramatist Play Service Inc. 2010 version)

FLOW CHART

Character	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37
Peter	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Taylor				x	x	x	x	x	x	x					
Rita	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Tom					x	x	x	x	x	x					
Mrs. Boyle	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x					
Dr. Boyle	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x					
Minister					x	x	x	x	x	x					
Aunt Dorothy					x	x	x	x	x	x					
Uncle Fred					x	x	x	x	x	x					
Old Man							x	x							
Jamaican Waiter											x		x		
Leah															
Party Guests					x	x	x	x	x	x					

APPENDIX A-6

ONSTAGE	PRESET	#1	#2	#3	#4	#6	#8	#9	#10	#11	#12
Check furniture spike											
Bar	SR										
2 Bottles	in Bar										
White cloth	folded in bar										
Menu	US on bar										
Bouqet	SL on the floor										
BACKSTAGE											
wedding rings	SL table										
wedding dress	hanging SL										
Suitcase	SL										
Dress	in suitcase SL										
Spoon	SL table										
Rag	SL table										
Bowl	SL table										
towels (2)	folded HR										
Sunscreen	in towel HR										
Book	in towel HR										

* Note any items/furniture that should be in place at the top of show and its specific placement onstage and blackstage.