

The OUP Technical Advisor & the Yale Dramatic Association

Introduction

Over the past several years the process of mounting undergraduate productions on campus has undergone major changes with the establishment by the Dean of the Office of Undergraduate Theater Production. The Dramat, by virtue of the scope and scale of the productions it mounts and its relationship with the Yale School of Drama and its facilities, has perhaps most keenly felt the impact of these changes. Not the least of these changes have been those attending the further development of the staff position of Technical Advisor and its relationship with the Dramat. This new production process has given rise to numerous questions regarding the scope of the position of Technical Advisor and its attendant responsibilities and the effort of answering those questions has resulted in a more clearly defined working process between the Dramat and the Technical Advisor. The following serves to detail that process.

General

The task of the Technical Advisor is two-fold. First, it is the role of the Technical Advisor to serve as a resource to the student body in its production of theatrical events and to provide support and training as necessary to facilitate that process. To that end a series of workshops will be provided as needed to develop and instill basic production skills. In addition workshops may be offered to answer the specific needs of intended productions. Secondly, it is also and equally the responsibility of the Technical Advisor to evaluate the technical requirements of the production plans and to ensure that these plans are executed in such a way as to insure the health and safety of all participants, both students and audience members.

Pre-Production Planning

The initial involvement of the Technical Advisor will begin during the production selection process. Scripts being considered for production must be submitted to the TA, allowing time for the scripts to be reviewed and for the TA to voice any concerns regarding technical production elements. The TA may restrict the Dramat from any production element that he deems beyond the scale and scope appropriate to the Dramat.

Once a script is chosen it is the responsibility of the Dramat to provide the Technical Advisor with all production information in a timely manner. A production staff list should be submitted as soon as it is available, technical positions such as technical director and master electrician being of specific importance. It is especially important that qualified individuals fill these positions. Guidelines detailing skill levels can be found in the Training and Certification section of the Production Protocols. The Technical Advisor must approve these appointments.

Once a production staff is established it is important that the Technical Advisor be brought into the development process with the Director and Designers in order to facilitate that process and to insure that the scope of the production stays within the realm of the capabilities of the Dramat and, more specifically, the individual productions staff and time frame. The Technical Advisor may require that a production be scaled back to insure that it can be mounted in a safe and effective manner. To insure the integrity of this process it is important that designers be held to design submission deadlines, allowing sufficient time for review and evaluation.

Once designs are finalized and the production is ready to move forward the Technical Advisor, along with the Dramat Production Officer will arrange a meeting of the production staff with the appropriate members of the YSD staff, to include but not limited to the YSD technical director, lighting supervisor, and sound supervisor. This meeting should take place in the relevant performance space. The Technical Advisor and Production Officer should be sure that the student staff members meet the appropriate YSD staff member and that all plans and production requirements are conveyed to the YSD staff. Once this meeting has occurred it is

appropriate for the individual students to contact YSD staff directly. It should be noted that it is expected that the students will keep the Technical Advisor “in the loop” and will copy the Technical Advisor on all production related correspondence.

Build Phase

During this phase of the production the Technical Advisor will work closely with all members of the student staff to realize the production goals. The vast majority of the time will be spent with the Technical Director and his/her crew, developing working shop drawings, estimating labor and materials, and supervising the construction of all scenic elements. The Technical Advisor will provide support and training in the shop as needed. While the Technical Advisor will generally assist students in accessing materials from YSD inventory, the TD, ME, and the Producer should purchase materials from inventory during normal hours of operation. The hours the Technical Advisor is available to the Dramat are limited to 20 hours a week on average. Therefore, it is imperative that a work schedule be developed and adhered to. For example, cutting and shaping operations in the shop must be scheduled during the hours when the Technical Advisor is present, while most assembly operations may be accomplished without the TA being present. The Technical Advisor will make the final determination as to the suitability of the schedule to the production requirements. The Technical Advisor will insure adherence to the shop rules, which are detailed in the Production Protocol document. The Technical Advisor can and will call a halt to the production process if he deems it necessary.

Load-In Phase

The Technical Advisor will insure that the Production Officer schedules a production meeting in the week prior to load-in specifically to plan that process. While the TD and Production Officer will actively lead the load-in process, the Technical Advisor will supervise all activities and insure that work progresses in a safe manner and that a safe work environment is maintained. Not all activities must be supervised by the Technical Advisor. Detailed lists of supervised/unsupervised activities are contained in the ABC list found within the Production Guidelines document. While some work may be accomplished without the direct supervision of the Technical Advisor, all work must be inspected and approved by the Technical Advisor before being put into service. The Technical Advisor will be present for the technical rehearsals as needed to insure that all systems are operating, and being operated properly.

Production Run

Recognizing the requirement of the YSD that a qualified safety person be on the premises for all performances in YSD facilities, the YDA has agreed to hire off duty Fire and/or EMT workers. The Technical Advisor will determine on a case by case basis whether he needs to be present at main-stage performances that may involve complicated technical systems, i.e. flys etc.

Strike

As in the load-in process, a meeting will be held in the week prior to strike to plan the process that will be followed for that activity and have it approved by the Technical Advisor. The TD and Production Officer will actively lead the strike crews and the Technical Advisor will be present at all times and supervise all activities, ensuring that proper safety procedures are followed and that a safe work environment is maintained. Only the Technical Advisor will have the authority to declare that the work has been completed satisfactorily and call the end of the strike call.

Post-Production

The Technical Advisor will conduct a walk through of the performance facility with the appropriate members of the YDA staff prior to the completion of the strike. The YDA production officer will arrange to do the same with the appropriate YSD staff as soon as is practicable.

The Production Officer will confirm to the Technical Advisor that all borrowed or rented equipment has been returned to the appropriate entity.

In addition to the normal production “wrap-up” board meeting held by the Dramat, the Technical Advisor may at his discretion call a post –mortem meeting of the production staff during normal business hours to address any production issues that he deems warrant attention.