

STEPHENS COLLEGE
THA 227 STAGE MANAGEMENT I

**Lecture #6: Getting Acquainted with Your Theater:
Plans, Sections, Plots, and Information Sheets**

HANDOUTS: *Cullen Performance Hall Information Packet, Cullen Performance Hall Stage Plot and Section*

TAKE TO CLASS: architect's scales, Cullen Performance Hall House Plot

- I. A lot of grief can be avoided if the stage manager becomes familiar with the theatre space before mounting a new production or taking an existing show on tour.
 - A. Loading in:
 1. will set pieces and large props fit through the loading door?
 2. Is there a loading door?
 3. Does the loading door open directly onto the stage or does scenery have to be threaded through a hallway?
 4. is the loading dock at truck height?
 - B. Stage Dimensions
 1. is the stage wide enough for your set?
 2. is the stage deep enough?
 3. is there a fly system? is the fly tower tall enough to fly out your scenery?
 4. is there enough wing space to store scenery and large props while leaving sufficient room for actors?
 5. Is there a crossover?
 - a. is it soft or hard?

- b. is it wide enough to accommodate the costumes and props that must pass through it – with actors crossing in both directions at once?
- c. is it lighted?

C. Dressing rooms:

1. Are there enough dressing rooms? Remember, Principal Actors' contracts may require that they have private dressing rooms.
2. Are all dressing rooms at stage level? Are *any* dressing rooms at stage level?
3. If not all dressing rooms are at stage level, is there an elevator? Is it large enough to hold wardrobe crates?
4. Are dressing rooms equipped with lights and mirrors? Hot and cold running water? Chairs? electrical outlets for hair dryers, electric shavers, and hot curlers
5. How far away are the restrooms?
6. Are quick change rooms/areas available?
7. are there showers available? washers and dryers?
8. make dressing room assignments and create signs (with actors' names) to tape to dressing room doors.

D. Other

1. is there storage for empty crates?
2. are there vending machines for food and soft drinks?

E. Review Cullen Performance Hall Information Packet - HANDOUT

II. Plots and sections HANDOUT: CULLEN PERFORMANCE HALL STAGE PLOT

- A. A drawing showing the theatre or stage as it might be seen from above, is called a ground plan – also referred to as a "plan"

- B. A drawing showing the theatre or stage as viewed from the side is a section
- C. Since a 60-foot wide drawing would be of limited use, plans and sections are said to be "drawn to scale". This means that a given unit of measure on the drawing represents one foot of real distance in the theater. For example, the stage plot in front of you is drawn in 1/8" scale. This means that every eighth of an inch on the drawing represents 1' in the theatre. If the width of the proscenium measures out to 4.5", which is 36 eighths of an inch, how wide is the proscenium in real life? (36').
- D. The most commonly-used scale in professional theatre is 1/2". Many people use 1/4". Architects typically use 1/8".
- E. since measuring drawings in inches with a normal ruler and then multiplying by 8, 4, or 2 (depending on the scale) would be very cumbersome and would probably lead to mistakes, we use a device called an architect's scale. This is a special ruler with measurements in all the commonly-used scales. **HAND OUT ARCHITECT'S SCALES AND DIVIDE CLASS INTO GROUPS.**
1. For example, if I use the scale marked "1/8" and place the "zero" on one side of the proscenium arch on our plan drawing, it tells me that the opening is 36' wide. I can use the same method with the section to learn that the proscenium is 22' high.
 2. How far is it from the pilaster line to the back wall? (29')
 3. How wide is the orchestra pit? (31')
 4. How deep is the loading dock on SL? (8-1/2')
- F. checking the plans can alert the SM to potential problems while there is still time to deal with them:
1. Example #1: Your show has a moving set piece that is 8' tall, 12' long, and 4' wide. What limitations will you have in the theatre shown on the handout?
 2. Example #2: the characters playing "Tweedledum" and "Tweedledee" wear rigid costumes that are 4' wide. What problems will you have in this theatre?

3. Example #3: your lighting depends on a 40' truss hung at a height of 20' directly over the apron. Is this possible in this theater?