

STEPHENS COLLEGE  
THA 227 STAGE MANAGEMENT I

Lecture #17: Touring

HANDOUTS:

TAKE TO CLASS:

ANNOUNCE:

- I. Trimming the show
  - A. the audiences you'll play to on the road deserve just as good – and as complete – a show as the audiences you played to at home.
  - B. There are many reasons you might have to trim back the production when planning a tour (as opposed to emergency adaptations on the road), but it should be done in such a way as to not compromise the artistic quality. Reasons include:
    1. financial -- the producer may wish to limit the number of trucks, stagehands, and drivers
    2. time constraints
      - a. a show which had several days to load-in to the theater at home might have significantly less time on the road. Often, in the case of one-night stands, the show will have one 8-hour day, in which all sets must be installed and all lights hung and focused.
      - b. the length of time needed to drive from one venue to the next might be such that the length of time needed to strike, load-out, and load the truck must be shortened.
    3. The director and designers should be the ones making these decisions; the SM's participation should be limited strictly to logistical considerations.
  - C. Emergency Adaptations
    1. Once out on the road, special circumstances may require emergency

adaptations of the show. These include:

- a. theaters whose actual measurements and equipment don't correspond to the information you were given in advance.
- b. acts of G-d and other unforeseen emergencies. I was on tour with the Washington Ballet when our truck broke and axle in Brooklyn. We arrived at the venue – where the load-in was scheduled for 8AM – after noon. Obviously, there was not time to install the entire production.

## 2. coping with emergencies

- a. have a plan in place
  - i. if possible, consult with the designers and director before starting the tour. set priorities with them
  - ii. consult with your department heads. a good master electrician or master carpenter will know what can and can't be done. be secure enough to trust them.
- b. **COMMUNICATE!!!**
  - i. make sure the actors are informed of any changes which may affect their performance (there's no need to bother them with subtle deletions of which they would otherwise be unaware).
  - ii. tell all your department heads what you're cutting and what you're keeping
  - iii. inform company management of any major cuts - if the local promoter complains, the "home office" needs to know what's going on.
  - iv. use your own discretion as to how much to inform local presenters and audiences.

## II. Arriving at the venue

- A. make sure the show will fit in as designed. if not, make cuts as described above.

- B. introduce yourself and your staff to the local crew. depending on the size of your show, you will probably not be touring with a complete crew; the remainder is provided by the local presenter. Remember that these local stagehands, while they may (or may not) be very competent, are not familiar with your show. review the schedule and "show calls".
- C. Get the load-in started.
- D. inspect the dressing rooms for size, location, cleanliness, and general suitability. The same criteria apply as applied to your home theater. Make dressing room assignments. and label dressing room doors.
- E. set up your work area. if you will be calling the show from the booth or other front-of-house position, inspect it for suitability.
- F. meet with the house manager. Discuss late seating policies and warn of any particularly quiet scenes.
- G. set lighting and sound levels.