

ASSISTANT COSTUME DESIGNER'S RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE DEPARTMENT

- Check e-mail on a daily basis.
- Attend all design and production meetings.
- Adhere to all published deadlines.
- Be proactive: contact your director and stage manager, find out the rehearsal schedules, check in with your fellow designers regularly, etc.
- Provide Donna Massimo with your class schedule no later than the preliminary-design due date. This will help in scheduling work calls and fitting times.
- Help your designer present their design to the cast.
- Attend necessary rehearsals.
- Attend all daytime work calls agreed upon with Donna Massimo.
- Attendance at all dress rehearsals and previews.
- Support your designer as needed (research missions, note taking, etc.)
- Help your designer to complete all Design Deadlines. Remind him/her of Design Deadlines as they approach.

RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE COSTUME SHOP

Costume Plot -

This is a breakdown by actor/scene & activity/act based on the script and stage directions. A grid pattern is a useful visual tool (Donna can show you examples) for fittings, generating dressing lists and talking with directors. Costume details are often implied by the dialog of a play. Creating the plot will help trouble shoot quick changes and raise questions concerning particular needs (action or visual) to be talked about at a production meeting or with the actor and director.

Renderings and Research –

You do not need to be a Rembrandt to discuss your ideas with the costume shop staff. Directors are visual people too. Sketches, accompanied by good research, clearly labeled and organized are a critical means of communication. If your rendering is not clear to everyone, be able to answer specific questions. For example, you can

explain the hat is a 'boater' and not a random tan hat. Show the research. Learn costume language whenever possible and use it. It is enormously helpful to leave copies of this information in the costume shop before fittings begin.

Dressing Lists -

Itemized lists of all wardrobe pieces/each actor/by scene. These lists are essential for fitting preparation; pulling costumes from the wardrobe (for yourself, an assistant or costume shop personnel), making shopping lists and for typing up final wardrobe call out sheets for the wardrobe run crew. Include accessories. Lists can change, but you need a starting point.

Moving Ahead:

Fittings -

Be prepared. Do not request a fitting if you do not have enough choices *in the correct sizes* to work with in order to get started. This is not a good use of time - yours, the actor's or the costume shop staff. It is not helpful to pull a rack of garments in random sizes. Pull garments that make sense and are true to your design. Understand how to use the size sheets, please ask if you don't. Include accessories when possible. Sometimes shopping is necessary before a fitting is requested.

Generally, fittings are arranged through the stage manager around the schedules of the designer, actor and shop staff. First fittings are particularly important. Do not arrange to do a fitting 'solo'. This is a recipe for confusion. Someone from the staff must be present. Notes from the fittings are recorded and referred to often.

Occasionally, in the event of a time crunch, the designer or a staff member will call the actor for a fitting. The stage manager needs to be informed of this arrangement.

During fittings the designer can help in the following ways:

Give the actor an idea of what he or she will be wearing for each scene; assist with fastening if needed; re-hang garments that are being used for the show or for putting back in the wardrobe; safety pin name labels in garments being used; hand safety pins to fitter; make sure notes are complete; remove garments that will not be used from the fitting room and put away if you truly know where they belong!

Rehearsal Clothing -

The designer and stage manager will generate a list of necessary clothing items. Actors should use their own clothing if at all possible. Long rehearsal skirts or hard to find pieces that are essential to the rehearsal process will be pulled from the wardrobe. These items do not leave the building. It is the stage manager's responsibility to lock these items up after rehearsals. It is the responsibility of the designer and the stage manager to return them to the costume shop **when dress tech begins.**

The costume shop does not supply rehearsal shoes unless there is a highly unusual need...like men in high heels. The designer will make recommendations regarding rehearsal footwear. In many cases, actors can start using their actual 'costume shoes' the week before tech.

Shopping -

Online research is very helpful. Donna can make purchases with the shop credit card or pick up items that are available locally. Donna can take the designer shopping if time and schedules allow. Designers can be given petty cash to shop with independently. Signing a document of financial responsibility beforehand is necessary. You will be given an accounting sheet and tax exemption form. Always use them.

Good Practice -

Keep the shop staff informed in general: if there is a change in your schedule; ideas that surface during rehearsals that need to be addressed at a production meeting; if you attend a rehearsal and recognize a potential costume issue that has not been addressed ; help with recovery in the shop when the show is over.