

Notes for Sound Operators

The role of the Operator :

- to operate the Sound equipment during the technical/dress rehearsal and performances of the production
- to work with the Director and Sound Designer to determine the cues and levels required, to note these in an appropriate way
- to operate the cues in an effective manner at each rehearsal/performance

To give the Operator more involvement in the show, the cues are not usually given by the Stage Management. Apart from the start of each Act or where the cue cannot be judged by the operator (e.g. an off-stage costume change), Operators take cues from a marked-up script or visual cues from the stage. This gives the Operator more responsibility and, hopefully, leads to feeling part of the production rather than simply a technician.

Rehearsals

The Operator will be invited by the Director, Stage Manager or Sound Designer to attend one or more run-through rehearsals prior to the get-in. This is the opportunity to meet the cast and crew and see the show for the first time. Shows vary in complexity and, by now, there should be a clear idea of what is required. The Operator may also be given a copy of the script, possibly already containing the cues, but this varies from show to show. Occasionally, sound effects are used during rehearsals and it is very helpful for the Sound Operator to be at these to get to know the cues.

Get-in/technical rehearsals

The Operator is expected to be available for the get-in, working with their respective Designer to help rig and test equipment. Later in the day, a technical rehearsal will begin where the lighting states are created and sound levels determined. Although driven by the Director and Sound Designer, the Operator is an important part of this process and is responsible for making sure the script has all the information necessary to run the show. Although this is the usual routine, it may vary depending on the get-in schedule.

If a cue or an operation is not clear, ask for clarification. If you want to practice a sequence of cues, again, ask, as this is probably the only occasion there will be time to do this. By the end of the 'tech', all the necessary information should be in the Operator's script. It is useful to consider that if you should be suddenly unavailable to operate a performance, someone else could run the show from the script. Ideally, the marked-up script should not be taken away.

The Tower owns a computer-based QLab system which is used on most shows. It is known as the 'Jim Spall' in memory of a long-standing member. Basic tuition in operating this will be available for those not familiar with it, and there is a set of notes on the web site : www.towertheatre.co/notes/soqlab.pdf. On occasion, more basic CD or MiniDisc formats may still be used.

Performances

Unless previously arranged with the Stage Manager and cover has been arranged, the Operator will work on all the performances. Arrive at the theatre with plenty of time to setup and check the equipment. Keep in touch with the Stage Manager to confirm that all is well and you are ready for the audience to be let in.

Strike

The Operators are expected to be available for the get-out after the final performance. Depending on the show, equipment may need to be derigged and stored. Remove all scripts, notes, sweet wrappers, cups, etc from the operating area and leave it clean and tidy for the next show.

In the Theatre : what you need to do for each performance

Opening up

If you are the first in :

Main stairs: Switch on staircase lights (wall switch at bottom or top of stairs)
Theatre door: Unlock door
Working lights: Switch on Working Lights (beside theatre door)
Exit lights (SR): Switch on SR Exit light (next to Working Light switch)

In 'Box' :

Follow the instructions in the main Sound System notes : these are available on the web site at <https://www.towertheatre.co/notes/qlab.pdf>

Perform sound check

Before the audience is let in

Start pre-show music if any.
Tell SM that Sound is ready for House to be opened

Closing down

When audience is clear

Switch off Sound System as described in the Sound System notes

Radio comms

If you have a radio set, return it to the SM or charging station

If you are the last out

Check that no one else is in the theatre, dressing room or toilets

Theatre: Switch off aircon – instructions next to controller by Lighting Desk
Dressing Room: Switch off aircon, ceiling and mirror lights and any other electrical items including relay monitor. Close door
SM room and toilets: Check taps are off. Switch off lights, monitor etc.
Fire escape: Check fire escape door is closed
Corridor: Switch off corridor lights
Stage door: Close door from stage
SL Exit sign: Switch off
SR Exit sign: Switch off
Working Lights: Switch off
Theatre door: Close and lock
Stair lights: Switch off

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