**HOUSE MANAGER DUTIES**

**(Barnum show)**

**The most important thing that you do as HM is serve our patrons.**

**Thank you for taking care of our audience!**

**I. House Manager Checklist**

**2 – 4 weeks before performance:**

* Have walk-around meeting with Box Office Manager, Assistant Box Office Manager, and Audience Services UGA. (This usually takes place the Monday before the show opens.)
* Acquire HM keys from Rick.
* Attend pre-tech meeting on *insert date*, 4:30 – 5:15 p.m. At this meeting, we should find out if FOH needs to help out with actor or prop shifts.
* Send email to all ushers about dress code, assignments, and Thursday night usher meeting. Make sure that each usher responds to confirm that they received the email and notifies you of any conflicts they might have. (More details in Usher Email section.)

**Week of performance:**

* By Monday: Contact cleaning crew to confirm that the theatre is on their weekend to-do list.
* Call the cleaning crew the week a show is to open to make sure they are scheduled to clean the theatre thoroughly the night before the opening. The number to contact is (515) 729-1415. Check the theatre during the day of a performance to make sure that it is clean.
* Final Dress: Train your ushers at 5:30 p.m. before the final dress rehearsal. Then, conduct the usher meeting at 6:00 p.m. and proceed as if it were a show night.

**Performance Checklist:**

**Before Show:**

* Dress professionally, but **not** in the black and white usher uniform.
* Arrive by 5:45 p.m. for a 7:30 p.m. performance and 11:15 a.m. for a 1 p.m. performance.
* Unlock lobby doors: top, bottom, east, and west.
* Turn on Blade Light to specified color. (UGA will show how). Send someone outside to verify light turns on and is the right color.
* Get headset to Stage Manager ASAP and make sure that he/she is clear on cues for FOH and the late seating procedure.
* Close the house doors.
* Conduct usher meeting at 6 p.m.   
  If you are missing an usher or anyone from the crew due to illness and not something with prior knowledge, contact Mimi Kammer at (206)-335-9402. Even if you think you could handle missing this person CALL Mimi.
* On Opening Night, count the number of chairs in the theatre and make sure the number lines up with the number the box office has.
* Tidy the house: straighten chairs, check for programs, and clean up trash
* Lead usher team to set up the lobby, including displays, and tape off any held seats in the house.
* Tidy the lobby: pick up trash, make sure design boards and tags are straightened, and make sure benches and trash cans are in the appropriate places.
* Check lobby clocks to make sure they are correct.
* Make sure you have enough programs and distribute them and baskets to ushers.

\*\*\* During the winter make sure the sidewalks are clear by salting/shoveling the walk ways. There should be enough room at the front entrance that if someone were to be dropped off in the circle drive, they could make it to the doorway without going through snow or slipping on ice. We *don’t* want patrons to get hurt!\*\*\*

**\*\*Make sure doors open and close on time!\*\***

**House Open:**

* Check in with Stage Manager every 10 minutes.
* While the audience is being seated, continue to check in at each entrance to make sure that all is running smoothly. If there is congestion at one particular door, you can help guide patrons to seats. **Ushers should be helping patrons find open seats in Barnum.**
* Check in with SM as curtain time approaches to make sure that there are no problems on his/her side that would cause reason to hold the curtain. Flash the lobby lights 5 minutes before curtain.
* Check with BOM about remaining tickets and the possibility of holding the curtain. \*The curtain should never be held more than 4 minutes after the published curtain time except in extreme circumstances. More importantly, the doors should not close until the show is ready to start.\*
* Check bathrooms for straggling patrons.
* Once you are ready to close the doors, let your ushers know and then give SM the clear. **Turn off the lights outside of Barnum and the stair lights**.

**During Show:**

* Collect ticket stubs from ushers and deliver them to BOM.
* Seat late comers unless otherwise notified. Make sure to discuss late seating procedure at the walk-around.
* At the intermission, turn on the lights outside of Barnum, open doors, and turn on stair lights.
* Flash lobby lights 5 minute before intermission ends. Check in with SM. Tell your ushers to shut the doors and turn off stair lights. Give the clear to SM in the same fashion as at the top of the show. Shut off lights outside of Barnum’s doors.
* Keep FOH Crew quiet in the conference room. Sound travels.

**Post Show:**

* Turn on lobby lights, open doors, and turn on stair lights.
* Ushers must stay by their doors until the audience clears. Then, doors must be shut again.
* Tidy up the house. Your ushers will help you pick up trash, programs, and lost and found items.
* Once the audience has left, lock up all four lobby doors. All FOH crew members must check in with you before leaving the building.
* Return headsets to chargers in box office.
* Write detailed notes of your night in. Be sure to describe any incidents, however small, so that the Audience Services UGA and supervisor can be up to speed on the events of the night.
* Turn off Blade Light. Send someone outside to verify the light turns off.

**II. Usher Meeting Checklist**

Run through this list around 6 p.m. for a 7:30 p.m. show and around 11:30 a.m. for a 1 p.m. show.

* Discuss the importance of Front of House (comments about this on the next page)
  + Customer service – “Think like a patron”; “The customer is always right”, etc.
  + Ownership mentality – “How do I make this work?”; “No sitting or standing still”, etc.
* Check attire. If the dress code is violated, it is at your discretion to send an usher home to change. If the usher has an issue with this, I will back you up.
* Remind your ushers that they can work on homework in the conference room during the show and that they must change into uniform once in the theatre. We cannot wear our uniforms out of the theatre. Ushers may watch the show during the final dress rehearsal.
* Review assignments.
* Review specific duties:
  + Ushers:
    - Assign to doors.
    - Tear off little end of ticket and keep in basket.
    - Guide patrons to seats.
    - Open and close doors at beginning, intermission, and end of show.
    - Remind patrons to turn off electronic devices.
  + Body guards:
    - Keep people from walking on sets by escorting patrons around set pieces.
    - Distribute programs.
    - Guide patrons to seats. Try to guide them towards the center, so there is open seating on the ends for later arrivals.
  + Everyone/Floaters:
    - Help BOM or HM.
    - Assist patrons with questions or concerns in the lobby.
    - ADA Seating- Remember to take the patron to the bottom floor using the elevator. **Above All, respect the wishes of the patron.**
* Discuss signals or how you will communicate doors open, close, and time left until those events.
* Remind ushers to watch for congestion and to help patrons find seats if this occurs.
* Remind ushers of late seating procedures.
* “In case of audience disruption (e.g. Excessive talking or texting, alcohol or tobacco use, photography, etc.), please exercise your right to ask the patron to leave. If he or she will not leave, call Campus Security at extension 1711.”
* Ushers should help you do pre and post-show duties such as, taping off seats or seating, reserving chairs, sweep of theatre for trash, reset any seating, set up lobby, any cleaning, etc.

\* Note: Ushers are to stay until the end of the performance unless you as House Manager think they have a legitimate reason for leaving early. This is left to your discretion, but remember, less ushers means more work for you at the end of the night. Also, make note of ushers who left early and their reason and give this list to the Audience Services UGA.\*

You can assign them to whatever jobs you feel is wise. You will need

* 1 - 2 ushers at each of 2 doors (One of the ushers should receive the task of shutting off the lights outside of Barnum from the booth.)
* 1 will-call attendant
* 2 body guards
* 1 – 2 APO concessions (APO members if possible)

Make sure to impress upon your ushers the importance of Front of House. We want ushers to think for themselves and to take ownership of their roles. The ideal ushers consider the condition of the theatre from the perspective of a new patron and thinks to themselves “How do I make this work?” instead of “Nobody told me to do that.” Ushers are never idle. Following is a list of specific tasks for Front of House. Everyone should think about all of these, but assign each usher a few specific tasks. You are welcome to add to this list and delegate from your own duties. You should not feel rushed to complete numerous tasks but should have time to oversee the quality of work your fellow ushers are doing and to troubleshoot problems.

* Are the proper lights on and off?
* Is the lobby furniture arranged neatly?
* Is there any trash in the lobby, stairs, or hallways?
* Are the bathrooms clean? No trash on the floor? Sinks dry? Take out the trash if it gets ¾ full. (Extra bags are in the trashcans.)
* Is there dust on any surface? Look at lobby displays, water fountain, high and low, etc.\* (There are cleaning supplies in the box office cabinet under the window, or you can use paper towels and water.)
* How is the house? Walk through each row looking for trash, programs, and lost and found, and aligning the seats.\*
* Are all the necessary lobby signs up, neat, and in the right places? (check upstairs, main level, and downstairs)\*
* Walk through the building and check that everything looks “right”.
* Is there any trash in the parking lot?
* Before signaling for the doors to close, are there any patrons in the bathroom?
* Distribute baskets and programs to the other ushers.
* Flick the lights 5 minutes before the show starts and 5 minutes before intermission ends.
* Turn off lights outside of Barnum from the booth.
* Help out with ADA seating.

\*Tasks with an asterisk must be complete by 6:45 (or 12:15 for a matinee).

On the final dress rehearsal, you will need to train your crew. The final dress rehearsal will run just like the show, so you need to complete training by 6:00 p.m. so you can begin practicing a typical show night. This is the night for ushers to watch if they would like. I would like to observe your training session.

Below is the email you will send to your ushers. You may revise it slightly if you like. Please copy me at [tsboxoffice@simpson.edu](mailto:tsboxoffice@simpson.edu) on the email when you send it to your ushers.

**IV. Letter to the Ushers**

Hello ushers!  
  
You will be the first people our patrons will see upon entering the theater building and will possibly make the most lasting impression. We have always been complimented on our Front of House crew by patrons; we want to keep this reputation going. Please treat this responsibility accordingly.   
  
Please make sure that your nights are free for the final dress rehearsal on [*final dress date*] and performances on [*performance dates*] – strike that evening. It is essential that you are completely free during these times, and if there is a conflict let me know as soon as possible. Punctuality is important to keep the evening running smoothly.

Secondly, what to wear; (*This is up to your discretion, they must wear black and white, but in the past there have been those who are more lax - colored ties that aren’t too distracting for men, colored jewelry or scarf for women, grey allowed, etc. - and those who are more strict - white tops, black bottoms. This is ultimately your decision, just make sure they look professional and no one is obscene or going to cause a scene. As the House Manager, you have the right to send people to change if they do not adhere to wearing appropriate attire*. *If you are unsure what to require for attire, come talk to me.*)

Lastly, we will have a meeting to go over your specific duties before each performance. We will meet for training on [*final dress date*] at 5:30 p.m. in the lobby.  
  
Please respond to this email letting me know that you

1) Received it

2) Have no conflicts.  
  
Thanks so much!  
Your Friendly House Manager,

[Your name here]