

Stage Managing, Grinder Style

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DATES FOR THIS WORKSHOP!

Stage Managers are the most over-worked, under-appreciated people in theatre. As a former stage manager myself, I know this to be true. I also know that at Grinder Productions Stage Managers will always be asked to take on responsibility and to do a good job, but they will also be rewarded for their efforts. And as we are desperate for stage managers anyone who successfully completes this two-week course will be **guaranteed** an offer of paid production stage managing work on a future show, either this season or in 07-08 (see ad below for more information on this position).

Details: October 10th and 12th from 7pm - 10pm at the Rehearsal hall.

We will cover all aspects of stage management, from preparation to rehearsals to calling a show. From who to talk to, when things need to be done, and tips for solving common problems the goal of this course is to provide stage managers with a format that is practical, simple and adaptable to personal style.

Cost: \$50 per participant, which will include some written materials.

E-mail grinder@grinderproductions.org or call 519 843-5999 or 519 787-1981 to register. Book early, as class size will be limited.

Notes from the Director's Chair

Happy Thanksgiving, everyone!

Grinder Productions is moving forward. Our first show of the fall season, *Absurd Person Singular*, was a box office success, solidly in the black. Thank-you to everyone who helped make this show possible.

Our second show, *Wuthering Heights*, shows great promise as well. You may have heard of our Thanks-giving promotion, and seen the post-card sized flyers around town. Anyone who brings in one of these cards before October 13th will receive \$4 off of a pair of tickets to the show. Please tell everyone you know about this offer, and encourage them to get out and see this wonderful story.

Our workshop series kicked off on September 23rd and 24th with "Acting for Beginners" and continues this month with "Stage Managing, Grinder Style." Please get in touch with me soon if you're interested in this course.

Renovations at the rehearsal hall are coming along nicely as well. We now have a tarp overhead to keep out the bird droppings, plastic over the walls to keep out the wind, and we've just finished installing the washroom. More and better lighting is now in place, and most importantly with the cold weather fast approaching, we are bringing in some space heaters this week. Throughout the fall we'll finish organizing the space to make it as "rehearsal-friendly" as possible, as well as set up the shop and props/costume storage areas. And while we didn't get to have a rehearsal-warming party there this fall watch for announcements in our upcoming newsletters about a get together in the spring, when I hope we'll really have something to celebrate.

A number of other activities are in the early stages of their development. In the November newsletter I'll be able to tell you more about some of the stuff we have planned for the Holiday season, a new project for our youngest members, and make a very exciting announcement about our 2007 summer season.

And... (drum roll please)

It is with great pleasure that I announce that I am overwhelmed by the amount of work that Grinder Productions has become. We are now large enough and successful enough that I can't manage all the marketing and production duties myself, as generous as the assistance of all of you, the members, has been in both these areas. Therefore, I believe the time has come for me to hire a couple of part-time assistants. These positions will be on a contract basis, with one in charge of marketing, and the

What the heck is he talking about?

Terms, definitions, jokes and other miscellany from the world of live performance

1642: The only date they still make you learn in Theatre History. That year Oliver Cromwell and the rulers of the British Commonwealth, having beheaded the king, began a systematic crackdown on all things un-Godly, which included closing down all public and private theatres and theatre companies (which were considered little more respectable than brothels at the time). From 1642 until the Restoration theatre was an illegal activity, carried on in secret, in quiet corners, basements and other clandestine locations.

Working backstage on a show? It's essential that you have a small flashlight with you at all times. But you don't want the beam of your light splashing all over the stage. Here's a tip; get a piece of blue gel from the lighting person and tape it over the lens of your flashlight. You'll still be able to see fine, but without the harsh, white light.

Vomitorium: This is a rather creative term for a hallway that leads from the stage or auditorium to backstage. I don't know why it has been given this name.

Words of wisdom from a seasoned stage manager when the going gets tough:

Find the love.

And if you can't do that...

Enjoy the pain.

We still need an Assistant Stage Manager (or 2!) for *Wuthering Heights!*

Come on out and join in the fun. No experience necessary.

Please e-mail grinder@grinderproductions.org

other working as a "Production Stage Manager" (a Production Stage Manager is basically a regular stage manager with more responsibilities). These are contract positions that are given out on a "Show-by-Show" basis, though I would like them to become more or less permanent in the near future. I will be putting ads in the paper in a couple of weeks time (the first openings will coincide with the start of rehearsals for *Everyman*) but I am including both job descriptions in this newsletter in case any members are interested in applying as well, or if anyone knows people who might be good candidates, please feel free to pass this information along. Anyone can apply, including students.

Well, I'm being rather long-winded this month, aren't I? So until next time, take care, and hopefully we'll see you all out at *Wuthering Heights*.

Eric

Final Report: Bordertown Café

The second and final show of our summer season closed on a dark and stormy September night, to much acclaim. With the largest cast and the most complicated set we've had in the library the show was an exciting challenge to stage. The numbers weren't quite as high as they were for *Owl and the Pussycat* (though they came very close) and they still surpassed last year's offering, *Butterflies Are Free*, allowing us to boast a doubling of our attendance this year. Thank-you to all who were involved on this show, and watch for more information about next summer's season at the library in our November newsletter.

Final Report: Absurd Person Singular

The first show of our fall and winter season was a blast! By our own admission, we weren't trying to go for too much depth on this one, but the audiences didn't mind, howling with laughter, gasping at our agonies, and cajoling us back onstage for an encore on the Saturday night. The memorable moment though has to be Friday, when in the middle of Act Three the storm that had been pounding Fergus since the show began finally took out power to all of main street, and left us sitting in the dark for about twenty minutes. The power did return, and we did finish the show for those who remained, though we offered anyone who wished it a free ticket to the Saturday night show. That night we were truly "Dancing in the Dark."

Progress Report: Wuthering Heights

Rehearsals are well under way for the second show of our season, the epic romance *Wuthering Heights*. This show certainly is a biggie, not only in terms of its story but in terms of its set. Re-creating the pre-Victorian look and feel has been a fun challenge for us, and one that has been instrumental in helping us take the show to new levels. With a talented, versatile cast in place, and just over three weeks to go to opening night, I think we're going to have a stellar production.

Website Update

Additions and repairs continue as I try and figure out the finer points of WYSIWYG site-building software! I should have everything up to date by the end of the month, as well as the new pages completed. If anyone has any digital photos out there that they wouldn't mind sharing I'd love to put them in our "Past Shows" area of the website. I'm also trying to get the Grinder Productions blog up and running, so that we can have an online chat and assistance forum in place for future productions.

Acting Workshops

Our first workshops of the year, "Acting for Beginners" took place on September 23rd and 24th. We gained several new members over the two days, many of whom I have added to the *Everyman* company to get them involved right away. I was also happy to see some of our current members come out and further develop their skills as well, something I always like to encourage, as the best actors and theatre people never stop trying to learn new things.

Help Wanted

Here are the two job descriptions for the openings I mentioned earlier. Please feel free to pass them along to anyone who might be interested.

Position 1: Marketing Coordinator

Reporting to the Creative and Executive Director, the Marketing Coordinator will be responsible for delegating, supervising, and completing marketing and marketing-related tasks on a show-by-show basis, responsible for implementing the company's basic marketing plan for a given show, as well as any "show-specific" marketing initiatives that may arise.

The ideal candidate will be energetic, outgoing, creative and undaunted by the ever-changing challenges of live theatre, possess excellent computer skills, good telephone etiquette and be able to work independently. Previous marketing experience would be an asset, but this position is also ideal for students and those looking for a new type of experience.

This position will be on a "per-show" basis, running from the time of engagement (usually the first rehearsal) to closing night (most often this will be a period of seven weeks, however longer and shorter engagements may arise from time to time). Compensation will be \$200 per contract.

Position 2: Production Stage Manager

Reporting to the Creative and Executive Director, the Production Stage Manager will be responsible for delegating, supervising, and completing all production-related tasks on a show-by-show basis, implementing the company's basic production schedule for a given show, and acting as the stage manager for duration of the production.

The ideal candidate will be organized, thoughtful, creative and undaunted by the ever-changing challenges of live theatre. No knowledge of theatre production techniques is required as we will train. Must be available for all rehearsals and shows. This position is suitable for students.

This position will be on a "per-show" basis, running from the time of engagement (usually just before the first rehearsal) to just after closing night (most often this will be a period of eight weeks, however longer and shorter engagements may arise from time to time). Compensation will be \$200 per contract.

Persons interested in either position should drop off resumes at the Fergus Grand Theatre box office no later than Friday, October 13th. Resumes can also be e-mailed to grinder@grinderproductions.org and successful candidates will be contacted for interview the week of September 16th – 21st with the first contract commencing October 29th.

