



POLKA

Where Theatre Begins

Production
KS3, KS4 & KS5

What Does a Production Team Do?

The Production Team are responsible for designing, making, setting up and running all the technical elements of a show.

What do you think this might include?



What Does a Production Team Do?

- Lighting
- Sound (including microphones)
- Projections
- Sets
- Costumes
- Props
- Wigs, Hair & Makeup



Who is in a Production Team?

There are lots of people who make up a production team. Some of these will have permanent jobs at one venue, but the majority are freelance. This means they are only contracted to work at a theatre for a specific production, and will then move on somewhere else!



At the Theatre

Head of Production

In charge of overseeing all production work in a venue, including scheduling, hiring crew, and managing budgets.

Production Manager

In charge of co-ordinating the technical elements of specific productions.

Duty Technician

In charge of making sure everything is running of a daily basis - and fixing it if it breaks!



Freelance

- Stage Managers
- Lighting Designers & Operators
- Set Designers & Builders
- Prop Makers
- Composers
- Sound Designers & Engineers
- Costume Designers
- Wardrobe
- Wigs, Hair and Makeup
- Dressers
- Pyrotechnicians, Armourers & more!



Appealing to a Young Audience

As a children's theatre, it's important that the technical elements of our shows appeal to children, as well as the scripts!

For example, we might use brightly coloured costume to capture the attention, or use softer sounds for shows for babies and toddlers.



Over to You!

Today, you're going to focus on lighting.

As Polka is a children's theatre, we'll be exploring how you can make lighting design playful!

If you're currently working on your own devised piece, you can use that. Otherwise, use an excerpt from a play you have seen, read or studied recently.



Let's Play a Game!

To begin exploring playful lighting, we're going to play a game.

To play this game, you will need:

- To get your room as dark as possible.
- Hand-held torches.



Let's Play a Game!

In pairs you're going to play a game of hide and seek in the dark.

- Take it in turns to hide and to seek.
- Every time you find your partner, swap!

Once you've played for a few minutes, half the pairs can sit down and form an audience.

Watch the other pairs play, then swap so everyone gets a go.

What did you notice?



Lighting a Scene

Now you're going to have a go at lighting a scene.

Choose a short excerpt from your play/devised piece that you'd like to try lighting with torches.



Questions to Consider

- How can you use lighting to reveal props, characters or other elements at opportune moments?
- How can you utilise shadows, or even shadow puppetry?
- How can you use the angle of your torch to add drama to your scene?





Performance Time!

Perform your scene to the rest of your class.
How have lighting choices changed the meaning or feel of the piece?

Hear from the Professional

Fergus O'Loan - Duty Technician

Describe your job in one sentence.

It is my responsibility to make sure the technical elements, (lights, sound, set and video) are up and running on a daily basis, and to fix them if (and when!) they break.

What are the top three skills you need for your job?

- Calm under pressure. When things break, or when something needs doing quickly in tech, you need a cool head to keep everyone else calm, and to quickly solve the problem.
- A methodical approach. Whether you're fixing a mic that's popping in a show, or you're trying to provide a designer a fix to their problem, it helps to think in a workflow. If a problem happens, try x, if not, try y, if not, try z. Hope you don't run out of letters! Also a willingness to learn and adapt this approach.
- Good interpersonal skills! It's a sorely overlooked part of the job, but theatre is a collaborative art form! On a day-

to-day basis, stage managers and duty managers will be looking to you for technical fixes. Getting on with them is crucial to smooth running of operations, so be nice!

Are there any specific qualifications or experience you need to be able to do your job?

Yes, probably more so than most, but know-how, practical experience, and attitude are as important, if not more, than formal qualifications! I have a Drama and English degree, but that's doesn't stop me knowing how to calculate power distribution, tie hauling lines, and run miles of pixel tape. Qualifications can be a nice short cut to those skills, but you will always be learning on the job.

What is your favourite part of your job?

When you get to the end of an often gruelling and arduous process of tech, and you look back on all the fruits of your hard effort, hear that first kid burst out in laughter or gasp in surprise.

Hear from the Professional

Fergus O'Loan - Duty Technician (cont'd)

So often I will finish tech, completely shattered, and sit in on that first show. I'll hear that audience's reaction, their jubilation and awe, and think to myself, "That. That's what we do it for." And, for better or worse, that makes it all worthwhile.

Do you have any advice or words of wisdom for a young person hoping to pursue a career in your field?

It's a hard job that will ask a lot of you; long hours, a unique combination of physical, mental and creative effort; it can be stressful, frustrating, even. But therein lies the joy of it. You get to look at the magic of a show and say "That was awesome! I wonder how they did it. In fact, I'm going to work it out. In fact, I'm going to replicate it here. In fact, I'm going to make it better!" It's immensely rewarding; it flexes every part of you in different ways, everyday.

As for actual advice, I would say just get stuck in, from whenever you can. If your school has a drama program, talk

to your teacher about stage management and technical; if you have a local drama group, talk to someone about your interest backstage. I didn't get really involved til university, through my degree and drama club. Studying technical theatre will give you a leg up, but it's hardly necessary. The ABTT, the Association of British Theatre Technicians is a terrific resource for training, apprenticeships, and early careers; absolutely check them out, they are an invaluable resource.





Want to learn more about careers in theatre?

Head to polkatheatre.com to find out about Work Experience.