



## OSA RENTAL GROUP HANDBOOK

*Revised 9/09*

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## INTRO

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This manual is intended to inform and assist Washington University Student Groups who will be renting or would like to rent Edison Theatre for their productions. The Edison Staff understands that the various renting organizations and their representatives have levels of technical experience as varied as the productions that they intend to put on. For those who have significant production experience, this manual should be a helpful guide to Edison's specific house policies and procedures. For the more novice producer(s), this manual should, we hope, explain some of the preliminary work that goes into a production, assist you in planning your production, and explain what the Edison tech staff needs from you to make your production run smoothly and successfully.

It is our sincere hope that your experience in Edison Theatre will be enjoyable and productive, and we take seriously our goal to facilitate a problem-free, successful production by each of our renters. We look forward to working with you to make your audience happy.

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## **EDISON THEATRE: THE FACILITY and PRODUCTION PHILOSOPHY**

Edison Theatre is the type of theatrical venue known as a professional roadhouse, referring to the fact that producing organizations bring in a complete show from the road, set it up, perform, and pack it up and hit the road again. While we don't believe we've seen an OSA group take its show on tour, the point is, we assist groups in mounting their *produced, packaged* shows. That is, your show should be almost entirely complete before your first day of technical rehearsal onstage in Edison. It should not be the case that your show is brought to Edison's stage with large gaps in it that you plan on "figuring out" when you get here (we'll talk more about this later).

It is also important to know that Edison Theatre is only part of the Mallinckrodt Center. Edison is neither the sole inhabitant, nor solely in control of this building. It is a separate entity from, but closely connected to, the WU Performing Arts Department. The scene shop, costume shop, and performing spaces upstairs (Hotchner Drama and Mertz Dance Studios) all have their own productions and their own schedules, and are likely to be in full swing during your rental of Edison. As a result it is important to understand that there are times when dressing room areas must be shared to facilitate concurrent productions. Things might get hectic or frustrating with all this activity, but remember, the good news is that all these people have the same goal: *to put on a great show for their audience*. Please be considerate of other productions occurring at the same time as you and make an effort to control your group's noise level.

All shows are important to Edison's Tech Staff because they are important to the group producing them. We want to help you have the best show possible. Since we were not involved in the creative team that conceived your show, **it is extremely important that we be informed of all the many needs of the show well in advance of its actual move-in to the theater**. These needs include calendars and schedules, as well as lists of all resources, both human and equipment (within our crew and inventory). This way, we can prepare in advance the proper support to accomplish your goals. Something that might be very simple to accomplish with advance warning and staff could be much more difficult, and in some cases impossible, when requested at the last minute.

Edison Theatre's Tech Staff is responsible for everything that occurs onstage or backstage in support areas. Talk to us about the stage, technical concerns – lights, sound, scenery, curtains, etc, the Green Room, the dressing rooms, the loading dock, and any other production support. We do not oversee the House (audience seating area), lobby, box office, ticket sales, or any other Front of House concerns. These things should be taken care of with the Edison Operations Manager, Bill Larson (for pre-show concerns), or the House Manager (on the day or night of a production).

Mounting a full-blown production be daunting and can be overwhelming. Even professional production companies can get frustrated in an unfamiliar space. The goal of this manual is to make the entire process, from the first Production Meeting to the final performance, as user-friendly, understandable and with as few surprises, as possible.

## GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

- **ILLEGAL SUBSTANCES:** No alcoholic beverages or controlled substances are allowed anywhere in Mallinckrodt Center. Possession shall be just cause for immediate expulsion from the theater and is, of course, subject to all applicable state and federal laws. In addition, this is a non-smoking building.
- **FIRE / FLAME:** The use of flame onstage is very strictly controlled and **must be approved by the Edison Theatre Tech Staff, as well as the Clayton Fire Chief and the University's Safety Officer.** If you plan to use flame in your production, be prepared to present a written detail of each and every use ONE MONTH prior to your production. It is never acceptable for a performer to move with an open flame; all candles must have drip guards or cups surrounding them, to avoid dripping on the floor, curtains, or other furniture or equipment. As an alternative, The Edison can provide battery operated candles. These must be returned in their entirety each night in order to be borrowed the next night.

Additionally, no flame, incense, or candles are allowed backstage, in the dressing rooms or in the Green Room.
- **FOOD/DRINKS:** No food or drinks are allowed onstage or in the house. All food/drinks should be confined to the Green Room, dressing rooms, or Schoenberg Gallery. Please stress this with your cast and crew. To avoid an additional cleaning charge, all members of renting group must be responsible for throwing trash/wrappers/containers away at the end of each rental day. Any candy or gum stuck to furniture or stains on carpet will result in an additional cleaning charge on the final bill.
- **CHILDREN:** If your production includes children, adequate supervision/chaperoning **must** be provided by your group. Children are never allowed to wander the stage, backstage or shop areas. If your production involves children, the Tech Staff must be informed in advance.
- **ANIMALS:** Animals are not allowed in the theater. If your production involves the use of an animal, this **must** be discussed with the Tech Staff and the university safety officer.
- **BROADCAST/RECORDING:** Edison Theatre is not responsible for broadcasting any video or audio signal to a venue outside the theater. For your performers' convenience, there are audio monitors in each dressing room, and a video monitor in the Green Room.

If you plan to video record your production, Edison's Tech Staff must be informed at least 1 week prior to the first performance. All videotaping personnel must arrive at least 60 minutes before the opening of the house (house opens 30 minutes prior to show, so personnel must arrive 2 hours before the show). Videotaping personnel arriving after this time will **not** be allowed to tape that performance.

Whenever possible, all cameras should be operated on batteries. Any cables must be routed so as not to interfere with audience traffic, which the Edison staff can

- assist with. All cameras must be positioned behind the last row of chairs, unless otherwise previously approved with the Edison Operations Manager. If you will need an audio feed to any cameras from the Edison sound system, such requests must be made no later than the Monday prior to the first performance.
- **DEFACEMENT / DAMAGE OF FACILITY:** Renting group will be responsible for any damage to the facility and its equipment. This includes nails or screws in the stage floor, gauges or holes in the stage floor, lighting or sound equipment damaged by performers, damage to Green Room furniture or stains on the carpet, makeup/fingernail polish/etc marks in the Green Room, or any other damage to the facility inflicted during the rental period by members or guests of the renting group.
  - **POTENTIALLY DAMAGING EQUIPMENT:** A complete list of all scenery, props or activity that is potentially damaging to the facility must be given to the Tech Staff during production meetings. This might include drumming on the floor, wearing tap dancing or other character shoes, throwing any objects, or dragging heavy props or scenery. No tap or character shoes are allowed on the Marley dance floor.
  - **GUESTS BACKSTAGE:** Guests are not allowed past the proscenium line before, during or after a performance for any reason. This is a safety issue. Onstage lighting fixtures get very warm, and staging areas can be dangerous for the unfamiliar. Edison's stage crew must be able to do its work safely and without obstruction. Additionally, no guests may use the back stairway to gain access to the dressing room, Green Room or hallway areas. This would pose traffic problems and makes it harder for Edison's staff to identify persons who don't belong, increasing the chance of theft. All performers should be instructed by the renting group's representatives that they should gather their things and meet guests in the Edison lobby, Schoenberg Gallery or other public areas in or around Mallinckrodt Center.
  - **CONTROL OF PREMISES:** Edison Theatre's Staff retains control of all persons, employed by Edison or by renting group and all equipment within the facility at all times.
  - **CONTROL OF STAGE EQUIPMENT:** Edison Theatre's Tech Staff and student Crew members are solely permitted to operate any stage equipment used in production. All rigging, lighting, sound equipment and rental equipment will be operated solely by the Staff or Crew.
  - **SECURITY OF VALUABLES:** Edison Theatre can not be responsible for any valuables lost or damaged in the dressing room, the Green Room or onstage. We recommend that no valuables be brought to Edison Theatre. You may also request that your Stage Manager gather performers' valuables and secure them during the performance.
  - **STAFFING:** The Tech Staff retains the right to determine the appropriate staffing level for any event, with the understanding that the renting group bears the cost of all crew labor put forth on behalf of its production. The minimum crew for **any** event is **THREE** (3) stagehands – light board operator, sound board operator and deck crew.

Other possible crew positions for a given production include: spotlight operator(s), add'l stagehands, flyrail operators, video operator, etc.

- **PERFORMERS IN HOUSE:** During technical rehearsals, performers are **not** allowed to be in the house. Only directors, execs, stage management personnel, choreographers, designers, and the Edison Staff and Crew will be allowed in the house. This serves to keep tech moving and keeps the theater clean. Performers must wait backstage or in Schoenberg Gallery until stage management calls them. It is also advisable to distribute to performers a staggered schedule of when each show segment will rehearse. This will make the most efficient use of your time in the theatre and reduce delays.
- **PERFORMERS ONSTAGE:** During tech and performances, only performers in the segment of the performance about to go on stage will be allowed to wait in the onstage wings. Other performers should watch the video monitor in the Green Room. This is essential for safety of your cast and crew, and to ensure that the Edison tech Crew can do their jobs. It is also a presentation issue, as audience members in the house can see groups of performers in the wings. If Edison's Tech Staff deems it necessary to add a crew member to control admittance to the stage, this labor cost will be billed to the renting group.
- **HAZERS AND FOGGERS:** If you plan to use haze or fog effects in your production, it must be requested one month prior to your production. There can be no last minute additions due to fire alarm arrangements.

## ACCESS

- **RENTAL DAY:** Rental of Edison Theatre entitles renting group up to 10 hours in the theater per day, between 9am and midnight. Unused hours do not roll over. Days lasting longer than 10 hours will result in additional labor and facility charges as outlined in the Schedule of Fees.
- **KEYS TO FACILITY:** Keys will not be made available to any renting group's performers or producers. Access to all necessary areas will be given by Edison's Tech Staff and can not be gained through other sources such as housekeeping or Performing Arts Dept staff.
- **SCHEDULES:** During production meetings, based on the renting group's needs, we will agree upon scheduled times that the group's cast and crew will be in the theater and backstage areas. This is used to schedule the tech Crew and therefore must be agreed and set three weeks in advance of the first load-in day. Any changes to the agreed-upon rehearsal or work times must be approved by the Edison Tech Staff in writing **48 hours in advance of scheduled times**. The Edison Staff has the right to refuse any changes. Even approved changes may result in additional crew labor and facility charges.
- **PROGRAM LENGTH:** Please remember that the **maximum length** for any production, including intermission, late starts, and all program material, is **3 hours**.
- **GREEN ROOM / DRESSING ROOMS:** Renters of Edison Theatre will receive access to the Green Room for the duration of their rental. The Green Room has a refrigerator, a microwave, a phone, and tables and chairs. Each production will be assigned dressing rooms based on its needs and on the needs of other groups using performance spaces in Mallinckrodt. Please stress with your group that the Green Room is OFF LIMITS to all makeup and hair styling as well as scenery and prop construction and painting.
- **IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW:**
  - \* Renters are responsible for straightening the Green Room and removing their property at the end of each weekday rental day, as this room is still used for meetings during the week. At the end of the weekend/production run, the Green Room should be returned to the state in which it was found.
  - \* For all subsequent performances after opening night, the stage, Green Room, and dressing rooms will be opened no earlier than 2.5 hours before curtain. Special circumstances may be discussed with the Tech Staff. Remember, arrival times must still be scheduled and cannot be changed with less than 48 hours notice.
  - \* After each performance, the Green Room, dressing rooms and stage area will be closed and locked **30 minutes** after the end of the show or midnight, whichever is first. Items left inside will be secure but unavailable until the next day's scheduled arrival time. Please do not call Campus Police if you find you left something in one of these rooms. Please wait until the next day and contact Edison Staff.
  - \* After the final performance, the Green Room and dressing rooms will also be closed and locked **30 minutes** after the end of the show or midnight, whichever is

first. This will necessitate an organized and well-populated strike on the part of the renting group. The stage area may remain open longer if necessary to accomplish the removal of all scenery and props.

\* Following the final performance, all costumes, props, scenery, etc must be removed from the theater's areas. Large or hanging items, or items requiring special rigging may be allowed to stay for future pickup, at the discretion of the Edison Tech Staff, but this must be communicated in advance. Any pickup or removal costs are the renters' responsibility. A hauling/disposal fee will be assessed if the Edison Staff must remove items from the building.

- **SECURITY:** While the Green Room, dressing rooms and stage area are locked each night, the hallways are not secured areas. Edison Theatre will not be responsible for any props, costumes or scenery left in the backstage hallways. Renters should check before leaving each night that all items are locked in a dressing room or onstage. Edison Theatre is not responsible for personal items left in the dressing rooms, Green Room or other theater areas. Renting groups should see that valuables are left at home or gathered by a responsible party from the renting organization, such as a stage manager, each night before performers take the stage.

## **PRODUCTION MEETINGS**

### **WHAT, WHEN, WHY**

Each renting group is required to have a preliminary meeting approximately 2 months prior to its production. This will involve a member of Edison's Tech Staff, Edison's Operations Manager and representatives of the renting group. This should also include a technical representative of the renting group. This meeting will serve to fill in calendars, get a broad outline of the production and take care of box office and contract issues.

Depending on the level of information available from the renter, this may be the only required production meeting. However, more often, this initial meeting will be a chance to ask questions and explore some options for production elements not yet confirmed and a second meeting with the Tech Staff will be needed approximately one month prior to the production.

### **INFORMATION YOU BRING TO PRODUCTION MEETINGS**

The Edison Tech Staff will be asking for the technical needs of your production. Please remember that in renting Edison Theatre, you are renting empty seats, bare walls, and a blank stage. You must communicate **all** your needs to the Tech Staff in order for us to help you put together a fully-realized technical production.

Each renting group will be asked to answer detailed questions regarding its need for:

- \*curtains / masking
- \*sound playback and microphones
- \*lighting needs
- \*staging areas
- \*video projection / recording
- \*crew needs
- \*program content
- \*dressing room space requirements for men and women

Rental groups will also be asked to submit the names of their stage manager and lighting designer and if applicable, scenic/sound/video designers **6 weeks prior to load-in.**

### **COSTS / BUDGETING**

The information you provide will be used to provide an estimate of costs and to efficiently prepare for your production. Providing as much information as possible benefits your production and your audience.

We understand that some groups operate under strict budget constraints, and we will work with you to maximize efficient use of Edison's resources.

## **PRODUCTION PERSONNEL**

*who you provide, who we provide, and what they do*

You are coming to Edison Theatre to present a themed, cohesive and interesting production for your audience. Our goal is to provide a professional quality experience for your audience and your organization. This section is intended to help explain what each renting group must have to bring a production to Edison Theatre. It will also explain what personnel Edison Theatre's Tech Crew will supply and what the various people do.

### ***What You Provide...***

→ **Artistic Direction:** Sounds fancy, but what this means is that you have a solid and thought-out idea for your production, an overall feeling/theme/flow that you want to communicate to your audience. This must be decided upon before your Production Meetings with the Edison Staff.

→ **A Cast:** This is also decided on and worked out before your show arrives.

→ **A Show:** This is also determined before you arrive in Edison. That's right; your show must be completely scripted before you arrive in Edison. With the exception of what your lighting will actually look like in the final product, the producers/directors should be able to step through your entire show verbally and/or in writing.

\*This includes shifting from segment to segment and details such as –

...who moves this table, and does (s)he take it off stage left or stage right?

...does an MC speak after this skit?

...what do the lights and sounds do?

\*This includes the length and pacing of your show –

...is there an intermission? How long will it be?

\*It includes the words spoken by each cast member from the beginning of the show until the final curtain –

\*It includes how the stage is used –

...when only the MC is onstage, where do they stand?

...for our dance number with 30 people in it, what area of the stage is covered?

...where does each piece of scenery and prop go when it is onstage and does it store offstage?

Essentially, you should be able to come to your production meeting and give us the following kinds of detail:

#### *Preshow:*

*coffee shop scene onstage: one table stage right, one stage left, each has 2 chairs*

*main curtain is CLOSED*

*house opens, music played: Vanilla Ice's Greatest Hits*

*house lights go to half*

*house lights go out*

*music fades out*

*curtain OPENS*

*MC walks on as stage lights come up. He should have wireless mic #1.*

*Blackout.*

In the back you'll find a form which might help you "step through" your show and get a mental picture of how the real thing will play out. This may seem like a lot of preliminary work, but it will only help your production run more smoothly.

## **WHO MAKES THIS HAPPEN?**

### *Who you must provide...*

1. A **Stage Manager**. This is the all-around organizational brain center of your production.

#### *What does a Stage Manager (SM) do?*

During the weeks leading up to a theatrical production, the Stage Manager runs all rehearsals, coordinating with actors and directors and keeps track of all information going in and out of the show, from each designer, each producer, director, choreographer, actor, etc. We know that often with student group rentals, much of this responsibility is distributed among your group's leadership, since they are with the group year-round. Therefore, your SM may not have this level of responsibility, but will most likely be at several rehearsals and be the person most familiar with the moment-to-moment running of your show.

During your technical rehearsals and the actual performances, the SM "calls the show". This means that during the week, the SM has been making notes on his/her script for when each music cue, light cue, scene shift, and line of dialogue is spoken. The SM uses this information to tell the Edison tech Crew (light board and sound board operators, spotlight operators, deckhands, etc) when to do their various assigned tasks for the production. This is called "calling the show".

#### *What do you communicate to your SM?*

The SM is the person completely in control of your show once performance time comes. So you must find an SM who is organized, in control and whom you can trust to handle your show. During a performance, if your actors are expecting a blackout to leave the stage at the end of a scene and the lights stay on, no one but the stage manager can instruct the light board operator to go out. Thus, your SM must have every piece of information about how your show should run. You should provide your SM with an accurate, updated script as early as possible and stick to it. Sometimes, a certain sound effect or lighting change will be attached to a certain line of dialogue. If your actor misses the line or the line has changed or a new line was added or the sound effect was scrapped altogether, and your SM didn't get the memo, you might have an awkward pause onstage.

#### *What does the SM communicate to the Edison Staff?*

The Stage Manager, as mentioned above, will be the person to call your show, giving the SM control over the timing and overall flow of the show. In addition, the Stage Manager, perhaps in conjunction with the producers, will be responsible for communicating the scheduling needs of each production with the Edison Tech Staff. This might include determining the timing/layout of your rehearsals, what time each cast member is required to be at rehearsals, what time the Edison tech Crew is needed for rehearsals and performances, and other scheduling and organizational concerns.

The name of your Stage Manager should be given to the Edison Tech Staff at the first production meeting, approximately two months prior to your production. **Your SM must**

**report all crew needs** (positions to be filled and times each is needed) **3 weeks prior to the production.**

2. An **Assistant Stage Manager**. Some productions will require an assistant stage manager to manage the backstage activities in communication with the SM. This needs to be determined during the first pre-production meeting.

3. A **Lighting Designer**. This person is responsible for what your show will look like.

*What does a Lighting Designer do?*

The process of lighting a theatrical presentation is much more involved than might be expected by those unfamiliar with the process. In a creative sense, any director, choreographer or producer might consider him or herself a “lighting designer”, because they are communicating what they would like to see, describing what it *should* look like. In the real world, a lighting designer takes that info and makes it a physical reality. This person handles the math and science behind creating what you want to see.

The Edison has many different *kinds* of lighting fixtures. They put out a different sized pools of light at different distances, with varying levels of brightness and with varying qualities of light. The designer must determine which ones will accomplish and balance all the desired lighting effects with Edison’s inventory of available fixtures.

The lighting designer also brings the technical knowledge of how to program our computerized light console in order to script and record the lighting of your show.

*What do you communicate with the Lighting Designer (LD)?*

When we say above that the lighting designer is responsible for what your show looks like, it’s the truth. It won’t matter who is in your cast, what costumes they wear, or what scenery or props you bring in; without lights shining (on each and every important aspect), none of this will be seen. Therefore, it is important that you instruct your lighting designer regarding everything you want and do not want seen. Sometimes what is not lit can be as important as what is. The lighting designer is responsible for keeping dark or shadowy areas invisible until the appropriate time to reveal them.

In order to accomplish his/her objectives, the lighting designer must have all relevant information from the producers. The LD must know what scenery is being hung and where, what scenery will be onstage and where, where each dance number or skit segment happens, where each MC speaks from, and so on. If your audience can’t see something, it may as well not be there. Plan carefully. Changes can cost time and money.

*What does your LD communicate to the Edison Staff?*

The LD is responsible for providing Edison with a **light plot**. This is a spatial drawing of the Edison Theater, with indications for where each and every light used will be hung, and how it will be programmed into the computer lightboard. On occasion the LD may be asked to work with the previously hung light plot. On these occasions, instead of designating where each light will be hung and what type, they will only change focus, color and channeling unless something must be added or altered. The light plot that will be adjusted will be given to the LD asap.

The LD will also supply all related paperwork – a channel hookup, an instrument schedule, color schedule, and other information needed by the tech Crew to implement the design for the production. **The plot and paperwork must be submitted to the Edison Tech Staff 3 weeks prior to the production.** The LD can acquire a blank ground plan and side

section of the Edison from the Tech Staff or from the Edison Theatre website at <http://edisontheatre.wustl.edu>, under the “**Technical Specifications**” page. Also there are the “Technical Specifications”, which include a list of all available lighting inventory. For equipment not found in inventory, the Staff is happy to try to help rental groups locate rental equipment from local vendors.

The LD will work with the Edison tech Crew in the days before the first technical rehearsal to focus the lights in his/her plot. During technical rehearsals, the LD will be onsite at all times, instructing the light board operator on how to program the looks for each segment of the show.

The name, email and phone number of your Lighting Designer should be given to the Edison Tech Staff at the first production meeting, approximately two months prior to your production.

***Additional tech personnel you might provide...***

4. A **Scenic Designer**. This person is responsible for the planning and construction of your scenic elements. This role may or may not be necessary, depending on the extent to which scenery is used in your production. At the very least, someone in the renting group should determine, likely in conjunction with the lighting designer and choreographers, two things regarding the Edison stage:

- \*will the apron be used in the up or down position?
  - maybe it is raised to stage level for additional performance area?
  - maybe it is floor level for additional seating?
  - maybe it is lowered for use as an orchestra pit?
- \*how will the masking curtains be placed?
  - consider entrances and exits,
  - consider blocking views into the backstage area
  - consider how and where scenery moves in and out of the performance area

Please consult the section entitled “SCENERY” for more detailed information and rules regarding the use of scenery in Edison Theatre. Your Scenic Designer is expected to consult with the Edison Tech staff prior to construction of your set pieces.

If applicable, the name of your Scenic Designer should be given to the Edison Tech Staff at the first production meeting, approximately two months prior to your production.

*What does a scenic designer do?*

A scenic designer is someone trained in the construction materials and methods common to theatrical or event scenery. This person will use your descriptions of what scenic elements you feel are necessary, and devise plans to build and implement the scenery, considering issues of construction, painting, rigging, masking, floor space, safety, and budget, among other things.

*What do you communicate with your scenic designer?*

The scene designer will need all available information from you regarding what scenic elements you would like to see, where they will be placed, where they will be hung (if applicable), how they will be hung (if applicable), how and where the cast members in the show will move around them, etc. The scene designer can then use this information to plan the use of the stage, backstage and overstage areas.

*What does your scenic designer communicate to the Edison Staff?*

Special Note: The scene designer will provide full construction drawings of any items to be built with details as to paint covering, materials, attachment methods, etc. The scenic designer will work with and in some cases modify these plans to meet the Staff's requirements for safe, workable scenery.

Special Note: All scenic elements should be thoroughly discussed beginning as early as is desired by the producers/designer. **All drawings and plans must be approved by the Edison Tech Staff 3 weeks prior to load-in.** Any scenic elements arriving at the theater not built according to plan, or not finished will not be allowed to be used for the production. Please refer to the section entitled "SCENERY" for further information.

5. A **Sound Designer**. This person would be responsible for providing all music and sound effects used in your production and determining microphone needs. Generally speaking, this information can be determined by the directors/producers and the Edison Staff, making this position less critical. Nevertheless, if you feel your needs are particularly complex, this is a person you might wish to acquire.

Whether you have a Sound Designer or not, all sound effects and music should be compiled to one master CD and one backup. Edison does not recommend the use of cassette tapes because of poor sound quality and lack of quick cueing. **The Master and BackUp disks must be delivered to Edison the Monday prior to the production**, to give adequate time to test all tracks. Once delivered, the disks should stay in Edison Theatre through the run. Adjustments that must be made, tracks added or deleted, or effects tweaked, must be complete by the final tech rehearsal or much sooner if possible. The Master version which is submitted on the night of final tech rehearsal will be the version used for all shows. No changes will be allowed from this point. This in keeping with our desire to provide a professional quality production.

A list of sound equipment and microphones can be found in the "Technical Specifications" page on [www.edisontheatre.wustl.edu](http://www.edisontheatre.wustl.edu).

6. A **Video Designer / Video content**. If you intend to use video in your show, you must designate someone who will be the contact for the Tech Staff to coordinate video projection/playback with. Please be ready to discuss this at the first pre-production meeting.

The Edison has a projector mounted on the Balcony Rail with VGA cable run to the FOH position (between the light and sound boards). We also have a laptop that you can use for video and sound playback.

Please remember that video will be a concern for your lighting and scenic designers as well, and for your directors/choreographers. Will any light or scenery block it? How big will the image be? Projected onto what? (generally the back cyc or the smaller hung screen)

### ***Who Edison Theatre provides...***

1. **The Tech Staff**. The Edison Technical Directors are here to help make your shows a success. That is our job. Please ask us any and all questions that come up. We are here to help make your production as professional and smooth as possible. Any limitations or restrictions we may impose are not arbitrary, but intended to be helpful, based on standard safety procedures and lessons learned from past experience.

**2. The Student Tech Crew.** The Tech Staff will coordinate, per your requests, the appropriate student crew to run your show. This includes:

\**Light Board Operator* – this person assists with programming the light board during tech rehearsals, and runs the lights during a show.

Please note that the lighting board is a computer console, and light cues are programmed into its memory. Therefore, everything must be planned in advance. If your MC enters and gives a speech stage right during tech rehearsals and then changes to stage left unexpectedly during performances, the programmed light cue will be incorrect. Cue changes require additional time for reprogramming and/or focus.

\**Sound Board Operator* – this person balances the levels of the various microphones in use and plays music and sound effects through the house speaker systems.

\**Flyrail Operator(s)* – this person(s) moves the main curtain and other curtains up and down, as well as any other hanging scenery or lighting that must move.

\**Followspot Operator(s)* – this person(s) sits in the catwalks over the house seating and controls a movable spotlight that can “follow” a person as they across the stage. There are two permanently mounted followspots in Edison Theatre.

\**Deckhand(s)* – this person(s) is positioned stage right or stage left, and is in charge of coordinating microphone handoffs, scenery or prop changes, operating foggers or hazers, or many other stagehand duties.

\**Video Operator* – if there is a large quantity of video content, it may be necessary to assign a video operator. This person will execute the cues from the laptop and use the douser to fade each image or video up or down.

**3. Lighting and Sound Equipment.** Edison provides its inventory of lighting and sound equipment to renting companies. Please note: we do not supply clip-on or lapel microphones. You can review the available equipment on the “Technical Specifications” page at <http://edisontheatre.wustl.edu>. The procuring of any equipment needed which is not found in the Edison inventory is the responsibility of the renting group, as are any and all associated costs for such equipment.

## **SCENERY** **(Please read carefully)**

If your production will involve scenic elements (scenery or props) and most do, there are several issues to consider. Theatrical scenery can be complicated and dangerous, and it is important that all elements are well-constructed and their use well-rehearsed. The Edison Tech Staff has extensive experience with scenic construction and rigging and is here to help you plan and execute your scenery effectively. However, please note that we are not able to build, complete, alter or repair your scenery for you. The safe construction and use of all scenery and props is of utmost importance to the Edison Staff, crew and the cast of your production. Never hesitate to ask questions or seek help; there are no stupid questions or simple answers.

### **REQUIRED INFORMATION:**

- What types of scenery will be used in this production? If you are going beyond hand props and pre-built items such as tables and chairs, you should procure a trained **scenic designer**. This person will be educated and experienced in building methods and materials used for theatrical scenery. This person will be the direct contact between the rental group's producers and the Edison Tech Staff.
  
- A list of all forms of scenery on or over the Edison stage and the full drawings and specs must be submitted in writing to the Edison Theatre Technical Director no later than 30 days prior to load-in and are subject to approval by the Edison Theatre Technical Director. These plans should also include details regarding painting or covering of the scenery. This is an opportunity for scenic design personnel to get advice, assistance in the planning of scenery construction. Those scenic elements not discussed, not approved, added late, or considered unsafe will *not* be allowed onstage or flown for the production.
  
- All scenic pieces must be built and/or rigged safely. Edison Theater technical staff has the right to inspect any and all scenery or props used onstage. For recommended construction of flats, refer to Appendix A drawings at the end of this manual.  
\*Any hanging scenery must be particularly well planned and constructed to ensure safe overhead use. Hanging scenery must be discussed in detail with the Edison Technical Staff prior to its being delivered to Edison Theatre.  
Pieces not meeting these standards will not be allowed onstage.  
\*As per the Fire Marshall, City of Clayton and the Wash U Safety Officer **all wooden and fabric surfaces must be flame-proofed** by one of the four approved methods:
  1. Back painting all raw wood
  2. Covering raw wood with flame-proofed fabric
  3. Spraying raw wood, fabrics, and papers with a recognized flame-proofing liquid
  4. Commercial flame-proofing of fabrics
  
- Please note: The scene shop does NOT belong to Edison Theatre. Use of the scene shop requires advanced approval by Washington University Performing Arts

Department. Also, power tools cannot be used onstage. Your scenery should be completed prior to your load-in.

- Please realize that scenery is not solely the concern of the scenic designer. Hanging scenery could interfere with overhead lighting or curtains and non-hanging scenery requires ease of movement and storage space when not in use. All scenic plans should be well discussed with the lighting designer and other tech personnel. This will ensure that your scenery is able to be hung as intended, along with all lights and masking curtains, and that your performers and the Edison Crew will be able to move backstage without obstacle.
- All scenery must be delivered to Edison, completely built, painted, etc no later than the Monday prior to the rental period. Any scenery not delivered or incomplete will not be included in the production.

### **A few words about hanging scenery:**

There are several issues to understand when it comes to scenery, particularly hanging scenery, at the Edison Theatre.

Scenery is hung from long pipes hung horizontally over the stage called “battens”. This is the “fly system”. Edison has 27 battens, line 00 through line 26 (there is no line 8). There are also 3 motorized battens, which have circuit strips attached and on which lights usually hang. The “Technical Specifications”, available from the Tech Staff or from our website at <http://edisontheatre.wustl.edu>, gives the “Lineset Schedule”, which includes measurements for each pipe’s length and position/distance from the proscenium line.

Some pipes are not available for scenery. Masking curtains – legs and borders – will likely take up 8-10 lines. The red front curtain, the 2 black full stage curtains (one midstage and one near the back wall), a scrim if applicable, and the cyc screen (or Rear Projection screen) near the back wall will likely take up another 5 lines. In addition, some pipes may have lights hung on them (which is why coordination with your lighting designer is so important). Some lines just won’t be over the right area of the stage. And some lines will be rendered unusable because the scenery or lights on the line adjacent is too bulky or wide to allow a pipe to pass by on one or both sides.

**SPECIAL NOTE:** Hanging scenery often requires more complex construction and consideration than floor-standing scenery, with special attention to safety, since it hangs over the heads of performers. The attachment points from which each piece will hang must securely support the weight of the piece without causing undue torque or twisting along the piece or breaking loose. The supporting framework must be such that when it is lifted off the ground, it will hang flat, in both the vertical and horizontal planes and does not stretch the piece out or compact it. The Edison Staff will assist as much as possible in the planning of these types of scenery.

As you can see, planning the physical layout of your production can be quite complex. It is important that there be lots of open communication between all the creative personnel on the rental group’s team and the Edison Tech Staff, to make it all come together as close to perfect as possible and allows all as safe as possible.

## TIMELINE / CHECKLIST

Rental Dates: \_\_\_\_\_ Performance Dates: \_\_\_\_\_  
Performance Times: \_\_\_\_\_

Please use this guide as a reference to create a timeline for your production. Based on the actual dates of your rental and production, you can fill in the dates for each deadline in the blank next to the list of requirements.

### Fill in Date:

\_\_\_\_\_ ~1 year till two months in advance – Conception of show, casting, creative work, rehearsals, etc.

\_\_\_\_\_ Two months till show – Production Meeting with Edison Tech Staff

#### *Things to bring:*

- *names of stage manager, lighting designer, and (if applicable) scene designer, sound designer, video designer*
- *Synopsis of show, content/format, and length*
- *Dressing room needs broken down by men and women*
- *Proposed schedule of rental period, including load-in, technical rehearsals, etc.*
- *Questions and help items regarding anything technical*

\_\_\_\_\_ ~Approx. Three weeks – one month til show – Production Meeting with Edison Tech Staff

#### *At this time, the following are due:*

- *Final light plot and paperwork from Lighting Designer*
- *Final construction drawings/plans from scenic designer*
- *Final schedules for rental period, including all tech Crew needs (positions and times), load-in, focus, and tech times, and rehearsal times.*

\_\_\_\_\_ The Monday of production week – 1-3 days until first technical rehearsal

#### *As applicable, the following things are due:*

- *Scenic - All scenery, hanging and free-standing, must be delivered to Edison completely finished. This includes all construction, painting or other covering, flame-proofing, etc.*
- *Video - Any video elements must be delivered to Edison. It can not leave the theater until after the final performance.*
- *Sound - Master and Backup disks must be delivered to Edison. These can not leave the theater until the final performance. Updates may be made until the final technical rehearsal; however, this is not the best course of action in terms of effective use of rehearsal time.*

- *Barring special circumstances, costumes and props can begin being dropped off to Edison in coordination with the Edison Tech Staff and will be held securely until needed.*

---

Final Technical Rehearsal

*The following are due:*

- *This is the last chance to give updated Master and Backup Sound compilations, as well as video content. Please plan carefully, the fewer changes the better. This allows rehearsals to be the most effective.*

---

Conclusion of final performance

*Following your final performance, the following is required:*

- *Removal of all costumes, makeup, props and personal items from the dressing rooms and green room. Remember that these areas will be locked 30 minutes after the performance.*
- *Removal of all scenery, props, video, music elements, and other items.*

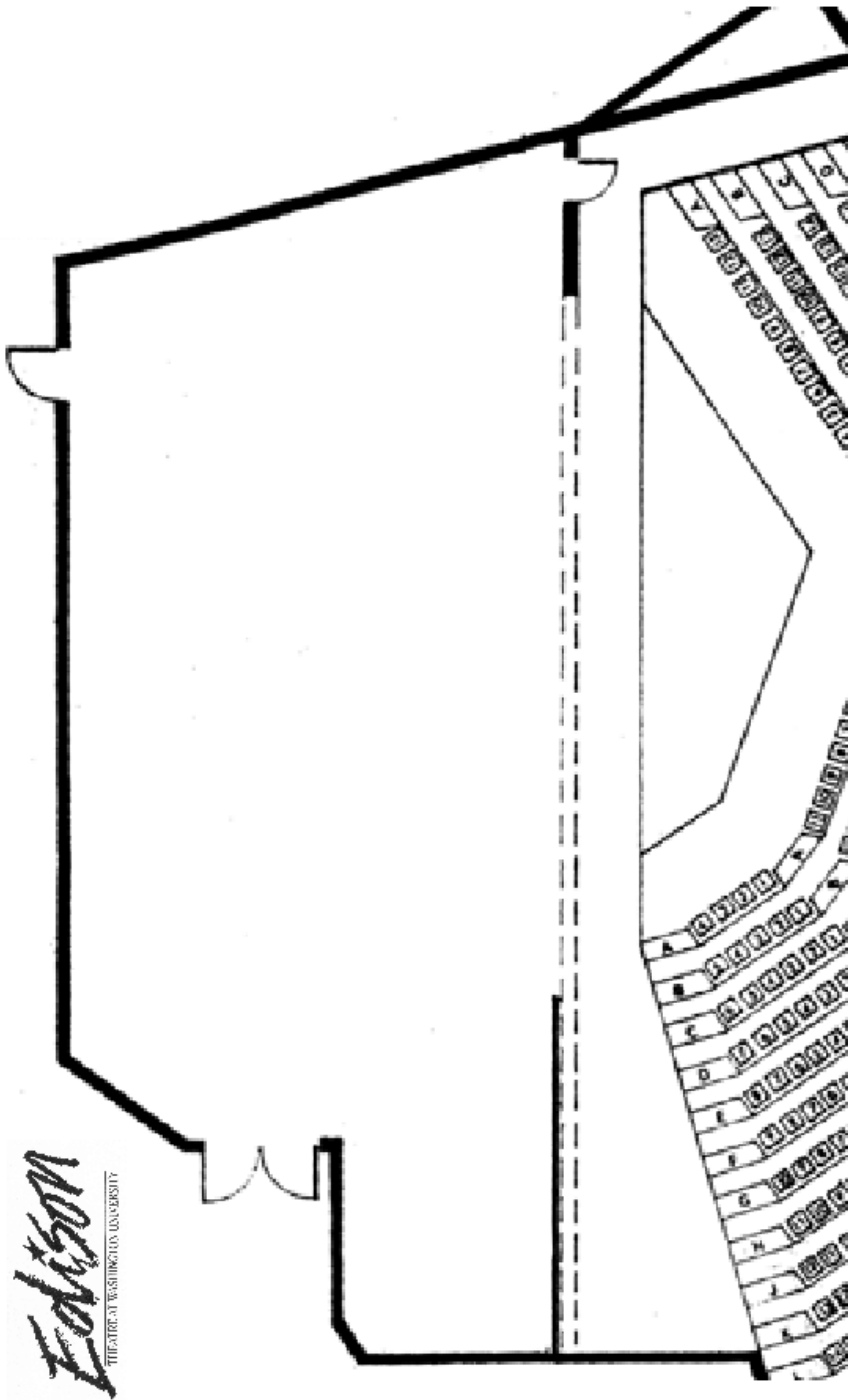
## GUIDE SHEETS

You may use the guides on the following pages to help visualize and plan your production. The Edison Staff is available to assist you in this process if you like. Included are:

**Ground Plan blank** – This blank page can be copied as many times as needed and used to pencil in a basic layout for each scene or segment of your show. Things to consider: Will a podium be onstage, and where? Where will the performers be? Which way will they enter and exit? What scenery will be onstage? Where? Which way will it get moved on and off from, and by whom?

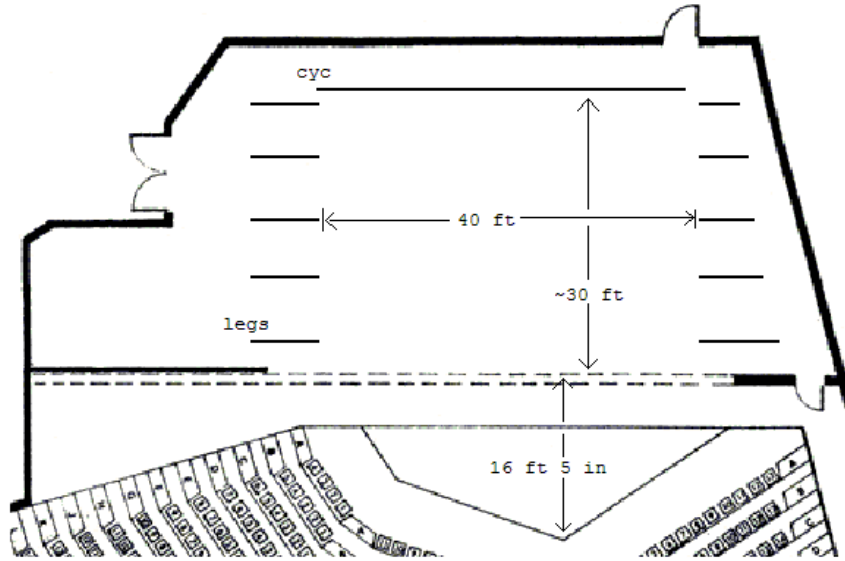
**Ground plan options/possibilities** – This sheet provides a few views of how the stage might be set up. Whether you follow one of these specifically or adjust it, you should transfer this sort of information to the Ground Plan Blank to use when sketching out your stage use for each segment.

**Tech Needs Step-Thru** – This blank can also be copied as needed, and used to step through each segment of your show, listing audio, video, followspot, performer, deck crew, and scenery needs.



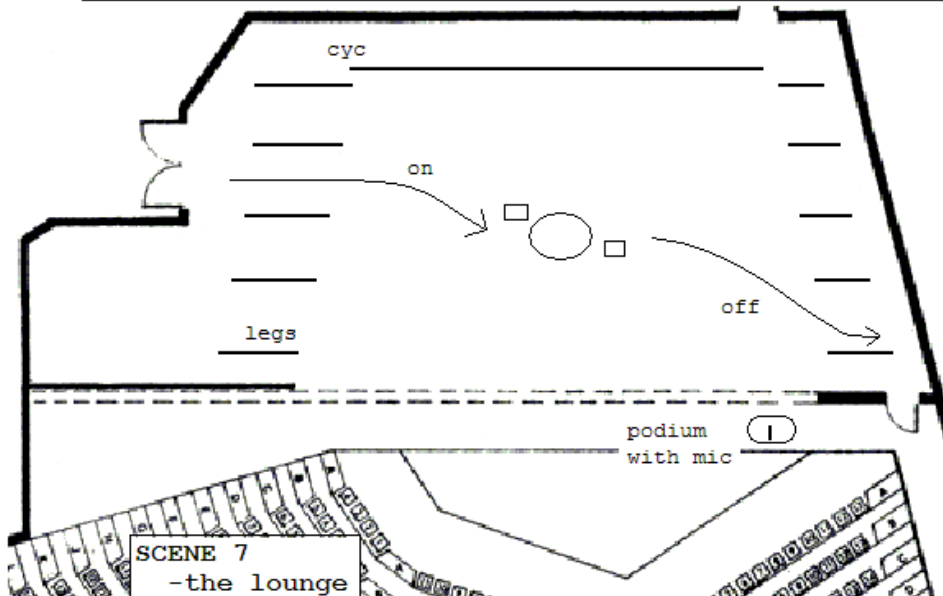
**Scene:**

**Notes:**

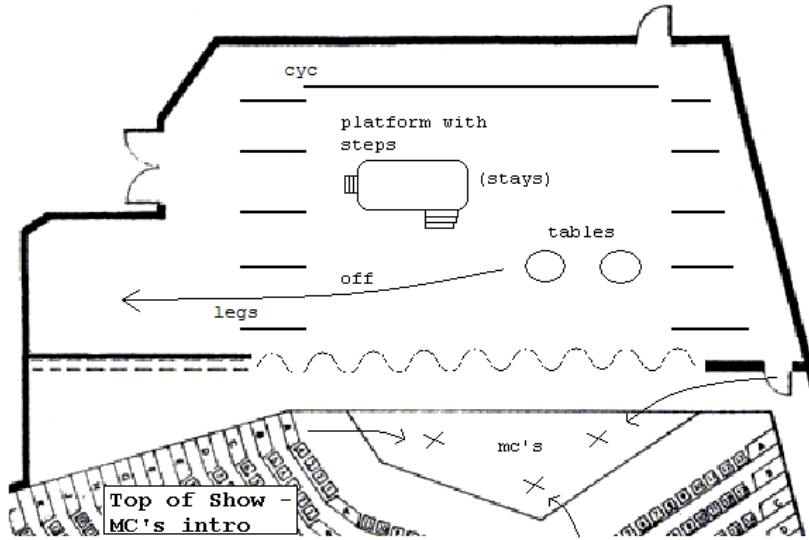


Example #1: Blank stage  
 \*Proscenium Opening: 50 feet  
 \*Width between legs: 40 feet  
 \*Main curtain open.  
 \*Cyc screen is in.

Example #2  
 \*Proscenium opening: 50 feet  
 \*Width between legs: gradual; 50' downstage, 40' upstage  
 \*Podium stage left in front of proscenium  
 \*Table and 2 chairs centerstage

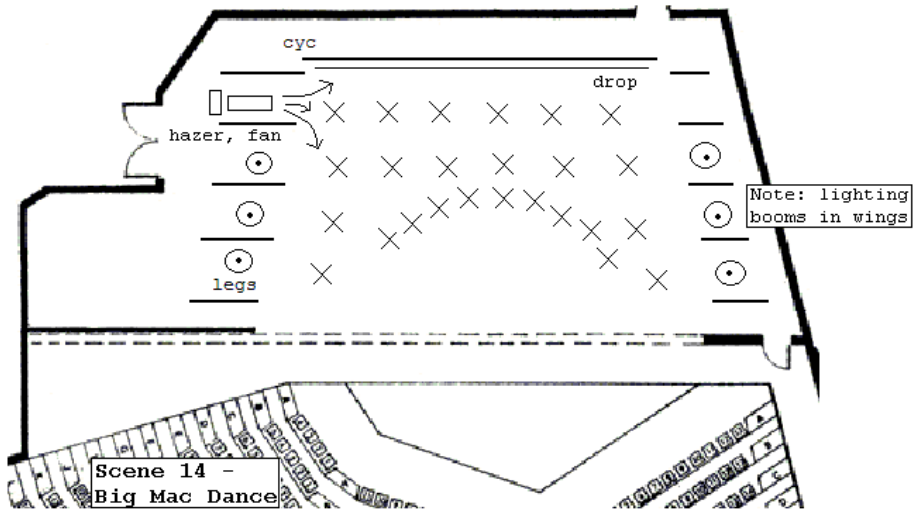


SCENE 7  
 -the lounge



Example #3  
 \*Main curtain closed  
 \*Legs and scenery pre-set behind curtain  
 \*MC's with mics on apron

Example #4  
 \*25 dancers  
 \*hazer upstage right with fan  
 \*Dance Club painted drop flown in



Production Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Rental Dates: \_\_\_\_\_



**Tech Needs - Show Step-Through**

SEGMENT/SCENE	Scenery/Curtains	Performers In/Out	Sound/Mics	Deck SL/SR	Spot HL/HR	Other

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

**Apron-** The area of the stage between the front of the Proscenium Arch and the edge of the stage.

**Booms-** The vertical pipes mounted in round or square bases found on the sides of the stage hidden by the Leg Curtains. Lights are mounted on these Booms and focused out onto the stage.

**Border-** A short overhead curtain running the width of the stage designed to block the lights and scenery from the audiences view.

**Bridge-** The narrow full width walk able platform over the front of the stage from which lights are hung. In Edison, this is the motorized pipe closest to the audience.

**Cable-** (1) The thick black electrical cables used to power the lights on and over the stage.  
(2) The heavy steel rope used to support equipment on and over the stage.

**The Catwalks or The Cats-** The connected walkways located above the audience seating area that allow technicians access to the lighting hanging positions.

**Circuit-** A completed electrical connection leading from an electrical source to a useful device such as a light or motor.

**Color/Gel-** Refers to different colors of media placed in front of lighting instruments to alter the look of the light striking the stage.

**Connectors-** The specialized ends of electrical cables, sound cables or video cables which physically connect a source (such as a power outlet or video device) to its destination.

**Counterweight System or Fly System-** The mechanical system used to raise and lower scenery over the stage. Each batten is connected to its own identical portion of this system. The weight of the scenery must be in balance with the weight on each of the counterweight arbors (places where the weights are carried). This is one of the potentially more dangerous systems in a theatre.

**Cyclorama or Cyc.** In the Edison it is also referred to as the R.P. screen. It is the large white plastic curtain hanging at the back of the stage onto which lights and projected images are directed. NEVER WALK BEHIND THE CYC WHEN THE LIGHTS ARE LIT! You can be seriously burned by the many 1,000 watt lights and the audience will see your huge shadow.

**Downstage-** The area of the stage near the front edge of the stage or towards the audience.

**Flat-** A tall piece of scenery typically representing a wall, window, screen... Usually thin and lightweight.

**Floor Mics-** Refers to PCC Microphones used along the edge of the stage to amplify the action across a large area. IF THESE ARE IN USE, PLEASE BE AWARE AND DO NOT STEP ON THEM. The Edison Staff reserves the right to remove these mics from use if it appears damage is likely to occur.

**The Fly Rail-** The work area above stage right where the counterweight or fly system is operated.

**Fly-** To raise or lower scenery over the stage by means of the counterweight system.

**Focus-** To direct and the control the beam of light coming from a lighting instrument to the stage.

**FOH-** Refers to Front Of House where light and sound consoles are located.

**The Grid-** The framework of steel at the very top of the theatre from which all of the rigging is finally supported.

**The Ground Row or Strip Lights-** The floor mounted lights designed for lighting the Cyc. They are found behind the Cyc. NEVER WALK BETWEEN THE CYC AND THE GROUND ROW LIGHTS! You can be seriously burned by the many 1,000 lights and the audience will see your huge shadow.

**Hanging Mics-** Refers to hanging choir microphones suspended over the stage to amplify the action across a large area.

**The House-** The audience seating area.

**House Left / Right -** From the audience perspective, facing the stage, the areas of the House to their left and right.

**Instrument-** Refers to the individual lighting instruments or fixtures used on and over the stage. NEVER touch one of these even if it is not lit. NEVER block the light from them when they are mounted on Booms on the sides of the stage.

**Jack-** A brace used to support a flat or other piece of scenery on stage.

**Legs-** The long narrow black curtains that border the sides of the acting area. Though these are soft, they should be regarded as walls by the performers, and not be pushed aside or moved. Their position is critical to masking backstage areas from the audience, and the lighting is usually focused right up to the edge of all curtains. Moving them changes how the lights hit the stage. Lastly, dirt and oil from hands is damaging to the curtains, and deteriorates the flameproofing chemicals in the fabric.

**Main Curtain –** In Edison, the large red curtain that completely separates the stage from the audience. Often used at the beginning and end of shows, and at intermissions.

**Mask-** To conceal performers or lighting instruments from the audience.

**Monitors** – Usually refers to the audio speakers placed on the floor on either side of the stage, so that performers onstage (and thus behind the house speakers) can hear music or words spoken through a microphone.

**Mute-** To control the output of microphone by interrupting its output at the soundboard.

**Offstage-** Any position on the stage outside of the acting area. Simply, any place where a performer is not seen by the audience.

**Onstage-** Any position on the stage within the acting area. Simply, any place where a performer can be seen by the audience. (if you are not performing in a scene, you shouldn't be onstage...)

**Pipe Batten-** The overhead pipes running the width of the stage on which lights and scenery are carried. They are part of the fly system.

**Platform-** Typically, a moveable wooden or metal framed structure used to elevate a portion of the stage.

**Practical** – a light which is contained within the set. A lamp on a desk is a **practical**.

**Proscenium-** The wall which divides the stage from the auditorium.

**Set-** A group or series of scenic units which suggest a single locale. This can be as simple as a table and chairs with a potted plant...

**Scene Shift-** To change scenery and props from one setting or scene to another.

**Spike Marks-** Specific tape markings placed on the stage floor to define exactly where performers or scenery is to be located.

**Spill Light-** Stray light outside a focused beam.

**Spot** – Usually refers to a followspot; also as a verb, “for this dance we need to **spot** the soloist.”

**Stage Left / Right-** - From an onstage perspective facing the audience, the areas of the stage to a performer's left and right.

**Strike-** To take apart and remove.

**Upstage-** Any portion of the stage away from the audience.

**Wings-** (or “The Wings”)- Any offstage space beyond the acting area, typically starting at the onstage edge of Legs where scenery is stored and performers wait unseen by the audience to go onstage.

**The vom-** Simply, the exit/access ramp located along the House Right wall leading from the House to the backstage and technical areas.

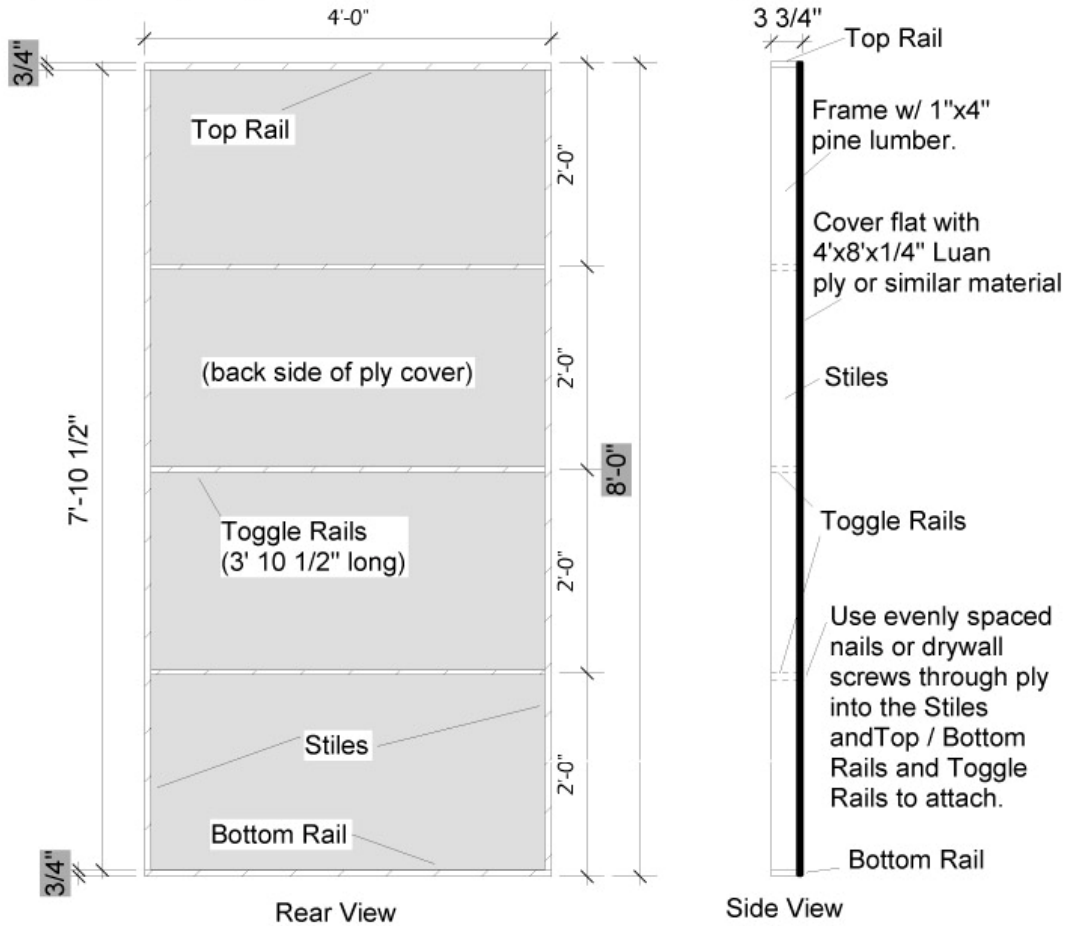
**Traveler** – a curtain which opens or moves. In Edison, pipe #11 holds a “midstage traveler”. That is, it divides the stage roughly in half (upstage-downstage), and it opens by way of pulling a rope to adjust the size of the opening.

## Appendix A

### How to Build a Flat

Standard 4'x8' Hollywood Style Flat  
 1"x4" pine frame w/ hard cover front (luan ply or similar)

This style of flat uses a standard 4'x8'x1/4" sheet of ply, untrimmed. 1" x 4" x 8' pine boards are cut to the proper length and nailed/screwed together at the joints. Apply white glue to the top edges of the frame. Lay the ply on top of the glued frame, square the frame to the ply and attach the two pieces with short nails or drywall screws, spacing evenly every foot or so all around and across the Toggle Rails.



(Showing 1"x4" lumber on edge on top of plywood sheet.)

Note: 1"x4" Lumber is actually 3/4" x 3 1/2" in dimension. This flat requires minimal tools (hammer, screw gun, jig saw/hand saw, square). Ply is used as-is, no trimming necessary. Measure twice... cut once!

4'x8' Hollywood Flat / Working Drawing  
 9/11/07 Scale= 0' - 3/4" = 1' - 0"  
 D&D by M. Hensley, T.D./F.M.  
 Edison Theatre at Washington  
 University, St. Louis, MO