STAGE MANAGEMENT
MFA PROGRAM IN
The MFA in Stage Management’s curriculum is designed to expand
upon two central principles:

1. Stage managers must have portable, flexible, and scalable skill-
sets that allow them to work in a variety of arenas.

2. Modern stage management requires its practitioners to
embrace the concept of the SM as an executive-level position
that is at the top of any production’s organizational chart.

The coursework uses methodologies specific to commercial
(Broadway) and not-for-profit theatrical stage management as a
foundation. This allows students to apply best-practices in many
other areas including opera, dance, and television.

Courses in dramatic literature and all aspects of theatre practice
are mandatory, while enrollment in classes outside the Theatre
Program is also strongly encouraged. Students are expected to
develop a thorough comprehension of union regulations and
theater administration, as well as a working knowledge of various
theatrical aesthetics that enhance creative development on a
production.

A major focus of the program is on leadership training: setting
the tone, driving the process, and delivering results. Current
trends in workplace culture, team dynamics, and human-resource
management are actively analyzed and discussed across all
program platforms.

Classroom courses are augmented by practical experience that
gives students hands-on participation in the production process,
in both academic and professional situations. Stage management
students are required to work on departmental presentations, as
well as complete at least two internships in professional theatre.
Individually designed field studies allow for the exploration of
ancillary interests in other realms of entertainment management.
Finally, the program connects students with experts who are
working at the highest level, giving graduates a leading edge when
they enter an intensely competitive job market.

Additional Requirements: 2 Professional Internships; 2 to 4
Production Assignments, including the stage management of up
to two departmental thesis productions in Year 2; Collaboration
Weekend Workshop.

Recommended Electives include Issues in the National Not-
for-Profit Theatre, Viewpoints, History and Theory of Comedy,
Promotions and Audience Development, Fundraising and
Marketing, Critical Writing for the Theatre, Budgeting and
Reporting, Models of Dramatic Structure, Press, Publicity and
Audience Development, Planning a Theatrical Season.

Stage Management Thesis Project: Students must satisfactorily
complete a 40-page thesis in order to graduate: a position paper
with a viable thesis statement that is supported by research,
experience, documented sources, and (if applicable), interviews,
statistical analysis, and exhibits. Ideally, the thesis will be based
on actual recent and practical production or work experience;
however, students may choose to write about historical,
economic, and/or sociological topics that are directly related
to stage management. Traditional “prompt” books and/or
production diaries can be used as supporting documentation.

AEA Eligibility: Two stage management MFA students per year
will be eligible to join the Actors Equity Association through their
participation as stage managers for the Classic Stage Company’s
Young Company production. This production is held at CSC’s
downtown venue every spring.

STAGE MANAGEMENT
APPLICATION DEADLINE

January 5, 2016

Celebrating
50 Years
Columbia University
School of the Arts

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STAGE MANAGEMENT
SAMPLE CURRICULUM

Fall Semester – Year 1

Leadership for Stage Managers I: An Introduction
   Michael J. Passaro and Jack Rous
Stage Management Methodologies I – The Broadway Musical
   Marybeth Abel
Seminar in Stage Management I – Team Dynamics
   Peter Lawrence
History and Theory of Theatre
   Arnold Aronson
Theatre Management & Administration I: An Overview
   Adam Hess
Internship
Asst. Stage Manager on Columbia “Directors Thesis” productions

Spring Semester – Year 1

Collaboration
   Anne Bogart
Directing For Stage Managers
   Seth Sklar-Heyn
Production Management
   Gene O’Donovan
Theatre Management & Administration II: Contracts
   Laura Brown McKinnon
Special Topics in Stage Management: New Frontiers – The Metropolitan Opera
   Raymond Menard
Internship
Assistant Stage Manager on Columbia productions

Fall Semester – Year 2

Stage Management Methodologies II: Plays
   Linda Marvel
Stage Management Methodologies III: Cue Calling & Documentation
   Bonnie Panson
Special Topics in Stage Management: Technical Theater Practicum
   Ira Mont
Elective in another concentration
Field Study
Production Stage Manager on Columbia productions

Spring Semester – Year 2

Leadership for Stage Managers II: Theory and Practice
   Michael J. Passaro and Jack Rous
Stage Management Methodologies IV: The Next Steps
   Diane DiVita
Special Topics in Stage Management: TV/Dance/Corporate Events
   Jim Semmelman, Danielle Ventimiglia, Arturo Porazzi
Elective in another concentration
Field Study
Production Stage Manager on Columbia productions

Year 3

Production Stage Manager of a Columbia “Directors Thesis” Production
Stage Management Thesis Paper
Stage Manager for Classic Stage Company Young Company Production (or another AEA opportunity)
Additional Internship (or completion of required internships from Year 1)