Putting it together. Show after show.

SFA’s pre-professional Bachelor of Fine Arts degree concentration in stage management provides intensive preparation for professional work as a stage manager. Admission is competitive, by portfolio presentation (normally at the end of the sophomore year). Since stage managers work closely with actors, directors, designers and technicians, students in this concentration take a wide variety of courses that familiarize them with all of these sub-disciplines. They work on a remarkably large number of productions of different sizes and genres, not only as stage managers and assistant stage managers, but also as control board operators, crew leaders and assistant directors, and they may even audition as actors. BFA stage managers may also apply to direct student productions. Then they undertake a full-season internship at a major regional theatre or a year of study abroad. No SFA student ever compete with a graduate student in theatre for an opportunity to stage manage, and new students (including freshmen) participate in productions from their very first semester.

Work on over 20 shows a year:

12 to 16 student-directed studio-scale 10-minute plays each year
Six to eight student-directed black-box one-act and full-length plays each year
Eight or nine faculty- or professionally directed shows each year

Key courses available include:
- Stage Management
- Production Laboratory I & II
- Costume Technology
- Stagecraft (scenic technology)
- Lighting Technology
- Stage Makeup
- Sound Technology
- Introduction to Play Directing
- Advanced Directing (period plays)
- Portfolio
- Design (scenic, costume or lighting; sound, props, advanced tech, etc.)
- Play Analysis
- Advanced Play Analysis
- Repertory Theatre (summer only)
- Theatre Projects (design or tech)
- Practicum (year-long internship)
- Theatre Cooperative (study abroad)
Students who concentrate on stage management at SFA have a wide range of well-equipped facilities in which to learn and lead. The 1,000-seat W.M. Turner Auditorium has a Broadway-sized stage house, a full fly system, trap space, a hydraulic apron/orchestra pit, a large control room atop the balcony and up-to-date lighting and sound systems. The Downstage Theatre, our “black box,” is a key laboratory for student productions. The Upstage Theatre, our studio space, was completely renovated and re-equipped in 2012. Stage managers for faculty-directed productions (and those directed by guest professionals) work from their own fully equipped production office. Guest speakers such as Equity stage manager George Boyd sometimes give workshops on campus, and students interact with Broadway stage managers and production managers every year in live two-way videoconferences arranged by The Broadway League.

Production opportunities of all kinds are practically boundless at SFA. Most BFA stage managers have an opportunity to coordinate the staff, cast and crew of a musical or revue, a classical play, and at least one complex modern drama or comedy while at SFA. Extensive student crews and staffs make these major productions possible, and BFA students are frequently assigned to positions of leadership. All of the many student-directed productions in the Downstage Theatre and Upstage Theatre also use student stage managers. Play readings, musical comedy revues and radio drama round out the School of Theatre’s public offerings. The University Series and Children’s Performing Arts Series offer part-time employment opportunities crewing professional music, dance and theatre events. Around campus, opportunities in film, television, dance and opera can add even more breadth to student experience in stage management and related work.

Students in SFA’s Stage Management concentration are strongly connected to American professional theatre and the international scene. Every year students from abroad travel to Texas to study with our acclaimed faculty and work on our productions. Nearly all BFA students complete a practicum lasting a full academic year. This may be an internship with a major professional company such as the Tony Award-winning Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, Arizona Theatre Company (Tucson), Dallas Children’s Theater, or Houston’s A.D. Players. Alternatively, it may consist of study at London’s leading international drama school, Rose Bruford College.

SFA’s Theatre Faculty and Staff include former professional stage managers as well as award-winning teachers. Every SFA theatre graduate has an excellent broad education in all aspects of theatre and a strong liberal arts core. Our alumni include successful stage managers, production managers and producers on stages large and small. And our current students are the friendliest, hardest working, most talented and most mutually supportive bunch you’ll encounter anywhere. Find us at facebook.com/SFATheatre and they will tell you themselves what it’s like to go to school here.