

# *PALOA Musical Theater*

## **Handbook for Cast, Crew, Parents and Family**

Thank you for your interest in acting or participating in this PALOA production. The following information is provided to help you understand the scope of a production, and to help you to prepare for your part and your position in the show. If there is any reason why you would be unable to fulfill expectations, please let us know now.

PALOA has been producing Broadway quality productions for 26 years, with shows such as *The Sound of Music*, *Carousel*, *The Music Man*, *Annie*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Camelot*, *Once Upon A Mattress*, *Oliver!* and more. Every year we start with a great group of friends, neighbors and newcomers, and through several months work of we turn them into a much larger group of friends and actors all working toward the goal of producing the best musical show that they can. This has been a rewarding experience for many hundreds of people. Shy people have been brought out, people totally unfamiliar with the theatre have gone on to work year after year on productions, careers have been made in the theatre, all starting here.

The following are some tips to help you enjoy and benefit from this experience:

### **Be On Time**

**Always be on time for rehearsals.** One person being late will hold up the whole rehearsal and inconvenience everyone. This will be a time-consuming project. You will work through the entire rehearsal and performance schedule. If you can only be there for some of the rehearsals or might miss a performance please let us know now. This may not be the year for you to star in the show. We will expect you to be good to your word, unless catastrophe strikes, and be available for ALL scheduled rehearsals and performances during July and the majority of rehearsals prior to July. If you will need to be absent from a rehearsal, please give notice to the Director or Conductor so that they may plan accordingly. Set strike

Notes:

needs direction on the stage. There may be many people receiving direction during a scene, so scenes may be gone over several times so that the director can see all the parts. If you worry about doing things over and over, this stress will affect your performance. Just relax. Remember that we are sincerely enjoying working with you.

Be real. Try to think of yourself as a character who has a past. What were you doing before you uttered your line? What kind of mood are you in? Why? The more you can develop your character, the more chance you have of realistically portraying that character. Please stay in character. This helps others stay in character too. Rehearsal time requires everyone to be in place and in character all the time. We will try to keep rehearsal time to a minimum, but the more we have to go over the same part because people were not paying attention, not listening or missing, the more time that will be required.

Don't focus on yourself, focus on the entire scene. If you are in a scene you should always be acting. This means that you should be completely into the scene. Don't just wait for your line and then say it. You should be acting even when you are not speaking your lines. Listen to other people who are speaking. Acting is 25% acting, and 75% re-acting. Show interest in your surroundings. Pay attention and respond to the small behaviors of your fellow actors. Otherwise, your timing and responses will always be off.

Keep acting. Only the director can end a scene. Maybe you feel that you blew it but the director liked what happened. If you end the scene yourself, that would really blow it. Just keep acting no matter what until the Stage Director says otherwise.

**Be consistent. Do just as the director tells you to do.** Never vary your line or behavior just because you are getting bored with it. Remember, the audience hasn't heard it as much as you have. It's their first time, so act like it's your first time. This is true even for extras. **Always do it exactly the same.** An extra can ruin a perfect scene by saying something funny. Even in a crowd scene, distinct phrases can sometimes be heard.

Please remember, there is no gum chewing on stage or during rehearsals. No smoking is allowed anywhere on the grounds of any of the church or school facilities that we may use.

Do not bring anything with you that you might lose or might be taken. PALOA is not responsible for the loss of personal property.

Please take care of the scripts and scores. Use pencils only when making notations. You will be responsible for the cost of your script if it is lost or damaged. All notations must be erased before turning scripts in.

If you have any questions about what is expected or how it affects you, ask!

We do reserve the right to remove, replace or add someone to or from a role for the good of the show.

We look forward to working with you.

## **Traditions**

Over the course of 26 years, PALOA as an organization - like a family — has evolved several traditions. These include a cast party, pre-show prayers and more.

One of our cherished, long-standing traditions is the post-performance “Meet and Greet” of the audience as they leave the theater. This becomes a favorite event for the community as family, friends, co-workers, neighbors and appreciative patrons get a chance to thank you, congratulate you and tell you how much they enjoyed the show. This is one of our best public relations opportunities and an easy way to get people to tell their friends about the show and invite people to become part of the *PALOA* production family.

All of our traditions are non-compulsory; each actor can choose to participate or not. We hope that you will feel welcomed and at home with *PALOA* and join us in the true spirit of community

all about. Ask how you can help.

## **Children & Parents**

Many shows have children in them and this must be calculated into the rehearsal schedule. Many times they have a shorter attention span and grow restless. Parents please be responsible for your children. Please plan to stay at rehearsal with your child. The job of the director or the supervisor of any rehearsal is to rehearse, and to get the most out of every actor. They can not be disciplining all the cast (both young and old) if they are to get any work done. Be aware of your child’s discipline, and please step in to help the director keep order. Please be as little disturbance as possible. We don’t want other cast members to have to discipline your children. This creates bad feelings and takes precious time away from rehearsals, inconveniencing everyone.

Parents, please remember that your children’s schedule will be your own schedule. It is important that you bring your children to rehearsals, and if they are young, that you stay with them. Please plan on their needs - snacks, activities to keep them happy, etc. There are many things that you can do to help the production so that you have a pleasant and rewarding experience with your child. There will be sacrifices no matter how small the part, but it will be worth it to your child as well as your family.

All production rehearsals are “closed”. Only Cast and Production Team members should be in attendance. Please do not invite family or friends to attend rehearsals, as they will be asked to leave.

## **Your Looks**

Do not change your looks during this time without prior approval from the Stage Director. This means don’t get a different style haircut. Don’t color your hair. Don’t do anything that would drastically change your appearance, as it may be important to the part you have been given.

## **Hygiene**

We will all be working very close together for several months. It is critical that everyone maintains a good working relationship. Bathing, deodorant, clean socks, etc. are all important to that relationship. Also many people are affected by strong smells, such as perfume, after-shave and hairspray. Please keep use of these items to a minimum.

## Scenes, Costumes & Props

All of the items that we use to put on a performance have to be constructed or borrowed. They may require many hours and sometimes a great deal of money to produce. Please be careful with all items and costumes so that they will not have to be remade or replaced. Because of the historic periods of some shows, the props may be someone's cherished antiques. Please treat them like they were your own. Don't touch or move props that are not your own unless specifically directed to by the Director or Stage Manager. You are responsible during the performance, and before a show to check to make sure all your props are accounted for and in working order. You will be the one on stage without a prop or with a prop that doesn't work. Report any problems immediately to the Stage Manager. Every actor is responsible to hang up his or her costume(s) after the performance and immediately notify the dressers if a costume is damaged, dirty or needing some care. Unless your mother will be here to clean up after you, please clean up after yourself.

## Production Personnel

**Stage Director:** The Stage Director has been given the responsibility to put the show together. Starting with the show script and the direction of the Board of Directors, the Stage Director breaks down the show into its component parts - Singing, Speaking, Dancing, Overall look, Music, Movement on stage (blocking), scenery, props, basically everything. While they are responsible for the total vision of the show, their main area of work will be in the acting and movement on the stage. This will be an ever changing project, so please stay adaptable and open to changes. The Director has final say about all business on the stage production.

**Choreographer:** The Choreographer (with the Stage Director) will design and implement the dance routines for the show. This is a process that many times will unfold as the show comes together. Therefore be aware that routines will change. When the show finally reaches the stage, the routines will take their final form.

**Choral Director:** The Choral Director has been given the responsibility to teach the music to the chorus and the principals. Rehearsals will be scheduled with different groups to work together. You will be given scores and rehearsal tapes. Please do not mark up the scores. They must be turned in clean. Many people find that making copies of your part is helpful, so that you can mark up the copy. Remember that the scores are expensive and must be turned in or else we will be billed for them. They are your responsibility.

**Conductor:** The Conductor has been given the responsibility to bring together the orchestra, rehearse them, and once the show reaches the stage, to conduct the show. During the show, the music cues and many other cues will be given by the Conductor. Timing, speed and sound are all the responsibility of the Conductor. The Conductor may be the same person as the Choral Director.

**Stage Manager:** Once the show reaches the stage, the Stage Director's job will be done, the Stage Manager will control the production. They will direct the flow of actors, sets and props on and off the stage. Listen to them as you would the Stage Director.

## Practicalities

You must sign a release form stating that you will be available for rehearsals and performances, and that you have read and agree to abide by the PALOA Handbook for Actors, etc.

Being on time is essential. Be prepared to stay for the entire session without having to leave for anything.

Assist with clean up at the end of the each rehearsal. It doesn't take long to put a place back together if everyone helps. No one should leave until the place looks great again.

While on the set, talk only to the Stage Director. Side talk is disturbing to those who are trying to direct activities. If you are talking with others, you won't be able to hear important directions. The entire production may have to wait while we get your attention. We can work fast and in a more pleasant way if talk is kept to a minimum. If something isn't working right, tell the Stage Director.

You may make suggestions to the Stage Director. If a line or action seems unrealistic, or if it is too hard perform, tell the director. As a part of the team, we want you to be interested in the quality of the final product. If you can see something that would look incorrect, silly or otherwise not good later, say so now. We always appreciate such suggestions. But do not argue with the Stage Director. The Stage Director has the final and larger vision of the show in mind, and as such, has the last word. Many times it is best to talk to the Stage Director privately, so that it does not distract everyone. This will give them the time to think through your suggestion.

## **Waiting**

The hardest thing you will have to do is wait. Your professionalism will be judged entirely on patience. Patience means never leaving the set or rehearsal room and never asking when you will be up. Professionalism means that no matter how long you have to wait, you respond enthusiastically when you are called. It means that no one has to go and look for you when the time comes. Bring everything you need to make yourself happy while you are waiting. It's not so bad if you have books, magazines, food, etc. Some people have brought cards and games. Anything that won't distract others with noises or other distracting features. Use time not on stage to review lines. From time to time, the production team may have small projects cast members are encouraged to help with. Your help in sewing on buttons, detailing scenery or assisting with props is a huge help and adds to your investment in the show. There is always help needed with sets and costumes, so if you can assist with these tasks it will mean we can rehearse in costume and with scenery that much sooner ~ cast members multi-tasking is part of what community theater is

theater.

*PALOA* actively promotes and supports community diversity and this is reflected in the ensemble of our production team and cast. We are all brought together from many avenues of life, age, careers, beliefs, political persuasions, and gender to produce a brilliant show on stage. To foster a positive community spirit, we ask that at all times you treat and speak to your fellow actors and stage technicians respectfully. We also request that to minimize potential discomfort or dissension that you avoid topics such as politics or religion. *PALOA* is NOT trying to stifle free speech, but we want to be mindful of the feelings of all our cast and crew and ask your help in contributing to the positive atmosphere back stage.

No general announcements, posters or notices are to be posted backstage, the Green Room, or dressing rooms without the prior approval of the *PALOA* board.

Have fun, and have a great show.

Thanks, *PALOA* Board & your Production Team

## **The production team for this show will be:**

Director: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Conductor/Vocal Director: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Choreographer: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Stage Manager / Asst Director : \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Production Manager: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

The official fudge supplier for this production is

Northwest Fudge - 110 W. 1st Street, PA 452-8299

(in other words where to reach Bob Lumens)

will be scheduled right after the last performance, so please plan on this time also. Remember many hands make light work, *so* don't assume that there will be enough people to do it. This will be followed by a party celebrating our experiences.

Each cast member is important to the show. Other cast members depend on you to be at each rehearsal and on time. Rehearsals begin promptly. Starting times vary with each rehearsal - please refer to the schedule for the starting time of each rehearsal. Please be considerate of others. Cast members who are repeatedly late or absent without prior notification may be released from the cast.

There will be many publicity events to promote the show. These will be on cast calendar... we need your help to publicize & sell the show!

## **Acting**

We know that you are not all professional actors. We also know that with training, you can do an excellent job. We will work with you and rehearse over and over until everyone is ready. Just relax and trust that we won't stop rehearsing until it looks good. Be prepared in rehearsals and even at performance to have your part changed. Things sometimes look very different in the final version than in rehearsals. If we change your role, understand that it is for a good reason. The success of the show depends upon every one doing their best and we will strive to get your best from you. You want to be proud of your performances when you finish.

## **Acting Tips**

Take direction. In the early stages of rehearsal keep a pencil in hand to take down blocking notes (movement) and directions from the director. We don't expect anybody to do things perfectly right away. *Lines must be memorized by the time set by the Director.* The stage director, vocal director, conductor and choreographer will give you the instructions and notes you need to succeed on stage. The rehearsal period is an on-going process of feedback and refinement. We are looking at you in an entirely different way on the stage. There is no reason whatsoever to feel bad about receiving direction. Everyone