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Stage Management

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Cue Calling Reflection

Cue calling is one of the most stressful and critical jobs of the stage manager; the show can not be consistently accurate and well represented without proper cue calling, so I was very grateful for the opportunity to call mock cues from the booth. I learned a lot from this experience, and I now know which steps I can take to improve. When practicing in the future, I'm going to focus on calling light and sound cues together when necessary, making sure that my standbys are more consistent, and ensuring that every cue is accurate.

In Mask and Wig's 2015 production for *Sing!* there are several light and sound cues that must be called very close together; something I need to improve upon is calling these cues more efficiently, so it's clearer to the board operators when cues are in rapid succession. I called light cue 5 and the fog together because that was the most efficient and accurate way to call, but there were a couple light cues and sound cues that were very close, but should not be called together. For example, light cue 8 into light cue 9 into sound cue L happen very quickly, but not together. I think if I spent a little more time on that specific sequence I would have been able to make those cues distinct, ensure the accuracy of their timing, and keep the pause between the words "light cue" and "GO" consistent.

I realized after listening to myself call that when I gave standbys was not the most consistent. Some of this was due to the placement of other cues that needed to be called, but it should have been as close to a consistent 15 seconds as possible. Part of the reason there were inconsistencies was in my script; I marked the line on which they should be called, but not the specific word. When I listened to myself calling the cues and watched the video, I went back into my script and marked specific words on which to call both standbys and cues. I think this kind of specificity is key to every aspect of stage management, but particularly in cue calling.

I called the majority of the cues accurately, but I did have a few stumbles. The standby for Sound Cue M comes right after the sequence of light cues 8 and 9 and sound cue 10. In my hurry to try to call that sequence accurately, I looked at my standby for sound cue M and called it as a GO. If this were to happen during a real show, it would throw off the momentum of the cast as well as start a track early, which would make the audience lose part of the story. After this happened, I went back to my script and color coded it so the standbys and the GOs were even clearer. I think this visual representation will help me ensure accuracy in the future.

Overall, I called most cues correctly and I think I have a strong, authoritative voice, which lends itself to calling cues confidently. This exercise was very useful for me in that it made me realize which areas I need to focus on. It also helped me improve my script, which is now color coded, accurate, and show ready.