



## Guide to "TD"ing

### Who or what is the Technical Director?

Basically, you are responsible for everything technical that your production wishes to use on and around the stage. You are responsible for the smooth running of the get-in and the get-out, and for the safety of the people present. Most of your time in advance of the show will be spent liaising ensuring the set gets built on time. You'll need to work with the set and lighting designers to co-ordinate the technical side of the show, and work with them to create detailed plans of every aspect of the show. It is important to make sure that everyone's working to the same set of designs!

You must oversee lighting, sound, set construction and cost, liaison with theatre staff etc. There are too many possibilities to give you a list of do's and don'ts, but hopefully you've got some experience of the ADC Theatre already and you have a reasonable idea of what you're up to. If you're not sure about whether something is your responsibility, ask the Club Technical Director or a member of the ADC Theatre management.

Remember, if at any stage you don't know how to do something, never be afraid to ask someone who does. This avoids damage and injury. If you don't know who to ask, try the Club TD or technician or the ADC Theatre management. In any case, if you are doing a show in the ADC Theatre, the theatre management would like to speak to you at least two weeks in advance of your show to check up on your plans.

You are also responsible for the get-in; you must ensure that you have enough people on Saturday night / Sunday / Monday (as necessary) so that your set and lights go up in time. You should work out a careful timetable for how you want the get-in to run; even if the schedule isn't kept to exactly, it enables the technicians and actors to know the order in which things will happen and when to expect to be called for the tech and dress rehearsals. Try not to be over-optimistic about how much you can accomplish in a given time. You should talk to the lighting people about when to rig lights, and give your Lighting Designer enough time on stage to focus and plot, preferably without carpentry being done. No one standing on top of a ladder can hear shouted instructions over the noise of a power-drill! For the same reasons, your sound designer will probably want a time when the auditorium can be silent. Arrange with the set-designer and painters when they can expect to paint. It is best to publish the schedule on a noticeboard in your venue, so that everyone can be informed of the plan with a minimum of fuss.

### 'TR' forms

If you're technical directing a show at the ADC Theatre, you'll need to sign a TR form and have read a section seven. What, I hear you ask, are these?!? The TR form is something that says you've read the section seven, and also gets you a set of keys to the theatre and some instructions on how to lock and unlock it. Section seven refers to section seven of the ADC Theatre regulations entitled 'Technical Representatives'. Every show must have a Technical Representative, and most shows have two, usually the lighting designer and technical director. The section seven explains that as TRs, you are responsible for enforcing safety regulations as defined by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974. In plain English, this means you must be present during the get-in and the get-out and during certain specified activities (e.g. counterweight loading) on stage; you must also be aware of certain

statutory matters, and are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of the people present up until the tech rehearsal, and between the tech and dress rehearsals. During the rehearsals, the stage manager assumes the safety responsibilities, since the stage manager is in overall control of the rehearsals. It is vital to read any technical forms, and be familiar with their contents - it's no good just having a vague idea of what's in it. Don't be too scared by all of this - a lot of being a TR just involves using your brain, making sure everyone's awake, and stopping to ask more experienced people (e.g. the venue management!) if you're have the slightest doubt about anything.

## **Early design work**

The TD will usually need to be involved from an early stage in the design concept of the show. The TD should work with the director and designer to make sure that the ideas being discussed at the early stages are feasible, both financially and practically. For this the TD needs to have a good feel for the cost and the time associated with making the designers wishes into a reality. Involvement at the conceptual stage is useful, as it irons out any potential problems that might crop up later, and means that the TD knows further in advance what will be required.

## **Production team**

The TD is arguably the "head" of the technical team, and will usually be an experienced technician. As such, it can make sense for the TD to be involved in the selection of the other technical team members, based in his/her knowledge of the roles, requirements of the show and the people applying. It is not a requirement for the TD to have this input, but it can be a worthwhile exercise and result in a more appropriate technical team.

## **Budgeting**

The TD, with overall responsibility for the technical side of the show, obviously has an important role to play in budgeting the whole production. In most cases, the only thing the TD has to take direct responsibility for is the set, but this can vary from show to show. Even if the TD is only in charge of the money spent on the set, they also should be in liaison with the other people (lighting and sound designers, for example) who will be spending money on the show. You will need to predict the required expenditure well in advance of the show (several weeks), which includes set as well as any other things which fall under your jurisdiction, such as pyrotechnics, or hire of staging for example. This doesn't need to be accurate to the penny, but it needs to be realistic – i.e. you will say "This set will cost £350" rather than "The set will cost £342.33". In order to cost out the set for a show, you need a reasonably final set of designs, and to sit down and work out how much wood, how much paint, how many screws (very roughly, i.e. is it 2 boxes, 10 boxes or 20 boxes) and so on you will need. Once you know roughly how much you need, find the cheapest place to buy/hire it all. You may find the suppliers list (in the ADC production office) useful for doing this. For example, you need to get quotes for the wood, look through catalogues for the best prices on paint, decided what kind of cloth you can afford, how many screws etc you'll need (very roughly!) If the set has any practicals (light fixtures which light up, controlled as part of the lighting rig) it's worth clarifying with the LD whether they are in the lighting or set budget. Once you have a good idea of how much you will need to spend, it is time to start talking to the producer to see whether your plans are affordable. Obviously the producer will want the show to be as good as possible, but there might not be enough money in the budget to do everything, so be prepared to compromise. This all needs to be done well in advance of the show, so that there is time to modify plans, if necessary, and also for the producer to finalise the budget with the funding company. Once the set budget is set, it just remains to build the set, not spending more than this! A few tips for keeping the price down:

Shop around for wood – there are at least three local suppliers, and they can vary widely in price, and each one fluctuates, so you need to ask them all every time! It is often cheaper to buy sheet material from one, and timber from another.

If you're a ClubShow, there is always some paint and a few screws etc in the Club Cupboard, so it is

always worth looking there. (See below for more info on the Club Cupboard)

If you are a very big show, it can be cheaper to buy screws directly from "Screwfix", but you have to be buying really huge numbers to make this worthwhile!

There is some wood in the gash rack in the ADC yard, which can help you save some money, but it is rude to use it all in a single show.

Chipboard is VERY cheap compared to plywood, and is a reasonable substitute in some cases (chipboard is quite weak in bending and tension, but is OK in compression)

Always assume (and order) rough sawn timber rather than planed unless you specifically need a smooth finish.

## Special Permissions

If a production wants to use certain effects (such as smoking, naked flames, pyrotechnics etc) these require special permission. This involved getting a specific license from the County Council before it can be used. Generally, the producer needs to apply via the ADC Theatre management at least three weeks before the show starts in order that the application can be made to the authorities in good time. If the production fails to apply for the permissions, then it will have to go without, so it is important to make sure that the producer is aware of which permissions he/she needs to apply for.

The following effects require special permissions:

- Blank firing guns
- Smoke machines
- Pyrotechnics
- Smoking
- Naked flames
- Maroons
- Strobe lighting

It is important to think about which of these you ACTUALLY need, and meet with the various designers and the director if needs be in order to clarify. It can be tempting to just apply for them all, as this will cover all eventualities, but this is regarded as very bad practice, as it shows that the production hasn't thought about it properly, and it also undermines the credibility of the Theatre with the licensing authorities. Once you have received the licenses you applied for, it is essential that all the relevant members of the crew reads them and digests the contents. As a bare minimum, the TD and SM should make sure they know what is in all the licenses, but it would probably also be worth the ASM, LD and producer reading them too.

## Hours

Everyone knows that get-ins fall behind schedule and that working into the early morning or all the way overnight seems the only way to catch up. But if you become overtired then your concentration fails and you become unproductive (and dangerous). You must make sure that your crew are sufficiently awake to work safely - i.e. make sure they get enough sleep. Appoint a deputy or let the other TR (usually the Lighting Designer) take over and leave it until tomorrow when you're tired and go home to sleep. The ADC Theatre operates something called the "eight hour rule" which states that each person must be out of the Theatre for at least 8 continuous hours in any 24 hour period, and the venue management will order you off the premises if you break the rules. The 8 hour rule isn't a target though, and even if you don't break this rule, you still mustn't work when tired.

Remember that some tasks can only be carried out when you or another TR are present, so plan your

time accordingly. This is dealt with further in the general pointers section of the ADC Club Safety Guide.

## **Safety, Risk Assessments, Fire Regulations and H&S**

You should read and digest the ADC Club Safety Guide; it is an essential companion to this TD guide.

Safety is of prime importance in theatre, and as TD, you will have a significant responsibility for this. Most venues have a risk assessment procedure, and the ADC Theatre is no exception. The ADC Theatre Risk Assessment is a document designed to be filled in well in advance of the get-in, and gets you to think about all the potential dangers that might be lurking in your show, in the hopes that accidents can be prevented. You are asked to think about set construction, the get-in, lighting positions, props, fire safety and so on. It isn't a legally binding document – the signatories aren't automatically held personally liable – but should be taken very seriously, as it can prevent some very serious accidents and is an official requirement of the ADC Theatre. Further, if an accident does happen, then the risk assessment should show that it could not have been easily prevented – this in turn might smooth the progress of any insurance claims made. If you have not filled in your risk assessment, then the ADC Theatre staff will not let you start your get in.

Both the MainShow and the LateShow in a given week are required to fill in the same risk assessment form, so that the two shows know what risks might be involved in the other, and several members of each production team (the TD, the Lighting Designer and the Stage Manager each have dedicated sections, but other members of the crew (such as the props manager, or assistant stage manager) might also need to contribute) need to be involved in filling it in. If at all possible, then the risk assessment should be filled in all at once, with everyone present who needs to contribute (from both shows) as this will lead to a full discussion of, and a better understanding of, the risks involved not only in each of the shows, but also in the interaction between the two. For example, in the year 2000, a fire was started in the ADC Theatre because a MainShow had lanterns which were flown down into view to blind the audience, but when flown back up out of view were pointed straight at a black cloth. When the LateShow started their get in they turned these lights on, not knowing where they were or that they were dangerous, and the heat generated set fire to the cloths in the grid. Even if the two shows don't fill in the form together, your production team should still meet as a group to fill it in, and then you should talk to the other show's TD about the risks your meeting highlighted.

Fire regulations are particularly important to safety in the ADC Theatre, and are rigorously enforced. They require that all cloths (although not costumes), props and set to be used on stage do not catch alight when tested with a naked flame – such as a match or cigarette lighter – for 30 seconds. The fire escapes must also be maintained at all times, including a metre wide fire passage down both sides of the stage, and the safety curtain must always be unobstructed. This is important to the set design of the show, as it means that none of the set on the stage may impinge on the fire passage or the safety curtain either when it is in use, or when stored offstage. If in any doubt as to whether your set will meet the necessary fire regulations, speak to the theatre management. The other major part of fire safety at the ADC Theatre is that naked flames (matches, candles) and smoking are allowed on stage when a suitable license has been obtained (speak to your producer about this) but while there is a flame on stage, there must be someone in each wing manning the fire extinguishers. Fire regulations are covered in more detail in the Stage Managers Guide, as fire safety during performances is primarily the SM's responsibility.

The wider Health and Safety issues involved in a show are the general responsibility of the TD, although obviously you will need to work with the rest of the crew to make sure everything is safe. It is impossible to write a list of all the things that could go wrong on-stage during the show (or indeed during the get in) but the following points are a good starting point. The risk assessment should also make you think about other potential problems.

Are there any trip hazards on stage? Cables across walkways? Staircases without much light? You need to find a way to mitigate any possible danger, possibly by providing more light, or putting high-contrast tape over it etc.

Are there any head hazards? Can they be removed? Or marked with hazard tape? Or padded? Don't just think in terms of static set, try to think of anything that someone could bang their head on, like stage lanterns hung at head height.

Do you have any raised platforms? Will you need handrails? What about toe-boards? Is the staircase or ladder safe? Could it easily be evacuated in an emergency? In the dark?

Are there any holes or trapdoors? How are you going to stop people falling in?

Do you have anything hot where someone might touch it, such as low lighting booms? How can you stop people burning themselves?

Will you need to put an earth connection on any bits of set? (for example, a scaffolding construction with anything electrical fixed to it)

The list could go on and on – as long as there is a way for someone to hurt themselves, there will always be a way for you to make the set and stage safer! But it is very much an application of common sense – the law on Health and Safety (1972) talks about “reasonable measures” to ensure people’s safety, and at the ADC Theatre, as long as you have done the risk assessment, and thought carefully about any potential dangers on stage, then things are usually fine.

As a final part of the Health and Safety measures taken, it is normal for the TD to walk round the set with the Theatre management to point out the dangers identified, the measures taken to mitigate them and so on. It is important to do this, as it gives the Management a chance to check that the stage is safe for use, and also they have a chance to suggest any last minute modifications which would further improve matters. After the set and stage have received approval from management, the TD then takes the cast and crew for a similar walk-around of the set and stage, showing them the fire exits, pointing out any remaining trip or head hazards, explaining the importance of the fire passages and so on. This is done in conjunction with the Stage Manager to ensure that the cast and crew all fully understand the dangers present on the stage, and what to do in the event of an emergency.

## **Late-shows**

If you're a TD for a MainShow then it's most likely you're sharing the stage with a LateShow. They are entitled to some consideration when it comes to set and workshop space. It's not unreasonable for them to want to have some clear stage, so you should think hard about having fixed set downstage and whether you can make it moveable instead. Most importantly you should communicate with the LateShow's TD early enough to inform them of your plans so no-one gets any nasty surprises the day before the show goes up. Be prepared to compromise a little when it comes to stage-space: remember, the next show you do might be a LateShow...

If you're the TD for the late-show then get in touch with the MainShow's TD well in advance of the weekend of the get-in so you know what their set is like. In the ADC Theatre, you should be able to persuade their TD to give you a clear stage downstage of a blinder on counterweight 10.

In terms of sharing the workshop between the Main and LateShows, there is usually plenty of time, but officially, the MainShow is entitled to the workshop from Thursday before the show starts until the show goes up, and then the LateShow has it after the show on Tuesday night, and then all day Wednesday.

# The Club Cupboard

Provided you're working on a ClubShow, you are entitled to make use of any item you find in the club cupboard. The cupboard is next to the iron-winding handle in the scene dock, and is locked. Ask the Club Technical Director [td@cuadc.org] for a key well in advance of when you need it. The theatre staff DON'T have access to the cupboard.

If you buy woodscrews, ring-shanks, glue, paint or other consumables to use on a club show, the left-overs belong to the club, and you should put them in the cupboard for use by the next club show. Obviously, this is in everyone's interest as it keeps the cupboard well stocked for the next show, so please do it! There is usually a good selection of paint, glue, glitter, pens, gaffa and LX tape, screws, rope, and so on stored in the Club Cupboard, but you will need to check it in advance of your show so you find out what you can take from there, and what you will have to order yourself.

## The workshop

If you are TDing at the ADC Theatre, there is a well equipped workshop available for you to use to build your set. (In some cases, with special permission of the ADC Theatre Management, it can be used by outside shows too)

Safety is paramount in all workshops, and at the ADC Theatre although all of the tools are available for student use, almost all of them require you to be specially trained by the venue management before you may use them - there are sign-up sheets on the noticeboard in the workshop which show a list of all those who have been trained. There is some information in the safety section of this website, but only training by the management allows any use of these tools. This applies to all those working under your direction too – everyone must be trained by management on the power tools. Tools like battery powered drills are exempt from this, but if in any doubt, check with the Management.

In addition to the safety in the workshop, tidiness is also important. Specifically, the large amounts of sawdust and other dirt that can accumulate in the workshop can be a fire hazard, and as such the workshop must be tidy and free of dust whenever members of the public are in the building – obviously during the evening performances (when the workshop must be tidy by 7pm) but don't forget about matinees!

During performances, most work in the workshop must cease, as most tools will make a noise, and the workshop is underneath the auditorium. Activities which can carry on quietly (such as painting etc) are fine, but in addition to showing consideration for the audience, the various Health and Safety (and fire escape) regulations of the building must not be breached. Check with Management before using the workshop during any show.

The workshop must also not be used during antisocial hours – these are defined as between midnight and 8am every day, and also between 11am and 12pm on a Sunday (as there is a house of worship next door).

## Set

After the budgeting exercise carried out earlier in the run up to the show, it is necessary to finish the set design, and carefully specify exactly what needs building. This is something which, if you're lucky, the set designer might do. However, as often than not, the set designer will just give you the dimensions and shape of the desired set (sometimes, if you're unlucky, they don't even give you the dimensions!) and then it is your job to make sure that the designs are turned into workable, buildable structures. It is worth noting that if the set designer wants flats on stage, the ADC Theatre has a good stock of these, at standard heights of 8', 12' and 16' which are free to use in the venue, but there you are not allowed to glue, screw or nail to them, and they must be painted with Rosco Supersaturated paint, rather than any random emulsion, which is more expensive, but helps them to

last for longer.

Once the technical designs are finished (which can vary in complexity from a simple square box or two all the way up to a flying house the whole width of the stage!) you will need to then order the materials. Wood, as mentioned earlier, is generally ordered from the three local wood suppliers, and it is well worth getting quotes from all three and shopping around. Any wood that is used in front of the safety curtain will need to be Grade 1 which is more expensive, but more resistant to fire. You will need to order wood well in advance – it takes up to three working days to get it delivered, and it is important that you leave yourself (and your crew!) enough time to build the show properly. You need to order all the other bits and bobs too – any electrical fittings, plastics, metal, cloth etc as required. It is worth noting that if buying cloth for use on stage, you should always order flame retardant; either NDFR (non-durable flame retardant) or IFR (intrinsically flame retardant) so that you won't have to flameproof it yourself. It is more expensive than untreated cloth, but you would spend more money and time to flame proof it yourself! When ordering metals and plastics, you will need to get in touch with the suppliers in advance to check on the availability of the products, as it is often harder to source them.

In addition to ordering wood, it is often the case that there will be leftover wood (from previous shows) in the gash rack in the yard. It is rude to use it all up in one show, so don't rely on the gash rack to build your whole set! The other thing to bear in mind is that if you build your set using screws rather than nails and glue, it will come apart more cleanly, and then the leftover wood can be added to the gash rack for future shows to use. There is also a gash metal rack, where you might be able to find any metal you need, saving you the money and hassle of getting hold of it yourself.

## Set Building

This often ends up being the TD's job; however, it isn't, and it's sometimes possible to find good carpenters and hands-on theatre designers in Cambridge to build your set. This makes it all the more important to have made decent plans of what is to be built, so that other people will be able to build what you want them to. If you want some help finding carpenters, it is worth contacting the ADC Club TD [td@cuadc.org] or Technician [technician@cuadc.org] for help, although obviously they can't guarantee to find you the help you want. It's worth trying to find a team of set-builders, if possible, as giving lots of people one project each and overseeing the whole process is more rewarding for all concerned than having just a couple of people working frantically to try to do everything. Bear in mind, though, that in some cases, a carpenter will not be available and you'll have to build the set yourself (with help from other members of the production team). Remember, too, that anyone helping you in the workshop will require training, and that you will still need to have a TR present in the building if the Theatre Management aren't there at the time.

Be sure to leave enough time to build everything that needs doing – remember that there are constraints on the time the workshop is available to use, as well as limitations to the manpower available. It is worth, on large projects, writing a list of things that need doing, and that way people can come in and find something to do even if you aren't there. There is often a white board in the ADC Workshop which is quite good for this kind of thing – it can also be a good morale booster to have a chart up with lots of things crossed off showing how well you're doing!

## The Stage and Grid Plan

Part of the TD's job is to help make sure the show 'fits together' – i.e. co-ordination of the various different aspects of the show, set and lighting being the two obvious ones, but sometimes also sound (for musicals with fold-back speakers and float microphones etc) to make sure that it will all fit on the stage safely. You should certainly meet with the LD to discuss power distribution, position of lighting bars in the grid, where he/she wants the lighting booms and so on, and reconcile this with the set design and so on. You need to make sure that the LD is happy with the positions of the lights relative to the set and the stage, and then check that the final position of the set is OK with the designer and director. Once this is all agreed and finalised, the detailed stage and grid plan need

to be drawn up, showing the location of all the set (both sitting on the stage and hanging from counterweights) and all the lighting bars, booms and floor-stands etc. If there are microphones in use, it is worth putting them on too.

Once the stage layout is agreed, you need to make it mask, meaning that no-one in the audience (seats A1 and A14 are the critical ones!) can see the lighting bars, or into the wings. To stop people seeing the lighting bars you hang borders in front of them (this needs to be designed carefully in profile and in conjunction with the LD so that you don't block any lighting angles) and to stop people seeing into the wings, you use masking. There are two forms of masking; soft and hard. Soft masking is done with legs which are tall, thin curtains which hang from bars, while hard masking is done with flats. The ADC has enough of both to give you a choice, but it is worth noting that hard masking is easier and usually looks nicer. It is only really worth doing soft masking when you need to roll set on and off from the wings, and it is too big to go through the gaps between the hard maskers.

Now that everything in the grid and on the stage is finalised, you need to plan the grid shift.

## Paper Tech

Many shows have a meeting between the Director, Technical Director, Sound Designer, Lighting Designer and Stage Manager (sometimes more people, depending on who has to be there!) when the lighting cues, sound cues and set movements are entered into the Stage Managers "Book" (which is a copy of the script with all the information needed to run the show written in it) so that the SM will know when to call the cues during the performances. Paper techs are not compulsory, especially on smaller shows with only a few cues of any kind, but on bigger shows with many lighting cues and set movements it has proved very problematic to have missed out a papertech. Then, during the shows, the stage manager will cue everyone from the Book, so that different operators can be used if necessary who do not know the show.

## Get in

The get-in is the period between the end of the last show's get-out, and the opening night of the incoming show. During this time, the lights need to be hung, focused, and plotted, the set needs to be put on stage, finished, painted and made safe, and there needs to be a Technical and Dress rehearsal. A standard get-in might run like this:

Sunday 01:30 – grid shift  
Sunday 02:30 – lighting get in  
Sunday 05:30 – lighting crew go home  
Sunday 09:00 – set crew come in  
Sunday 16:00 – lighting crew return to do focus  
Sunday 20:00 – lighting crew start lighting plot  
Sunday 22:00 – set crew stop for the day and go home  
Monday 02:00 – plot finished, lighting crew go home  
Monday 09:00 – set crew return to theatre to finish set  
Monday 14:00 – tech rehearsal  
Monday 19:45 – dress rehearsal (same time as normal performances)  
Tuesday all day – trouble shooting Tuesday 19:45 – first performance starts

This is however not in any way a fixed schedule; all shows will run differently, and it is the TD's role to make sure that the schedule for the get in is going to give everyone enough time to do their jobs while simultaneously making sure that the show goes up in time. In practice, the TD will usually be responsible for the construction of the set and overseeing all the other aspects of the get in.

If you haven't organised a get-in, or been involved often enough to have a good feel for it, then you should ask a more experienced TD for advice, as it is important that the get-in goes smoothly and runs to time.



The Technical and Dress rehearsals are an essential part of the get-in, and the TD should make sure that they happen with enough time to get everything done that needs to be done. The TD may not have a very large role to play in the tech and dress, as it is more down to the SM and LD, but the TD will sometimes be needed to continue building stuff or to do crewing.

## Crew

During the running of your show you will almost certainly need stage-crew. It is up to you as TD to ensure that enough people are on hand every night for your show to run smoothly. This includes (in consultation with your LD, SM and sound designer) stage crew, LX operator, fly crew and sound operator. If you're really short, contact the Club TD [td@cuadc.org] and they will try to arrange extra people for you. You must also be sure that your crew are trained in what they're doing - for example, novice fly-crew should have 'the ropes' explained to them, and be accompanied by an experienced person until they are comfortable with their role. All hemp crew need to be changed by the theatre management.

## Get-Outs

After the curtain on the last night, the temptation is to relax. However, things are not quite finished. You've still got to run the get-out for your show. This means clearing your set, and de-rigging any unusual lighting positions (side ladders on stage, for example) and leaving the theatre in a fit state for next week's show to start their get-in. This includes (in the ADC Theatre) tidying the green room, the dressing rooms, the yard, the scene-dock and the back-stage corridor. Discuss your GET-OUT plans in advance with the venue management, especially if you need their help for things like flying set through the traps.

Get-outs usually take place a lot faster than the average get-in, and the pressure is on to get off stage and into the bar. Don't be careless at this point - remember you are responsible for people's safety and it is your job alone to run the get-out. Don't let others (especially the incoming show's crew) interfere; do, however, listen to instructions from the venue management. Make sure you've planned in advance how you are going to run the get-out and the sequence in which you will clear the stage. While you shouldn't be taking any risks in order to get to the bar that bit quicker, there are many things you can do to make the get-out more efficient:

- If there's a reasonable amount of time between MainShow and LateShow, you can clear some items of MainShow set and props during the turnaround between shows, and de-rig floor-lights and booms that aren't used during the LateShow. Don't forget to negotiate this with all the relevant people, and remember that it's second priority to getting the LateShow up and running on time.
- Get next week's lighting crew to de-rig front-of-house lighting positions and rig their lights as they go - the FOH rig doesn't change that much at the ADC Theatre and this speeds up both the get-out and the get-in.
- Get people started on tidying the dressing rooms (quietly) during the late-show.
- Appoint a few cast members or spare crew members to file gel in the gel trolley as it comes out of lanterns throughout the get-out.

The real secret to an efficient get-out is people management. If you can have lots of things going on simultaneously then you can occupy everyone present, which makes for a faster get-out. Thus, you can have a group of people filing gels, some people tidying the dressing rooms and scene dock, etc., some people working front of house and yet more people working on stage. Remember that the stage floor should be clear - and all personnel behind the safety curtain should be wearing hard-hats - when you are flying things in. Often the largest number of people present are the cast. In the case of the ADC Theatre, they're usually hyped up waiting for a party and not very technically skilled; however, it's customary for the party not to start until the get-out is finished. Rather than have the whole cast hanging around in the auditorium, try to get them to help. You can use them for less-

technical jobs, such as carrying set down to the scene-dock, and you can give them technical jobs to do with the assistance of experienced techies. Most actors are very intelligent and some are even interested in technical work! It's worth having a chat to the cast before the last night, to explain what is going to happen during the get-out and that there are simple ways in which they will be required to help along with everyone else (cable coiling, carrying stuff etc). It's also worth having the stage manager talk to them as well.

No one on stage should have been drinking. If you have too many people present to be useful, send some to sit in the auditorium. What mustn't happen under any circumstances is rowdy behaviour in the auditorium or on stage while the get out is happening: the potential for accident and serious injury is enormous.

## Summary

If you have any questions or need help, don't hesitate to contact any members of the ADC committee or the theatre management; they will always do their best to help. And whatever you do, always be thinking about safety. The show must go on, but not if you have to kill a few technicians in the process.

While a lot of the above sounds quite daunting, being a technical director is actually quite easy and just requires you to engage brain and think safety at all times. Even if something goes wrong, it's rarely the end of the world and you'll have learnt a valuable lesson for next time; we all make mistakes, after all. It's a very rewarding job, especially when you see the production come together as a result of your organisation and planning. If you're keen to learn, ask the technical director of a show at the ADC Theatre if you can be their assistant technical director and help - they'll probably jump at the offer. Contact the ADC Club Technician [technician@cuadc.org] if you would like to be put in touch with such a technical director.