



Stage  
**Production**

Design, Management and Staging and Rigging



Occupational  
Profiles



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**Production**

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These occupational profiles are an *offprint* of a study of training needs entitled *Production scénique – Conception, gestion et techniques de scène* produced in 2007, in partnership with the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport and the Comité sectoriel de main-d'œuvre de la culture (Conseil québécois des ressources humaines en culture). This study attests to the willingness of these organizations to harmonize their actions as regards training in Quebec's cultural sector.

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Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, 2008-07-01213

ISBN 978-2-550-52499-1 (Printed Version)

ISBN 978-2-550-52500-4 (PDF)

Legal deposit – Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec,

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**English Version**

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**Linguistic Review**

Under the supervision of the Direction des communications  
du ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport

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## INTRODUCTION

The twelve occupational profiles developed as part of the study *Production scénique – Conception, gestion et techniques de scène* réalisée were based on the results of the survey and various documentary sources that specifically describe stage production activities in Québec. These profiles may eventually be used to develop a system of reference for the occupations and monitoring tools for the sector.

## PROFILES OF OCCUPATIONS IN STAGE PRODUCTION

Based on the results of the survey and various documents, we have put together profiles of the 12 Design and Production occupations.

### *Design*

1. Assistant Director
2. Set (and Prop) Designer
3. Costume (and Accessories) Designer
4. Lighting Designer
5. Sound Designer

### *Production*

6. Production Manager
7. Technical Director
8. Stage Manager
9. Sound Technician
10. Lighting Technician
11. General Stage Technician (Stagehand)
12. Set, Costume and Prop Artisans

## SOURCES USED

The information contained in the Occupational Profiles comes from various documents as well as the results of the following surveys:

- Four face-to-face interviews with key people in stage production
- Twenty-nine telephone interviews with specialists working in one or several of the targeted occupations
- Three focus groups conducted with 17 recognized experts in stage production
- Seven telephone interviews with stage production employers
- The committee of experts.
- A work on occupations in the performing arts currently being produced by André Simard and Roger Ponce, from the Collège Lionel-Groulx, in collaboration with the Collegial Centre for Educational Materials Development
- *National Occupational Classification*, Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC)
- *Labour Market Information*, based on *Perspectives professionnelles* (2002–2006), Emploi-Québec<sup>1</sup>
- *Job Futures Quebec (2009 Scenario)* published by the HRDC on the Emploi-Avenir Québec site;<sup>2</sup>

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1 Québec, Emploi-Québec, Direction générale adjointe à la planification et au développement de l'emploi, Direction de la planification et de l'information sur le marché du travail, directions régionales de la planification, du partenariat et de l'IMT, May 2003, [Online] <http://imt.emploiquebec.net>

2 [Online], <http://www.jobfutures.ca/noc/browse-occupations-work-prospects.shtml>

- *Dictionnaire Septembre des métiers et professions* (Les éditions Septembre inc.)<sup>3</sup>
- Collective agreement signed between the APASQ and Théâtres Unis Enfance Jeunesse
- *Analyse des besoins en formation continue des professionnels des arts de la scène du Québec*, TREMBLAY, Pierre, Association des professionnels des arts de la scène du Québec, with the support of the Conseil québécois des ressources humaines en culture, April 2004, 68 p.
- *Charte de compétences Technicien de scène* (Conseil des ressources humaines du secteur culturel, 2006)
- *Chart of Competencies for Sound Technician* (Banff Centre, 2000)
- *Chart of Competencies for Lighting Technician* (Banff Centre, 1999)
- *Chart of Competencies for Stage Carpenter* (Banff Centre, 2000)
- *Chart of Competencies for Prop Artisan* (Banff Centre, 2005)
- *Production d'événements culturels, Étude des besoins en formation artistique, by the Conseil québécois des ressources humaines en culture, the Ministère de l'Éducation and the Ministère de la Culture et des Communications, 2003*
- *Analyse de la profession Régisseur* (CQRHC, mars 2001)
- *Analyse de la profession Metteur en scène et Assistant metteur en scène* (CQRHC, December 2000)
- *Analyse de la situation de travail Régisseuse, régisseur* (MEQ, 1993)
- *Analyse de la situation de travail Directrice technique, directeur technique* (MEQ, 1993)
- *Analyse de la situation de travail Directrice, directeur de la production* (MEQ, 1993)
- *Analyse de la profession Éclairagiste* (MMSR, 1991)
- *Analyse de la profession Concepteur, conceptrice de décors* (MMSR, 1991)
- *Analyse de la profession Designer de costumes* (MMSR, 1991)

## DEFINITION OF THE HEADINGS USED

### *Occupational Group*

The *National Occupational Classification* links each occupation to one or several occupational groups by assigning them a unit group to which a numerical code is given.

### *Group of Establishments*

The occupation is also associated with a group of establishments from the *Québec Culture and Communications Activity Classification System* (QCCACS) that applies to all the activities of culture and communications establishments. This general classification system includes 15 fields subdivided into groups that correspond with various types of existing establishments (five-digit code). Remember that included in the performing arts field are independent artists who create or interpret works before an audience or who do both; the establishments that manage the careers of these artists; the individuals who provide the artistic, creative or technical skills required for performances; and vocational training institutions for the performing arts.<sup>4</sup>

### *Lead Statement*

The Lead Statement sets out the main function of the occupation. It also describes in which occupational settings or which establishments this occupation is practised. The information presented is based on the documents consulted and the results of a survey of industry specialists.

<sup>3</sup> [Online], <http://dico.monemploi.com>

<sup>4</sup> Institut de la statistique du Québec, Observatoire de la culture et des communications, *Québec Culture and Communications Activity Classification System*, November 2003, p. 31.

### *Examples of job titles*

The examples of job titles specify the professional titles currently used in establishments where the occupation is practised. They come from the documents and the survey of industry specialists. The list submitted is not comprehensive and is presented in alphabetical order.

### *Main duties and responsibilities*

This section describes the duties performed during the practise of this occupation. The information is mainly derived from the adaptation of a text taken from a work on the performing arts occupations currently being produced by André Simard and Roger Ponce, from the Collège Lionel-Groulx, in collaboration with the Collegial Centre for Educational Materials Development. Other documents were used as needed to complete the information. These were mainly analyses of trades and occupations as well as charts of competencies produced by the Conseil québécois des ressources humaines en culture and the Conseil des ressources humaines du secteur culturel as well as analyses of work situations produced by the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport. When necessary, additional information came from the experts we spoke with during our research.

### *Training and Experience Required*

This section describes what sort of training and experience employers generally require on hiring. The information produced is the result of the survey of specialists and employers.

### *Training Profile*

This section lists the various relevant training paths that lead to working in the occupation. Insofar as possible, the following information is provided: the order of instruction, the specialty of the education and the type of diploma. The information is taken from focus groups of recognized experts, the survey of specialists, the *Dictionnaire Septembre des métiers et professions* and the committee of experts.

### *Skills, Abilities and Personal Suitability*

The skills, abilities and personal suitability related to the occupation are taken from the analyses of trades and occupations or analyses of work situations (when available), from the *Dictionnaire Septembre des métiers et professions* and information obtained from the survey of specialists and employers. When necessary, additional information came from the committee of experts.

### *Career Development*

Career Development describes the typical career path, from the start of employment, to advancement within the occupation or to other occupations with equivalent or greater responsibilities. The information presented is taken from telephone interviews with specialists. When necessary, additional information came from the experts we spoke with during our research.

### *Outlook for the Occupation*

Outlook for the Occupation deals with changes affecting the context and the conditions for practising the occupations under study, particularly emerging labour markets, new technologies, methods for organizing work as well as legislation and regulations. This qualitative data comes from interviews with key people as well as focus groups and the survey of specialists and employers. When necessary, additional information came from the committee of experts.

### *Findings and Issues*

The Findings and Issues section seeks to explain the most significant elements that characterize the occupation and the conditions for practising it, especially the outlook for the occupation, the training received as well as emerging training needs.

## Occupational Group (NOC)

5131 Producers, Directors, Choreographers and Related Occupations

This occupational group is mainly defined by the personnel who supervise and coordinate the *technical* and *artistic* aspects of a production in the various stage production environments. These people are involved in interpreting scripts and directing the staging of the various productions for which they are responsible. However, the specific activities of assistant directors are not described there.

## Group of Establishments (QCCACS)<sup>5</sup>

12101 Independent Stage Designers and Directors

This group comprises independent professional artists primarily engaged in creating set, costume, or lighting designs or directing various stage performances. Artists practicing an art on their own account, whose competence is recognized by their peers in their own discipline, and whose creations are disseminated in a professional context are considered as professional artists.

## Lead Statement<sup>6</sup>

The assistant director assists and supports the director throughout his/her entire artistic approach and vision. This person attends all meetings, in the rehearsal hall and the theatre, up to the first public performance. Using his/her skills and with the aid of art and technology, this person helps the director to develop and finalize the staging.

The assistant director reports directly to the director, who hires him/her with a view to building a team that enjoys working together and that complements each other. If the team develops real professional synergy, it will become quasi-permanent. The position occupied by the assistant director and his/her contribution to the preparation and creative work will vary according to the individual's complementary abilities. This person interacts constantly with the design and production teams and the artists he/she is directing.

This means that the assistant director acts as an intermediary between the designers, the production team and the company in order to establish good communication and an efficient working arrangement between the departments. His/her role is to act as a catalyst and to become the linchpin of the production team.

Assistant directors work in various areas of stage and screen production, particularly, theatre, circus, television, advertising, motion pictures, dance and opera. Consultation with industry experts tends to show that theatre is nevertheless the main area where this occupation is practised.

5 Institut de la statistique du Québec, Observatoire de la culture et des communications, *Québec Culture and Communications Activity Classification System*, November 2003, p. 31.

6 Text taken from the Conseil québécois des ressources humaines en culture, *Analyse des métiers et professions Metteur en scène et Assistant metteur en scène* [Analysis of trades and occupations Director and Assistant Director], June 2000, pp. 11–19 and adaptation of a text taken from a work on the performing arts occupations currently being produced by André Simard and Roger Ponce, from the Collège Lionel-Groulx, in collaboration with the Collegial Centre for Educational Materials Development.

## Examples of Job Titles

- Assistant Director

## Main Duties and Responsibilities<sup>7</sup>

### 1) *Artistic Assistance*

- Study and analyze the director's text or concept (or both) in order to detail its highlights.
- Develop a working script with the director.<sup>8</sup>
- Invite performers for auditions, if necessary.
- Attend auditions and interviews with performers, if necessary.
- Attend various design and production meetings, take notes and follow up if required.
- Do artistic, historical, or other research depending on the needs of the show.
- Give team members relevant information.

### 2) *Organize and supervise rehearsals*

- Plan and draw up a rehearsal schedule and distribute it to the entire team.
- Notify performers of rehearsals and ensure they attend.
- Attend all rehearsals, ensure the performers' well-being, and create a smooth work environment.
- Tape out the ground plan on the rehearsal hall floor.
- Find the furniture, props and costumes required for rehearsals and preset them in their proper place each day, prior to the rehearsal.
- Run the rehearsals as planned when the director is absent.
- Write down the blocking and keep it up to date. Note cues and relay the information to those concerned.
- Keep the various lists of the performance's needs (rehearsal notes) up to date and convey them to the entire team.
- Coordinate the performers' presence at costume fittings, sound recordings for the performance, photo sessions, interviews and meetings with the press (in collaboration with the communications department).
- Compile each performer's and the director's rehearsal time according to their contract and see that union rules are respected

### 3) *Assist with the move to the theatre*

- In collaboration with the director and the various designers; attend all lighting and sound level sessions as well as any other stage movement cueing sessions, taking note of the timing and placement of all cues.
- Supervise and run level or cueing sessions when the director is absent.
- Allocate dressing rooms in collaboration with the head of wardrobe.
- Convey the information needed to create the prompt book to the stage manager and familiarize him/her with the performance's requirements and procedures.

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<sup>7</sup> Adaptation of a text taken from a work on the performing arts occupations currently being produced by André Simard and Roger Ponce, from the Collège Lionel-Groulx, in collaboration with the Collegial Centre for Educational Materials Development.

<sup>8</sup> Separate the text into scenes and acts.

#### 4) Artistic Follow Up

Collaborate with the show's administration to archive all documents used while working and see to storage and to the cleaning of the rehearsal hall.

### Training and Experience Required

- Theatrical training (production) at the National Theatre School of Canada, or at a college or other educational institution
- and
- Experience with staging and rigging (stage management, sound, lighting)

Although a diploma is not required to work as an assistant director, theatre training makes it easier to find employment. Apprenticing with experienced directors is still the best way to establish a long-term relationship. Most of the time, if they work well together they will become a quasi-permanent team. Therefore the ability to network in the milieu and with directors and to establish good contacts with them will make it possible to obtain contracts.

### Training Profile

- College level training (DCS) in theatre production (Collège Lionel-Groulx, Cégep de Saint-Hyacinthe, John Abbott College)<sup>9</sup>
- Training in production at the National Theatre School of Canada

### Skills, Abilities and Personal Suitability

- Analytical ability
- Ability to assimilate and transmit the director's vision
- Communication skills
- Diplomatic
- Intuitive
- Good time management
- Ability to plan, organize and adhere to schedules
- Respect for others
- Thorough
- Interpersonal skills
- Concerned with maintaining the quality and artistic integrity of the show
- Team player

### Career Development

The assistant director works almost exclusively in theatre. According to the people we consulted, it is possible to find employment in this occupation when entering the job market. In these cases, people usually start in small theatre companies. In larger-scale productions, most people start in the field working as an apprentice, stage technician or in production.

This job is usually done on a contractual basis. Permanent employment opportunities are very rare and, to earn a living, workers must often take on other jobs, sometimes in stage management, sometimes in staging and rigging and even in sound and lighting design. Someone who is versatile will be offered more opportunities.

According to an analysis of the occupations of director and assistant director by the Conseil québécois des ressources humaines en culture,<sup>10</sup> the turnover rate in this occupation is fairly high. The survey results show that most people work a large variety of jobs throughout their careers. The organization of

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9 It should be noted that the Centre d'études collégiales de Montmagny du cégep de La Pocatière started offering this training in September 2006. This institution offers specialized courses in Gestion et techniques de scène (voie B) [stage management and techniques].

10 Conseil québécois de ressources humaines en culture, *Analyse des métiers et professions Metteur en scène et Assistant metteur en scène*, June 2000, p. 18.

stage production clearly favours work on a project-by-project basis rather than perspectives for ongoing work. This job insecurity makes people work long hours on different productions on the same day. After a number of years of experience, some people specialize in two main occupations: assistant director and stage manager. They devote an equal amount of time to both.

Finally, it does not seem that working as an assistant director leads to becoming a director. This career path seems mainly open to actors. Advancement in this occupation seems to be more related to challenges that take the form of larger productions in bigger theatres, or collaborations with well-known and talented directors and designers. Over time, some people change to work in motion pictures or advertising as a sound person or production assistant, while still others turn to other occupations in the performing arts (dance, variety shows, circus, opera).

To offset the insecurity of their job, many people join the Association des professionnels des arts de la scène du Québec to ensure their rights are upheld and to give them bargaining power when dealing with producers' associations.

### **Outlook for the Occupation**

Managing schedules, which is one of the assistant director's responsibilities, has become a challenge. Reconciling performers' schedules appears to be increasingly complex because of their multiple and more lucrative commitments in fields other than theatre (television, motion pictures, advertising). Assistant directors must equip themselves with planning tools and learn to use software programs such as Word and Excel. They must also become familiar with the Internet to communicate with designers throughout the design and production process. In addition, knowledge of other software programs such as Autocad and ACDSee is useful for reading plans or simplifying access to images submitted by designers.

The challenges involved with managing project teams is taking over a larger part of the assistant director's job. Tensions caused by the faster pace of productions requires that this individual be able to manage projects effectively and handle potential conflicts.

As this occupation is practised mainly in theatre, the job is dependent upon government grants given to establishments.

### **Findings and Issues**

The profession is marked by a double challenge. On the one hand, dividing one's time between different occupations, in particular the occupation of assistant director and that of stage manager, and, on the other hand, reconciling schedules of artists, designers and technicians in a context where many of them work on simultaneous contracts to earn a living. The use of the Internet and planning tools as well as a knowledge of software programs such as Word, Excel, AutoCAD and ACDSee is becoming necessary in order to communicate with the various design and production teams. These people must also learn to use project management tools and develop conflict management skills.

As an independent worker, this person must be able to manage his/her own career. To do this, he/she must take on various management tasks, in particular negotiate work contracts, plan his/her schedule and manage his/her personal accounting and income tax.

Currently, the best employment opportunities are in the theatre, even if this occupation can be practised in other areas of stage production. Although theatre training makes it easier to enter the labour market, experience in the performing arts is preferred, and the ability to create a bond with a director is important. Long-term employment in this occupation is therefore conditional on the possibility of creating a partnership with a director. Finally, the job remains subject to the grants given under government programs to help artists and cultural establishments.



**Occupational Group (NOC)**

5243 Theatre, Fashion, Exhibit and Other Creative Designers

This occupational group includes the people who design and produce sets and props for stage productions. Theatre designers work in the performing arts and at festivals. Other creative designers work in scenic workshops are self-employed or entrepreneurs.

**Group of Establishments (QCCACS)<sup>11</sup>**

12101 Independent Stage Designers and Directors

This group's main activity consists of creating set designs for various stage performances. Artists practicing an art on their own account, whose competence is recognized by their peers in their own discipline, and whose creations are disseminated in a professional context are considered as professional artists.

**Lead Statement<sup>12</sup>**

The set and prop designer, in collaboration with the scene shop and the technical director, designs set pieces and hand props as well as the overall stage setting according to the work and the director's concept. He/she ensures the quality of the production in accordance with the allocated schedule and budget. A substantial part of his/her design is original and creative. His/her creations help performers better portray their characters through the set design and the work. This person develops a unity of atmosphere and colour in collaboration with the lighting and costume designers. For artistic matters, this person reports to the director, and for production matters, to the production department. The director generally chooses the set and prop designer.

The set and prop designer is never directly in the limelight, but he/she is the one who chooses all the elements that go into the theatre space. With the director, he/she interprets the text and creates a universe, taking into account the space, time, and characters. The set and prop designer takes care of historical documentation, does sketches, finds the right proportions, textures and colours for various elements, then gives form to his/her idea by making a three-dimensional model.

He/she works in close collaboration with the technical department to develop a proposal that respects the various constraints of the production. After the design has been approved, he/she follows up on the construction and the setting up of the scenic elements. In collaboration with the technical director and the production manager, he/she chooses the materials and the construction techniques best suited for the design. He/she draws up an outline of a plan or design of a theatre space, creates, makes or has made the objects and their supports, produces renderings (drawings in two or three dimensions), closely supervises the progress of set construction, in order to ensure that all scenic elements are completed on schedule.

11 Institut de la statistique du Québec, Observatoire de la culture et des communications, *Québec Culture and Communications Activity Classification System*, November 2003, p. 31.

12 Adaptation of a text taken from Ministère de la Main-d'œuvre, de la Sécurité du revenu et de la Formation professionnelle, Direction de l'intervention sectorielle, *Devis de formation professionnelle Concepteurs et conceptrices de décors* [Specifications for professional training for set designers], June 1991, and adaptation of a text taken from a work on the performing arts occupations currently being produced by André Simard and Roger Ponce, from the Collège Lionel-Groulx, in collaboration with the Collegial Centre for Educational Materials Development.

## Examples of job titles

- Property Person
- Prop Designer
- Set Designer
- Stage Scenery Designer
- Museum Exhibits Designer
- Show and Demonstration Designer
- Stage Designer
- Set Decorator — Theatre and Cinema
- Stage Set Designer
- Theatre Designer
- Scenic Artist

## Main Duties and Responsibilities<sup>13</sup>

### 1) *Preproduction*

- Do an analytical reading of the play, noting the elements that may help in producing the design.
- Gather information about the author and the context in which the action takes place and its period, without forgetting the historical, social and political aspects, interior design and architecture.
- Meet regularly with the director to validate the proposed design as it is developed. Report to the director as often as necessary.
- Attend rehearsals and run-throughs to validate or orient the proposed design according to the staging, paying particular attention to action on-stage and performers' entrances and exits.
- Produce renderings, sketches, drawings and a maquette of the set.
- Draw a preliminary ground plan of the stage to be reproduced in the rehearsal hall.
- Attend production meetings.
- Produce, in accordance with agreed deadlines, a three-dimensional scale model and plans that include a ground plan, a front elevation and a cross-section of the design as well as overall design plans.
- Follow up on the development of construction plans<sup>14</sup> in collaboration with the production manager, technical director and head of the carpentry shop.
- Help choose materials and provide the necessary samples.
- Present the entire design project to the scenic artist and the head of props, and follow up on their work in the shop.

### 2) *Production*

- Follow up on all aspects of construction, finishing, painting and setting up of the scenic elements during the build, the set up and production week.
- Follow up on the fabrication of set pieces and hand props as well as the painting of the set.
- Supervise and help during set up.
- Participate in lighting levels.
- Attend cue-to-cue rehearsals, onstage technical run-throughs and the dress rehearsal in order to supervise all necessary changes.

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13 Adaptation of a text taken from a work on the performing arts occupations currently being produced by André Simard and Roger Ponce, from the Collège Lionel-Groulx, in collaboration with the Collegial Centre for Educational Materials Development.

14 Plan for set construction and related relevant notes in order to be able to construct the various elements.

### 3) Postproduction

- Keep all documents, drawings, relevant maquettes, plans and computer files to be archived by the production.
- Follow up the production for a potential revival of the show on tour.

### Training and Experience Required

Theatrical training (production) at the National Theatre School of Canada, the Conservatoire d'art dramatique de Québec, or at a college, university or other educational institution.

The skills required by theatre designers are a combination of academic training and work experience. Getting hired depends more on artistic skills shown in previous productions and the person's ability to establish a network of contacts. As regards initial training, the experts consulted during the survey stressed that a certain amount of importance is given to the reputation of the place where the person trained, rather than the diploma, which is not necessary to work in the occupation.

### Training Profile

- College-level training (DCS) in theatre production (Collège Lionel-Groulx, Cégep de Saint-Hyacinthe, John Abbott College)
- Training in stage design at the Conservatoire d'art dramatique de Québec
- Training in stage design at the National Theatre School of Canada
- University training in dramatic art, specialization in dramatic art B.A., Université du Québec à Montréal)
- University training in *Design for the theatre* (BFA, Concordia University)
- College-level training (ACS) in set and prop design (Collège Inter-Dec)

### Skills, Abilities and Personal Suitability

- Enjoy playing with ideas
- Ability to assimilate and transmit the director's vision
- Ability to communicate
- Problem-solving skills
- Adaptability
- Creative and artistic
- Enjoy exploring and experimenting
- Ability to plan, organize and adhere to schedules
- Sensitivity and imagination
- Visual and aesthetic sense
- Team player

### Career Development

People in the field agree that the best way to become a set designer is to first become an assistant or to work in peripheral occupations such as scenic painter or property manager. The ability to sell his/her talents and a good network of contacts will help an individual enter this occupation more or less quickly. Being hired as an assistant to the designer is rare, due to increasing budgetary constraints.

Consequently, it has become more of a challenge to get a first contract. As a general rule, people start their careers in small creative or repertory theatres or with self-managed projects, such as plays put on by students. There is a lot of competition between professionals in this field and while competence is quickly recognized, the same can be said for incompetence.

Set and prop designers are almost always self-employed or contract workers. In order to earn a living, it is often necessary to have several contracts and to work in various milieus: theatre, musical theatre, music, dance, variety shows, the circus, cultural and corporate events, motion pictures and video, television. To earn a living from this occupation and carve out a place for oneself, it is essential to find a niche in one or several areas of stage production. Someone who is versatile (technical drawing, set painting, manufacture and adaptation of props, welding, etc.) will be offered more opportunities. According to the experts consulted, it takes a lot of determination and passion to succeed in finding a niche and many feel that the market is saturated. These difficult conditions have caused many set designers to join the Association des professionnels des arts de la scène du Québec, whose mandate is to represent them, defend their interests and negotiate agreements on work conditions with producers' associations.

## **Outlook for the Occupation**

Although set design has evolved a lot over the past years, in theatre, sets are designed for a particular location and the work is presented directly and immediately. The challenge of this live art is to produce the desired result and to be able to repeat it at each presentation. Set and prop designers are key partners in creating a show; they work together with directors, choreographers and the entire creative team (actors, dancers, lighting designers, musicians). Their role consists of giving a show a "look" and making sure this look is coherent.

Computer-assisted design is becoming an increasingly important element in this occupation. The use of computerized tools to create plans or propose design ideas has accelerated the design process and gives much greater flexibility for changing or tweaking a concept. Three main software programs are used for set design: Autocad, Illustrator and Photoshop. However, several people questioned during our survey insisted on the importance of developing and maintaining the ability to draw plans by hand.

There are several benefits to working in set and prop design. The designer works in close collaboration with the director or producer, and the work provides the opportunity for much interpersonal contact. He/she also enjoys great professional autonomy and the creative work is very stimulating due to the challenges that must be met, especially when the production goes on tour. Then, the designer must not only create sets, but also adapt to the physical constraints imposed by their transportation and the theatres chosen for performances.

Over the past years, work conditions have become more difficult, especially in the theatre where there are still major time constraints and the creative pace is accelerated to compensate for budget shortfalls. The set and prop designer must always keep costs in mind but still create sets that meet expectations.

According to the experts we polled for our survey, it is difficult for set and prop designers to earn a living working solely in the theatre. They often work in other areas such as the circus, motion pictures and television. Although each area has its own specific constraints, the design process remains essentially the same. However, working in television requires designing new techniques for which they have not been prepared. In fact, as this medium amplifies details, several factors must be taken into account in order to project the desired effect.

The workload is very heavy and, as a result, there is a lot of pressure. Time management is often very difficult because of multiple commitments. Designers must therefore equip themselves with computer work tools such as the Internet to be able to communicate at all times with members of the various design projects with which he/she is associated.

As a self-employed worker, designers must take on various administrative tasks (personal income taxes, contracts, career management) for which they are ill-prepared by their education. For this reason, many choose to use the services of an agent, whose job is to manage their affairs. This method of career management is recognized as fairly common practice by the set designers consulted.

## **Findings and Issues**

Set designers must meet a double challenge. On the one hand, design an authentic environment that meets the needs of the staging and, on the other hand, design sets that can be adapted to the requirements of going on tour.

The job is often dependent on government aid programs awarded to artists and cultural establishments. In the theatre, this occupation is practised in an environment characterized by increasing constraints on time and budgets.

As regards the need for workers, the market seems saturated in the world of theatre. However, trained people can work in other areas, mainly the circus, cinema and television.

To earn a living, set designers must be flexible and work on a large number of productions, which complicates time management. The need for communication with other members of the design team means they must equip themselves with various virtual work tools such as the Internet.

The use of software programs such as Autocad, Illustrator and Photoshop has become essential to increase productivity although traditional design tools are still a condition of effectiveness.



**Occupational Group (NOC)**

5243 Theatre, Fashion, Exhibit and Other Creative Designers

This occupational category includes people who design and produce the costumes and accessories for stage productions.

**Group of Establishments (QCCACS)<sup>15</sup>**

12101 Independent Stage Designers and Directors

This group's main activity consists of creating costume designs for various stage performances. Artists practicing an art on their own account, whose competence is recognized by their peers in their own discipline, and whose creations are disseminated in a professional context are considered as professional artists.

**Lead Statement<sup>16</sup>**

The costume and accessories designer designs the costumes and accessories and sees to their construction. These items must agree with the text and the director's concept, and fit within the allocated time and budget. A substantial part of his/her concept is original and creative. His/her creation helps performers better portray their characters through the design. This person develops a unity of atmosphere and colour in collaboration with the lighting and set designers. For artistic matters, this person reports to the director, and for production matters, to the production manager. The director generally chooses the costume designer.

As there are almost no more costume workshops in Quebec theatre companies, costume designers often produce the costumes in their own workshops. They therefore both design and produce the costumes. Furthermore, these individuals generally assume responsibility for their budget.

Design of costumes and accessories is practised in many different milieus: theatre, motion pictures, television, variety shows, one-time events, the circus and even museography.

**Examples of job titles**

- Property Person
- Costume (and Accessories) Designer
- Head of Wardrobe

15 Institut de la statistique du Québec, Observatoire de la culture et des communications, *Québec Culture and Communications Activity Classification System*, November 2003, p. 31.

16 Adaptation of a text taken from a work on the performing arts occupations currently being produced by André Simard and Roger Ponce, from the Collège Lionel-Groulx, in collaboration with the Collegial Centre for Educational Materials Development.

## Main duties and responsibilities<sup>17</sup>

### 1) *Preproduction*

- Analyze the play and in particular the details of the characters.
- Gather information about the author and the context in which the action takes place as well as the period and prevalent clothing fashions, always remembering the historical, social and political aspects.
- Meet regularly with the director to validate the proposed costume designs as they are developed. Report to the director as often as necessary.
- Attend rehearsals and run-throughs to validate or adjust the proposed costumes according to the staging, paying particular attention to performers' actions, entrances and exits, and to costume-change requirements.
- Produce layouts, sketches, drawings (or all three) and renderings of the costumes.
- Attend production meetings.
- Produce the final renderings of the costumes with fabric swatches.
- Purchase the required fabrics.
- Determine and choose which costume elements should be rented or reused and supervise alterations.

### 2) *Production*

- Ensure follow through on the design by supervising the cutting, sewing and finishing of the costumes in the workshop.
- Supervise costume fittings.
- Assist the head of wardrobe during certain technical run-throughs and the dress rehearsal in order to take notes on changes that must be made.
- Help performers learn how to handle and wear their costumes.
- Show the dressers how to handle and care for the costumes.

### 3) *Postproduction*

- Keep all documents, drawings, relevant renderings, plans and computer files to be archived by the production.
- Follow up the production for a potential revival of the show on tour.

## Training and Experience Required

- Theatrical training (production) at the National Theatre School of Canada, the Conservatoire d'art dramatique de Québec, or at a college, university or other educational institution  
or
- Training in fashion design or costume design for theatre, television and motion pictures (ACS).

The skills required by the directors who hire costume designers are the result of a combination of academic training and work experience. Getting hired depends more on artistic skills shown in previous productions and the person's ability to establish a network of contacts. The milieu is looking for people who have an excellent knowledge of the performing arts. Whatever field they work in, costume designers must know periods and their styles, master the art of clothing and design issues as well as the materials and technical aspects related to its production. As regards initial training, the experts consulted during the survey stressed that a certain amount of importance is given to the reputation of the place where the person trained, but not to the diploma, which is not necessary to work in the occupation.

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17 Adaptation of a text taken from a work on the performing arts occupations currently being produced by André Simard and Roger Ponce, from the Collège Lionel-Groulx, in collaboration with the Collegial Centre for Educational Materials Development.



## Training Profile

- College level training (DCS) in theatre production (Collège Lionel-Groulx, Cégep de Saint-Hyacinthe, John Abbott College)
- Training in stage design at the Conservatoire d'art dramatique de Québec
- Training in costume design at the National Theatre School of Canada
- University training in dramatic art, specialization in dramatic art (B.A., Université du Québec à Montréal)
- University training in *Design for the theatre* (BFA, Concordia University)

## Skills, Abilities and Personal Suitability

- Enjoy playing with ideas
- Ability to assimilate and convey the director's vision
- Communication skills
- Adaptability
- Creative and artistic
- Ability to plan, organize and adhere to schedules
- Sensitivity and imagination
- Visual and aesthetic sense
- Team player

## Career Development

Employment is generally found by starting as a wardrobe assistant in charge of costume accessories, purchasing materials, alterations, patina and fabrics, or as a dresser. Some people start in the workshop where they have the opportunity to be involved with cutting and sewing. Others prefer to specialize in dyeing or printing fabrics. While waiting for a position, those who are only interested in design will take other occupations in stage production, such as set or prop design, or as a stagehand or teacher. Still others will prefer to temporarily work at something outside of stage design.

Costume and accessories designers are almost always self-employed or contract workers. In order to earn a living, it is often necessary to have several contracts and to work in various milieus: theatre, singing theatre, music, dance, variety shows, the circus, cultural and corporate events, motion pictures and video, television.

The position of costume and accessories designer may be attained relatively quickly at the start of a person's career, depending on abilities and circumstances. The difficulty is to keep working. Talent is what makes the difference. Over time, some people prefer to change their orientation towards set and prop design or directing as an addition to their first career or to replace it. According to one expert consulted, recognition does not result in long-term success; in this occupation, designers must constantly prove themselves with each production.

These difficult conditions have caused many costume and prop designers to join the Association des professionnels des arts de la scène du Québec, whose mandate is to represent them, defend their interests and negotiate agreements on work conditions with producers' associations.

## Outlook for the Occupation<sup>18</sup>

The work context for costume and accessories designers is fairly stable and design and production methods remain quite traditional. Apart from the materials used, which have changed, the people we consulted observed that work methods have changed very little; they don't foresee any computerized breakthrough to improve the quality of their work or performance.

Although, in the past, costume and accessories designers had a tendency to specialize in one area, today they have to move around a lot in order to make a living. They therefore practise their occupation in various areas of stage and screen production. Despite certain particularities in each area, the work remains essentially the same. However, in motion pictures and television, special attention to detail is required as they are amplified by the camera. The work therefore requires a greater degree of accuracy and the sewing techniques must be adapted to the period filmed.

In some situations, costumes are made by specialty firms or rented from them. Almost everywhere, production budgets are smaller, and in some productions requests are made to reuse existing costumes rather than produce new ones. Renting or reusing costumes does not mean there is no creative work involved. The choice of costumes and materials and the required alterations must always be integrated into the approved concept for the staging. Therefore, there are several challenges to be met, as costumes must be worked on from a conceptual as well as a material perspective.

Although still not seen much in the theatre, there have been some technological breakthroughs in costume design. We have seen some costumes on stage trimmed with light sources such as LEDs to produce visual effects. Costume and prop designers are almost always self-employed or contract workers. That is why many of them agree to perform various technical tasks (cutting, looking for fabrics, patina, dyeing, making hats, etc.) in addition to design. In most cases, this person will look after estimating the cost of costumes and will manage the budget for producing costumes.

At the same time, these people must manage their career or company. To do this, they must perform management tasks such as promoting and marketing their services and taking care of their taxes. The people who run a workshop must be able to manage a work team and manage the various projects that they take on.

As regards the need for workers, the market seems saturated in the world of theatre. However, trained people can work in other areas, mainly the circus, motion pictures and television. There is a lot of insecurity regarding the amount of work and the market is perceived as being saturated. Competition is becoming more pronounced with the arrival of young people hoping to work in this trade. All these people cannot share the limited number of productions, particularly in milieus where cutbacks in spending are reducing opportunities for work. For this reason, costume and accessories designers have started using the services of an agent to represent them in searching for work and negotiating contracts.

## Findings and Issues

Over the years, the occupation of costume and accessories designer has not undergone any marked changes. The materials used are different, but according to the experts consulted, work methods have changed very little despite advances in computer-assisted design. However, newcomers from the world of fashion are establishing themselves in the milieu with their avant-garde tools and are competing with workers from the world of stage production.

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18 Québec, Ministère de la Main-d'œuvre, de la Sécurité du revenu et de la Formation professionnelle, Direction de l'intervention sectorielle, *Devis de formation professionnelle Designer de costumes*, June 1991.

A career in costume and accessories design presents several challenges, such as the difficulty of breaking in and, especially, of keeping pace in this very competitive field. There is thus more movement between the various milieus. This situation is related to the saturation of the labour market in the theatre and to the budget restrictions that various establishments in this milieu are experiencing. The main outlets for people practicing this occupation are the circus, motion pictures and television. To succeed in this field, costume and accessories designers must be able to adjust their way of doing things to meet the requirements of the camera, which are very different from those required by a theatrical production.



**Occupational Group (NOC)**

5243 Theatre, Fashion, Exhibit and Other Creative Designers

This occupational category includes people who design and produce the lighting concepts for stage productions.

**Group of Establishments (QCCACS)<sup>19</sup>**

12101 Independent Stage Designers and Directors

This group comprises independent professional artists primarily engaged in creating lighting designs for various stage performances. Artists practicing an art on their own account, whose competence is recognized by their peers in their own discipline, and whose creations are disseminated in a professional context are considered as professional artists.

**Lead Statement<sup>20</sup>**

The lighting designer designs the lighting environment of the production and ensures it fits the play and the director's concept while complying with the time and budget allocated.

The basic function of theatre lighting is to make the actors and stage sets visible to the audience as required by the staging. But lighting can also:

- evoke the appropriate mood
- indicate location and time of events
- shift emphasis from one stage area to another
- give the production its style
- make objects appear flat or three-dimensional
- blend all the visual elements into a unified whole

This person develops a unity of atmosphere and colour in collaboration with the set and costume designers. For artistic matters, this person reports to the director, and for production matters, to the production manager.

Lighting designers attend rehearsals to get a feel for the lighting cues and to plan how to light the actors as they move about on stage. When the blocking is set, the lighting designer can start to work out which lighting instruments will be used and where each will be located.

At the planning stage, the lighting designer uses the following tools:<sup>21</sup>

- paintings and photos showing the mood and style of specific lighting techniques
- a lighting plot, a scale drawing of the stage and set as seen from above showing the planned layout of each lighting fixture to be used
- a vertical section plot, a cross-section of the stage and set drawn to scale showing the vertical sightlines and the height and position of each instrument

19 Institut de la statistique du Québec, Observatoire de la culture et des communications, *Québec Culture and Communications Activity Classification System*, November 2003, p. 31.

20 Adaptation of a text taken from a work on the performing arts occupations currently being produced by André Simard and Roger Ponce, from the Collège Lionel-Groulx, in collaboration with the Collegial Centre for Educational Materials Development.

21 [Online] <http://www.artslive.ca/en/eth/design/lighting.html>

- an instrument schedule, a chart that lists each lighting instrument separately along with the details of its type, wattage, purpose, filter colour, the dimmer it will be plugged into and the circuit that will control it
- a cue sheet, a complete list of the various lighting effects the designer has planned for the show and when they occur

The lighting designer works in close collaboration with the other performing arts specialists who design the costumes, sets, sound and music. He/she cooperates with the production team and directs the lighting technicians' work. The light designer also supports the theatre's technical staff.

## Examples of job titles

- Lighting Designer
- Lighting Technician

## Main duties and responsibilities<sup>22</sup>

### 1) *Preproduction*

- Do an analytical reading of the script or the director's concept or both in order to identify all the indications that may help situate the lighting design (period, season, place, time, country where the action takes place, etc.).
- Gather information about the author and the context in which the action takes place, the period, the architecture and lighting, always remembering the historical, social and political aspects.
- Meet regularly with the director to validate the proposed lighting designs as they are developed. Report to the director as often as necessary.
- Meet with the other designers and work with them to become familiar with the concepts developed.
- Attend several rehearsals and run-throughs at the rehearsal hall to validate or adjust the lighting design according to the staging, paying particular attention to action on-stage and performers' entrances and exits.
- With the director and assistant director, establish the order of the various lighting effects required by the show.
- Attend production meetings.
- Get a plan of the stage and a complete inventory of the lighting instruments.
- Make a list of the lighting instruments to be used and, if needed, find out the cost of renting them in order to give this information to the production manager.
- Draw the lighting plan to scale, specifying the spotlights, colours, circuits, dimmers and specific equipment. This plan will be used to set up the equipment
- Create a complete list of all the lighting effects.

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<sup>22</sup> Adaptation of a text taken from a work on the performing arts occupations currently being produced by André Simard and Roger Ponce, from the Collège Lionel-Groulx, in collaboration with the Collegial Centre for Educational Materials Development.

## 2) *Production*

- Be present for, and if required, participate in the lighting hang.
- Run the lighting focus session.
- Set the levels and the cue timings with the director and assistant director.
- Attend the cue-to-cue rehearsals, technical run-throughs with or without the performers and the dress rehearsal in order to note any changes to be made.

## 3) *Postproduction*

- Keep all documents, plans and computer files to be archived by the production.
- Follow up the production for a potential revival of the show on tour.

### **Training and Experience Required**

Theatrical training at the National Theatre School of Canada, or at a college, university or other educational institution.

The skills required by the directors who hire lighting designers are the result of a combination of academic training and work experience. Hiring depends more on artistic and technical skills shown in previous productions and the person's ability to establish a network of contacts. The milieu is looking for people who have an excellent knowledge of the performing arts.

### **Training Profile**

- College level training (DCS) in theatre production (Collège Lionel-Groulx, Cégep de Saint-Hyacinthe, John Abbott College)
- Training in production at the National Theatre School of Canada
- University training in dramatic art, specialization in dramatic art (B.A., Université du Québec Montréal)
- University training in *Design for the theatre* (BFA, Concordia University)
- University training in interdisciplinary arts, specialization theatre (B. A., Université du Québec)
- Certificate or minor in theatre (Université du Québec à Chicoutimi)

### **Skills, Abilities and Personal Suitability**

- Enjoy playing with ideas
- Ability to assimilate and transmit the director's vision
- Communication skills
- Adaptability
- Creative and artistic
- Ability to plan, organize and adhere to schedules
- Sensitivity and imagination
- Visual and aesthetic sense
- Takes care to maintain the quality and artistic integrity of the show
- Team player
- Problem-solving skills

## Career Development<sup>23</sup>

It is rare for a graduate to work in lighting design immediately on entering the labour market. An individual would generally start as a stagehand or head electrician before becoming a lighting designer. After a few years' experience, the lighting designer must choose between two career paths: the technical path or the artistic path. The artistic choice leads to design.

Like the majority of other performing arts specialists, the lighting designer is a freelance or contract worker. To be able to earn a living in this occupation, an individual must be very versatile and simultaneously take on the role of lighting designer as well as the technical role of lighting technician (hanging, programming, handling consoles, adjustments, etc.). The more aspects of the lighting production process the person is able to work in, the more contracts he/she will obtain. These difficult conditions have caused many lighting designers to join the Association des professionnels des arts de la scène du Québec, whose mandate is to represent them, defend their interests and negotiate agreements on work conditions with producers' associations.

With experience, this person can work towards becoming a stage manager, assistant director, technical director or production manager. It should be stressed that many leave the occupation for other trades.

## Outlook for the Occupation

Lighting has long been thought of as a technique belonging to the field of electricity. Since the 1970s, artists have been exploring the various possibilities lighting offers as a form of artistic expression. Today, lighting design has become a specialization which is central to creating atmosphere and illusion.

Lighting designers have access to a highly advanced technology that allows them to create effects that can be changed at will, that can adapt to people's moods, to movement and to action. To do this, these people must know how to use various software programs such as AutoCAD, Vectorworks, Lightwright and WYSIWYG to program the effects they want and to construct their lighting plans.

The lighting equipment field is undergoing a revolution. Whatever the type of stage production, the number of spotlights used in a show has increased exponentially. Some environments are changing more quickly than others. In the theatre, for example, the technological renewal has been slowed down by the budgetary restrictions that confront these organizations. But in other environments, lighting designers are exposed to different more or less sophisticated electronic equipment, in particular motorized spotlights and video projectors.

Lighting design opens other horizons than the theatre. This occupation is practised in various performing arts environments such as motion pictures, television, corporate and cultural events, festivals, variety shows, museums and teaching. Furthermore, the people interviewed stressed that lighting design occupies an increasingly important place in public spaces, in particular in architecture. Lighting designers must be on the lookout for changing technology and constantly experiment with new creative possibilities in order to obtain contracts in these various environments.

With the increasing complexity of lighting installations, time has become a constant challenge for designers. They have very little time in the theatre before opening night to set up. They therefore have to work under pressure and show great adaptive skills.

In the theatre, the lighting designer must be able to adapt to technological environments that are sometimes traditional and sometimes contemporary. According to the employers consulted, it seems that it is less difficult to find lighting specialists who can handle advanced technology than it is to find people able to handle traditional technology. However, a shortage of people able to work with moving lights has been observed.

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23 Québec, Ministère de la Main-d'œuvre, de la Sécurité du revenu et de la Formation professionnelle, *Devis de formation professionnelle Éclairagiste*, Direction de l'intervention sectorielle, February 1991.



As an independent worker, this person must be able to manage his/her own career. To do this, he/she must take on various management tasks, in particular negotiate work contracts, estimate the production costs of projects if necessary, plan his/her schedule, and manage accounting and taxation.

### **Findings and Issues**

Today, lighting design has become a specialization which is central to creating atmosphere and illusion. This occupation is undergoing great changes, and it poses many challenges. Lighting designers are confronted with difficult work conditions. To obtain work, they must have many technical and artistic skills and adapt to the rapid development of new technologies. In the focus groups, specialists in the occupation felt that learning new technologies went beyond the initial training. Furthermore, several specialists stressed that employment opportunities are declining in the theatre, but are growing in other environments such as the circus, variety shows, special events and motion pictures. However, the lighting training currently offered in the theatre environment is not adapted to the particular needs of motion pictures and television. In the opinion of the people interviewed, professional development must play a key role in this occupation. Designers who want to work in museum and urban environments must adapt their skills to meet the challenge.

Furthermore, to effectively manage their careers, lighting designers must acquire management skills to be able to negotiate work contracts with employers, estimate the production costs of projects, and manage their accounting and taxes.



**Occupational Group (NOC)**

5132 Conductors, Composers and Arrangers

This occupational group includes those who compose musical works for film and television as well as accompanying music or who create or produce sound designs for stage productions.

**Group of Establishments (QCCACS)<sup>24</sup>**

12101 Independent Stage Designers and Directors

This group comprises professional artists primarily engaged in creating sound designs for various stage performances. Artists practicing an art on their own account, whose competence is recognized by their peers in their own discipline, and whose creations are disseminated in a professional context are considered as professional artists.

**Lead Statement**

"Theatre can make use of a wide variety of sounds in complex combinations. In addition to the sounds of the words spoken by the actors, a play may also call for sound effects to recreate lifelike noises or use music or abstract and unidentifiable sounds to support the drama. The sound designer plans and provides the sound effects in the play. The composer writes any original music the show may require. All the music and/or effects in a play considered as a whole make up the soundscape."<sup>25</sup>

The sound designer creates the soundscape of the show and oversees it according to the script and the director's wishes, respecting the available time and budget. This design work is done mainly in theatre. For artistic matters, the designer reports to the director, and for production matters, to the production manager.<sup>26</sup>

Sound design is part of production environments such as recordings, variety shows, the theatre, documentaries, motion pictures, radio, television, advertising and webcasting, and is used in the production of CDs, Web sites and video games.

The sound designer is a full member of the design team. He/she may contribute to the creation of musical compositions, computer products, MIDI recording, multitrack recording, sound performance, synchronization with the picture and interactive products.

The sound designer must collaborate with the technical staff of the space where the show is produced. This person must have an excellent knowledge of the stage soundscape, be familiar with periods and musical trends and the technical equipment at his/her disposal. Often, in addition to designing the soundscape he/she must also take responsibility for musical composition and direction and sometimes studio sound recordings.

**Examples of job titles**

- Sound Designer
- Soundscape designer

24 Institut de la statistique du Québec, Observatoire de la culture et des communications, *Québec Culture and Communications Activity Classification System*, November 2003, p. 31.

25 Arts Alive [Online] <http://www.artsalive.ca/en/eth/design/sound.html>.

26 Adaptation of a text taken from a work on the performing arts occupations currently being produced by André Simard and Roger Ponce, from the Collège Lionel-Groulx, in collaboration with the Collegial Centre for Educational Materials Development.

## Main duties and responsibilities<sup>27</sup>

### 1) *Preproduction*

- Do an analytical reading of the play or the director's concept or both in order to identify all the indications that may help situate the soundscape design (period, season, place, time, country where the action takes place, etc.).
- Gather information about the author and the context in which the action takes place and about the period and the music, always remembering the historical, social and political aspects.
- Meet regularly with the director to validate the proposed sound design as it is developed. Report to the director as often as necessary.
- Meet with the other designers and work with them in order to become familiar with the concepts developed.
- Attend rehearsals and run-throughs in the rehearsal hall in order to validate or adjust the sound design according to the staging.
- Attend production meetings.
- Obtain a plan of the stage and a complete inventory of the sound equipment.
- Make a list of the sound equipment to be used and, if needed, find out the cost of renting in order to give this information to the production manager.
- Draw the sound equipment system layout or block diagram, on the stage and in the theatre.

### 2) *Production*

- Be present for and, if required, participate in the set-up of the sound equipment.
- Supervise calibration of the sound equipment in the theatre.
- Set the levels and cue times with the director and assistant director and the head sound technician.
- Attend the cue-to-cue rehearsals, technical run-throughs with or without the performers and the dress rehearsal in order to note any changes to be made.

### 3) *Postproduction*

- Keep all documents, plans, recordings and computer files to be archived by the production.
- Follow up the production for a potential revival of the show on tour.

## Training and Experience Required

- Theatrical training at the National Theatre School of Canada, or at a college, university or other educational institution
- or
- Musical training (composition) at a college, the Conservatoire de musique, a university or at another educational institution.

It is important to note that designers who organize large-scale events generally have musical training (DCS or other). Some have basic or follow-up training in sound design. People trained in theatre production can produce a sound track without musical compositions for theatre productions.

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<sup>27</sup> Adaptation of a text taken from a work on the performing arts occupations currently being produced by André Simard and Roger Ponce, from the Collège Lionel-Groulx, in collaboration with the Collegial Centre for Educational Materials Development.

## Training Profile

- College level training (DCS), Professional Music and Song Techniques, specialization stream in composition and arrangement (Cégep régional de Lanaudière à Joliette, Collège Lionel-Groulx, Cégep de Saint-Laurent, Cégep Marie-Victorin, Vanier College, Notre-Dame-de-Foy Campus)
- College-level training (ACS) in sound and recording techniques at several recognized specialized schools.
- Music training (composition) at the Conservatoire de musique
- University level training (B.A.) in music (Bishop's, Concordia, Montréal, Sherbrooke, Université du Québec à Montréal, Laval, McGill)

## Skills, Abilities and Personal Suitability

- Enjoys playing with ideas
- Ability to assimilate and transmit the director's vision
- Communication skills
- Adaptability
- Creative and artistic
- Interest in music, sound and new technologies
- Ability to plan, organize and adhere to schedules
- Sensitivity and imagination
- Team player

## Career Development

On entering the labour market, a trained person will work as a sound technician or stagehand. After a few years of experience, he/she will be able to work in sound design. It is nevertheless standard for sound designers to also take on other technical tasks at the same time, such as installation, wiring, hook-up, calibration, sound balancing as well as programming equipment.

Like the majority of other performing arts specialists, this person works as a freelance or contract worker. To be able to earn a living in this occupation, an individual must be very versatile and simultaneously take on the role of sound designer as well as the role of sound technician. The more aspects of the sound production process the person is able to work on, the more contracts he/she will obtain. These difficult conditions have caused many sound designers to join the Association des professionnels des arts de la scène du Québec, whose mandate is to represent them, defend their interests and negotiate agreements on work conditions with producers' associations.

In the course of their career, sound designers may move towards stage management, work as an assistant director, a technical director or a production manager for theatrical productions.

## Outlook for the Occupation

The sound designer works in a technological environment that is evolving very quickly (digital consoles, digital equalizers, wireless technology, etc.). There is much equipment and many software packages on the market [Protools, Live, Max MSP, Reason, acoustical analysis software (SMAART), sequencers, etc.] offering diverse possibilities. This person must not only constantly adapt to these technological changes, but must also specialize in his/her area of expertise while still remaining flexible enough to respond to the various needs of the production for which he/she has been hired.

As a self-employed worker, this person must be able to manage his/her own career. To do this, he/she must take on various management tasks, in particular negotiate work contracts, copyrights (if applicable), estimate the production costs of projects, plan his/her schedule and manage his/her personal accounting and income taxes.

## **Findings and Issues**

Sound designers can work in a wide variety of environments, including the production of recordings, shows, documentaries, motion pictures, Web sites and video games, as well as radio and television broadcasting, advertising and webcasting. Their technical and artistic skills are transferable to different environments, but the individuals must show their ability to adapt. It is important to note that designers who organize large-scale events generally have training in music or sound design. People trained in theatre production can produce a sound track without musical compositions for theatre productions.

The occupation is characterized by fast technological change. In a highly competitive market, these individuals must continually improve their skills. The study also showed that, in the theatre environment, people able to simultaneously take on the technical and artistic roles in the field of sound, and who also showed versatility regarding staging and rigging (sound, lighting) had better employment prospects.

Finally, in addition to staying abreast of new technology, to effectively manage his/her career as an independent worker, the sound designer must acquire career management skills, in particular as regards negotiating work contracts and copyrights, planning time, estimating production costs of projects designed, and managing budgets, accounting and taxes.

**Occupational Group (NOC)**

5131 Producers, Directors, Choreographers and Related Occupations

This occupational group includes the people who oversee and control the technical and artistic aspects of theatre productions.

**Group of Establishments (QCCACS)<sup>28</sup>**

12201 Producers of Live Entertainment Shows

This group comprises establishments primarily engaged in producing live entertainment shows in the areas of theatre, opera, music, dance, and variety. These establishments are in charge of organizing and financing these shows; they hire the services of all participants, and own the operating rights to these shows. Producers of live entertainment shows may at times act as presenters of these shows.

**Lead Statement<sup>29</sup>**

The production manager is responsible for preparing, producing and supervising shows. This person supervises the different stages of producing a show with the show's creators and designers by managing staff, schedules and budgets and making recommendations. He/she resolves any problems related to work organization and staff throughout the production. The production manager is legally responsible for establishing safe work conditions. He/she must also create a climate appropriate to the performance of the production and react to unexpected events.

The production manager generally works under the supervision of the administrator or general manager. The person in charge of the production department helps to develop budget forecasts and gives his/her opinion of the feasibility of the artistic project. He/she works with the producers, the director and the various departments: design, technical, set and costume workshops, etc. This person also finds suppliers, and ensures that artistic objectives and schedules are respected. He/she is also responsible for managing work contracts for the entire production staff. The role of production manager may vary according to the size of the company. In large companies, this person usually supervises the work of the technical department, which becomes an extension of his/her role. Smaller companies commonly hire only one person, who does both jobs simultaneously and is then generally much more involved in planning all activities, artistic as well as technical. Some small companies, with very low budgets, may even ask him/her to carry out other functions at the same time, such as lighting, sound or other tasks according to the person's skills.

28 Institut de la statistique du Québec, Observatoire de la culture et des communications, *Québec Culture and Communications Activity Classification System*, November 2003, p. 31.

29 Adaptation of a text taken from the Ministère de l'Éducation, Direction générale de l'enseignement collégial, *Rapport d'analyse de la situation de travail, Directrice ou directeur de production*, May 1993, p. 13, and adaptation of a text taken from a work on the performing arts occupations currently being produced by André Simard and Roger Ponce, from the Collège Lionel-Groulx, in collaboration with the Collegial Centre for Educational Materials Development.

## Examples of job titles

- Production Manager

## Main duties and responsibilities<sup>30</sup>

### 1) *Preproduction*

#### a) *Analyze the project*

- Read and analyze the script or the director's concept (or both) in order to find all the elements likely to help establish the needs of the production.
- Invite participants to design meetings.
- Discuss the artistic process with the creators and designers.
- Evaluate the feasibility of the production as regards time and financial resources.
- Evaluate and analyze the availability and the expertise of the various participants in order to prepare the production schedule.

#### b) *Determine needs and find resources*

- Plan, call and direct production meetings and ensure follow-up.
- With the assistant director, gather all appropriate information and create a contact list for the production and ensure it is distributed to the entire team working on the show.
- Evaluate the work-related health and safety risks, and determine their critical impacts on all production staff.
- Invite tenders and negotiate various service contracts (rentals, construction, purchases) for set, costume and prop workshops and any other production supplier.
- Negotiate possible exchanges of services with some suppliers.
- Draw up the various production schedules and deadlines.

#### c) *Prepare a budget*

- Collaborate with the administrator to confirm the allocated production budget.
- Establish a preliminary production budget that includes costs of materials and labour.
- Meet with creators and designers in order to clarify the show's financial needs.
- Adjust the budget, make a final budget and present it to the various people involved.
- Oversee and control the production budget.

#### d) *Hire staff*

- Hire the production staff (including performers and designers), inform them of their jobs and responsibilities, and negotiate their contracts.
- Approve employee time sheets and follow up with administrative services.

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<sup>30</sup> Adaptation of a text taken from a work on the performing arts occupations currently being produced by André Simard and Roger Ponce, from the Collège Lionel-Groulx, in collaboration with the Collegial Centre for Educational Materials Development.



## 2) Production

### a) Launch and monitor the production

- Maintain close ties with the director and the technical director.
- Clarify, correct and oversee schedules and deadlines.
- Confirm contracts with suppliers and workshops.
- Oversee and control the production budget.
- Supervise the work of all production staff in order to respect the planned schedules.
- Proceed with purchases and rentals.
- Plan and oversee stage set-up with the technical director.
- Oversee rehearsals.
- Usually in collaboration with administrative services, validate the accounting of financial transactions and payments related to the production.

### b) Supervise performances

- Oversee the smooth running of performances, with the production team and performers.
- Occasionally represent the company to the media or for any official requests (photographs, communications, advertising, reception in the theatre, etc.).
- Plan and supervise strike of the production with the technical director.

## 3) Postproduction

### a) Contribute to the company's growth

- Write reports for management and the board of directors.
- Supervise compilation of the production archives.
- Attend management meetings.
- Participate in planning the company's up and coming season.
- Prepare production budgets for grant requests.
- Participate in elaboration of development projects (tours, etc.).
- Make recommendations to improve the production process.

### b) Manage premises and equipment (if necessary)

- Supervise theatre maintenance.
- Supervise maintenance of equipment and production premises.
- Manage rental of the premises.
- Prepare a capital plan for the premises and the technical equipment in collaboration with the technical director and the administrator.

## Training and Experience Required

- Theatrical training at the National Theatre School of Canada, or at a college, university or other educational institution
- or
- Training in administration or industrial relations at a college or university
- and
- Experience in staging and rigging and stage management

The general managers or administrators who hire production managers usually require experience. It is very rare for anyone to get a position as a production manager at the start of their career. To do this job, one must acquire experience in the performing arts, know the various aspects of producing a show and the trades involved and, especially, have worked in some of the production-related trades.

### **Training Profile**

- College level training (DCS) in theatre production (Collège Lionel-Groulx, Cégep de Saint-Hyacinthe, John Abbott College)<sup>31</sup>
- Training in production at the National Theatre School of Canada
- Training in administration or industrial relations in a college- or university-level educational institution

### **Skills, Abilities and Personal Suitability**

- Ability to assimilate and transmit the director's vision
- Analytical ability
- Communication skills
- Ability to grasp the context of the work
- Ability to conciliate and mediate
- Knowledge of various steps in the production process, as well as occupational profiles
- Leadership
- Ability to plan, organize and adhere to schedules
- Interpersonal skills
- Team player

### **Career Development**

Usually, the job of production manager is not an entry level position. People work at technical or artistic occupations before acquiring management skills. The few exceptions compiled come from the National Theatre School of Canada training programs or colleges that offer a theatre program where young graduates get involved in the production of small theatre troupes to work as production managers.

Throughout their career, some young people will continue their training in administration, which will enable them to fill other management positions such as general manager or administrator. Others will found their own production company or will go into teaching.

### **Outlook for the Occupation**

This occupation meets the needs created by the increasing complexity of stage design. Evolving technical methods, increased budget constraints and unionization of performing arts specialists have contributed to the emergence of the occupation of production manager.

This occupation is mainly practised in performing arts environments such as the theatre, circus and variety shows. In these environments, production management is essentially the same and allows the transfer of skills acquired in the theatre. However, other production environments, such as motion pictures and television, are difficult to break into, and the skills required are so different that little or no mobility is possible.

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31 The Centre d'études collégiales de Montmagny du cégep de La Pocatière started offering this training in September 2006. This institution offers specialized courses in Gestion et techniques de scène (voie B) [stage management and techniques].

Large companies (theatre, opera, variety shows) often offer permanent employment for production managers, which is not the case of small companies, who hire on a contract basis according to the number of productions planned, or who hire freelancers depending on their various projects. Often, budget constraints cause employers to require that the person in charge of the production department also take on the role of technical director or other technical jobs. Therefore, in order to earn a living, production managers must possess the ability to work in various occupations or work on several productions at the same time. The ability to juggle several tasks is often a condition of permanent employment. The smaller the company, the more versatile one is required to be.

The explosion of stage technology in performing arts environments other than the theatre demands that production managers be attentive to change in order to renew equipment and hire competent specialized staff. Production managers must be familiar with the equipment and aware of its possibilities in order to justify their decision to refuse some of it and especially to find replacement solutions.

The main work tools used by production managers tend to promote better work organization and are usually made up of three categories of software programs. These people must first master basic tools such as word processors and electronic spreadsheets in order to prepare budgets and other reports. Knowledge of the Internet is also essential in order to communicate with team members working remotely. Finally, production managers must be qualified to use certain software programs (Photoshop, Autocad), that will enable them to read the plans produced by the designers. They must also master some technical drawing concepts to be able to suggest improvements to the plans provided.

## **Findings and Issues**

The occupation of production manager reconciles artistic needs with the management of stage production projects. Today this occupation has an important and meaningful place within the design team. The people consulted consider this to be one of the stage production occupations offering the best chance for employment over the next five years. Relatively few in number, the people who work in this occupation feel that the current market favours full employment, especially since the arrival of the Cirque du Soleil, which offers good employment opportunities.

Even though the evolution of the labour market promotes the recognition and clarification of duties related to this occupation, in the theatre, the budget situation of institutional companies and those with projects in the theatre environment often prevent this from being fully realized. An individual who assumes the role of production manager is often called on to work in other occupations, in particular technical direction. This plurality, very common according to the experts consulted during the survey, contributes to creating confusion between the two roles even though the production's needs require the expertise of both. Production managers would do well to develop their creative abilities in order to propose original solutions that respect both the concept and the budget. With the cumulation of jobs, lack of time makes performing this role difficult, and the people who work in this occupation concentrate on quick solutions to the detriment of planning and organization.

Production management is becoming increasingly challenging. Recruiting specialized resources, negotiating work contracts, managing copyrights, coordinating the work of multiple design and production teams, evaluating the costs of realizing production projects, negotiating with suppliers, managing schedules and deadlines, drawing up and managing the production budget requires many management skills. The experts consulted stressed that theatre training programs provided some of the practical opportunities required in the preparation of an individual for the role of production manager. However this training was insufficient to permit an individual to work as a production manager upon entering the labour market. Acquisition of relevant work experience within the working environment is generally considered to be an essential prerequisite. The experts also mentioned that management skills were necessary to mastering all aspects of this occupation. Although these skills can be acquired through management training programs at the college or university level, these programs are not geared towards stage production.



**Occupational Group (NOC)**

5131 Producers, Directors, Choreographers and Related Occupations

This occupational group includes the people who oversee and control the technical and artistic aspects of theatre productions.

**Group of Establishments (QCCACS)<sup>32</sup>**

12202 Technical Service Providers — Performing Arts

This group comprises establishments primarily engaged in providing producers or presenters of live entertainment shows or hall lessors with specialized technical services such as stage equipment operators, set carpenters, stage managers, grips, technical directors, dressers, lighting technicians, sound engineers, electricians and props persons.

**Lead Statement<sup>33</sup>**

The person in charge of technical direction is responsible for the development, organization and coordination of all technical aspects of the production. He/she reports to the production manager who, usually, selects this person. The technical director generally has a lot of autonomy regarding the technical aspects of a production. His/her work is done mainly in collaboration with the designers and he/she is, in fact, responsible for the set, sound, lighting and all other technical aspects related to a production project. He/she supports the designers in developing their concepts and helps them find solutions to technical problems that arise. The technical director is legally responsible for establishing safe work conditions. To do this he/she must evaluate the feasibility of projects and any health and safety risks related to them. Finally, the technical director estimates the cost of design proposals and establishes budgetary forecasts approved by the production manager.

The technical director's main collaborators are the production manager, who works in close collaboration with him/her, the director, the designers and the stage manager. In some companies, the production manager may also take on the role of technical director.

In a company that has its own theatre, the technical director may also be in charge of the theatre. The responsibilities related to these two occupations differ in fairly important ways. Consequently, a precise description of a theatre technical director is presented below.

The occupation of technical director is practiced in various stage production environments: the theatre, the circus, variety shows, dance, motion pictures, television and other cultural or corporate events. However, the people we consulted in the performing arts environment said that it was difficult to practise this occupation outside of this environment because the techniques and equipment used are very different. Mobility between environments is therefore perceived as being infrequent, especially in motion pictures and television.

**Examples of job titles**

- Technical Director

32 Institut de la statistique du Québec, Observatoire de la culture et des communications, *Québec Culture and Communications Activity Classification System*, November 2003, p. 31.

33 Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, Direction générale de l'enseignement collégial, Service du développement des programmes, *Rapport d'analyse de la situation de travail, Directrice ou directeur technique*, May 1993, p. 13.

## Main duties and responsibilities<sup>34</sup>

### A – Production technical director

#### 1) *Preproduction*

##### a) *Become familiar with the project*

- Read the script and analyze the director's concept.
- Participate in design meetings.

##### b) *Analyze the production's needs*

- Locate places to work (theatres, stages, etc.).
- Make preliminary setup schedules.
- Assess rigging needs.
- Participate in developing a preliminary budget for the various technical departments.
- Attend production meetings.
- Gain a thorough knowledge of the collective agreements in effect in the various work places.

##### c) *Draw the plans and write specifications*

- Study and understand the design plans of the design plans for the set elements and collaborate closely with the designers to successfully achieve and create their concept.
- Draw construction plans for the set elements and complete preliminary estimates, usually in collaboration with the set designer, workshop and department heads and the production manager.
- Do research and conduct technical consultations.
- Identify specific construction methods and requirements of the concept, and find solutions to technical problems.
- Revise the technical budget.
- Manage and coordinate the integration of the needs of the various people working on the production.

##### d) *Find resources*

- Purchase and rent material in conjunction with the production manager.
- Hire and negotiate with the technical team in conjunction with the production manager.

#### 2) *Production*

##### a) *Supervise production work*

- Oversee all the stages of production in the workshops by supporting the production manager.
- Manage the technical budget.
- Follow up with the designers and ensure good communication between the departments.
- Conduct experiments and technical tests.
- Oversee the construction or creation of production elements that require more care from a technical point of view.
- Respond to unforeseen events.

<sup>34</sup> Adaptation of a text taken from a work on the performing arts occupations currently being produced by André Simard and Roger Ponce, from the Collège Lionel-Groulx, in collaboration with the Collegial Centre for Educational Materials Development.

*b) Plan and direct setup on stage*

- Prepare the final setup schedule, and have it approved by the production manager.
- Coordinate the work of the head carpenter, the head electrician and the head of sound for the various setups.
- Give the head carpenter the necessary plans for the setup.
- Coordinate the various deliveries on the stage and their transportation (sets, props, rentals, etc.)
- Comply with workplace health and safety standards and union rules.

*c) Contribute to the smooth running of the show*

- Ensure that technical aspects run smoothly during performances
- Ensure the show has a supply of perishable technical materials.

*d) Direct striking*

- Plan the strike schedule and confirm it with all members of the team.
- Ensure the return and storage of sets, costumes, props and technical equipment for which he/she is responsible.

### **3) Postproduction**

*a) Finalize the production*

- Inventory rented materials and ensure they are returned to the suppliers.
- Give the production manager all relevant documents to be archived.
- Produce a production balance sheet.

*b) Participate in managing the company*

- Participate in the elaboration of development projects (tours, etc.).
- Update inventories.
- Help organize the company's purchases of technical materials.
- Organize technical reference files, stage personnel files, and files on workshops available for production services.

## **B – Theatre technical director**

The person in charge of technical direction in the theatre assumes responsibility for the technical management of a performance facility that welcomes touring shows. He/she is responsible for the stage technical team who install the set, props and technical equipment (sound, lighting, special effects). The theatre technical director is legally responsible for establishing safe work conditions. He/she ensures the maintenance and safe operation of the equipment available in the theatre. To ensure everything is properly coordinated, he/she gathers technical information about all of the season's upcoming shows or events. He/she works under the supervision of the general manager or the company administrator and performs the following tasks.

- Keep the inventory of theatre equipment up to date and produce a data sheet for distribution.
- See to the maintenance and replacement of all the technical equipment in the theatre.
- Make a list of the touring company's technical needs.
- Hire all technical personnel required for a production.
- Plan the technicians' work schedules.
- Ensure compliance with work safety standards and union rules, as applicable.
- Ensure that rules for proper and safe use of all technical equipment are respected.

- Compile the hours worked by all the stage technicians including the dressers and the stage property people and give them to the production manager.
- Ensure that the stage, wings, exits, storerooms and dressing rooms are clean.
- Manage the annual technical budget he/she is given.
- Responsible for purchase of new equipment.
- Responsible for rental of equipment as required.
- Keep an up-to-date contact list of competent technicians.
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### **Training and Experience Required**

- Theatrical training at the National Theatre School of Canada, or at a college, university or other educational institution
- and
- Experience in sound and lighting techniques or stage management experience
- or
- Experience in sound and lighting design

The skills needed by a technical director, in order to be hired by a production manager, are the product of a combination of academic training and work experience. However, a diploma is not required to practise this occupation. Getting hired depends more on experience acquired in previous staging and rigging occupations and the person's ability to establish a network of contacts. The milieu is looking for people who have an excellent knowledge of the performing arts.

### **Training Profile**

- College level training (DCS) in theatre production (Collège Lionel-Groulx, Cégep de Saint-Hyacinthe, John Abbott College)<sup>35</sup>
- Training in production at the National Theatre School of Canada
- University training in dramatic art, specialization in dramatic art (B.A., Université du Québec Montréal)
- Certificate or minor in theatre (Université du Québec à Chicoutimi)

### **Skills, Abilities and Personal Suitability**

- Analytical ability
- Ability to assimilate and transmit the director's vision
- Ability to communicate
- Problem-solving skills
- Human resources management
- Leadership
- Ability to plan, organize and adhere to schedules
- Interpersonal relationships
- Sense of responsibility
- Team player

### **Career Development**

In most cases, technical directors have work experience as sound and lighting technicians or stage managers. Some have experience in sound or lighting design. To work as a technical director, it is important to have solid stage experience, to have dealt with different situations, and to have taken part in tours in order to understand the technical limits of setting up a show in various size theatres each with their own specific challenges.

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35 The Centre d'études collégiales de Montmagny du cégep de La Pocatière started offering this training in September 2006. This institution offers specialized courses in Gestion et techniques de scène (voie B) [stage management and techniques].



The employment status of people working in technical direction varies greatly. Some people start business as independent workers or start a small subcontracting company. Depending on the jobs available, a person with a variety of skills may have several different jobs at the same time on a freelance or contract basis. Large theatre companies usually hire a permanent technical director. In smaller companies with limited budgets, the technical director often takes on the job of production manager. It is not unusual for someone to work as a technical director for a time and then later move on to production management. His/her career may also take a different track, either in design or as a set design consultant. The latter consists of carrying out feasibility studies for projects or of delivering a turnkey staging for productions.

## **Outlook for the Occupation**

The evolution of technology and the increasing need for technical coordination created by the size of productions over the past 20 years has given rise to the occupation of technical director. The role of technical director has taken shape over time, and has evolved into a management and design position rather than a strictly technical one.

Today the technical director is faced with reconciling the demands of technical design, the budget and managing the technical staff required to carry out the project. However, these changes are not happening everywhere. There are still work environments where a technical director's only role is to provide the necessary technical support to carry out the designers' plans. To do this job, the technical director must be able to work with most of the tools used for design (AutoCAD, Photoshop, Vectorworks, Lightwrite, etc.). However, most technical directors interviewed during the survey felt the need to specify that they did not need to be an expert in the use of these tools. This role is only one of their contributions. They must, however, choose capable people who meet the production's needs. They are responsible, along with the production manager, for putting together a technical team that can complete the production project and for managing that team.

It is crucial for this person to know about new products and new stage technologies (video projection, moving lights, etc.), how materials are used in the workshops (sets, welding) and other technical aspects of stage production to be able to do the job properly and solve technical problems. The technical director is also responsible for evaluating various technical aspects of a project. To do this, he/she must know enough about various stage technologies to be able to give advice and supervise the technical work on a production. He/she must be on the cutting edge of change in stage technology and equipment in the principal specialty fields of stage production (sets, sound and lighting). Increasingly, the technical director is called on to support the design team from the start of a project. However, this practice is more common in Quebec than in the rest of Canada.

## **Findings and Issues**

The technical director's main challenge is to plan and coordinate all the technical work and to propose the most appropriate and cost efficient solutions. With the evolution of technology, this work has become increasingly complex and requires supervision that takes into account budget constraints, set-up time and programming schedules. To do this, the technical director must translate the plans proposed by the designers and find technical solutions that respect the specifications and various administrative, environmental and artistic constraints. He/she is responsible for ensuring that everything works and for making the creative concept become a reality. For this to happen, the technical director must be able to manage his/her work team effectively.

The technical director's role is often misunderstood by producers of shows, who have a tendency to associate it exclusively with the technical aspects of production. According to the experts who participated in the survey, the technical director's contribution at the start of the process may help to find creative solutions for the realization of the project.

When a tour is anticipated, the technical director must ensure that he/she knows the parameters of the various theatres in which the show will be presented. In Quebec, standards for theatres vary. The equipment and often the technical expertise leave a lot to be desired in many theatres in outlying areas.

The technical director must therefore know the limits of the various theatres in order to make provisions for the personnel required as well as any constraints related to the set. He/she often has to deal with problems that can alter the original artistic vision of the project. Therefore, the sooner the technical director knows the project's aims, the more effective he/she will be in resolving technical problems.

The occupation of theatre technical director is one of the rare opportunities for permanent employment. However, the jobs are rare and the challenges very different. In this situation, the technical director works with a specification sheet which helps him/her reproduce the technical parameters required for the production of the various shows renting the theatre for which he/she is responsible. He/she provides technical opinions according to the parameters of the theatre space, and the larger the theatre, the more the technical director plays a managerial role. He/she also provides personnel according to the specifications of the rental contract and the lessor can decide how to use the personnel. The technical director becomes the resource person needed to meet the technical needs specified by the client.

**Occupational Group (NOC)**

5226 Other Technical and Co-ordinating Occupations in Motion Pictures, Broadcasting and the Performing Arts

This occupational group includes the workers who perform specific coordination activities for motion pictures, broadcasting and the performing arts.

**Group of Establishments (QCCACS)<sup>36</sup>**

12202 Technical Service Providers - Performing Arts

This group comprises establishments primarily engaged in providing producers or presenters of live entertainment shows or hall lessors with specialized technical services such as stage equipment operators, set carpenters, stage managers, grips, technical directors, dressers, lighting technicians, sound engineers, electricians, props persons, etc.

**Lead Statement<sup>37</sup>**

In French theatre in Quebec, the assistant director is in charge of stage management before the show, and the stage manager takes over stage management during and after the show.

The assistant director performs his/her role during the design phase of the production project (preproduction, production and postproduction until the curtain rises). The stage manager is in charge of the show from the time it starts its run in the theatre until the last performance. The stage manager checks all details of the staging and applies them or sees to their application in accordance with instructions from the director, his/her assistant and the designers. He/she records in the prompt book all light, sound and set changes. Each cue recorded in this book is then timed and repeated, in order to coordinate light and sound with the onstage action. During presentations, the stage manager supervises the entire show by providing cues. He/she directs all the show's technical staff. After the opening performance, he/she is solely responsible for what happens during the show.

Since the stage manager's work follows that of the assistant director in the production process, it is not unusual for one person to do both jobs. This person generally works under the production manager and there is often close collaboration between the director and the individual who does these two jobs. This association, which is often long-lasting, allows them to build a solid, complementary relationship that helps the stage manager better understand the director's needs and thus facilitate his/her relationship with the rest of the team.

No matter the environment in which it is practised, the occupation stays the same except for a few details: the number of shows, the number of set changes, the visual or musical cues, etc.

36 Institut de la statistique du Québec, Observatoire de la culture et des communications, *Québec Culture and Communications Activity Classification System*, November 2003, p. 31.

37 Taken from Conseil québécois des ressources humaines en culture, *Analyse de métier et profession Régisseur*, February 2001, p. 7 and adaptation of a text taken from a work on the performing arts occupations currently being produced by André Simard and Roger Ponce, from the Collège Lionel-Groulx, in collaboration with the Collegial Centre for Educational Materials Development.

## Examples of job titles

- General Stage Manager
- Stage Manager
- Floor Director
- Assistant Stage Manager

## Main duties and responsibilities<sup>38</sup>

### 1) *Manage the show*

- Read the script and analyze the director's concept.
- Attend run-throughs at the rehearsal hall in order to properly oversee the show's progress.
- Attend various production meetings, as needed.
- Become familiar with the protocol for accessing and using the show's venue.
- Create a prompt book according to information provided by the director, assistant director and the designers.
- Produce and keep cue sheets up to date and distribute them to the various stage chiefs and technicians so the show can run smoothly.
- Inform the technical team of the show's requirements and procedures.
- In the theatre, direct and organize cue-to-cue run-throughs, technical run-throughs, complete run-throughs and the dress rehearsal.

### 2) *Supervise the show*

- Call performers and the technical team before the start of the show so that they can be ready and in place on time.
- Be responsible for discipline on the stage and in the dressing rooms during work periods.
- Ensure everything is in place before allowing the public into the theatre.
- Have the show start on time in collaboration with the manager of the theatre.
- Manage general conduct during shows.
- Enforce the duration of intermissions in collaboration with the theatre manager.
- Respect and apply union rules, as required.

### 3) *Oversee the show*

- Create a daily show report (duration of the show, duration of the intermission, specific problems, etc.), and communicate the main points to show personnel.
- Assume artistic responsibility for the show and, in this capacity, schedule adjustment rehearsals for performers and technicians, if necessary.
- Communicate with the various directors, designers or heads of departments in order to have necessary changes or repairs made to the set or technical elements as quickly as possible.
- Stay in contact with the director and the artistic director to inform them of the show's development.
- Compile the blocking and stage management documents and those of the technical departments as well as lists of costumes, sets, props and special effects, and give them to the production manager so they can be archived at the end of the show.

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<sup>38</sup> Adaptation of a text taken from a work on the performing arts occupations currently being produced by André Simard and Roger Ponce, from the Collège Lionel-Groulx, in collaboration with the Collegial Centre for Educational Materials Development.

## Training and Experience Required

- Theatrical production training at the National Theatre School of Canada, or at a college or other educational institution.

## Training Profile

- College level training (DCS) in theatre production (Collège Lionel-Groulx, Cégep de Saint-Hyacinthe, John Abbott College<sup>39</sup>)
- Training in production at the National Theatre School of Canada
- University training in dramatic art, specialization in stage design (B.A., Université du Québec Montréal., Université du Québec Montréal)
- University training in interdisciplinary arts, specialization theatre (B. A., Université du Québec à Chicoutimi)

## Skills, Abilities and Personal Suitability<sup>40</sup>

- Self-reliant
- Adaptability
- Communication skills
- Good time management
- Ability to plan, organize and adhere to schedules
- Thorough
- Observant
- Takes care to maintain the quality and artistic integrity of the show
- Team player

## Career Development<sup>41</sup>

The survey revealed that it is possible to work as a stage manager upon entry into the labour market. However, in English companies, entry into the occupation is usually achieved by working as an assistant stage manager, or as an apprentice stage manager on large theatrical productions. This practice is not very common in French companies, except for a few large productions.

Stage managers move around a lot throughout their careers. People practise this occupation in various performing arts environments: theatre, dance, variety shows, comedy shows, circus, opera and special events. However, this mobility does not extend to motion pictures and television, where floor manager is viewed as a specialized occupation.

Various factors cause people to change career direction after working for a number of years. For some, the desire to design causes them to undertake a career in lighting or sound design or in production management. Others are motivated by the desire for a management position within an organization in the performing arts sector. Other factors such as job insecurity, salary conditions, prolonged absences because of working on tour and the desire to reconcile family and work push people to chose a new direction.

However, some people spend their whole careers as stage managers; they see the possibility of advancement in terms of greater and more interesting challenges to be met. The scale of the shows produced, the fame of the assistant directors with whom he/she works or the possibility of working with an assistant stage manager he/she can delegate certain tasks to, are all aspects that may be considered career advancements.

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39 It should be noted that the Centre d'études collégiales de Montmagny du cégep de La Pocatière started offering this training in September 2006. This institution offers specialized courses in Gestion et techniques de scène (voie B) [stage management and techniques].

40 Conseil québécois des ressources humaines en culture, *Analyse de métier et profession Régisseur*, February 2001, p. 8.

41 *Ibid.*, p. 14.

## **Outlook for the Occupation**<sup>42</sup>

The occupation of stage manager is usually performed on a contractual basis. Few positions are stable, and it is rare that this occupation is part of the permanent team of a performing arts organization. So, to earn a living, stage managers must obtain multiple contracts in various environments or work in staging and rigging occupations.

Work schedules vary. Stage managers can work up to six nights a week, if the show is intended for an adult audience, or work only days, if the show is for young people.

In outlying areas, few people work as both assistant director and stage manager. As indicated by the experts consulted, it is particularly difficult to recruit qualified people to work as stage managers because people with diplomas in theatre often choose to work in large centres that offer better employment opportunities. Therefore, because of the limited resources in outlying areas, stage technicians able to work in sound, lighting and stage management are often hired.

In small touring productions, the stage manager may often take on the role of tour manager. This is not the case for large productions. Also, given the lack of an operating budget, this person has to adapt to theatres of varying quality and to technical equipment that is often outdated and poorly maintained.

Furthermore, given the changes in the work environment, stage managers must constantly stay up to date with the various new technological developments in the equipment used to produce a show. In addition, it is essential that these people learn to use basic office computer tools and have at least some knowledge of the new technologies used to design shows. According to the theatre community, these requirements are becoming relatively high.

## **Findings and Issues**<sup>43</sup>

In Quebec, in order to work in the theatre environment, stage managers must have several stage management contracts and perform other jobs in staging and rigging. The more complex the production, the more crucial is the role of stage manager. As shows are becoming more automated, the risks of experiencing technical problems during performances are higher. In some work environments, the production budget allocated to stage management is often minimal. This situation results in the stage manager limiting the time spent on managing the show, even though this is an essential function. As this occupation is often merged with that of assistant director, the lack of preparation time added to unforeseen and chance events during the show increases the stress factor.

Stage managers must continually adapt to new technologies. Finally, to effectively manage his/her career as a self-employed worker, the stage manager must acquire career management skills, particularly regarding negotiating work contracts and copyrights, planning time, estimating production costs of the projects designed and managing budgets, accounting, and taxes.

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42 Conseil québécois des ressources humaines en culture, *Analyse de métier et profession Régisseur*, February 2001, p. 13.

43 *Ibid.*

## Occupational Group (NOC)

5226 Other Technical and Co-ordinating Occupations in Motion Pictures, Broadcasting and the Performing Arts

This occupational group includes the technical personnel who perform specific coordination activities for motion pictures, broadcasting and the performing arts. These people may also be self-employed workers.

5225 Audio and Video Recording Technicians

This occupational group includes the people who record, mix and edit music for motion picture, broadcasting and performing arts production companies. These people may also be self-employed workers.

## Group of Establishments (QCCACS)<sup>44</sup>

12202 Technical Service Providers - Performing Arts

This group comprises establishments primarily engaged in providing producers or presenters of live entertainment shows or hall lessors with specialized technical services such as stage equipment operators, set carpenters, stage managers, grips, technical directors, dressers, lighting technicians, sound engineers, electricians and props persons.

## Examples of job titles

- Sound Technician
- Head of Sound
- Sound Operator
- Sound Engineer
- Sound Effects Editor
- Sound Mixer
- Video and Sound Recorder

## Lead Statement

The sound technician installs, operates (if necessary) and dismantles the sound equipment. This person works under the supervision of the head of sound.

## Main duties and responsibilities<sup>45</sup>

- Maintain and prepare sound equipment.
- Install sound equipment (hook-ups, connections, tests, etc.).
- If necessary, look after the microphones on the stage (for musical theatre or variety shows).
- Dismantle and store the equipment at the end of shows.

44 Institut de la statistique du Québec, Observatoire de la culture et des communications, *Québec Culture and Communications Activity Classification System*, November 2003, p. 31.

45 Adaptation of a text taken from a work on the performing arts occupations currently being produced by André Simard and Roger Ponce, from the Collège Lionel-Groulx, in collaboration with the Collegial Centre for Educational Materials Development.

## Training and Experience Required

- Theatrical training at the National Theatre School of Canada, or at a college, university or other educational institution
  - Musical training (DCS) or training in sound and recording techniques (ACS) at a college and
- Experience operating sound consoles or in sound recording.

It should be noted that the college theatre production program is designed to train people to handle sound equipment. Specialized training in sound and recording techniques is associated with the fields of music and sound technologies.

## Training Profile

- College-level training (DCS) in theatre production (Collège Lionel-Groulx, Cégep de Saint-Hyacinthe, John Abbott College)<sup>46</sup>
- College-level training (DCS), Professional Music and Song Techniques, specialization stream, composition and arrangement (Cégep régional de Lanaudière à Joliette, Collège Lionel-Groulx, Cégep de Saint-Laurent, Cégep Marie-Victorin, Vanier College, Notre-Dame-de-Foy Campus)
- College-level training (ACS) in audio recording technology (Vanier College)
- College-level training (ACS) in sound recording and live sound (Treas Institute)
- College-level training (ACS) in sound, music and applied digital techniques (Musitechnic)
- College-level training (ACS) in live sound and recording (Cégep d'Alma and Cégep de Drummondville)
- College-level training (ACS) in sound and lighting techniques (Centres d'études collégiales de Montmagny, Cégep de La Pocatière)
- College-level training (ACS) in sound and recording techniques at several recognized specialized schools)
- College-level training (ACS) in production techniques for cultural and corporate events (École du Show-Business)
- College-level training (ACS) in sound design (Institut Trebas)

## Skills, Abilities and Personal Suitability

- Communication skills
- Problem-solving skills
- Adaptability
- Resourceful
- Listening ability
- Interest in music, sound and new technologies
- Interest in computer and electronic applications
- Artistic sense
- Team player

## Career Development

A person can work as a sound technician on entering the labour market, especially on small productions. Many people have musical training. Specialized sound technicians generally acquire experience by operating consoles or in sound recording before practicing this occupation. Others first work as stagehands.

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46 The Centre d'études collégiales de Montmagny du cégep de La Pocatière started offering this training in September 2006. This institution offers specialized courses in Gestion et techniques de scène (voie B) [stage management and techniques].



Like other workers in the performing arts, sound technicians rarely obtain permanent employment. Unless one obtains a job connected with operating a theatre, this occupation is usually on a self-employed or contract basis. People often combine both technical and design jobs.

Sound technicians work in many environments including recording, variety shows, documentaries, films, CDs, the Internet and video games as well as radio and television broadcasting, advertising and webcasting.

By developing their management and design skills, these individuals may be able to work as a head sound operator or sound designer.

### **Outlook for the Occupation**

The main resources used by sound technicians are their knowledge and ability to handle sound equipment. The field of sound is changing rapidly and these people must constantly update their skills to be able to use equipment and software programs. This equipment relies heavily on the various digital technologies, such as sound consoles, processing devices, equalizers, sequencers and wireless technologies. Several software programs are currently used: Pro Tools, Live, Max MSP, SMAART, etc. These people must constantly adapt to technological change and find a specialization niche while remaining sufficiently flexible to respond to the needs of various environments.

In addition, sound technicians must also be able to work with older technology, as equipment is renewed more slowly in theatres.

### **Findings and Issues**

Technicians specializing in sound generally have training in live sound and recording techniques related to the field of music. Sound designers can work in a wide variety of environments, including the production of recordings, shows, documentaries, motion pictures, Web sites and video games, as well as radio and television broadcasting, advertising and webcasting.

The occupation is characterized by rapid technological change that necessitates a constant updating of skills in order to remain on the leading edge of technology. In a very competitive market, these specialists must continually improve in their field of expertise. In addition, to find work in the performing arts, these people must demonstrate their ability to do various lighting and staging and rigging jobs. They must also be able to handle traditional equipment, mainly in the theatre, where technical equipment is renewed more slowly.

Finally, to effectively manage his/her career as a self-employed worker, the sound technician must acquire career management skills, in particular regarding negotiating work contracts and copyrights, planning time, estimating production costs of the projects designed and managing budgets, personal accounting and income taxes.



## Occupational Group (NOC)

5226 Other Technical and Co-ordinating Occupations in Motion Pictures, Broadcasting and the Performing Arts

This occupational group includes the technical personnel who perform specific coordination activities for motion pictures, broadcasting and the performing arts.

## Group of Establishments (QCCACS)<sup>47</sup>

12202 Technical Service Providers - Performing Arts

This group comprises establishments primarily engaged in providing producers or presenters of live entertainment shows or hall lessors with specialized technical services such as stage equipment operators, set carpenters, stage managers, grips, technical directors, dressers, lighting technicians, sound engineers, electricians and props persons.

## Examples of job titles

- Lighting Technician
- Lighting Operator
- Assistant Lighting Technician
- Spotlight Operator
- Projectionist

## Lead Statement<sup>48</sup>

This person installs, operates (if necessary) and dismantles all the lighting equipment according to instructions from the head lighting technician.

Lighting technicians provide the lighting and light shows for stage performances or other environments such as motion pictures and television. This person installs and adjusts lighting equipment throughout the production, dismantles it after use and sees to its maintenance. He/she ensures lighting needs are adequately met (intensity, location, colour, mood, visual effects, etc.), and ensures that the equipment works properly throughout the production.

## Main duties and responsibilities<sup>49</sup>

- Maintain and prepare lighting equipment.
- Hook up, connect, test and focus lighting equipment.
- If required, operate follow spots and lighting equipment for special effects.
- Strike and store equipment at the end of shows.

47 Institut de la statistique du Québec, Observatoire de la culture et des communications, *Québec Culture and Communications Activity Classification System*, November 2003, p. 31.

48 Adaptation of a text taken from a work on the performing arts occupations currently being produced by André Simard and Roger Ponce, from the Collège Lionel-Groulx, in collaboration with the Collegial Centre for Educational Materials Development.

49 *Ibid.*, p. 40.

## Training and Experience Required

- Theatrical production training at the National Theatre School of Canada, or at a college or other educational institution.

Training makes it easier to find employment, but a diploma is not required to practise the occupation.

## Training Profile

- College-level training (DCS) in theatre production (Collège Lionel-Groulx, Cégep de Saint-Hyacinthe, John Abbott College)<sup>50</sup>
- College-level training (ACS) in sound and lighting techniques (Centre d'études collégiales de Montmagny du Cégep de La Pocatière)
- College-level training (ACS) in production techniques for cultural and corporate events (École du Show-Business)

## Skills, Abilities and Personal Suitability

- Communication skills
- Problem-solving skills
- Adaptability
- Listening ability
- Resourceful
- Interest in computer and electronic applications
- Interest in new technologies
- Artistic sense
- Attentive to detail
- Team player

## Career Development

A person can work as a lighting technician on small productions on entering the labour market. In some cases, he/she will work as a stagehand before acquiring experience in lighting.

By developing his/her artistic or management skills, a lighting specialist can take on greater responsibility and become a head electrician or lighting designer.

Like most other workers in the performing arts, lighting technicians rarely enjoy permanent employment. Unless one obtains a job connected with operating a theatre, this occupation is usually on a freelance or self-employed basis. Often, mainly in small productions, lighting technicians also work as stagehands, and the more experienced also work as lighting designers.

The occupation of lighting technician is practised in various performing arts environments such as motion pictures and television. The people who practice it move freely from one environment to the other.

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50 The Centre d'études collégiales de Montmagny du cégep de La Pocatière started offering this training in September 2006. This institution offers specialized courses in Gestion et techniques de scène (voie B) [stage management and techniques].

## **Outlook for the Occupation**

In the theatre, the art of lighting has changed greatly since the invention of the first spotlight. Today, specialized lighting technicians have access to highly developed technology. The number of spotlights used in a production has increased exponentially. Motorized spotlights are being used more and more.

Lighting a scene has become increasingly complex, and requires that technicians manipulate multiple lighting sources by means of computer technology. Computers have completely transformed the field of lighting in the performing arts. Lighting technicians must therefore learn to handle several software programs that control lighting: Vectorworks, Lightwrite and others. Setting up and striking has also become much more complex than before and requires much more time.

Specialized lighting technicians work with electricians, and must respect occupational health and safety rules.

## **Findings and Issues**

The occupation is undergoing great change in addition to being marked by many challenges. The experts consulted during the survey noted a shortage of specialized lighting technicians. To be able to work, lighting technicians must both specialize to keep up with technological change and acquire the experience that will give them the versatility needed to work at various staging and rigging occupations.

Furthermore, several specialists stressed that employment opportunities are declining in the theatre, but are growing in other environments such as circus, variety shows, special events and motion pictures. However, the various types of training now offered in the theatre environment are not adapted to the specific needs of motion pictures and television. In their opinion, professional development must play a key role in developing the required skills. People who work as lighting technicians in motion pictures and television must adapt their skills to the special needs of these media. Moreover, practicing this occupation means continually adapting to new technologies.



**Occupational Group (NOC)**

5227 Support Occupations in Motion Pictures, Broadcasting and the Performing Arts

This occupational group includes the workers who perform support duties in the motion picture, broadcasting and performing arts environments. These people may also be self-employed workers.

**Group of Establishments (QCCACS)<sup>51</sup>**

12202 Technical Service Providers — Performing Arts

This group comprises establishments primarily engaged in providing producers or presenters of live entertainment shows or hall lessors with specialized technical services such as stage equipment operators, set carpenters, stage managers, grips, technical directors, dressers, lighting technicians, sound engineers, electricians and props persons.

**Examples of job titles**

- General Stage Technician
- Stagehand

**Lead Statement**

The occupation of general stage technician is usually the entryway to employment in stage production. Stage technicians are most often hired by the organization that manages the theatre. They look after installing the set, stage props and some technical equipment (depending on the type of show). They work under the supervision of the chief stagehand and the technical director.

**Main duties and responsibilities<sup>52</sup>**

- Load and unload the trucks that transport items for the production.
- Load and maintain the items and equipment for the theatre and the production.
- Install the stage elements (set, stage props, stage curtains, lighting equipment, special effects, audiovisual equipment, sound equipment, etc.).
- Prepare the wings (stage access, props tables, costume racks).
- Rehearse.
- During the show, make set and special effects changes.
- Troubleshoot production elements.
- Strike and store stage elements (sets, stage props, lighting equipment, special effects, audiovisual and sound equipment and the theatre's technical equipment at the end of shows).
- Use tools and operate the theatre's equipment (handling, personnel lifts, ladders, scaffolding, rigging, safety equipment, cables, etc.).

51 Institut de la statistique du Québec, Observatoire de la culture et des communications, *Québec Culture and Communications Activity Classification System*, November 2003, p. 31.

52 Pierre Morin, *Charte des compétences Technicien de scène*, Conseil des ressources humaines du secteur culturel, 2006.

## Training and Experience Required

Training on staging and rigging at a college or another educational institution.

## Training Profile

- College-level training (DCS) in theatre production (Collège Lionel-Groulx, Cégep de Saint-Hyacinthe, John Abbott College)<sup>53</sup>
- College-level training (ACS) in sound and lighting techniques (Centre d'études collégiales de Montmagny du Cégep de La Pocatière)
- College-level training (ACS) in production techniques for cultural and corporate events (École du Show-Business)

## Skills, Abilities and Personal Suitability

- Communication skills
- Adaptability
- Listening ability
- Problem-solving skills
- Knowledge of stage equipment
- Resourceful
- Artistic sense
- Team player

## Career Development

The occupation of stage technician is often an entry level position to work in the field of stage production. By developing their technical and artistic skills, individuals may be able to work as specialist technicians or designers.

As is the case for most other workers in the performing arts, permanent employment is rare. Unless one obtains a job connected with operating a theatre, this occupation is usually on a freelance or self-employed basis. General stage technicians usually work at other jobs such as lighting technician, sound technician, or stage and prop artisan.

These individuals work in various performing arts environments as well as in television and motion pictures. They move freely from one environment to another.

## Outlook for the Occupation

Stage technicians must develop technological skills in a constantly changing environment.

The experts consulted during the survey agreed that there is currently a shortage of skilled general stage technicians, especially in outlying regions.

In order to meet the identified need for workers, a new training program in lighting and sound techniques leading to an ACS was set up at the Cégep de La Pocatière in 2005. In addition, a private college level educational institution, the École du Show-Business, offers training in the production of cultural and corporate events which leads to an ACS.

In addition, five semi-specialized study programs — audio recording assistant, production assistant, sound assistant, set and events labourer, as well as stage labourer — leading to an AVE are offered by various school boards. For the past 12 years in Montréal, the organization Productions Jeun'Est in collaboration with Emploi-Québec has offered , training in staging and rigging for young dropouts.

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53 The Centre d'études collégiales de Montmagny du Cégep de La Pocatière started offering this training in September 2006. This institution offers specialized courses in Gestion et techniques de scène (voie B) [stage management and techniques].



However, it seems that all these various and diverse training programs fail to adequately train enough skilled general technicians. It should be noted that there is confusion regarding the occupations really targeted by some training programs. This raises some questions regarding professional certification in the cultural milieu.

### **Findings and Issues**

Although there are a variety of staging and rigging, training programs, several experts consulted during the survey reported a shortage of skilled general stage technicians. The consolidation and development of training in staging and rigging in Quebec therefore poses a major challenge.



## Occupational Group (NOC)

5227 Support Occupations in Motion Pictures, Broadcasting and the Performing Arts

This occupational category includes the workers who perform shop-related duties on the motion picture, broadcasting, and performing arts environments.

## Group of Establishments (QCCACS)<sup>54</sup>

12202 Technical Service Providers — Performing Arts

This group comprises establishments primarily engaged in providing producers or presenters of live entertainment shows or hall lessors with specialized technical services such as stage equipment operators, set carpenters, stage managers, grips, technical directors, dressers, lighting technicians, sound engineers, electricians and props persons.

## Examples Titles

- Carpenter
- Cabinetmaker
- Welder
- Scenic Painter
- Costume Cutter
- Stage and Costume Props Person

## Lead Statement<sup>55</sup>

Set, costume and prop artisans are the people who specialize in making sets, costumes and props for the theatre, dance cinema, television, circus, etc. This group includes craftspeople who are specialists in scenic painting, carpentry, cabinet-making, welding, costume cutting, and stage and costume props. In Quebec, such persons work in a small-business setting or are self-employed.

The activities of shop artisans specializing in carpentry, cabinetry and welding involve the cutting of wood and metal as well as the assembly of the various elements that make up the set. These workers must create a first installation in the shop to verify the conformity of the set and its various elements before installing it on the stage. They work under the supervision of the scene shop supervisor.

Scenic painters paint prop elements, as well as create patinas, trompe-l'oeil and backdrops that make up the production's set design. The artistic aspect of this work is supervised by the set designer and the assistant set designer, who collaborate on the production.

54 Institut de la statistique du Québec, Observatoire de la culture et des communications, *Québec Culture and Communications Activity Classification System*, November 2003, p. 31.

55 Adaptation of next taken from a work on the performing arts occupations currently being produced by André Simard and Roger Ponce, from the Collège Lionel-Groulx, in collaboration with the Collegial Centre for Educational Materials Development.

Shop artisans specializing in cutting prepare the patterns and cut the material that will be used to create costumes. The costume designer and assistant costume designer provide the designs and direct the work, and may even participate in it. This work is done under the supervision of the head of wardrobe.

Shop artisans specializing in props build or locate (through purchase or rental) scene props and costume accessories. Their work is based on the stage or costume renderings and maquettes approved by the designer supervising the work.

## **Main duties and responsibilities**

### **Stage Design Carpenter<sup>56</sup>**

- In conjunction with the welding and painting departments, discuss with the set designer how to implement the design from the 2- or 3-D maquette provided, with a view to properly planning each department's role.
- Procure the construction drawings, measurements and visual references for all articles to be produced by the carpentry shop.
- Assist the designer in the planning and creation of the props produced by the carpentry shop to ensure that solidity, weight, and set-up speed meet expectations.
- Create a work plan (processes to be followed, materials, timeline, planning of jobs for artisans).
- Prepare a list of any special materials or equipment that may be needed and submit it to the production manager.
- Ensure that the facilities, tools and equipment are suitable for the work to be done and available when needed.
- Carefully analyse the designer's plans in order to distribute them to the shop carpenters.
- Complete carpentry work according to the established schedule in co-ordination with other departments, such as welding and painting.
- Plan and complete the in-shop pre-assembly as required.
- Create setup plans and provide appropriate hardware for assembling set pieces.
- Maintain facilities and equipment during and after production.

### **Set Welder<sup>57</sup>**

- In conjunction with the carpentry and painting departments, discuss with the set designer how to implement the design from the 2- or 3-D maquette provided, with a view to properly planning each department's role.
- Procure the construction drawings, measurements and visual references for all articles to be produced by the welding shop.
- Assist the designer in planning and creating the props produced by the welding shop to ensure that solidity, weight, and set-up speed meet expectations.
- Create a work plan (processes to be followed, materials, timeline, planning of jobs for craftspeople).
- Prepare a list of any special materials or equipment that may be needed and submit it to the production manager.
- Ensure that the facilities, tools and equipment are suitable for the work to be done and available when needed.
- Carefully analyse the designer's plans in order to distribute them to the shop welders.
- Complete welding work according to the established schedule in co-ordination with other departments such as carpentry and painting.
- Plan and complete the in-shop pre-assembly as required.
- Create setup plans and provide appropriate hardware for assembling set pieces.
- Maintain facilities and equipment during and after production.

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56 Information obtained from Productions Yves Nicol.

57 Information obtained from Productions Yves Nicol.

## Set Painter<sup>58</sup>

- Discuss with the set designer how to implement the design from the 2- or 3-D maquette provided and procure the colour samples, photographs, detail drawings and designs required for implementation.
- Create a work plan (processes to be followed, colours, types of paint, schedule).
- Prepare a list of any special materials or equipment that may be needed and order them.
- Ensure that the facilities, tools and equipment are suitable for the work to be done and available when needed.
- Complete painting and patina work according to the established schedule.
- Maintain facilities and equipment during and after production.

## Set and Costume Props person<sup>59</sup>

In many productions, the set and costume props person is also a designer. Working with the set and costume designer, this person must create and produce an artistic treatment of the props that are an integral part of the sets and costumes.

- Read and analyse the script.
- Discuss the work to be done with the designer of the appropriate speciality and obtain the design drawing and maquettes.
- Using the script of design and in co-operation with the assistant director, prepare a list of props.
- Attend a number of meetings with the director and the designer to properly understand the requirements, criteria, references and performance of the actors.
- Do documentary research.
- As required, investigate prop warehouses and prepare a list of articles to be rented.
- Draft drawings of the required props, and submit them to the designer for approval.
- Research and create props within the established time limits.
- Ensure responsible purchasing of props and manage the budget.
- If necessary, provide the assistant director with similar props for rehearsal.
- Attend technical run-throughs and the dress rehearsal.

## Training and Experience Required

- College-level training (DCS, ACS) in theatre production, set design and techniques, presentation design, fashion design or cabinet-making  
or
- Vocational diploma in the construction trades (welding, carpentry, painting) or in cabinet-making  
or
- Apprenticeship in settings or costume workshop

Carpenters and welders who are interested in stage production could practise the occupation of set and props artisans if they develop the specific skills needed for set construction. Apprenticeship in the scenic workshop is one of the best ways to acquire this competency.

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58 Adaptation of a text taken from a work on the performing arts occupations currently being produced by André Simard and Roger Ponce, from the Collège Lionel-Groulx, in collaboration with the Collegial Centre for Educational Materials Development.

59 *Ibid.*

## Training Profile

- College-level training (DCS) in theatre production (Collège Lionel-Groulx, Cégep de Saint-Hyacinthe, John Abbott College)
- College-level training (DCS) in presentation design (Cégep de Rivière-du-Loup, Cégep de Sainte-Foy, Cégep du Vieux Montréal, Dawson College)
- College-level training (ACS) in furniture and cabinet-making techniques (École nationale du meuble et de l'ébénisterie de Montréal)
- College-level training (ACS) in presentation design (Campus Notre-Dame-de-Foy)
- College-level training (ACS) in set and prop design (Inter-Dec college)
- College-level training (ACS) in fashion design (LaSalle college, International academy of design and technology, Institut supérieur de design de mode)
- Vocational training (DEP) in cabinet-making (École nationale du meuble et de l'ébénisterie de Victoriaville)

## Skills, Abilities and Personal Suitability

- Communication skills
- Adaptability
- Problem-solving skills
- Resourceful
- Manual skills
- Team player
- Artistic sense
- Meticulousness

## Career Development

Cultivating specialized competencies and co-operative skills, could allow artisans to become heads of their speciality and, later, shop supervisors. However, regular full-time positions are rare. For that reason many work freelance or start their own service business.

## Outlook for the Occupation

The study has revealed a shortage of competent set, costume and prop artisans. Shops offer internships to theatre production students, but it appears that such people often choose to pursue a career in other more creative environments that correspond more closely to their professional aspirations. Businesses in this sector have indicated that workers are difficult to recruit and retain.

Apprenticeship in the work environment is often the only way to develop the specialized skills required for set and prop construction and scenic painting. Businesses have revealed that they invest a great deal of energy in workplace training of workers recruited from the industrial or construction (welding and carpentry) sectors. Once their training is complete, shop artisans leave to go on to more lucrative jobs or even to start their own business.

In costume and settings shops, positions as cutters are usually held by costume design graduates. They leave as soon as possible to work in design. Companies complain of a shortage of cutters.

## Findings and Issues

It is difficult to recruit competent set, costume and prop artisans. With regards to artisans specializing in carpentry and welding, experts consulted during the study indicated that the particular skills required by set construction could be developed within existing professional training programs or through internships. It is imperative that proper training programs be established for artisans specializing in scenic painting and costumes as this specialized training is almost nonexistent in Quebec.



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17-0473-05TA