

## Internship Report

Playhouse on the Square is a professional theater company located in Memphis, TN. It thrives in Midtown, an artistic region in Memphis, and includes three theaters in the area: Circuit Playhouse, Theatre Works, and the Playhouse on the Square itself. Collectively in all three spaces, Playhouse on the Square produces about 16 productions in a season, using its company, professional visiting artists, and local talent. The productions range from big musicals such as: *Les Miserables*, *Spamalot*, *Hairspray*, and many others, which are primarily done on the main stage at Playhouse on the Square, to straight plays such as: *Red*, *Angels in America*, *Hot L Baltimore*, and others.

The theatre hires about 14 interns on a yearly basis; I was an exception as a summer intern. I worked with stage management at Playhouse on the Square, the main stage. My responsibilities included: overseeing rehearsals and the spaces, running the backstage area and fly rails during performances, getting together the necessary materials for rehearsals and performances, and working closely with the director, actors, and the stage manager of the production. Katharine Stubblefield, the production stage manager and my supervisor, also was the properties designer for *The Color Purple: The Musical*, so I also would run errands and help to create different props. My work day was from 10am to 10pm Tuesday through Saturday and 1pm to 10pm on Sundays. From 10am- 1pm included preparing for afternoon rehearsals and either evening rehearsals or performances. Stage management interns are also responsible for attending either light load-in or scenic/properties load in for each show usually occurring on Mondays. Stage management interns are also responsible for striking the properties and then assisting scenic strikes following the final performances of the different shows.

This internship has not only allowed me to hone my skills in stage management but to also understand the workings of a professional theater. I began my internship the first day of the *Color Purple: The Musical* rehearsals, and I ended my internship with the closing of the show. The rehearsal process began with music rehearsals. We then moved into blocking rehearsals which requires detailed notation in the script of the actors' movement and tracking the scenic and property elements. During the rehearsal process, I was able to move in the scene shop and help construct and paint some of the set. These tasks enabled me to see how it would be to work in a professional shop in comparison to the scene shop in the Tennessee Williams Center. I was also asked during the rehearsal process to help with some of the scenic elements over at Circuit Playhouse as well. As we moved into only evening rehearsals I spent the bulk of my day constructing and creating properties based off of the design of the properties master. The week before our production opened is called "tech week". This week marks the introduction of scenic elements, microphones, lights, and props to the blocking and performance of the actors. It involves long hours, but after opening night, it becomes worth it. During tech week and the run of the show, I was responsible for sweeping and mopping the stage, presetting the scenic elements and properties for the top of the show, presetting certain flown elements, managing the backstage area during the performance, flying all flown set pieces in, and solving problems as they arise backstage.

*Color Purple: The Musical* had five weeks of rehearsal and four weeks of performances. The majority of the performances were sold out. Overall it was a very successful and rewarding run of the show. In addition to honing my skills, I learned a lot about myself and what it would be like to work in a theater company that is professional but not equity. I learned that I am capable of problem solving in stressful situations and remaining calm and patient. Some of my

favorite moments in my internship happened while backstage in a show. I enjoy the high pace nature of it and the feeling of accomplishment that follows after another successful show run. Through my low points, such as cleaning steel and long hours striking a set, I learned that I perform my best when I am being challenged and when the tasks vary. My highest point occurred after opening night of the *Color Purple*. The satisfying feeling of building props, helping run rehearsals, working backstage, and finally feeling comfortable running the pin rail system, gave me an overwhelming feeling that what all that I had been working for was worth it. Following opening, my hours became more regular and we began music rehearsals for *Les Miserables*, another high point, even though I was only there for the beginning of the production process of *Les Miserables*. I just love the music!

Interning at Playhouse on the Square was overall a very fun and rewarding experience. Though I enjoyed working with all of my co-workers and in the theater, it has shifted my perspective on future career paths. I've learned that I would be happy working in any job where I work towards a goal, whether it be an event, a show, a concert, etc. I enjoy the process and the leadership aspects of theater, so I would love to continue working in theater in stage management or in other areas, but I will not limit my post graduating job search to only career in theaters but also events, museum galleries, etc. I am very grateful for the experience this summer, and I have truly enjoyed my summer internship.