

## Love and Boundaries

A couple well-known stage managers passed away in the last few weeks: Beverley Randolph and George Martin. They were fairly ordinary stage managers, which is to say they were extraordinary human beings. I never worked with Beverley, who worked some twenty-two Broadway shows before succumbing to a fast-moving cancer while she was Production Stage Manager for *The Addams Family*, but George put me into the show when I replaced Kevin Kline in *On the Twentieth Century*.

These two came to stage managing via different routes: Beverley was a stage manager from the get-go and George, who was one of the last connections to the glory days of Jack Cole, did a dozen Broadway shows as a dancer, dance captain and assistant choreographer before becoming a stage manager six times for Hal Prince. His last show as Hal's Production Stage Manager was *Evita*, which was Beverley's second Broadway job; and she went on to be Hal's PSM on his next seven shows. What they shared, in addition to Mr. Prince and in common with most stage managers, was a commitment to the flawless execution of the show and the well-being of its company.

As a father, my philosophy is that kids need two things: love and boundaries. A good stage manager is like a parental presence on a show: firm, even stern when necessary, and yet radiating a goodwill and bonhomie that create a pleasant workplace. In Equity's rulebooks, we don't stipulate or even enumerate a stage manager's duties, preferring to leave it to a stage manager's discretion as to which jobs and duties are necessary and which are inappropriate; but here, for those of you who are not stage managers (and those of you who are will know how far from complete this list is,) is a partial list of some of the things stage managers do.

They arrive an hour early for rehearsals and performances. They set up the rehearsal room. They tape out the set. They organize and set out the props. They make out the daily schedule. They make coffee. They copy and distribute changes in the script. They annotate the blocking. They enter the lighting cues (the fly cues, the set cues, the automation cues, etc.) into the script. They run dry tech rehearsals (tech rehearsals without the actors.) They call the show, helping pace the show by precisely calling lighting cues and set moves. They help oversee the installation of a show into the theater. They maintain the director's vision of the show, viewing the show regularly and giving the cast notes on their performances. They direct the understudies in up to twelve hours of understudy rehearsal a week. They train and put in cast replacements. They write up a report about each performance.

Clearly stage managers do far more work and work far longer hours than actors do. We acknowledge this in our contracts by negotiating a higher minimum salary for them (though a stage manager's relatively decreased likelihood of negotiating above minimum undercuts this somewhat.) They deserve even more acknowledgement for the care they take of the rest of us. We can no longer tell Beverley or George how much we appreciate them; but this Mother's Day and Father's Day, e-mail or text or Facebook your favorite stage manager and thank her or him for the love and the boundaries.