

Steamboat Dance Theatre Choreographer Handbook



Welcome to Steamboat Dance Theatre's (SDT) annual show. We are delighted to have you choreograph for the show and look forward to working with you. This manual is designed to help choreographers with timelines, production expectations, costuming and over all guidelines.

From now until the show you will be working closely with the Artistic Director(s) and the Producer(s), also known as the Production Team. The Production Team will be in charge of ensuring things are going smoothly, troubleshooting, and offering support or suggestions when necessary. At times, someone from the Production Team will be attending your rehearsals to help you stay on track and offer creative ideas.

The following are the considerations and responsibilities as a choreographer:

Dance Pieces:

1. We encourage pieces of various levels and numbers of dancers since we are a large organization with varying degrees of dance ability. Typical pieces should range between 2-5 minutes. Any pieces longer than 5 minutes require review and approval from the Production Team.

2. When choosing music, costumes, and choreography, keep in mind the SDT concert is a family show. Any questionable language, costumes and movements will be subject to approval by the Production Team.
3. At the choreographers' meetings please be ready to present details about your piece and costumes. This will help the Artistic Director(s) get an idea of the flow of the show. If at any time your piece changes after the choreographers meeting and/or auditions (i.e. music, style, dancers, etc.), you must inform the Production Team.
4. In the event there are too many pieces submitted for consideration you may be asked to audition your piece for the Production Team.
5. Please remember to choreograph at your dancers' ability level. Many SDT dancers are at beginner/intermediate level and will need adequate demonstration and practice time (i.e.: try not to change too much as show time nears).

Auditions:

1. At the choreographer interest meeting, each choreographer will provide PT a brief description of his/her piece including: level of dance, music, number of dancers, genre, costume description, and rehearsal schedule. At this time include any special skills needed to perform in the piece along with any additional expenses you expect dancers to incur including shoes, tights and props. Choreographers cannot require that dancers take classes, although they can highly recommend and make suggestions for specific classes. During auditions you can give preference to dancers that have been taking classes (you can announce this as well).
2. Each choreographer will be assigned an audition time in the amount of approximately 30 minutes. The 30 minutes MUST encompass teaching time as well as review time. Come prepared to teach a section of your dance that will best represent what you are looking for, typically around 4 counts of eight. Please teach a continuous set of 8 counts (i.e.: no roll offs). After teaching your segment, it's recommended you break the dancers into groups and rotate lines while reviewing the talent. At the same time other choreographers will be watching to give you input on your decision. It's customary that you do the same for other pieces.
3. When the auditions are over the choreographers will stay and go through the sheets to develop the cast list. Every dancer should be cast in at least one piece. NOTE: You must be flexible. Not everyone will get the dancers he/she wants (ability-wise) and may have to accept more than he/she needs in order to place dancers. Be prepared to stay

as long as it takes to place all dancers and be sure you leave with your assigned dancers contact list.

4. When choosing your dancers take into consideration that you will most likely lose at least 1 or more dancers in the course of rehearsals due to injuries or other issues. In particular, if you have a piece that requires paired dancers it is highly recommended you have several back up dancers/alternates.

5. Often times there are dancers that are unable to attend auditions. Please work with the Production Team to help them be a part of our production. Dancers that are unable to attend auditions will be informed by the PT team that they are only placed in a dance at a choreographer's discretion.

Rehearsals:

1. Each choreographer will receive one hour per week of rehearsal time following auditions. Any additional rehearsals before auditions and/or outside the normally scheduled time will be the financial responsibility of the choreographer, at the current studio rental rate. The only exception is if a regular rehearsal falls on a holiday and a make-up rehearsal is scheduled.

2. It's important that you arrive on time and are prepared for your rehearsals so precious time is not wasted. Make sure you have your choreography, music, and are ready to teach. Rehearsal times are tight, please stay within your scheduled time and respect the rehearsals right before and after yours. If you need to change or cancel a rehearsal contact your dancers and studio owner/manager with as much notice as possible. If you are continually late or regularly cancel rehearsals, please understand the Production Team may have to take action.

3. It is recommended to establish your attendance expectations at the first rehearsal. Typically a dancer can have only 2 unexcused missed rehearsals (i.e. forgot, didn't call, no show). If there are excessive absences, it's the choreographer's discretion to release or replace the dancer. Excessive absences make it difficult for dancers and you to make progress. If there are excessive excused absences, please bring this issue to the attention of the Production Team.

4. If at any time, you remove a dancer or if someone drops your piece, please inform the Production Team as soon as possible.

5. Please take care of the rehearsal space. It is your responsibility to clean up after your dancers and lock up if you are the last rehearsal. Generally, there's a closing list posted.

Costumes:

1. Choreographers need to attend a mandatory 3rd Choreographers Meeting in set by the Production Team where costumes, sponsorships and progress of dance piece will be discussed.

2. Check the SDT costume inventory before making any purchases. In addition, PRIOR TO ANY PURCHASES/SELECTIONS, your costumes must be signed off/approved by the Artistic Director.

3. Choreographers who do not have their costumes at the 2nd showing may not be given the opportunity to choreograph in the following year's concert. If this happens, the Production Team may intervene and select costumes for your piece.

4. Choreographers are responsible for finding a sponsor to fund costumes/props for their pieces. Please check with the PT to find out what percentage of sponsor money can go towards your costumes. Sponsors can complete their sponsor form and pay online at the SDT website.

5. Purchase costumes by end of November, or other deadline set by the PT depending on the showing date. If ordering costumes, pay attention to shipping timeframes—it may take 6 to 8 weeks to receive your costumes or even longer (China?)

6. Hand in receipts along with Reimbursement Form, itemizing purchases, to Treasurer for reimbursement. If you need, the Treasurer can purchase items on a debit card but ONLY once sponsorship money has been received by the Treasurer. In this case, a Reimbursement Form must still be filled out in order to itemize purchases. d. At conclusion of show all costumes paid for by SDT must be given to the Costume Coordinator with an inventory sheet that lists sizes, colors and quantities. Also make a note of any costumes paid and retained by dancers. This inventory will be cross referenced with original itemized form. e. If dancers wish to purchase their costumes the money needs to be collected by the Treasurer or other designated person. If you spend more money than allotted, you will be personally responsible for the over expenditure and cannot expect dancers to pay the difference unless prior arrangements have been made.

Showings:

1. **First showings** take place around 4 to 5 weeks into rehearsals. If your piece includes any special props, they **MUST** be available and used at this showing in order to get a clear picture on their use. The showings will be scheduled by the Artistic Director(s) and/or Producer(s) during your regularly scheduled rehearsal. This will be a time for the Artistic Director(s) to offer guidance, discuss costumes and answer your questions. A follow up showing may be scheduled at the Artistic Director(s) discretion. Choreographers should ensure all dancers are present at this showing.

2. **The second showing** is held at the high school (or performance venue) about one month prior to the concert. All dancers are required to be there, the dance should be finished and complete costumes should be worn. **Choreographers who do not have their costumes by the 2nd showing may not be given the opportunity to choreograph in the following year's concert. If this happens, the Production Team will intervene and make costuming decisions.** Please stress the importance of this showing to all of your dancers and remind them that their attendance is **REQUIRED**.

a. A schedule will be posted in advance of each piece's showing time. Your dancers are asked to arrive 20 minutes prior to their scheduled time.

b. The 2nd showing is a chance to run your dance 1-2 times and video tape it for feedback. It isn't a time to stage or rehearse your dance.

c. Bring a final edited version of your music for Sound Tech

d. Bring your Cue Sheet filled out with props and lighting design information for the Lighting Designer. *** 2nd Showing is not for lighting, but giving your cue sheet to the Lighting Designer now gives him/her plenty of time to prepare.

e. You will receive feedback from the AD and/or Producer before you leave the showing. You will also receive the video of your piece to review and show to your dancers.

f. Even though changes may have been made following the 1st Showing, the 2nd Showing will determine any final production concerns, including deletion or restaging of a piece.

g. The order of 2nd Showing is not necessarily the final show order, but it may be used to try out the flow between various pieces.

Production/Tech/ “Hell” Week:

1. The Technical Director and Production Team will set the rehearsal schedule and direct/instruct all performers and crew. There can be no changes to any dance numbers at this point. All choreographers and dancers should follow the directions of the Tech Director and Producer(s).
2. A schedule for the entire week will be posted in advance of Tech week.
3. Choreographers are expected to help lay the Marley Floor, usually on Friday evening before Tech weekend.
4. This is a time in the production when EVERYONE is required to be present and ready to go (even if it means hurry up and wait!) so be prepared.
5. On the first two days of Tech, all musicians should arrive with the dancers to allow time for sound checks and set-up. They are required to hold to the same tech schedule as the dancers.
6. **Tech Time:** This time is used for lighting design and technical rehearsal- it is not a time for staging or rehearsing. Please come prepared with a copy of your lighting cue notes and ideas for lighting. Please DO NOT critique your piece during this time. Focus on timing for lighting cues is imperative to remaining on schedule.
7. **Extra Stage Time:** Will be allocated with a sign up sheet. This time is used for additional critiquing, staging and cleaning. A production team member will be present for all extra stage time. A sign up schedule will be distributed sometime after the 2nd Showing.
8. The Tech Director will be directing an estimated 100 or more people, so choreographers should be respectful and empathetic of the time restraints on the crew.
9. The Artistic Director will set the bow, usually at the end of tech rehearsal.
10. Notes will be given by the Production Team each night of tech rehearsals, prior to the start of run-through of the show. Choreographers and dancers are required to attend note time, as this is when specific performance feedback and other important information is communicated.
11. Warm-up and “Love Circle” will be held each evening beginning with Dress Rehearsal. This is an important time for everyone to be present and participate in SDT traditions.

Clean up & Breakdown (AKA: STRIKE): Each night specific dances will be in charge of certain clean up duties, please do your part. A schedule will be posted in various places in the dressing areas. On the last night of the show the stage needs to be broken down before anyone goes to the cast party. A list of specific duties will be provided.

Good luck and have a great show!

Merde!

Choreographer Jobs

These jobs are pivotal to the successful production of the Annual Concert. Each choreographer is expected to fulfill one choreographer job.

1. **Poster Coordination & Local Media**- Assists Artistic Director/PT in getting the word out about the concert! Main duties include assisting w/poster creation, printing, editing, and distribution in addition to securing local advertising

A. Works directly with PT to secure poster designer

B. Solicits businesses for printing quotes

C. Reviews poster verbiage with PT & poster designer to ensure correct and important information is present (double check dates, times, spelling, etc.)

D. Picks up finished posters

E. Assigns location for posters and distributes assigned posters/not assigned posters to choreographers/dancers

F. Coordinate w/the PT the need for newspaper or radio ads and PSAs- ideas for local promotion are encouraged!

2. **Lobby Coordinator (2 people)** – Organize all lobby activities and create displays in support of show theme. You will be given an expense budget.

A. Plan layout for all lobby sales and displays.

B. Acquire all necessary materials and supplies for displays in the lobby. Check the Depot Costume Closet for existing materials. I.e. easels, tape, tables, etc.

C. Connect w/**Dance Directory choreographer** on local dance instructors/programs/studios for any promotional material to be displayed.

D. Decorate display case outside of theatre with permission from school and in thematic element of show.

E. Communicate with the **Sponsorship Concierge** for needs of Underwriting Sponsors (i.e. banner placement, promo materials, etc.)

F. Include a Sponsor Board, SDT committees, programs, and events in displays- reach out to SDT Marketing Committee and **Concert Historian** for media

G. Photo montages or pre-production slide shows have worked well in the past, but new ideas are welcome.

3. Costume Coordinator (2 people) – Coordinates the return of costumes into SDT inventory.

A. WEEK BEFORE SHOW- contact SDT treasurer and offer assistance in coordination of cast costume purchases. Confirm who (choreographer or assigned dancer) will be collecting/cleaning costumes for each dance

B. WEEK OF SHOW- **ANY DANCER WANTING TO PURCHASE A COSTUME MUST CONTACT THE TREASURER AND PROVIDE PAYMENT BEFORE SATURDAY NIGHT WARM-UP**

D. WEEK OF SHOW- Secure & distribute all materials needed for costume collection after final show (bags, etcj). Email or distribute to choreographers the *Costume Inventory Sheet* to complete prior to drop-off date(s).

E. AFTER SHOW- Coordinate a date/time (1-2 weeks after show) for clean costumes to be collected at a designated location- be present for length of drop-off. Costumes must be dropped off w/*Costume Inventory Sheet*

F. Reference *Costume Inventory Sheets* and add to master inventory list as stored in costume closet.

G. RECOMMENDED COLLECTION PROCEDURE: Each dancer will have a plastic bag for non-purchased costumes per piece, labeled with his/her name, to hand to choreographer/assigned dancer after the final show. At Show close, choreographers (or assigned dancer) will collect bags with costumes from every dancer; checking off names from a roster. All labeled costume bags will then be deposited into a large piece bag for the choreographer/assigned dancer to take home, clean, and drop-off on designated date.

4. House Manager – ***This job should be filled by someone who is either not performing, or performing in no more than 2 pieces.*** Lead volunteer ushers (6-8) each night, scan tickets, and ensure theatre etiquette is being followed.

- A. If assigned choreographer is dancing- choreographer confirms a House Manager or assistant and assists pre-show and when able, in addition to other duties
- B. Recruit ushers beginning 1 month prior to show: ushers may watch after paying guests have been seated. 2 ushers must be in lobby at all times during the length of performance.
- C. Provide list of ushers/volunteer needs to **Volunteer Manager**
- D. Provide flashlights to ushers to assist patrons when lights are low.
- E. Limit access into theater to ONLY between pieces so as not to allow ambient light to compromise performance.
- F. Help ushers and door people with ticketing application, scanning procedure, and program distribution
- G. Assist in handing out additional SDT materials (i.e.: flyers, surveys, sponsorship information)

5. **Bake Sale** – Organize and manage bake sale fundraiser for ALL performances. There are several separate attachments to aid in this job—make sure you get them from Producer.

- A. Audit existing inventory in the Depot Costume Closet for bake sale/table supplies
- B. Review existing guides—Helpful Hints for Bake Sale for details related to set up, needed supplies, money collection, etc.
- C. Provide volunteer needs to the PT & **Volunteer Manager**; if dancers are volunteers provide list to **Volunteer Manager** for accountability
- D. Connect with **Lobby Coordinator** on designated placement of bake sale
- E. Send bake sale information to PT a week before show for mention in cast wide email~ All dancers are required to bring a baked good for the bake sales. Relay the requirement each night during cast notes and announcements (if PT does not).

6. **Dance Directory**– Gather list and descriptions of all local dance schools, dance classes, and upcoming SDT events and provide to Program Coordinator/SDT Executive Director & Marketing Committee.

- A. Use prior year's program for reference if needed.

- B. Communicate w/Program Coordinator for date of completion and formatting specifics
- C. Provide list to AD prior to 1st Warm-Up date- allowing AD to ask instructors to provide class information during Notes
- D. Connect w/**Lobby Coordinator** on groups/studios/organization that want to display promotional material in lobby- help organize and arrange

7. **Flower Sales** – Responsible for the coordination of flower sales during ALL performances

- A. Solicit local businesses for quotes/donations/bulk rate- explore ALL options
- B. Secure florist 2 months prior.
- C. Start with bulk order of 40 flowers and add more for Saturday if necessary. (Past florists have included Safeway).
- D. Provide volunteer needs to the PT & **Volunteer Manager**; if dancers are volunteers provide list to **Volunteer Manager** for accountability
- E. If needed, prepare flowers to sell (i.e. wrap, ribbon, SDT logo, etc)
- F. Secure all materials needed for flower table/sales
- G. Collect, track, and deliver all monies to treasurer each night.
- H. Suggested price of \$5/flower.

8. **Cast Party (2-3 people)** – This is a big job and is suggested to involve at least 2-3 choreographers. ALL CHOREOGRAPHERS TAKING THIS JOB MUST STAY AFTER THE PARTY AND CLEAN UP, MAKE ARRANGEMENTS AHEAD OF TIME TO RETURN THE NEXT MORNING FOR CLEAN UP OR HIRE A CLEANING CREW.

- A. Review budget with Producer(s).
- B. Establish the number of attendees based on dancers and possible guests (generally all cast and crew plus one guest).
- C. Book venue by November (if PT has not confirmed a venue)- allow time to decorate, set up, and clean.

- D. Obtain limited liability insurance certificate from the board.
- E. Solicit businesses for food donations in November. Once confirmed, provide **Program Coordinator** & PT a list of F&B sponsors to be mentioned in program
- F. Book DJ in November. Please be aware of our demographic when booking a DJ.
- G. Send volunteer needs to **Volunteer Manager**; if your dancers are volunteering send the volunteer list to **Volunteer Manager** for accountability
- H. Secure decorations, sodas, bottled water, paper products, cups and ice. (check Costume Closet)
- I. Coordinate food delivery and DJ equipment set up.
- J. Arrange collection of donations from guests-- \$10 donation for non-cast members.
- K. All money must be submitted to the SDT treasurer or active Board Member. Make nightly announcements of the guest fees during notes.
- L. Ensure a responsible party is available to secure property at the end of the party.

9. **Sponsorship Concierge (in support of Board Member)**—Reports and assists designated Board Member in communicating with sponsoring businesses and/or individuals. Understanding of email etiquette, strong written and verbal communication needed.

- A. Submit Sponsorship PSA (provided by producers) to the Happenings/News Briefs section of the Pilot starting November. It is sometimes necessary to submit it multiple times before it is printed. PSA runs until Program Advertisement Deadline.
- B. Meet with Board member and develop a contact schedule for sponsors. Stay on schedule with calls/communication reminding sponsors of deadlines.
- C. Reach out to sponsors, as confirmed, with a welcome email, important dates, etc.
- D. Ensure sponsors are aware of deadlines; send reminders as deadlines approach
- E. Be available to review/double check programs and promotional materials for errors as it relates to show sponsors; at the direction of BoD
- F. Assist SDT Board with Thank You cards for sponsors. Sponsors to receive at the discretion of the Board (what level receives thank yous). Ask PT to secure list.

G. WEEK BEFORE SHOW- with help of PT/Board Member reach out to all Underwriting Sponsors extending help in getting promotional materials to the lobby. Let them know where they are setting up and ensure tickets are ready for them

10. **SDT Merchandise Sales (in support of Board Member)**

- A. Offer input on design and style of merchandise; assist with ordering as directed by Board Member
- B. MUST BE PRESENT AT 2ND SHOWING to help with cast orders and sales
- C. As pre-orders arrive assist Board Member in distributing merchandise to purchaser
- D. Communicate w/**Lobby Coordinator** on table location for show sales
- E. Help designated board member in organizing merchandise for sale at all performances
- F. Display SDT merchandise in an appealing manner to boost sales.
- G. Send volunteer needs to **Volunteer Manager**; if your dancers are volunteering email the volunteer list to **Volunteer Manager** for accountability
- H. Track sales on spreadsheet, collect money, and deliver to SDT Treasurer EVERY night.

11. **Volunteer Manager** – Oversee the volunteer schedule and work with PT, choreographers, and cast to fill all positions and hold cast accountable

- A. Assist w/finding House Manager
- B. Meet w/PT to determine volunteer areas and quantities
- C. Set up online volunteer program and provide details to cast for signing up
- D. Receive confirmed volunteer lists (from choreographers enlisting dancers) and enter into online list
- E. Send online volunteer info to PT to send to cast before Hell Week

12. Concert Historian/Social Media- Document the creative & production process of the Annual Concert throughout the concert season and into performances

- A. Meet w/PT to establish vision and goals (hashtag, photo campaigns, etc)- discuss how to keep everyone organized and contributing media
- B. Create weekly media schedule with PT- week 1- photos (theme each week?), week 2- boomerangs, week 3- all choreos post something from rehearsal, etc...)
- C. Gather contact information for choreographers & SDT Marketing Committee for emails and scheduling
- D. Schedule at least one rehearsal per piece for capturing photo/video footage for use in promotional material, concert media, etc. (can also put this in the hands of choreographers)
- E. Take pictures/video at auditions & casting
- F. Capture moments during Tech Week- laying marley, warm up, dress rehearsal, etc.
- G. Communicate w/SDT Marketing Coordinator & PT for Social Media postings (must be approved before posting)

13. Production Recording

- A. Choreographers typically receive one complimentary DVD/link.
- B. Communicate w/Videographer (likely KPA Productions) on how production will be recorded and distributed
- C. Come to agreement with Videographer of pricing, distribution, etc. Ensure all details of video purchasing and production are covered (are dances able to be purchased individually, what versions are available?)
- D. Connect w/PT and SDT Executive Director on preparing for sales and communicating procedure to cast
- E. Follow up with Videographer after the show and communicate delivery timeline to PT, so cast is informed

**I have read and understand the parameters of my
involvement as a choreographer for the annual
Steamboat Dance Theatre concert.**

Signature

Print Name

Date



