

# Opera Philadelphia

## ***Supernumerary Handbook***

***2014-2015 Season***

*As of January 9, 2015*

## ➤ WELCOME

Welcome to your role as a supernumerary – or “super” – at the Opera Philadelphia! Supers are non-singing, non-speaking actors engaged to play supplementary roles in an opera. Your responsibilities may include interacting with the principal artists, chorus, or dancers, moving props or furniture around the stage, or even playing characters that help move the action along. Whatever your role, you are an integral part of the opera and we are happy to have you here!

## ➤ WHO’S WHO

**Director:** The stage director is the creative leader of the opera. He or she directs you concerning where to go onstage and what is happening dramatically in each moment of the production. The director will instruct you about the show and your role(s) in it.

**Conductor (Maestro):** The maestro is the musical director of the opera, leading the singers and orchestra through the score. The maestro controls the tempos, pacing, interpretation, and expression of the music.

**Assistant Director (AD):** This person aids the director in creating his or her vision. Just like the director, he or she may give you staging directions which should be followed just as if they come from the director themselves. The assistant director also aids stage management in organizing the performing artists and relaying information to the cast. If you have questions about your staging or motivations you should ask the assistant director.

**Stage Management:** The stage management team is in charge of organization and logistics, ranging from scheduling your rehearsals and costume fittings to setting the stage properly for each scene to telling you when to make your entrances to the stage. Stage management can help you with issues concerning safety, first aid needs, problems backstage, or costume, prop, and set questions.

**Stage Manager (SM):** The leader of the stage management team, this person keeps rehearsals and performances running smoothly and on time. Listen to the stage manager for important announcements, such as your call time for the next rehearsal or performance. When onstage, the stage manager will give you your “places” calls over the PA system, telling you when to proceed backstage to prepare for your entrances.

**Assistant Stage Manager (ASM):** The individuals (usually there are two) who organize each side of the stage. They help you line up or place you in the proper groups for your entrances, as well as cue you when to go onstage. The ASMs will help you with questions concerning technical aspects of the stage, entrances and exits, safety concerns, and so on. The ASMs may also help relay information from the director or assistant director.

**Production Super Captain:** Each opera will have an experienced OP super assigned as its super captain. The super captain is here to answer all your questions, such as: What will the rehearsal and performance processes be like? Where is the stage door located? Where is my dressing room? How do I find my way around the theater? The super captain will also help ensure that the supers are in the right places at the right times and performing their duties as assigned, and may assist the stage management team with super paperwork such as ticket request forms and ticket distribution.

**Costume Director:** The costume director is responsible for making you look fabulous on stage! The costume director and her staff will be present at your costume fittings and in the theater to make sure that all your costume pieces fit properly and to make any modifications as needed.

**Wig and Make-Up Coordinators:** The wig and make-up coordinators make sure your hair is dressed appropriately for your role or provide a wig for you to wear. They may also apply theatrical make-up for you or instruct you how to do so.

#### **2014 – 2015 Season Staff:**

Directors:

Michael Shell, *The Barber of Seville*  
Kevin Newbury, *Oscar*  
Tim Albery, *Don Carlo*  
Ron Daniels, *Charlie Parker's Yardbird*

Assistant Directors:

Seth Hoff, *The Barber of Seville*  
James Daniel, *Oscar*  
Amanda Consol, *Don Carlo*  
Amanda Consol, *Charlie Parker's Yardbird*

Stage Manager:

Joe Gladstone, *The Barber of Seville*  
Chelsea Antrim, *Oscar*  
Jennifer Harber, *Don Carlo*  
Becki Smith, *Charlie Parker's Yardbird*

Assistant Stage Managers:

Sara Prince and Becki Smith, *The Barber of Seville*  
Sara Prince and Becki Smith, *Oscar*  
Jen Shaw and Becki Smith, *Don Carlo*  
Jen Shaw and Sara Prince, *Charlie Parker's Yardbird*

Costume Director:

Millie Hiibel

#### ➤ **STAGE TERMINOLOGY**

**Blocking:** Your movement while on the stage

**Upstage:** Away from the audience

**Downstage:** Towards the audience

**Stage Right/Stage Left:** Your right and left, as you are facing the audience

**Wings:** The partitioned areas immediately offstage where you make your entrances and exits. Wings are usually created with soft black drapes, called **legs**, which serve to hide the offstage areas from the audience. Wings are numbered from downstage to upstage and you will be assigned a specific wing for each entrance and exit.

**Sightlines:** The cutoff points where the audience stops seeing you. Sightlines will be taped on the floor in the wings; you must always remain behind the sightline until you receive your entrance cue. When exiting, remain in character until you cross offstage of the sightline, as some of the audience can still see you until you pass this point.

**Pit:** Where the orchestra plays

**House:** Where the audience sits

**Entrance Cues:** You will always receive a cue from stage management to go onstage. You will first be given a “stand-by” – which means to get ready and watch for your cue – followed by a “go.” Watch and listen to the ASMs for your cues.

**Props:** The things you handle onstage, such as a sword or a book, or the furniture that helps create the scene.

**Places:** Your “places” calls indicate that it is time to get ready for your entrance. When you hear your call over the PA system (or from a stage manager in the rehearsal hall), you should proceed directly to the wings to prepare for your entrance.

**Call Time / Next Call:** The call time is the time you must report to the rehearsal hall or the theater. Your next call will always be posted on the callboard near your sign in sheet and announced by the stage manager at the end of the previous service. Calls are subject to change, so ALWAYS check your next call before leaving the theater.

## ➤ REHEARSALS

### Schedules

Prior to being cast as a super, you will receive a complete overview schedule of the rehearsals and performances. If you have any conflicts with a scheduled rehearsal, please notify the stage

manager immediately. Conflicts which occur early in the rehearsal process can sometimes be worked around, however, conflicts with onstage rehearsals are almost never approved. In case of an emergency or illness once rehearsals have begun, please notify the stage manager as soon as possible.

Rehearsal schedules are subject to change. This may mean a change to the overall date or time of the rehearsal, or just a change to the time you are required to report (your “call time”). At each rehearsal your “next call” will be posted on the callboard and also announced by the stage manager. Please be sure to check your next call at the end of every rehearsal and performance.

Rehearsal schedules are also available online at [www.operaphila.org/schedule](http://www.operaphila.org/schedule). Schedules are typically posted by 7:00p for the following day.

### **Location**

All staging rehearsals are held in the Academy of Music Rehearsal Hall, located at 1420 Locust Street. Please enter via the bank of glass doors near the bottom of the steps to Duel Piano Bar and proceed to the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor rehearsal hall.

### **Attire**

For rehearsals, dress comfortably in clothes and shoes that allow you to move freely. Wear shoes that are secure on your feet and, preferably, close-toed, so that you can move easily around the stage and your toes will be protected in those big crowd scenes! For costume fittings and rehearsals and performances in costume, be sure to wear proper undergarments.

### **During Rehearsals**

Punctuality and reliability are key qualities of a successful super, so please be on time! Upon arriving, sign in on the callboard located immediately inside the main entrance to the rehearsal hall. Check the callboard for any announcements or notes relating to supers. Pick up your nametag from the table next to the callboard, then have a seat, stow your personal belongings, and wait for the rehearsal to begin. You may sit in any of the chairs at the end of the rehearsal hall near the entrance. Don't forget to silence your cell phone while in the rehearsal hall.

Rehearsals will sometimes involve periods of waiting. We recommend that you bring a quiet activity, such as reading material, to occupy your time when you are not needed onstage. Please keep talking to a minimum during rehearsals, even when you are not onstage. At least one break will be given during each rehearsal.

## **➤ AT THE THEATER**

### **General Info**

Our main performance venue is the Academy of Music, located on the southwest corner of Broad and Locust Streets. Please enter via the stage door, located under the gas lanterns on the south side of Locust, between Broad and 15<sup>th</sup> Streets.

Upon arrival, sign in on the callboard inside the stage door. Check for daily announcements pertaining to supers. You may wait in the house (the audience) or in your dressing room until you are called to the stage. Please do NOT come to the stage until you are called.

**Safety**

The stage can be a dangerous place, with heavy moving scenery and dark spaces. We work very hard to choreograph both backstage and onstage movement to ensure a safe environment. Please pay careful attention to stage management's instructions backstage and onstage, as part of our job is to keep you safe! If you see a safety hazard, please report it immediately to stage management. You should never come to the stage unless you have been called, including before and after the show and during intermissions, as the crew is often working and moving scenery at these times. Close-toed shoes are required for safety at all onstage rehearsals.

**Costumes**

Your costume(s) will be waiting for you in your dressing room. A dresser is available to assist you with getting in and out of costume, as needed. Unless you have a very complicated costume which requires extra time to dress, please do not get into costume sooner than thirty minutes before the rehearsal or performance start time, as the costume crew is often still pressing and preparing your garments until then. When you take off your costume, please hang it on the rack and return any accessories to the bags or counter space where you found them.

Please wear your costume as directed, with no modifications. This means no personal jewelry, wristwatches, or eyeglasses (unless approved by the costume director). If you encounter a problem with a costume piece – a hem is too long, a helmet is obscuring your vision, etc. – notify your dresser. They will work with the costume director to correct the problem.

Please do not eat or drink anything (except water), smoke, or chew gum while in costume. Many, many hours have gone into the preparation of your garments and they should be kept in excellent condition. While in costumes, wigs, or stage make-up, please do not leave the theater or go into any public areas of the theater.

**Wigs and Make-Up**

If you wear a wig or need to have your own hair specially dressed by the wig and make-up crew, you will be assigned a time to report to the wig room to have this done. Only wig and make-up crew may put on or remove your wig for you; do not attempt to do so yourself. Do not modify your wig or hairstyle once the crew has finished preparing you for the stage.

Depending on your role, you may have stage make up applied by a crew member or you may be given instruction on how to apply make-up yourself. Make-up is applied based on the designer's and the director's specifications, so please follow all directions exactly.

Men may be asked to be clean shaven or to grow facial hair for a particular opera. Facial hair requirements will be given to you when you are cast (if they are available at that time), or will be posted on the rehearsal hall callboard. If you are unwilling or unable to accommodate the facial hair requirements please notify stage management.

**Props**

The props you carry onstage will be located on tables backstage right and left, near your entrance location. If you have a question about where to find your prop, ask an assistant stage manager. Please pick up your prop just before your entrance and replace it on a table as soon as you exit. Your prop might be used by someone else later in the opera, so do not take it out of the immediate backstage area.

**Photography & Recording**

Photography is permitted in the dressing rooms (once everyone is dressed, of course!) and the hallways. Please remember that courtesy dictates asking an individual's permission prior to photographing them. Photography is not permitted backstage or onstage, so please do not bring cameras into the wings. Video and audio recording of any kind are prohibited.

**Guests**

Guests are not permitted backstage at any time. Please ask your guests to meet you outside the stage door on Locust Street at the conclusion of a performance. (Remember to change out of costume before going outside to greet your guests.)

**➤ COMPENSATION & TICKETS**

Supers receive \$15 per call, no matter how long the call is or whether it is a rehearsal or performance. You will receive your remuneration by check at the final performance.

All Supers cast in Opera Philadelphia productions must be eligible to work in the United States and possess a valid social security number. Upon being cast in an opera, Supers will be required to submit a W4 form for tax purposes, unless you have worked for Opera Philadelphia within the past twelve months and your personal information has not changed in that time. The W4 form is available for download at [www.operaphila.org/schedule](http://www.operaphila.org/schedule) in the "Super Information" section.

Supers receive two complimentary tickets to the final dress rehearsal. These will be distributed to you at one of the final staging rehearsals.

Supers also receive two complimentary tickets to any performance date, subject to availability. Ticket request forms specific to supers will be provided to you in rehearsals. (Make sure to use the SUPER request form and not the request form for principal artists.) You will receive an email confirmation from subscriber services when your ticket order has been filled and tickets will be available at the theater's WILL CALL window under your name starting two hours prior to the performance. Please do NOT call subscriber services with comp ticket requests; they will be unable to assist you. If you have any questions concerning the status of your ticket request please contact Meggie Scache, Production Coordinator, at [scache@operaphila.org](mailto:scache@operaphila.org).

➤ **CONTACT INFORMATION**

**Alexander Farino, Production Manager**

[farino@operaphila.org](mailto:farino@operaphila.org)

(215) 893-5936 Office

(612) 201-2106 Cell

**Meggie Scache, Production Coordinator**

[scache@operaphila.org](mailto:scache@operaphila.org)

(215) 893-5915 Office

*Contact with ticket request questions or updates to your personal information for payroll purposes*

**Box Office**

(for ticket purchases only; no comps!)

(215) 732-8400

**Daily Schedule Website**

[www.operaphila.org/schedule](http://www.operaphila.org/schedule)

*Also contains the super overview rehearsal schedule, handbook, and other forms or information pertaining to supers in the current opera. The "Super Information" section is just for you!*