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## Tear Sheet Cover

ROBERT DODD, PUBLICITY COORD

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Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Savvy".

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## Reviews 2.2.09

Arts & Photography / Performing Arts / Reference

**Stagecraft Fundamentals: A Guide and Reference for Theatrical Production** by Rita Kogler Carver (Focal Press)

**Stagecraft Fundamentals** is the only book that tackles every aspect of theatre production. The history of stagecraft, safety precautions, lighting, costumes, scenery, career planning tips, and more are discussed with full-color examples that display step-by-step procedures and the finished product.

Rita Kogler Carver's goal in writing **Stagecraft Fundamentals** was to bring the newest ideas and technologies available in professional theater to the attention of anyone with an interest in backstage theater. Each chapter goes into enough historical detail to give readers a background and a perspective. Visual examples as well as explanations of current techniques bring readers not only into the present, but also into the future. Carver is an Emmy Award winner for her lighting design at the 2000 Sydney Olympics, a guest lecturer at NYU's Tisch Design Department, a theatrical and television lighting designer, and the Executive Artistic Director of Dragonfly Performing Arts, Inc.

Carver in the introduction says that she has been fortunate to interview a great many working designers and technicians, and she quotes them throughout **Stagecraft Fundamentals**. She uses examples of past and current design ideas to make comparisons. This fundamentals book contains a lot of information for one book, organized to help it make sense. Chapter 1 discusses the terms that form the foundation to build on in later chapters, and Chapter 2 discusses the design process. The next logical step is to discuss composition and color theory, and Chapters 3 and 4 explore the basics of these topics. Chapter 5 begins the implementation phase of **Stagecraft Fundamentals**. This is the first tangible step for any designer – to get the ideas out of our head and onto paper. The 'old way' is with a pencil and the 'new way', with technology, adds the use of computer drafting software and photo manipulation software as well as other programs written specifically for the theatre. Chapter 6 talks about safety both backstage in the theater as well as in the various shops related to implementation of the designs.

Scenic tools and materials are discussed in Chapter 7. There are so many different projects readers might need to do, and Carver gives them the basic information they need to walk into a scene shop and get the job done. She also talks about how to choose the right tool or material for the job at hand. Chapter 8 is about scenery. This chapter gives readers a background in the traditional scenic elements: flats, platforms, stairs, doors, etc. The next logical topic in **Stagecraft Fundamentals** is a discussion on paint. Chapter 9 addresses a range of painting tools and techniques.

Chapter 10 follows with a discussion on rigging. Now that the scenery is built, how do readers get it into place and into its storage position? Does it fly in and out, does it track on and off, or does it just sit there? Once readers learn about the knots that make theater rigging safe and easy, Carver moves on to more complicated rigging where new technology has really made a huge impact. From all things scenic to all things lighting, Chapter 11 discusses lighting – the history of lighting through a variety of developments straight through to today's fixtures. Chapter 12 is about costumes. From costumes, the next logical step is makeup. Chapter 13 explores the basics of makeup. The book discusses street, or everyday, makeup, as well as aging and some special effects. Additional effects can include everything from a broken nose, to scarring, to injuries, to

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all sorts of fantasy characters.

Chapter 14 explores sound. With the advent of digital technology, the impact sound can have has drastically improved. Sound can now follow a performer around the stage, or around the entire theater. Digital delays can ensure that audiences of 50 to 50,000 all hear the same thing at the same time. Special effects are the focus of Chapter 15. A prop may need to explode into flames, rain or snow might be needed for a certain scene, or a character might need to fly through the air.

The culmination of working in the theater is the actual performance. Chapter 16 talks about stage management. The stage management team is responsible for everything that happens during the actual performances. Stage managers have to be organized, they have to love paperwork, and they need to work well with a variety of people.

Chapter 17 discusses all the places readers might find employment. There are many job opportunities out there, some of which are directly related to the theater. Many of these possibilities will be in related fields and some will be in what seems at first totally unrelated. The book explores these options to make sure students' training gets put to good use in an area where they will be happy.

***Stagecraft Fundamentals** is beautifully illustrated throughout.... The writing is clear and personal, which should be very appealing to students.*

*...Her close ties to the New York theatre scene gives this book a special insight into the professional world, one that goes well beyond what is found in most college textbooks. – John Holloway, Professor in the Theatre Department at the University of Kentucky and President of the International Association of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) Local 346*

*Written in a user-friendly conversational tone.... Wonderfully complete and filled with hundreds of images, most of them in color.... While the chapters provide a thorough survey of all subjects, the book is packed with illustrations and photos; a lot of them drawn from nationally recognized professionals and companies. **Stagecraft Fundamentals** will supply students of stagecraft with a solid foundation of the body of knowledge required to pursue a career in backstage theatre or one of its numerous avenues of employment. – Dennis Dorn, Professor of Theatre Technology and Faculty Technical Director at the University of Wisconsin-Madison*

*Beautifully written! The author has succeeded in relaying technical theatre information without being too technical .... When I think back on the insufferable intro to tech theatre books I had to read, I feel cheated I didn't have this one as a student. I will be using this text in my class! – Rob Napoli, Designer and Technical Director at Penn State University, Berks Campus*

The bible for theatrical production, **Stagecraft Fundamentals** is the most comprehensive and up-to-date reference in existence. It provides students with a solid foundation while getting them excited about the theater. For students beginning in theatre as well as the practiced, Carver assembles her vast experience into a one-stop guide. The book includes step-by-step models that lead readers through each aspect of theatrical production. Complete and thorough, written in a conversational style, the book is filled with tons of information and useful, full-color illustrations.