

## **Schenectady Light Opera Company**

### **Audience Service Volunteer Instructions**

The Audience Services department encompasses all areas where we, as an organization, greet and assist our patrons. This includes the Box Office, Will Call, Ushers and House Managers. We want to make sure that our patrons are well taken care of and feel welcome in our theater. You are a key part in making sure our patrons have a positive experience. To that end, we ask that you comply with all the rules below to ensure the safety and comfort of our patrons and to give them a great experience at SLOC. Unfortunately, if you cannot meet these requirements, we ask that you don't sign up. There are many other volunteer opportunities at SLOC, please let us know if you would like to help in another way and we'll connect you to the right people. It's important to remember that our Audience Services Volunteers are the first people the patrons encounter at the theater during a performance and it is our job to leave a wonderful first and positive lasting impression.

#### **Audience Service Volunteer Minimum Requirements:**

The following are the minimum requirements for being a volunteer in the Audience Services Department as a Usher, Head Usher, Will Call Attendant and House Manager.

- Volunteers must be able to smile and warmly greet our patrons!
- Volunteers must be able to stand/walk without assistance.
- Volunteers may not eat in the theater during the performance.
- Volunteers may not drink alcoholic beverages while they are on duty.
- Volunteers must be a minimum 16 years of age.
- Please contact Amy Jessup at [usher@sloctheater.org](mailto:usher@sloctheater.org) and/or 518.428.5047 if you find you are unable to help within 48 hours of the performance that you are scheduled to work.

#### **Usher Instructions:**

- Ushers must be able to stand during the show. The good news is SLOC does frequently sell out. When this happens, Ushers may have to stand during the show. Ushers should never move a seat to block a door, aisle, row, or patron's view so they can see the show. We do our best to try to accommodate ushers in specific usher seats, but we cannot guarantee that all ushers will be able to sit during the show.
- Usher dress code: Solid black (or very dark blue) pants or skirt, solid white top and an optional solid black (or very dark blue) blazer, sweater and/or tie. Please, no patterns! It is important to follow the dress code so patrons can easily identify an Usher in case they need help of any kind.
- Ushers must arrive no later than 7 pm for evening performances and no later than 1 pm for matinees. If this is your first time ushering at SLOC, you should arrive by 6:45 pm/12:45 pm for a brief orientation with the Head Usher. Please plan for the possibility of limited parking or heavy traffic.
- Ushers will go to the Box Office and obtain a lanyard/flashlight and then proceed directly to the theater and check in with the Head Usher.
- Ushers will help set up the theater and stuff inserts into the playbills as instructed by the Head Usher.
- Ushers will attend the Usher meeting at 7:10 pm/1:10 pm. Ushers must attend the meeting even if they have already volunteered for the current show or previous shows.
- Once the house is open, ushers should stay in their assigned locations, greet patrons and guide them to their seats. We have a very short time to seat as many as 260 patrons. Please limit personal interactions with friends to a brief hello and then catch up with them at intermission. We want you to be friendly, but keep in mind that the show can't start until everyone is seated.
- Ushers should remain in their assigned location until instructed to sit (if seating is available) by the Head Usher.
- Ushers should never step in front of a patron to take an empty seat; this includes sitting in the first row. Only take an aisle seat, if one is available, after 15 minutes into the show.
- During the performance, Ushers should pay attention to the audience and ensure there aren't any issues. If there are patrons that are being disruptive (talking, texting, recording using a cell phone or other recording device), Ushers should address this with the patron to get the behavior to stop OR ask for the assistance of the Head Usher to address the patron's behavior.
- Ushers must stay for the entire performance and help clean up the theater after the show. Gloves and trash bags are provided.

- Ushers should check out with the head usher.
- Ushers should return their lanyard to the box office before leaving the theater.

### **Will Call Attendant Instructions:**

- Will Call Attendant dress code: Business casual. No jeans, shorts or t-shirts. You do not have to wear black and white (as the Ushers do), but you can if you'd like. Dresses and/or ties are not required, but please remember that you are representing SLOC when selecting your outfit.
- Will Call Attendants should arrive by 7 pm for evening performances and 1 pm for matinees. Please plan for the possibility of limited parking or heavy traffic.
- Upon arrival, check in with the Box Office and get instructions for that performance.
- Be prepared to be asked to help usher instead of doing will call. When we have last minute usher cancellations or when the performance is sold out, we routinely ask the Will Call Attendant to help in the theater as an Usher. Please review all the notes above in the event that this happens.

### **Head Usher Instructions:**

- Head Usher dress code: Solid black (or very dark blue) pants or skirt, solid white top and an optional solid black (or very dark blue) blazer, sweater or tie. Please, no patterns! It is important to follow the dress code, so patrons can easily identify an Usher in case they need help of any kind.
- Arrive at 6:45 pm for evening performances and 12:45 pm for matinees. Please plan for the possibility of limited parking or heavy traffic.
- Check the bulletin board for the house instructions and Usher roster.
- Check in with the Box Office to get the house size, check if there are any large groups or people in wheelchairs.
- Check in with the House and Stage Manager to get any special instructions for the performance (any fundraising activities, updates to run times, house instructions, etc.)
- Do a basic theater orientation with any new ushers (bathrooms, exits, tickets, seat numbering, expectations, etc.)
- Make sure any inserts and playbills are in the theater.
- Do a check of the seating to make sure all seats are aligned correctly, replace any chairs that may have been removed and remove any chairs to accommodate wheelchairs, as necessary.
- Check in each Usher and have them stuff playbills, as needed.
- Run the Usher's meeting at 7:10 for evening performances and 1:10pm for matinees. Go over house instructions and assign ushers to locations. There should be at least one ticket reader at the main entrance to the theater (2 is great if you have enough ushers), 1 balcony usher, 2 ushers on the left and 2 on the right (one on the risers and one on the floor each side of the house). If the show is sold out and there will be patrons sitting in the right-side balcony, be sure to assign an usher to this area as well.
- Once the show starts, please stay next to the main theater entrance to assist with late seating as well as patrons who may leave/return during the show. The black curtain at the main entrance should remain closed during the show. The light above the main entrance should be off during the show and it should be left on at all other times.
- During the performance, the Head Usher should pay attention to the audience and ensure there aren't any issues. If there are patrons that are being disruptive (talking, texting, recording using a cell phone or other recording device), the Head Usher should address this with the patron to get the behavior to stop. If the patron refuses to cooperate after being warned, you may ask the patron to leave. Obtain the assistance of the House Manager, as needed.
- Coordinate with the House Manager to move patrons into the theater a few minutes before intermission ends.
- Help clean up at the end of the show. Please make sure the usher area inside the theater is neat and clean before you leave. This means that all supplies and playbills should be stored neatly and the trash should be emptied.
- All ushers will check out with you before they leave.

## House Manager Instructions:

- House Manager dress code: Business casual. No jeans, shorts or t-shirts. You do not have to wear black and white (as the Ushers do), but you can if you'd like. Dresses and/or ties are not required, but please remember that you are representing SLOC when selecting your outfit.
- Arrive no later than 6:45 pm for evening performances and 12:45 pm for Sunday matinees. Please plan for the possibility of limited parking or heavy traffic.
- The job of the House Manager is to oversee everything on the theater grounds that are not specifically performance or production related. They should make sure the facility is in working order, that our patrons are able to enter and exit the building safely and handle any issues that may arise.
- The detailed House Manager instructions are attached to the bulletin board in the box office; but here's a basic summary:
  - Unlock doors (including pit side theater door to exterior, cabaret room exterior door, connector doors, front door by box office) and update outdoor signage as needed.
  - Check in with the Box-Office, House Manager and Stage Manager for updates.
  - Check restrooms and tidy up if needed.
  - Attend the Ushers meeting at 7:10 pm/1:10 pm.
  - Assist patrons as they arrive and depart the theater.
  - Communicate with the Stage Manager and Box office to start the show.
  - Manage late seating.
  - Periodically patrol the theater grounds making sure there are no safety or security issues on the campus.
  - The House Manager should not sit inside the theater during the show. Instead, the House Manager should station themselves outside the main theater entrance or in the lobby.
  - Stay for the entire show and until everyone leaves. Lock all doors. (If the cast seems to be taking their time or if there is an after-show Cabaret, the responsibility to lock up can be passed off to the show producer or other responsible party if it is clearly communicated).

## Signing Up

Use the following link to sign-up for any of the roles above.

<http://signup.com/go/DaqbGMM>

## Contact

- Usher Coordinator: Amy Jessup, [usher@sloctheater.org](mailto:usher@sloctheater.org) 518.428.5047
- Director of Audience Services: Jeffrey Hocking, [audienceservices@sloctheater.org](mailto:audienceservices@sloctheater.org), 518.859.7516
- Please contact Amy Jessup at [usher@sloctheater.org](mailto:usher@sloctheater.org) and/or 518.428.5047 if you find you are unable to help within 48 hours of the performance that you are scheduled to work.