

## MASTER CARPENTER

Can I start by saying one thing.....you will never find a more rewarding or fun industry in which to base yourself! In 30 years I can honestly say that I still go to work every day with the same smile on my face that I had on day one starting out as stage crew at the Apollo Theatre, Shaftesbury Avenue.

As Head of the Stage Department on a long running musical it is important to balance many aspects of the job.

Undoubtedly the most fun and certainly the most satisfying part of the job is putting the show in – The Fit Up.

To see a Set go up in front of your eyes is hard work but then to watch as a new cast come in to rehearse on a stage that only a few weeks ago was empty cannot be described.

However the excitement of the Fit Up soon gives way to the equally hard work of running a show. After interviewing and hiring your crew (the least I've had was 1 and the most 12), the maintenance and administrative part of your job really starts.

A successful Master Carpenter should be able to write any number of Risk Assessments, Safe Systems of Work, Method Statements etc. as now the safety of his or her crew and all others in the building is paramount.

Working for Cameron Mackintosh demands the highest standards from all departments and the Stage Dept. is no different. Therefore someone in my position will have to complete over 30 training courses as part of the job, including everything from Work at Height, Ladder Safety, Abrasive Wheels etc. to Working with Hazardous Substances and Risk Assessment training. All of which you must pass. However you can never do enough of these courses to increase your competence.

A typical day starts the evening before after reading that evening's Show Report and formulating a plan for the next day as no two days are ever the same.

Your first priority in the morning is any maintenance on the set from the night before, as unfortunately not all shows are perfect, which is why we love theatre as opposed to TV or Film!