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Arts & Entertainment

Back of House

While the actors, dancers and singers are the main attraction of the show, the people who work backstage are the meat of the whole showcase.

The back of house staff at the Irvin L. Young Auditorium doesn't follow set work schedules. With every show that takes place in the auditorium, long work days for the students can be the norm.

"During show weeks we change out our hours," freshman Lauren Goggin, theater major said. "[We] may work three hours, go to class then come back for another couple hours."

For each show, the staff prepares between two and three weeks in advance. From rigging, hanging and focusing lights to setting up props, every student worker is valuable to making the production move smoothly.

Most of the members of the stage crew are students. Many obtained their job at the Hawk Career Fair which is hosted every fall in the Williams Center. The theater majors were given the job opportunity through the theater department..

"I am a theater major and I plan to working in theater after graduation, hopefully in the Chicago area," Kyle Higgins said.

While observing a typical day on stage, it's apparent that you have to trust each other. Lifting heavy props takes team work in order to get done. Even task such as climbing high heights to cover the speakers or put up backdrops can be a dangerous.

"We work with heights a lot," freshman journalism major, John Soper said. "[We] have to be careful. I have a fear of heights but I suck it up and just do it because after a while you get used to it."

The thing that sets the back of the house apart from the other components of the Young auditorium is that they get to see what goes into putting a show on Soper said.

"It's fun to see how the actors change from their character on stage," Goggins said. "You see the real them."

One of the most memorable moments for International Studies' sophomore, Natalie Zeller, was cleaning the costumes for the Georgian Dancers of New York.

"We had to clean about 800 suits with their version of 'Febreze®'," said Zeller. "It was made up of water and Vodka."

The high alcohol content in Vodka makes it an excellent cleaning agent. By spraying the underarms and necklines of the costumes, the costumes were freshened up without dry cleaning.

For any student that wants to be a part of theater but doesn't want to actually get out on stage, the back of house is just for you.

"Being backstage is not that hard," said Goggins. "You get to see traveling shows for free and meet new people."