

Nutcracker Props Coordinator

Note: This document was written by and for the Props Coordinator. Non-coordinator Props volunteers will make sure the props are properly placed and in the right hands backstage, help with any on-the-spot repairs, and make sure Props are put away or placed for the next day. All the details of Props placement are in the document Nutcracker Props List. Some Props and Stage Crew jobs tend to blend at certain moments backstage. Come to a Dress Rehearsal to learn the ropes, and performance day will be easy!

Load-in

The props coordinator should arrange with wardrobe the time everyone is going to be at the Costume Shop (they have the key to get in) on the morning of load-in. It is also helpful to have someone with a truck or large vehicle to get everything in one trip. The wardrobe people are usually very helpful but they have lots of things to move also.

The props still there are at the back of the room (come in door and turn left) and props are also kept on the shelves facing the back wall.

The Mouse King is considered a costume and a prop and the wardrobe people usually take it but it "lives" with props during the show.

If I get things done I always try to help wardrobe in setting up in any way I can. By being helpful and considerate of their job they then were always very helpful to me. I feel that this is very important and is just a win win situation because it can get pretty crazy sometimes.

At Hering

Once I have everything in and get 2 or 3 tables (I can't remember exactly) on stage left and 2 tables on stage right (I stack these two long tables) and then have a smaller square between them and the door.

I put the bins filled with props where they need to go (either stage left or right). Scott usually puts Mother Ginger together for me and hangs her. Later I have her lowered and put the bows on her skirt.

The next big job is to "dress the stage" this means that all of the greenery needs to be put on the fireplace including the wreath (this is brought over by the Loading Crew), the clock, and the stairway. There are pictures of how it should look in one of the green bins. Also the curtains need to be "hung" (stapled) in the window and I usually repair any rips in the netting at this time. There are also the curtains in the puppet house (blue velvet) - sometimes they stay in there all during storage and sometimes they end up in wardrobe. You need to find them and get

them steamed and then hung up. There are ladders at the auditorium and I usually borrow a staple gun (either Jim Baird or Scott Calder have one that I use). Don't lose any staples on the ground everything needs to be picked up.

The wreath can be kind of tricky - it was falling apart last year and I don't remember if they remade it or what. The Set Load In Crew sometimes hangs it but they have a tendency to hang it low, almost touching the mantle; it needs to be higher (check the photos). It also has fruit and stuff on it that needs to be dusted, fluffed, repaired, etc.

Once all of this is completed and the kids have finished rehearsing over at the studio the props over there need to be picked up and brought over to Hering. Once again it is helpful to have a truck or multiple people helping. The props there are the muskets box, 2 puppet boxes, a very large bin, the urn, carpet, swords and brooms, elf bag, and the Sugar Plum Fairy cape & Garland.

Thus ends Day One.

If load-in was on Saturday sometimes they will have a rehearsal on Sunday which means you can go and finish anything you didn't get done the day before.

I spent all week at the auditorium because they use the props all week and I found it helpful to because things do break and things need to be tweaked. Please check Mother Ginger's skirt when they are going out to make sure it is 1) not dragging on the ground 2) not lopsided and 3) not too high. The polichinell's feet should not be seen. There should be one props person at each rehearsal.

Starting Wednesday they will need the dry ice for the Coffee dance. I purchase the dry ice at Alaska Fire and Safety; I usually buy 3-4 pounds (dependent on the temperatures) on Wednesday and again on Saturday morning. They close on Saturday at 1pm I believe and are open until 6 on Friday (I think). I also get \$50 from petty cash to use to purchase the dry ice, club soda (for party guest glasses), tea (Drosselmeyer), and any other supplies that might be needed. You can also purchase these things yourself, save the receipts and then fill out a check request form in order to be reimbursed.

On Monday I also started doing repairs on anything that needed to be fixed. Mainly the Clara puppet seemed to always need touching up. I also would ask wardrobe to steam her nightgown if it looked too bad. Be sure to have the the Sugar Plum Fairy's cape steamed and up on the barres along with her garland. Norman works with the little ones Monday and Tuesday evening and gets upset if those props are not there.

No liquids in cups until dress rehearsal. After each rehearsal and performance all cups need to be washed with soap and water and dried then put back onto the

prop table.

Props are not toys or playthings and the cast should respect that and handle them appropriately. It is the responsibility of the props staff to make sure that everything is handled well.

There are directions for where they should be placed and when props need to be transferred back to the other sides. These are in one of the small green bins.

Mother Ginger's wig, jewelry, bodice, and top are downstairs in wardrobe. I bring them, along with the mouse head and gloves, up to the stage right tables.

The chariot lives on stage right -it is next to Mother Ginger's box during Act I with the pole over where the tree goes when it comes off stage. After it is used it all goes behind the drop. Scott will be on this but it is a prop so you need to be aware of where it is and so on.

Load-Out

So after a grueling week of performances and dry ice now you get to put it all away. After the Coffee dance on the last show I actually start packing up. Get all the presents boxed up, toys, guns, glasses, teapot, urn, hats and shawls put away. Get the Sugar Plum Fairy cape, Mother Ginger's head & wig, jewels, bust, and dress top, Mouse King's head and gloves, and possibly the velvet drapes out of the puppet house down to wardrobe as soon as possible. When the show is over the guys tear things down pretty fast and furious so the first thing to do is get all the greenery taken off and put away in the bins and finish getting everything put away.

IMPORTANT: Pack up all of the props that will be needed for next year's rehearsals in the very large bin. Very important - make sure the cheap hats, fans, and older shawls are in this bin, old nutcracker doll, cups, tray, elf bag, broom, present, Coffee robe, jewel bag, blue jewelry box, toys, toy bag, trumpet, cheese, blindfold, and anything else that I have forgotten. Ask Norman & Courtland what all they need.

Once everything is packed up, coordinate with wardrobe on going over to the costume shop. Try to get the large vehicles to help so it can be done in one trip.

You are now done - go crash and have someone buy takeout!

by Lisa Freer (retired Props Coord)