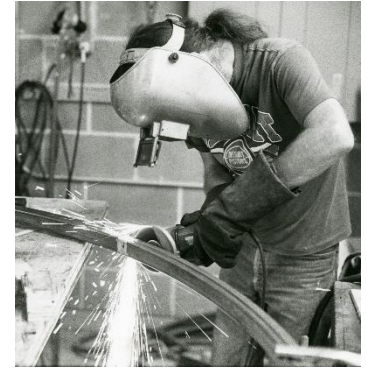


Theatre People: Scenic Carpenter

Scenic carpenters take the set designs from page to stage. They use a variety of techniques including woodworking, carving, welding, and sculpting to create these worlds. The team includes a Master Carpenter who is the leader and manager. Many theatres employ at least one carpenter full-time through the season (MTC has three full-time carpenters on contract September-May) and add others on a show-by-show basis when extra help is needed.



Tasks and activities in a typical day

- Read the script to understand the time period and setting
- Read technical plans and determining the best way to build pieces; help the technical director determine the costs of each
- Order materials and hire labour; keep to a budget
- Determine a process of building to meet deadlines
- Master Carpenter assigns carpenters to complete tasks; carpenters use their initiative as well as following directions to complete them
- Cut, shape, carve, weld, and assemble pieces
- Read the Stage Manager's rehearsal notes from the day before, and prioritize and delegate the day's tasks
- Converse with designer and stage management. Help find creative solutions for new action.
- Attend meetings and required technical rehearsals
- Ensure health and safety of team members and shop space
- Perform maintenance of shop and tools
- Supervise and assist with installation of the set onstage



10 skills that a scenic carpenter uses:

- Numeracy/math skills
- Organization
- Working as a team and independently
- Patience
- Attention to detail
- Safety awareness
- Drafting and reading technical drawings
- Problem solving
- Skill with various tools and techniques
- Thinking outside the box - in theatre for example, walls need to be lighter than the real world; furniture has to be stronger to be stood on...

Building Abilities

There are probably lots of things you are already doing, and things you can start to do, that will serve you in a career as a scenic carpenter. Some of these are:

- Join a school theatre program or community group and volunteer in the areas that interest you. Learn by doing! Experiment with different techniques and learn about safety in the shop.
- Learn to use a scale ruler and read technical drawings.
- Practice smaller builds and DIY projects.
- Observe buildings and objects around you. Look at how things are put together. Practice sketching.
- Take care of your body. Carpentry is a physical job, so knowing ways to rest and rejuvenate that work for you is important.