

Section Eleven

Running Cues

Running Cues is the term used to describe what takes place in many theatrical plays. The stage manager will tell the soundboard operator a cue number and the operator will play this cue. This is similar to playing the different tracks on a CD. There is a specific way this is done.

The Stage Manager will first say “Ready Sound Cue One.” Then at the moment the sound effect is needed the stage manager will say “Sound Cue One.....GO.” This pattern repeats throughout the show with each cue having a higher number.

This is how the stage manager calls the cues. But for you the soundboard operator you will have to know a number of things about each cue.

Each cue will have the following:

1. Cue Number
2. Source
3. Track Number
4. What the effect is
5. Duration
6. Level
7. Notes about how to play the cue.

The cue number is just a number

The Source may be a tape deck, a CD Player, a mini disc, a reel to reel, a record player, a live microphone or many other types.

The track number for each cue will directly relate to which source is being used.

What the effect is tells the operator whether it will be, for example, rain, cars, thunder, a song or whatever is recorded on the source.

Duration tells how long the effect will be heard.

Level tells where to place the fader on the mixing console to give it the appropriate volume level.

Notes about how to play the cue may suggest that you fade out the cue over a two second count. It may say that you abruptly end the cue. It may say you fade down this cue while the new cue starts. This way you hear both for a brief time.

The Cue Sheet

Cue	Source	Track	Effect	Duration	Level	Notes
1	CD	1	Song	1:30	-5	Fade up
2	MD	1	Thunder	0:10	+5	Play entire
3	CD	2	Gunshot	:05	+5	Play entire
4	MD	2	Music	1:15	-10	Fade in X fade out
5	CD	3	Music	0:45	-10	X fade in
6	CD	3	Music		-10	Fade out
7	MD	3	Door Shut	:05	+5	Play entire
8	CD	4	Song	3:22	-5	Fade^ to +5

Here's how to read this chart.

On Cue one play track one on the CD player. The notes say to fade it up from no volume until you reach the -5 setting on the channel the CD player is patched into.

On Cue two play track one on the Mini Disc player. It will be the sound of thunder. Before you push the play button have the channel level set to +5. This cue plays entirely.

On Cue three play track two on the CD player. Once again the channel level must be at +5.

On Cue four play track two on the Mini Disc player. First you push the play button then you fade up the sound until it reaches -10 on the channel. At around 1 minute and 15 seconds the stage manager will call cue five.

On Cue five play track three on the CD player and fade it up until it reaches -10. At the same time you are fading the Mini Disc player, which still has cue four going. This is called a cross (X) fade.

On Cue six fade out the CD player track three.

On Cue seven play track three on the Mini Disc Player. It will be the sound of a door shutting. You will have the level at +5 when the cue starts and it plays entirely.

On Cue eight play track four on the CD player. Start at a -5 level and fade it up to a +5 level. Let it play entirely.