

CAREERS. **BROADWAY**

What to do, **where** to look and **how** to build a career on Broadway.

Presented by  **THE BROADWAY LEAGUE**

Explore the careers below!

What does an Aerial Choreographer do?

An AERIAL CHOREOGRAPHER is in charge of creating, directing, and ensuring the safety of ACTORS who leave the ground during a performance. AERIAL CHOREOGRAPHERS work with the DIRECTOR and TECHNICAL PRODUCER of a show to choreograph any movements done in the air that is simultaneously in line with the director's vision and technically safe and possible. They work with ACTORS on how to make the movement or dance full of intention and most efficient.

Skills

Comfort with heights and flying | Attention to detail | Knowledge of safety precautions | Directing | Choreographing | Collaboration

Pathways

Aerial and Dance Training | Assisting | Experience using wires, silk ropes, gymnastics, and the rigging | Circus training

How to become an Aerial Choreographer

Many colleges and universities offer degrees and concentrations in dance and performance, but none offer a degree in aerial choreography. Broadway aerial choreographers typically start out with several years of acrobat, aerial, gymnastics, and dance training. From there, aerialists and dancers can assist or be mentored by a professional aerial choreographer to understand what it is to choreograph movement in the air. Those starting out may want to strengthen their skills by taking workshops, classes, or trainings in their region.

What does an Animal Trainer do?

An ANIMAL TRAINER is a professional who trains and works with animals when a show needs an animal on stage. ANIMAL TRAINERS can be a part of agencies, work freelance, or be brought on specifically because their pet was cast in a production. They work with the DIRECTOR to determine what it is the animal is being asked to do, as well as the ACTORS so that the ACTORS know which cues to use and be familiarized with the animal.

Skills

Patience | Caring for animals | Ability to train animals | Collaboration | Grooming animals

Pathways

Experience working with animals

How to become an Animal Trainer

Getting a degree in biology, animal behavior, or zoology is the first major step in becoming an animal trainer. Some colleges offer special programs, such as Moorpark College in California, that train students in animal training management. Aspiring trainers also complete internships in zoos, aquariums, or apprenticeships with accomplished animal trainers in the industry.

What does a Dance Captain do?

The DANCE CAPTAIN leads the dancers in rehearsals and warm ups and ensures that the choreography is maintained at each performance. Dance captains usually know the movement and choreography for every character in a show. They typically are an ensemble member or a swing of the show.

Skills

Dancing | Ability to give direction | Think quickly | Maintain a choreographer's vision throughout the run | Ability to remember multiple tracks

Pathways

Dance training | Experience as a choreographer/assistant choreographer

How to become a Dance Captain

Many colleges and universities offer degrees and concentrations in dance as well as connections to alumni working on professional productions. Broadway dance captains often begin as dancers or performers themselves, transitioning to the dance captain role as they prove they can manage the responsibilities of a dance captain. Those just starting out may want to explore available classes, auditions, workshops, amateur productions, and volunteer opportunities available in their region for training and experience as dancers.

What does a Child Guardian do?

A CHILD GUARDIAN oversees the care, professional behavior and well-being of Broadway's youngest stars – the children performing on stage who are under sixteen years of age. The guardians help create an atmosphere where children performers can be working professionals in a safe environment and still be kids off stage.

Skills

Patience | Tutoring | Good with children | Knowledge of theatre | Detail-Oriented | Able to stay on schedule

Pathways

Experience in child care | CPR and First Aid training

How to become a Child Guardian

The role of a child guardian is a specific one that can be attained through a variety of pathways. Those looking into being a child guardian on Broadway should have several years of experience working with, tutoring, and looking after children 16 and under. One could take classes in teaching, as well as making sure they are CPR and First Aid certified, on top of having a strong understanding of theatre.

What does a Digital Marketing Manager do?

A DIGITAL MARKETING MANAGER in theatre typically is in charge of all online marketing from video-creation, social media campaigns, digital advertisements, and sometimes even social media handles. They work in a company's marketing department and stay on top of social trends, digital analytics, and help promote ticket sales, a show or client's social presence, or awareness of upcoming events. A DIGITAL MARKETING MANAGER may be responsible for both content creation for social channels, monitoring or listening to those social channels, as well as community engagement or responding to comments on social.

Skills

Expertise on various social media platforms and editing software | Understanding social trends and analytics | Strong written and verbal skills | Graphic Design | Proofreading

Pathways

Degree in marketing, media, and/or advertising | Internships

How to become a Digital Marketing Manager

Today, many colleges and universities offer degrees and concentrations in marketing, advertising, graphic design, and communication. Those with an interest in working on Broadway in digital marketing can work for the venue or production itself or work for an outside company that is outsourced by the venue. Internships are great opportunities to get hands-on experience in digital marketing, as well as courses that can strengthen one's skill set.

What does a Dramaturg do?

A DRAMATURG works with the PLAYWRIGHT/BOOK WRITER, DIRECTOR, and/or ARTISTIC staff to help them have a deeper and more accurate understanding of a production. DRAMATURGS work directly with a playwright or help interpret a play (if the playwright is not available) by doing research and helping shape the world of the play.

Skills

Ability to interpret and compile comprehensive research | Directing | Analysis | Collaboration

Pathways

Degree in playwrighting, literature, or dramaturgy | Assisting | Experience in a literary office/department | Fellowship

How to become a Dramaturg

Many colleges and universities offer degrees and concentrations in literature or directing; however, few offer degrees in dramaturgy at an undergraduate level. Those looking to become Broadway dramaturgs should seek out available opportunities in their region that involve assisting (either directing or doing dramaturgical research), observing, or apprenticing professional directors and dramaturgs

What does an Entertainment Attorney do?

An ENTERTAINMENT ATTORNEY is a lawyer who specializes in representing productions, venues, and people (such as ACTORS, PRODUCERS, and MUSICIANS) and advising them when interpreting and negotiating contracts.

Skills

Contract law | Labor Law | Copyright law | Intellectual property | Knowledge on taxation | Ability to negotiate | Strong written and verbal skills | Detail-oriented | Strategic and tactical thinking

Pathways

Law School | Degree in entertainment law and/or arts business

How to become an Entertainment Attorney

Many colleges and universities offer degrees and concentrations in law, and more specifically in entertainment law. Those wishing to practice law must be licensed and pass the bar exam in the state one wishes to work. Those interested should explore law firms that focus on and represent those in the entertainment industry. When in law school, students may want to seek out internships or positions in entertainment law firms or with Producers.

What does a Fight Director do?

What does a Hair & Wig Designer do?

The HAIR & WIG DESIGNER transforms the ACTORS into their characters through the use of hair and wigs. HAIR & WIG DESIGNERS develop the look and style for each character's hair (including facial and body hair) that will help convey the show's time and location, and character's personality. For wigs, they can make them, rent, or purchase them. Their responsibilities can also overlap with those of a COSTUME DESIGNER and/or the MAKE-UP ARTIST, as HAIR & WIG DESIGNERS help create the overall aesthetic for a character.

Skills

Attention to detail | Ability to work with hair and wigs | Ability to take care and maintain wigs | Research | Resourcefulness

Pathways

Classes in hair and wigs | Degree or certificate in design or fashion | Cosmetology | Hairdressing | Assisting | Having an Associate-level position | Freelance work

How to become a Fight Director

How to become a Hair & Wig Designer

Many colleges and universities offer degrees and concentrations in design, as well as opportunities working on student-led or official school productions. Broadway hair and wig designers often start out with a strong interest and passion for hair, transitioning this interest into a career. Those just starting out may want to explore available classes, workshops, tutorials, and volunteer or assistant opportunities available in their region for training and experience.

What does a Flyman/Fly Operator do?

The FLYMAN, or FLY OPERATOR, directs and supervises the movements of the scenery between the fly floor and the stage during a show. The fly floor They move painted backdrops and key scenic pieces in and out of the audience's line of vision, during the show as well as helping with anyone or thing that leaves the ground.

Skills

Experience with a fly system and working on a production | Physics and math | Knowledge of safety precautions | Attentiveness | Cautiousness | Physical ability to fly in and out heavy scenery | Comfortability with heights

Pathways

Degree in theatrical design and/or production | Apprenticeships | Stagehands | Volunteer-based Opportunities

How to become a Flyman/Fly Operator

Many colleges and universities offer degrees and concentrations in production and design; however, most do not offer tracks specialized for those wishing to become a flyman. Broadway flymen often begin as stagehands themselves, transitioning to the role of flyman as they gain experience working with the proper equipment. Those just starting out may want to explore available volunteer or stagehand opportunities available in their region for training and experience.

What does a Lyricist do?

A LYRICIST creates and writes the words for the songs in a musical production. The LYRICIST works closely with the COMPOSER to guarantee that the lyrical and musical components of a piece work together in tandem.

Skills

Language | Creativity | Patience | Attention to detail | Collaboration

Pathways

Assisting | Apprenticeship | Self-practice

How to become a Lyricist

Many colleges and universities offer degrees and concentrations in songwriting and poetry. Due to the competitive and challenging nature of the job, most Broadway lyricists will tell you their successes came from being in the right place at the right time. However, the chances of becoming a working lyricist increase the more one networks, collaborates with different artists, and publishes their own work.

What does a Music Contractor do?

The MUSIC CONTRACTOR, sometimes referred to as the musical coordinator, is responsible for finding the musicians for a musical or play. MUSIC CONTRACTORS work with the CONDUCTOR, MUSIC DIRECTOR, and GENERAL MANAGER of a specific production, as well as the union, to guarantee that the appropriate musicians are found to match the genre of the project. They also ensure that the musicians' working conditions and payment meet the qualifications and requirements of the contract.

Skills

Strategic Thinking | Problem Solving | Contracts | Organization | Networking | Attention to Detail | Flexibility

Pathways

Musician Background | Degree in Contract Law | Apprenticeships

How to become a Music Contractor

Due to the specificity and competitiveness of the job, many colleges and universities do not offer majors in music contracting. Becoming a successful music contractor is done through networking and making connections. Music contractors generally start out as musicians themselves and graduate to the position through years of working with fellow musicians, managers, and other music contractors.

What does a Projection Designer do?

The PROJECTION DESIGNER creates all projections shown on stage, including still photos and filmed footage. The PROJECTION DESIGNERS work with other scenic design elements to create the setting for a production story to unfold.

Skills

Graphic Design | Tech-savvy | Ability and knowledge of different software

Pathways

Degree in design and/or graphic design | Apprenticeships | Mentorships | Workshops | Assisting

How to become a Projection Designer

Many colleges and universities offer degrees and concentrations in theatrical design and graphic design; however, few programs allow students to focus on projection design. Broadway projection designers often begin as production crew or assistant designers, transitioning to the role as they gain experience working with the technology. Those just starting out may want to explore available classes, workshops, tutorials, and volunteer opportunities available in their region for training and experience in set design.

What does a Special Effects Designer do?

The SPECIAL EFFECTS DESIGNER creates the illusions that help to immerse the audience into the world of the production. From large, awe-inspiring effects to smaller and more contained illusions, the SPECIAL EFFECTS DESIGNER is responsible for bringing them to life in the most realistic and safe way possible. The biggest challenge of the SPECIAL EFFECTS DESIGNER, who works with the PRODUCTION MANAGER, is to ensure that the contraptions and inventions that administer these effects do so every night and that they do not harm any members of the cast or audience.

Skills

Creativity with objects | Knowledge of computers and programming | Fire safety | Time-management | Patience | Ability to take direction | Trustworthy

Pathways

Degree in theatre design and stagecraft | Volunteering | Internships | Apprenticeships

How to become a Special Effects Designer

Many colleges and universities offer degrees and concentrations in theatrical design and stagecraft. Those interested in becoming special effects designers can volunteer to help with productions at their university, in the local area, or with someone already established in the industry. Special effects designers often begin this way, making connections that will lead them towards internship and apprenticeships professionally.

What does a Swing do?

A SWING is an off-stage member of the cast that learns many different ensemble and principal roles. While these ACTORS may not always be onstage, their role in the production is crucial. In the event of a sudden injury or illness to one of the chorus members, SWINGS are always in the wings ready to go on at a moment's notice.

Skills

Flexibility | Good memorization | Confidence | Ability to take direction | Ability to use one's body and voice to convey emotion | Good diction

Pathways

Degree in performance | Auditioning | Apprenticeships

How to become a Swing

Many actors' first jobs on Broadway are as swings, and chances to advance are higher for someone who works hard, practices their craft, and exhibits the memorization and spontaneity needed for the role. Those just starting out may want to explore available classes, auditions, amateur productions, and other opportunities available in their region for training and experience. Many colleges and universities offer degrees and concentrations in performance and acting, as well as connections to alumni working on professional productions.

What does an Usher do?

The USHER works in a theatre to provide customer service for audience members taking their tickets and escorting them to their seats in the theatre. USHERS are employees of the theatre. USHERS serve as welcome ambassadors and provide information about the theatre, production, and amenities of the building to patrons. They are available during the performance and intermission to assist patrons and watch for camera and cell phone use. USHERS are trained to assist the HOUSE MANAGERS in case of emergency.

Skills

Customer service | Knowledge of theatre's procedures and seating

Pathways

Volunteer-based opportunities | Interest in Theatre

How to Become an Usher

Though many colleges and universities offer degrees and concentrations in theatre administration or business, universities do not traditionally have concentrations focused on ushering. Ushering is usually a pathway to house management. Those interested in becoming a Broadway usher may start by volunteering at a local community theatre, regional theatre, high school, or college theatre department or any nonprofit arts organization.

What does an Understudy do?

An UNDERSTUDY is a member of the ensemble or a principal performer who memorizes the lines, vocals, blocking, and choreography for another principal role or a leading [ACTOR'S](#) role. In the event of an unexpected injury, illness, or if a principal is taking a vacation, UNDERSTUDIES are essential in ensuring that the show is always ready for performance.

Skills

Flexibility | Good memorization | Confidence |
Ability to take direction | Ability to use one's body
and voice to convey emotion | Good diction

Pathways

Degree in performance | Auditioning |
Apprenticeships

How to become an Understudy

Many actors' first job on Broadway are as understudies. Those just starting out may want to explore available classes, auditions, amateur productions, and other opportunities available in their region for training and experience. Many colleges and universities offer degrees and concentrations in performance and acting, as well as connections to alumni working on professional productions.

What does a Vocal Coach do?

A VOCAL COACH assists performers in finding their own unique musical style and stage presence. This is typically accomplished through private lessons with an individual ACTOR in order to find what makes them stand out in an already competitive market. VOCAL COACHES are less technical than VOCAL DIRECTORS, focusing on things such as emotional connections to a song, pronunciation, and repertoire building.

Skills

Vocal performance | Ability to maintain good vocal
health | Patience | Ability to use one's body and
voice to convey emotion | Music theory

Pathways

Degree in vocal performance or education |
Apprenticeships | Assisting

How to become a Vocal Coach

Many colleges and universities offer degrees in vocal performance with concentrations or dual enrollment in education. Those starting out may want to seek out apprenticeships with coaches in their regional area. Practicing an instrument, such as the piano, is also important, as this allows prospective vocal coaches to assist with practices and be in the room for training.

What does the Wardrobe Crew do?

During performances WARDROBE CREW dress performers, assist with fast changes, keep track of costumes and accessories, and quickly fix costume pieces when necessary. Before the show they attend to beading, pressing, repairing and anything else required to ensure that all finishing touches are in place before the curtain goes up. Thus, the costumes look just as beautiful years into a show's run as they do on opening night. The WARDROBE CREW can also be in charge of wig or make-up changes.

Skills

Sewing | Sketching | Drawing | Attention to detail

Pathways

Degree in costume design and/or production |
Internship | Wardrobe Assistant

How to become a Part of the Wardrobe Crew

Many colleges and universities offer degrees and concentrations in production and design, as well as opportunities to work on official school or student-led productions. Broadway wardrobe crew members can also attend schools that focus on the creation and study of fashion and garment-making. Those just starting out may want to explore available classes, workshops, amateur productions, and volunteer opportunities available in their region for training and experience with costume designers and wardrobe departments.