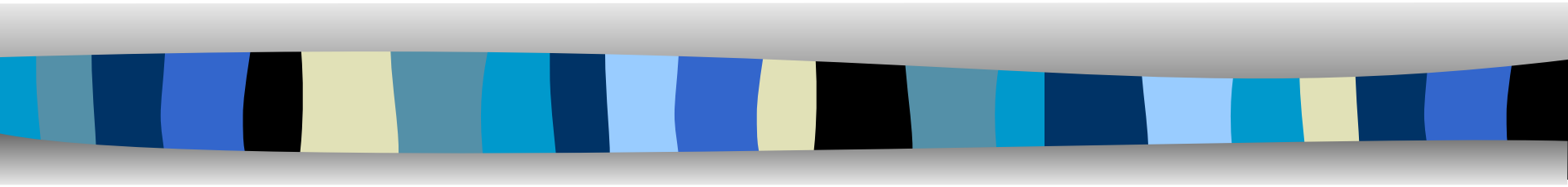


The Director and the Directing Process



The Director

- n Directors in the modern theatre stand as the controlling force for unifying all facets of the production of a play.
- n They must have keen perception into human behavior, have a keen sense of responsibility to the playwright and to the audience, and they must possess organizational skills and knowledge of the craft of directing.

The Director

- n The effective play director needs to be a combination of architect, sociologist, draftsman, sculptor, choreographer, plumber, painter, carpenter, electrician, stress engineer, historian, nurse, drill sergeant, psychiatrist, anthropologist, costumer, musician, dancer, and public relations person - and really ought to know a little about acting, playwrighting, stagecraft and scene design. The truth is, they must also possess a sense of the dramatic so they can translate a manuscript into a meaningful theatrical experience. This skill cannot be taught, nor can it be acquired. A good director quite simply is full of creativity.

The Role of the Director

n Interpret the play

- read, analyze and decide upon a unifying theme**

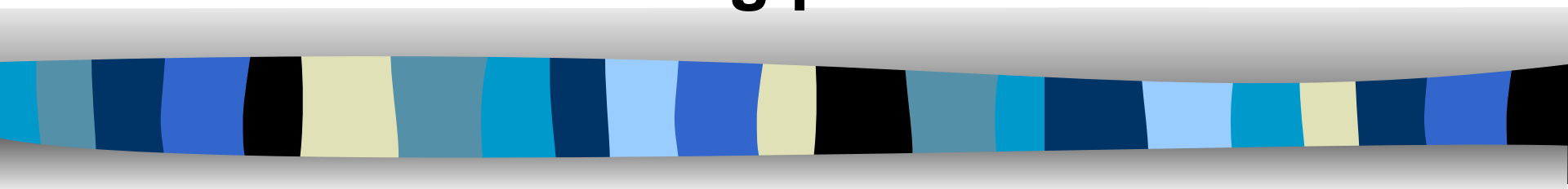
n Create its mode of production

- choose a style of production, and work with theatre technicians to unify the design**

n Prepare it for performance

- audition and rehearse actors**

n Now that we understand the role of the director, lets examine his responsibilities. We will begin at the beginning. The Director chooses a script. The first stage of the Directing process is:



Pre-rehearsal

Pre-rehearsal

- n If the play has been selected and the director has read it several times, the process of pre-rehearsal planning begins with an **analysis** of the script. The director will examine it for ***type, style, theme, structure***, and the manner in which the playwright treats ***characters*** and ***dialogue***.

Pre-rehearsal: Analysis

n TYPE: The director decides, and sets down in indelible fashion precisely what the play is - comedy, tragedy, melodrama, drama, or farce. He will use the label or TYPE he gives the play to communicate his intent to cast and designers.

n STYLE: the director will determine the style of the play. To determine style the director will relate the play to everyday life. If it is similar, the play will be in the realistic style. If not, he will determine it's style and convey the style to cast and designers.

Pre-rehearsal: Analysis

n **THEME:** The theme of the play is the playwright's statement, question, or view concerning human experience, human behavior, or the human condition. It is the unifying element for all that transpires within the play. The director identifies the theme through careful script study.

n **PLOT:** When analyzing the plot of a play, the director does not concentrate on relating what happens, but rather examines the structure and the placement of significant elements within the plot. Dramatic action is built upon conflict. The director must identify the points of conflict.

Pre-rehearsal: Analysis

- n **CHARACTERIZATION:** In order to analyze characterization, the director collects information and then assimilates it in a manner that reveals a character's motivations. He reads the play looking for clues as to the physical, psychological, and environmental factors for each character.
- n **DIALOGUE:** In the process of analyzing theme, plot and characterization, the director becomes familiar with dialogue. He must look at specific aspects of dialogue such as speech patterns. Are there more long speeches or short? Are they descriptive or introspective? These discoveries will help the director coach actors.

Pre-rehearsal

- n After a lengthy period of analysis, the director will have decided upon a point of view and determined an approach to the play. This is preparation for the second step in the process of pre-rehearsal planning which is to **consult** with designers or associates who will carry out technical matters.

Pre-rehearsal: Consultations

- n The director must make decisions regarding the **floor plan** at this point because the designer will need it in order to prepare preliminary sketches of the setting. The **floor plan** is a sketch or blueprint of the doors, windows, fireplaces, furniture or any other set piece called for by the script.
 - Two major considerations guide the director in mapping out a floor plan: traffic patterns and acting areas. Both relate to the placement of doors, window, steps, fireplaces and furniture.
 - In order to create a good floor plan the director must take into consideration how many actors will be on the stage at one time, and how many of them exit and enter to how many different offstage locales.

Pre-rehearsal: Consultations

- n When the floor plan is complete, the director meets with the design team to discuss the style of the production.
(Design team would be made up of the costumer, the scenic or set designer, and the lighting designer)
- n During this conference the designers explore the possibility for color treatment. The treatment of color is a concern for all of the designers. None of them would want a red costume backed by hot pink setting and bathed in steel blue light. The designers and director use this meeting to come to agreement about a color scheme.

Pre-rehearsal

- n The third and final stage of pre-rehearsal planning is the preparation of the **prompt book**. The creation of a prompt book is a huge expenditure of time for the director, but it conserves precious rehearsal time and makes rehearsals more efficient.
- n The **prompt book** will contain the director's reflections during script analysis. The director then visualizes the script in action. This process is called ***pre-blocking***.

Pre-rehearsal: Pre-blocking

- n The director pre-blocks a play by placing notations of movement, entrances, props, and exits into the margin of the prompt book itself. Remember, blocking is the decision making process of arranging action on a stage. Pre-blocking is the decision making process done by the director **BEFORE** the actors arrive.
- n Pre-blocking serves to make rehearsals far more efficient because the director has had to closely examine the script and make decisions about characters and their motivations before rehearsals even begin.

Pre-Blocking - creating stage pictures.

- n Usually a play is a series of pictures, some lasting merely a second, some as long as a minute. Each must be purposeful, pleasing to the eye, help communicate the play, and establish focus on the most significant point. The director composes each picture carefully, dissolves it, then creates another one. What the audience sees, usually without realizing it, is a continuous cycle of composition, transition, composition, transition. Without this action the stage picture and the production itself would be uninteresting.

n After fulfilling pre-rehearsal preparation, the director enters the next phase of the production process with confidence, knowing more about the play than any other person involved in the production. In the next phase the director becomes a teacher, not only of the play but also of acting.

n The next phase of the directing process includes the actors and is called:

The Rehearsal Phase

Rehearsals

- n Directors enter the rehearsal phase knowing that they, too, will learn a great deal more about the play and all other facets of production. Learning is in the involvement, and the director certainly becomes involved.**
- n There are several phases of rehearsal, each demanding a certain number of hours and each having it's own function. These phases are:**
 - Discussion**
 - Blocking**
 - Developing Characterizations**
 - Polish**
 - Technical Rehearsals**
 - Dress Rehearsals**

Discussion & Blocking

- n Directors spend several rehearsal periods analyzing and discussing the script, establishing character relationships, and even delving into specific characterizations and interpretations.
- n The Director will then mark off the floor plan in tape on the floor, and explain the acting areas to the actors.
- n Prior to beginning the blocking, the director will review stage-direction terminology with the actors.
- n The director will then teach the actors the blocking he/she has created in the prompt book.
- n The amount of time spent in blocking rehearsals is relative to the experience of the director and actors, the amount and degree of difficulty in the movement and composition, and the number of rehearsal hours allotted for total production.

Stage Manager

- n The Stage Manager is the closest assistant to the Director.**
- n The Stage Manager will have taken part in all of the Design Consultation meetings.**
- n It is at this point that the Director turns over his prompt book to the Stage Manager.**
- n The Stage Manager will be responsible for recording all of the final blocking and technical cues into the prompt book.**

Stage Managers Duties and Responsibilities

- n In charge of the production during the performances as well as dress and technical rehearsals
- n Supervises all actors and backstage crew members during production as well as dress and technical rehearsals.
- n Responsible for order and decorum in the green room.
- n In consultation with the light booth and the house manager, cues the opening of the house (30 minutes prior to curtain) and the beginning of the show as well as all internal cues.
- n Responsible for maintaining and monitoring the call board during rehearsals and performances, in applicable.
- n At all times is responsible for the minute-by-minute running of the show within the theatre. .

Stage Managers Duties and Responsibilities

- n At all times is responsible for the minute-by-minute running of the show within the theatre.
 - Makes sure that all technical elements are checked prior to the opening of the house.
 - Remind props crew and actors to check props
 - Remind light and sound technicians to check their equipment and cues and make sure all music is ready to begin
 - Remind any crews involved with special effects to check their equipment and cues
- n While the house is open, makes sure all actors and technical staff are in the green room or in specified assigned area, not on stage.
- n Informs company that the house is open and gives 15 minute call, 10 minute call, 5 minute call and places, both before the show and during intermission.

Stage Managers Duties and Responsibilities

- n Supervises the green room and communicates with company to keep the green room tidy
- n First to arrive and last to leave
- n Responsible for securing the door and seeing that all lights are off
- n Setting the ghost light, if applicable
- n In the event of an emergency, responsible along with the House Manager for implementing the Board approved guidelines.
- n Assists in the supervision of the strike.
- n Appointed by the director
- n May also serve as Assistant Director or Technical Director.

Stage Shorthand used by the Stage Manager to record blocking

- n X = Cross, usually two or more steps
- n X5 = Cross, five steps
- n EnU = Enter, using upstage entrance
- n ExR Exit right stage
- n XDR table = Cross to down right of table
- n XDRC = Cross down right center
- n chL table = sit in chair left of table
- n ^ Xch2 = rise, cross to chair number 2
- n EnL1 = Enter number one entrance
(entrances are often numbered, especially if there are more than one on the same side of the stage)

Stage Map – blocking is given to actors based upon the map below.

UP RIGHT	UP CENTER	UP LEFT
RIGHT	CENTER	LEFT
DOWN RIGHT	DOWN CENTER	DOWN LEFT

Key:

C = Center

D = Down

U = Up

L = Left

R = Right