

## **DIRECTOR:**

The work of the director is central to the production of a play. The director has the challenging task of bringing together the many complex pieces of a production—the script, actors, and set—into a unified whole.

To accomplish this task, a director needs to:

- Interpret the script
- Cast the production
- Guide the actors in their work during rehearsals (**COMMUNICATION**).

The director's work is most often based on a detailed study and analysis of the script to be produced. Many careful readings of the script help the director develop an individual **VISION** of the playwright's intentions, which will form the core of his or her interpretation. This sense of "what the play is really about" will shape a director's thinking about every other aspect of the production.

Directors also study the characters in the script, gathering as much information as they can about their physical and psychological traits. This is vital preparation for casting, when the actors who are best able to bring the characters to life in performance need to be chosen.

Acting areas, entrances and exits, and furniture and props called for in the script or desired by the director will need to be a part of the set design. The floor plan can then be sketched out. The floor plan is a basic outline drawing of the stage setting as it would look from above. It is an essential rehearsal planning tool because it allows a director to work out the blocking of the play. Blocking (or staging) is the precise moment-by-moment movement and grouping of actors on stage.

The director's creative **COLLABORATION** continues during his or her work with the actors in rehearsals. The actors will bring their own interpretations to the project and perhaps inspire the director to rethink his or her interpretation. They will work closely together to breathe life into the lines and develop a deeper understanding of the characters' motivations and relationships, fleshing out the subtext of the play. Later the focus of the director's work in rehearsals will broaden to the overall look and feel of the whole production as transitions between scenes are smoothed out, effective pacing is achieved and all the design and technical aspects of the production are integrated.

## **ACTOR:**

Because good actors make it look so effortless, it's easy to forget just how much hard work acting really is. But the polished and natural feel of an actor's performance often represents years of training and onstage experience.

**An actor's performance is enhanced by:**

- an ability to put personal skills like imagination, emotional honesty and empathy at the service of a creative process
- an ability to focus and listen
- vocal training for greater power, expressiveness and clarity
- insight into the psychology of human behavior
- a ready understanding of and love for language
- high-level reading, research and text-analysis skills

While there is no agreement on the one right way to train actors, many working in theatre today have been exposed to the great Russian director Konstantin Stanislavski (1863-1938) and his ideas about how to build a character. While not all actors, directors, or teachers subscribe to his ideas, many are useful to consider:

- Given circumstances—all the facts in the script that are not open to interpretation such as plot, historical period, the basic personalities of the characters and the social conditions in which they live.
- The "magic if"—a way an actor can stimulate his or her imagination by asking "How would I behave if I really was this character in this situation?"
- Motivation—the underlying reason for a character's behavior
- Subtext—the deeper meaning in the spoken lines that reflects the inner life of the character.
- Objective—the goal towards which a character is working in a scene; the specific outcome of an event the character would like to see.
- Obstacle—something that stands in the way of a character's achieving his or her objective.
- Concentration—an actor's ability to focus his or her attention completely.