**A Directors Checklist**

**What is a director?**

A director is responsible for creating a concept or vision for a production. They facilitate the rehearsal process allowing the cast and creative team to explore this vision and input into it. The director is then responsible for organising all the ideas generated throughout rehearsal into one unified piece of theatre. A director will oversee all decisions made on a production, from decisions around an actor’s performance, to the set design, lighting and sound. Although a director might have the final say on these things, they are still a collaborator and they will work with a creative team to make those decisions.

**Absolutes**

Your vision as a director must serve the text.

If you find yourself adding lots of extraneous action, you are not serving the text. Like, movement pieces, that are not in the script or directions etc….

**Get Organised.**

A director is a coordinator and facilitator.  Bringing together the many different strands of a play production requires a fair amount of pre-planning and organisation.  A rehearsal schedule is very helpful.  Set deadlines for having lines down, collecting props, collecting ideas for costume. You don’t have to keep the schedule with a grim rigidity, but the actors should have a good idea of what is expected and when.  Communicate to everyone that rehearsal time is precious and that, during rehearsal, the focus needs to be on the play.

**Visualise the Play.**

Directing is a matter of communicating your vision to the actors and design crew. Imagine the action of the play.  Have an idea of how each scene should look and sound.  What lines have a potential for a laugh or strike a dramatic cord? What sections of the play should move more rapidly than others?  What lines should be slowed down?  Where are the climatic points?

**Don’t Panic.**

There may be *moments* of panic in putting together a production, but don’t let panic become your default setting.  You are the captain of the ship. The crew look to the captain for guidance. One of the many benefits of directing a play is the honing of problem-solving skills, so meet those difficulties with a clear-headed, can-do attitude.  Let your actors see your coolness under pressure.

**Focus on the Basics.**

You might have a high-tech stage, a phenomenal set, jaw-dropping special effects and costumes by Versace, but if the acting is flat, your production will suffer.  On the other hand, with good acting, you can have a bare stage, with no effects and only thrift-store costumes and still absolutely dazzle the audience.  The best productions start with a solid foundation of acting basics.

Vocal projection and articulation are key.

If the audience cannot hear the dialogue, Plus, all that work on memorization will have gone for naught!

Projection involves proper breathing, common-sense phrasing and clear enunciation.  Usually, an inexperienced actor can “turn up the volume” simply by opening his mouth more widely when he speaks and over-enunciating.  The audience will perceive clarity as an increase in volume.

Positioning on the stage is also important.  Many student actors tend to face any which way as they speak, hiding their faces or closing themselves off from the audience.  With a little training, any actor can learn to “play to the audience”.

How do you direct your actors in the space is also determined by the type of theatre it is.

For example, moving on the line takes away the characters power.

Standing down stage centre is the most powerful position on the stage.

**Pay Attention to Detail.**

The stage is a magnifier.  Little things can become big things on stage, and a tiny distraction can wreak havoc in a big scene.  View your production from the vantage point of an audience seeing it for the first time by actually sitting out in the house for a rehearsal.  In fact, move around the theatre and try different angles.  *Watch* carefully.  *Listen* closely.  And then *communicate* to your cast and crew what you saw and heard.

**Value Your Actors.**

Remember that actors are not chess pieces to be moved around a board.  They are thinking, feeling people with complexities and a life outside of rehearsals.  Encourage their creativity on stage.

Their passion is discovering and dissecting characters. More often than not they will find something interesting in the text that you have missed, or a way of expressing the characters true nature, that hadn't even occurred to you.

Two steps forward one step back, there's a general rule during rehearsal. You cast this actor for a reason. See if they can discover what you want them to find without you pushing them in that direction.

**Build a Network.**

Drama is a collaborative art, so don’t try to do it alone.  More than likely, you will have connections with people who can do carpentry, electrical work, sewing and fund-raising.  Develop a good working relationship with those people and solicit their help.

**Don’t Forget the Support Roles.**

A play needs more than just actors.  It needs a stage manager, a house manager, a property mistress, technicians, stage hands, set painters, publicity people, etc.

**And Finally.**

Have fun.  The storytelling you oversee will be full of creativity, inspiration and merriment.  And when the curtain closes on the final performance, you’ll find yourself, as a seasoned director, saying, “I can’t wait until next year!”