

Directing from A to Z  
Role of a Director in a Puppet Theatre

## THE ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR

- 1) ORGANIZATOR
- 2) ARTIST

Director assigns and directs the work of those participating in the production;  
Has a vision of the final look for the performance;  
has to be able to communicate this vision to his co-workers;  
has to be able to organize and divide the work so the puppets, the props, the scenery, the music, the lights, etc. are ready in time for not only the show but also for the rehearsals;  
is responsible that the show will happen on a certain day, at a certain hour, that it will be performed from the beginning to the end without unplanned interruptions;

Director is responsible for the final artistic look of the production;

## WHERE TO START

The director has to know the play inside out and outside in  
Director has to be able to imagine the production the way it will be presented to the audience  
Director has to be able to describe the characters, sets, props (how they will be used), musical requirements, special effects;  
Director has to be able to communicate this vision to his co-workers, the production team.

## PLAN OF WORK

- Make a detailed list of everything what has to be done prior the first rehearsal, during the rehearsals and prior the premiere;
- Assign a realistic date to everything - budget the time - the dates will change, but a clear plan will always inform you what was done and what has to be done.

## LIST OF PUPPETS

- Make a list of puppets, describe their characters, costume, other characteristics & action in the play; (witch flies, magic wand glows)
- Time period for the story, nationality and/or ethnic background;

## LIST OF PROPS

- In order of appearance
- how they will be handled and
- with as much description as possible;

## SCENIC & LIGHTING REQUIREMENTS

- Detailed requirements of the set, which door has to open, which window has to shut, behind which drape the hero hides

- Special lighting requirements like projections, black light, etc.

## MUSIC REQUIREMENTS

- make a list of musical cues, describe what the music has to express, (sometimes opposite of what we see, sometimes foreshadowing the near future, ... )

- When picking music, watch for mixing different styles, different orchestrations,

## DIVISION OF WORK

- Make a list of everything what needs to be done even if you are working alone.

- Everything, from getting the room for rehearsals to the last closing of the curtain.

- Divide responsibilities for helping with making puppets, props, who helps with lights, sound; who is responsible for making sure that all the puppets and props are ready for the show, who turns off and turns on the lights in the auditorium, who helps with the promotion.

- **And write this all down.**

## BUDGET

- Necessary if you really try to stay in the business.

- Keep a book with actual expenses.

## PLAN OF REHEARSALS

- Director has to know how much and how long the show has to be rehearsed.

- Puppeteers have to know what will be expected from them and when.

- A list of rehearsals and what will be rehearsed: dates and hours will be helpful to everybody. It will keep you and everybody posted as to what is needed and when; take into consideration the difficulty factor and length for setting the number of hours necessary to rehearse.

- It takes longer if a difficult creative process is ongoing while rehearsing,

- it will be shorter if tightly scripted and well preconceived.

## ACTING ASSIGNMENTS

- Director has to take into consideration artistic as well as practical requirements

- there are more roles than puppeteers - there are fewer puppets than puppeteers,

- each puppet may require two or three manipulators,

## DIRECTOR'S BOOK

■Is the conductor's score. It can be carried in the head, but the one on paper is better. It carries all the notes about the characters in the play, voice inflections, blocking, helping roles of other puppeteers, musical cues, it should be clear, even if picked up a few years later, it should be understandable.

## ORGANIZATION OF WORK

■Director has to choose what kind of puppets to use - Marionettes are different from hand puppets - Hand puppets are different from rod puppets - Rod puppets are different from the shadow puppets

■Director's role working with actors is to focus everything

## WORKING WITH A DESIGNER

■Even though the show is the director's concept, director should not tie up the designer's hand - The director should communicate ideas and point of view, stay flexible, accept new ideas, use designer's ideas for your own inspiration

## REHEARSALS

■Director MUST be always prepared otherwise there is waste of time, time is money – and if money is not involved, there is a waste of energy and loss of momentum

## PREMIERE

■Can bring surprises.

■Audience may react differently.

■Watch the audience reactions and think of changes.

■This is the last part of the creative process when the audience gets the chance to shape the creative process.

## CLOSING

■Director creates a very special world  
it needs to be a world which has something to say.

■Each production brings new experiences.

■One has to learn from the past mistakes.

■Try to do better on the next production.

■Don't give up easily.

■Director must approach the job responsibly - director shapes lives - excites imagination - affects thinking