



Part  
**FOUR**

# *Producing the Drama*



Taking a drama from the playwright's script to its final presentation requires many people. The contributions made by these people include planning and directing the drama as well as designing and creating scenery, lighting, costumes, and makeup.



## 8

# Producing the Play

Many kinds of rehearsals go into a successful production. Until you have memorized your lines, you will rehearse with the script in hand.



*A good audition is one in which the performer . . . reveals who and what he [she] is as a human being while at the same time giving the auditors an idea of the extent of his [her] talents.*

—FRED SILVER, MUSICAL AUDITION COACH

# SETTING THE SCENE

## Focus Questions

Who are the key members of a production staff, and what are their responsibilities?

What items are included in a master production schedule checklist?

How do you prepare a budget?

How do you make a promptbook?

How do you conduct and/or participate in an audition?

How do you prepare a résumé?

What are the different types of rehearsals?

What are dress rehearsals?

How do you create a rehearsal schedule?

What are curtain calls?

## Vocabulary

producer	technical director	publicity manager	blocking rehearsal
director	stage manager	house manager	working rehearsal
assistant director	grip	promptbook	polishing rehearsal
prompter	properties chief	audition	technical rehearsal
scenic designer	business manager	reading rehearsal	dress rehearsal

*P*roducing a play can offer opportunities that you may find as stimulating and exciting as acting in a play. Design and construction of sets and costumes, handling lighting equipment, and managing backstage, onstage, and publicity matters can provide challenges and satisfaction.

School stages may range from simple ones in classrooms to theaters having computerized lighting consoles, sophisticated

recording and sound equipment, fine dressing rooms, and ample work and storage space. If your school does not have all of these facilities, do not be dismayed. A small stage, a crowded backstage area, and the minimum of stage lights are limitations that may challenge your imagination and ingenuity. As a result, your productions may well be equal to those presented more easily with extensive physical equipment. Whatever the size and equipment of your theater, having a share in a full-length public production is a rewarding experience.

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## *The Production Staff*

Without the group of responsible, hard-working, and talented people that make up the production staff, producing a play would be impossible. After the preliminary planning and preparation are complete, the production staff must work intensively for several weeks to make the play or musical a reality. The size of the staff is determined by the size of the production, the specific technical demands of the production, and the availability of capable and enthusiastic people.

### THE ARTISTIC STAFF

#### CUE

Many actors seek the opportunity to work with successful directors, both for the learning experience and for the association with an exceptional director or production.

Every venture needs a person who can envision the end product and be actively involved with the production as it takes place. In the world of dramatic presentations, the **producer** is that person. In professional theater, the producer finds investors willing to provide the money to fund a show. The producer hires the director and the production staff, establishes a budget, and sees that the bills are paid. In a high school production, the producer may also be the director.

The **director** is responsible for creating a team that will work cooperatively toward a common goal. The drama teacher is usually the director of the public productions in high school. Some high schools today have a trained, and professionally experienced, teacher-director.

In the professional theater, the director is usually credited with the play's overall success or failure. The ideal director inspires actors to have confidence in their abilities and to use intelligence in building their roles. In an effort to mold all phases of production into a unified whole, the



As he works with these actors in *Much Ado About Nothing*, the director must have an eye for detail in order to see how each character relates to the play as a whole.

# CUE

Although each person on the production staff may be creative, the director's final word must be "law."

director must be someone who can coordinate a multitude of details and, at the same time, delegate responsibilities. During most production schedules there are distractions and conflicts that require the director to possess a reserved but commanding demeanor that gives the team a feeling of assurance. The director is responsible for onstage empathies and backstage morale. He or she should be a person who can see the areas of needed improvement and who has the ability and personality to communicate the means by which improvement can be made. This communication is accomplished in rehearsal and through oral, written, or taped notes called **critiques**.

The director is responsible for producing the playwright's intentions as faithfully as possible. He or she accomplishes this by studying the script, the author's style, the play's theme, and the characters' relationships. The professional director is also responsible for auditions, casting, blocking, preparation of a promptbook, and the opening of the show. In both professional and high school productions, the director and the staff can have a delightful experience working together as a team to produce a play.

In the school theater, a student is usually the **assistant director**. This student is preferably someone who is interested in the "big picture" of theater and is capable, dependable, and willing to take on many of the director's responsibilities. The assistant director serves as a liaison between the director and the cast and crew; sometimes the assistant director takes charge of rehearsals at the request of the director. This position allows a student to see the rehearsals, the actors, and the overall production from a unique perspective.

# CUE

## Responsibilities of the Assistant Director

- Take attendance
- Set up rehearsal room
- Take charge of rehearsals
- Read lines for absent actors
- Write down blocking
- Assemble program

One of the most important positions in the production of a play is that of the **prompter**. It is a job that requires both reliability and intelligence. Some directors do not use a prompter during the performance, preferring to have the actors know they are on their own, while other directors feel that a skilled prompter is essential. It is critical that this person attend every rehearsal. During rehearsals the prompter writes notes from the director in the promptbook. These notes should include information on interpretation, movement, and positions. Color-coded light and sound cues are often included in the promptbook, also. By including a floor-plan sketch, the prompter can clarify any questions concerning stage groupings, crosses, and changes.

Every pause should be marked so that an unnecessary prompt will not be given. If emergencies arise during the performance, the prompter can often save the show by giving correct cues and lines. If the cast starts to skip passages, the prompter can feed the vital lines to bring the actors back on track. This position

is a difficult one because the prompter must follow the script word by word in both rehearsals and performances. If an actor hesitates in rehearsal or calls out "line," the prompter must be ready to immediately give the necessary assistance. Most prompters whisper the first word of the line. Then, if the actor does not pick up the line, the prompter gives the first three words of the line a little louder. If that is unsuccessful, the prompter responds according to the director's instructions. In rehearsal, the scene is usually stopped, the prompter gives the line to the actor, and the cast backs up a line or two and proceeds. In a performance, it is up to the other actors onstage to pick up the scene and proceed.

Settings, costumes, makeup, and lighting are the responsibilities of the **scenic designer**. Whether simple or complex, the design of these elements works best when it gives the play visual dimensions that are in harmony with the aims of the director. Sometimes the **technical director** will oversee the design of costumes and lighting instead of the scenic designer. The technical director executes the designs of the scenic designer. With the assistance of a crew, the technical director is responsible for building sets, painting drops, creating costumes, and hanging lights. Both the scenic designer and the technical director must serve the director's intentions effectively, simply, and beautifully to achieve a unified production.

A high school drama director gives instructions to student actors. Directors of high school productions are usually responsible for coordinating all aspects of the productions.





The crew members who manage the technical details play a big part in determining how the audience will perceive the performance.

## Application ACTIVITIES

1. Make a chart of the positions on the artistic staff. Then list the responsibilities that accompany each position. Compare the responsibilities of the staff members, noting which of these responsibilities overlap. After analyzing the jobs, note the one for which you feel most qualified. Even though you probably do not have the experience, you should have an idea of the talents and personality traits needed for the particular position. List your qualifications.
2. After your analysis, write Help Wanted ads for two of the artistic staff positions. Describe the responsibilities of each position and the qualifications applicants should possess.

### THE BEHIND-THE-SCENES STAFF

Although often unseen by the audience, all the people working behind the scenes are absolutely crucial to a successful production. Aided by the stage crew, the **stage manager** takes charge backstage during rehearsals. A good stage manager is essential to a smooth production. In some cases, the stage manager and the crew act as both the stage carpenters who build the sets and the **grips** who move the scenery. The stage manager keeps track of all cues and effects and makes cue sheets for the stage crew that contain cues for lights, sound, curtains, and set and prop changes.

During the performance, the stage manager usually sits at a prompt table in the stage-right wing just upstage of the proscenium and calls all cues to the technical crew. In addition, the stage manager must handle all emergencies that arise during the performance. The stage manager times each full rehearsal and each performance. Occasionally during a production with many performances, the stage manager will turn over the backstage supervision to the assistant stage manager and go out “front” to watch the performance from the audience’s perspective, taking notes on projection, timing, and cues.

In the professional theater, the stage manager has to be versatile and experienced in all phases of theater production, including acting and directing. In addition to running the show backstage, the stage manager directs brush-up rehearsals, trains new cast members, and keeps the production fresh and sharp.

Also necessary for a successful production are the **properties chief** and the **properties assistants**. Their responsibilities include acquiring the

### CUE

As behind-the-scenes staff, you may do a lot of computer work for various business tasks (for example, creating publicity materials). If you spend long periods on the computer, take short breaks frequently to avoid muscle cramping and eyestrain.



The person working the ticket window should be responsible and enthusiastic. It is a good job for someone interested in the financial aspects of play production.

furniture and props that fit the designer's plan, storing them, preparing a prop table, and giving hand props to the actors backstage just before entrances. These positions require hard work, dependability, and ingenuity.

Hand props should be kept on the side of the stage from which the actors who use the props will make their entrances. Props are returned to the prop table after use and should never be touched by anyone other than the props crew and the actor by whom they are used. The prop table should have a list of the props posted over it and should be marked with the location and identification of each prop. After each rehearsal and performance, the props crew should store the props in a secure storage area.

The responsibility of financial arrangements for the production

belongs partially to the producer but mostly to the **business manager**. Both should monitor production and publicity expenses in an effort to achieve a reasonable profit. In addition to financial issues, the business manager is also responsible for accurately listing in the programs names of cast members, all production staff, committee chairpersons, and acknowledgments for favors and assistance from businesses and individuals. Although guided by school policy, business managers usually

- handle funds and pay bills
- handle the printing and selling of tickets
- issue tickets to salespersons
- monitor sales
- supervise the ticket booth
- order the printing of programs
- supervise advertisement sales (if applicable)

## CUE

If your school provides an office for theater management and publicity planning, maintain an efficient workspace and avoid clutter hazards, such as those that can cause tripping, by keeping supplies neat and organized.

## SAMPLE BUDGET WORKSHEET

### John Adams High School Drama

Production: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates: \_\_\_\_\_

**Projected Income:**

Tickets sold \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ @ \$ \_\_\_\_\_ = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Other income:**

Concessions \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Program ads \_\_\_\_\_

Total Projected Income: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Projected Expenses**

Royalty \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Play books \_\_\_\_\_  
Tickets \_\_\_\_\_  
Programs \_\_\_\_\_  
Advertising \_\_\_\_\_  
Scenery \_\_\_\_\_  
Properties \_\_\_\_\_  
Costumes \_\_\_\_\_  
Makeup \_\_\_\_\_

**Miscellaneous:**

Custodial fees \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Police department \_\_\_\_\_  
Fire department \_\_\_\_\_  
Ushers \_\_\_\_\_  
Box-office staff \_\_\_\_\_

Total Projected Production Costs \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Projected Net Income (Total income  
less total production costs) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**CUE**

The publicity for a production can be just as important as the staff and the finances. The person who promotes the show in the school and the community is the **publicity manager**. The public press, other schools' newspapers, local radio and television stations, and closed-circuit television stations may give space or time to notices about school productions. There are almost limitless possibilities for promoting a play. The publicity manager and assistants have an opportunity to make original and artistic contributions to the success of a production. The school's art department can be an excellent source for contributions.

If you plan to post flyers to publicize a performance, find out whether you need permission from a property owner or operator. Unauthorized areas should be avoided.

If you use paints or fixatives to create advertising material, work in a well-ventilated area to avoid breathing in toxic fumes and follow the manufacturer's safety directions.

Advertising should be consistent with the spirit and style of the play. For example, when promoting comedies, cartoons of the cast and humorous items about the funniest rehearsal situations can be featured, possibly with comic quotations from the play. The title of the play itself, the playwright, the skill or prominence of the performers, the past achievements of the director, and the striking scenic effects can also furnish material for publicity.

An important part of planning a successful production is considering the needs of the audience. The **house manager** must juggle a variety of duties to ensure both the physical comfort of the audience and smooth admission and intermission periods. The responsibilities will probably resemble those shown here.

### Responsibilities of the House Manager

#### To the audience

- Repair damaged seats.
- Check ventilation.
- Maintain comfortable temperature.
- Provide competent ushers.

#### To the ushers

- Provide training.
- Specify dress code.
- Provide programs for the audience.
- Assign equipment such as flashlights.

#### To the playhouse

- Collect ticket stubs for the business manager.
- Signal the end of intermission.

School productions frequently involve still more people. Firefighters and police officers are often required. In some communities, they will be on hand if they are notified that a production is scheduled; otherwise, they must be hired. In some schools, members of the faculty are in attendance for supervision, and they often collect and sell tickets out front.

A crew member may be in charge of furnishing recorded music for the curtain raiser or intermissions. If so, the selections should be approved by the director far in advance, and they should be properly rehearsed. Music should be in keeping with the production but subordinate to it, not added as a special feature. Be sure that any permissions required for the use of music are secured well in advance.



Productions need many people who are not directly involved with the drama. Crowd control, traffic management, ticket sales and collection, and program production and distribution require willing workers.

## Application ACTIVITIES

### CUE

1. Discuss difficulties that might arise during a performance. How might the stage manager avoid or overcome them?
2. Choose one mode of publicizing a particular play. Make an oral or visual presentation of your promotion.

To create publicity for a show, actors might go out in public in full costume to perform a short scene. This may be a good attention-getting strategy, but actors should be careful to choose safe areas and times.

## Prerehearsal Activities

An abundance of planning and scheduling must be done before the actual rehearsals can begin. How well these prerehearsal steps are taken often makes the difference between a smoothly run production and a chaotic one. The first step is the selection of a play. Before or immediately after play selection, a tentative budget should be prepared. If production costs will be a determining factor, the budget should be established first. Work toward resolving each step to ensure success from the outset.

## FIRST STEPS

Choosing the right play is one of the first decisions to be made. The right choice has much to do with the success of the production. Before the choice can be made, several plays should be read. This may be done by the director, the director and the staff, or the director and a play-reading committee. It is important that those making the decision know the purpose of the proposed production. Is it primarily a school project, or is it to raise funds for a specific cause or organization? Whatever the purpose, it is important to select the best play possible as far as script quality, strength of parts, and entertainment value are concerned.

### Things to Consider When Choosing a Play

1. Does it fulfill its designated purpose?
2. Does it appeal to a particular audience?
3. Has your audience recently seen it?
4. Does it provide variety in your annual productions?
5. Is it adaptable to your actors' abilities?
6. Is it adaptable to the size and equipment of your stage?
7. Does it fit your budget?

Rather than compromise the quality of a script, it is better to present classics (most of which require no royalty) or cut production expenses sufficiently to pay the royalty of a first-class contemporary play. Remember that there are many classics that most people will thoroughly enjoy. There are also many entertaining plays of the nineteenth century that have been released from royalty charges.

Before a play is finally selected, the director or some authorized person should contact the publisher controlling the acting rights of the play. The director should state the dates, the number of performances planned, and the various ticket prices and should request authorization to present the play. Many regulations restrict the presentation of plays by amateurs, especially in larger cities where stock and road companies appear. Therefore, full permission should be obtained for a public performance before preparations start.

If the budget has not been established, it must be set before proceeding further. The director must estimate the probable size of the audience and take into account sets and props that can be obtained without expense. Because scheduling is crucial for a smooth production, the director should set up a master production schedule containing the items found on the checklist shown on the opposite page.

## CUE

The size of the cast requires attention in the choice of a play. When the cast is large, more students receive the benefits of training and experience.

## Master Production Schedule Checklist

1. Production budget established
2. Play-reading committee selected
3. Committee reports given
4. Play selected
5. Staff organized
6. Production meetings held with director, stage manager, technical director, scenic designer, lighting designer, and costumer
7. Production rights obtained
8. Research started
9. Scripts ordered
10. Promptbook prepared
11. Floor plan designed
12. Designs for scenery, lights, and costumes made
13. Tryouts held
14. Cast selected
15. Stage and costume crews recruited
16. Publicity committee organized
17. Costume measurements taken
18. Costumes rented or purchased
19. Light plot prepared
20. Floor plan on rehearsal floor
21. Blocking rehearsals begun
22. Tickets ordered
23. First publicity release written
24. Scenery begun
25. Program prepared and printed
26. Working rehearsals started
27. Costumes fitted for first time
28. Publicity photos arranged
29. Props secured
30. Second publicity release written
31. Tickets placed on sale
32. Scenery construction completed
33. Special effects secured
34. Lighting, cue sheets, and prop plots completed
35. Tickets distributed
36. Costumes fitted for second time
37. Lighting checked for first time
38. Polishing rehearsal timed
39. Set or sets completed
40. Major press releases written
41. Technical rehearsals held
42. Final set touches completed
43. Dress rehearsals held
44. Performances given

### After-Production Schedule

1. Costumes/props checked in
2. Bills paid and tickets audited
3. Scenery struck and stored
4. Props put away
5. Borrowed items returned
6. Rented costumes returned
7. Owned costumes cleaned, stored
8. Dressing rooms cleaned
9. Thank-you letters sent
10. Final financial statement drawn

The director must study the play from every angle to determine the style and atmosphere to be carried out in the sets and costumes. Then she or he must decide how best to express the theme, how to emphasize the conflict, the suspense, and the climax of the plot, and how the characters and their relationships with one another should be portrayed. For a

Before constructing the full-scale set, it can be useful to make a scale model from the floor plans. This way, you get an idea of what your set will actually look like before you go to all the trouble of constructing the real thing.



period play, the director must also study the historical background, the social conditions, and the attitudes of the people represented, as well as the clothing, furnishings, and manner of speech and movement of the period.

After studying the play, the director must make a floor plan. This is an overhead view of the set that helps the director plan the action that will take place on the stage. During this early period, the director should have frequent conferences with the scenic designer and the stage manager concerning many aspects of the production.

After the director, the scenic designer, and the stage manager have made overall plans, the director must visualize important scenes carefully and plan for effective grouping and movement. Entrances and exits must be logical and orderly. The location and the size of furniture should be planned carefully to create balanced and effective stage pictures. Light sources, such as windows, lamps, and fireplaces, should be marked on the floor plan. Even backstage storage areas for furniture, props, and sets must be diagrammed.

The backbone of a production is the **promptbook**, started by the director during the planning period and containing the entire play script. Into this book go the director's plans and eventually the telephone numbers and addresses of everyone involved in the production. The easiest way to make a promptbook is to paste the pages of the play in a large loose-leaf notebook. This system requires two copies of the play. If there is only one copy available for this purpose, page-sized windows can be cut in the sheets of the notebook, and each page of the script can be fastened into these windows with cellophane tape or glue.

Large margins around the script are essential for sketches, cues, and notes. These are first made by the director in the preliminary planning and then added to and changed during rehearsals. Marginal notes show script cuttings, stage directions,

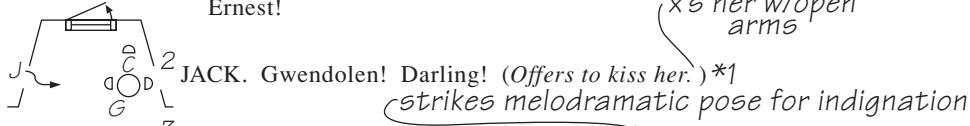
## CUE

When your play is finished, save the promptbook and a copy of the program and photographs of the production. You may want to use them for future reference.

## Sample Promptbook Page

(Stress mirror lines and actions\*)  
Ent Jack (Enter JACK.)

1 GWENDOLEN. (Catching sight of him.) Ernest! My own Ernest!



JACK. Gwendolen! Darling! (Offers to kiss her.) \*1

*x's her w/open arms*

*strikes melodramatic pose for indignation*

warn: 3 GWENDOLEN. (Drawing back.) A moment! May I ask if  
 Alg-ENT you are engaged to be married to this young lady? (Points  
 #4 to CECILY.) \*2

"forced" w/fan

4 JACK. (Laughing.) To dear little Cecily! Of course not!

*Play up little's*

What could have put such an idea into your pretty little head?

*As if "Just as I thought" — Jack kisses her (#5) and keeps arm around waist*

5 GWENDOLEN. Thank you. You may. (Offers her cheek.)

6 CECILY. (Very sweetly.) I knew there must be some misunderstanding, Miss Fairfax. The gentleman whose arm is at present around your waist is my dear guardian, Mr. John Worthing. (x DL) #6

*Jack runs finger nervously around inside of collar*

7 GWENDOLEN. I beg your pardon?

*Melodramatic shock pose — back of hand to forehead — flutters fan*

8 CECILY. This is Uncle Jack.

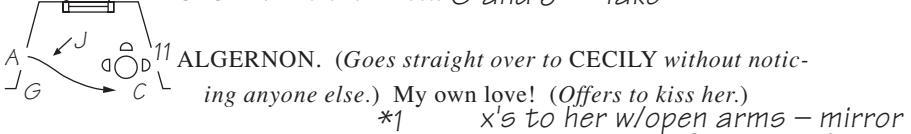
*flutters fan*

9 GWENDOLEN. (Receding.) Jack! Oh! x's DR

*Turns back on J.*

Ent Algy (Enter ALGERNON.)

10 CECILY. Here is Ernest. G and J — "Take"



ALGERNON. (Goes straight over to CECILY without noticing anyone else.) My own love! (Offers to kiss her.) \*1

*x's to her w/open arms — mirror of Jack*

12 CECILY. (Drawing back.) A moment, Ernest! May I ask

Points w/fan you — are you engaged to be married to this young lady?

*"Take"*

13 ALGERNON. (Looking round.) To what young lady? Good heavens! Gwendolen!

and markings of difficult passages for pauses, phrasing, and emphasis. The sketches or diagrams of floor plans and sets show positions of furniture and actors as they move in every scene. Stage groupings of actors can be drawn with the initials of the characters' names marked in little circles. Most directors like to sketch important crosses and countercrosses and mark actors' movements with symbols.

The stage manager adds to the promptbook cues for lights, sound effects, curtains, and other effects both on and off the stage. As rehearsals progress, individual cue sheets are made from the book by the stage manager and are given to the following: electrical technician, wardrobe staff, props committee, sound technician, and anyone whose tasks require written directions.

When marking the promptbook, pencils should be used so that changes may be made when necessary. Use different colors for particular types of cues and warning signals, such as red for lights, blue for curtain, and green for entrances and exits. Most directors and stage managers want warn cues marked in the promptbook. A **warn cue** advises the stage manager of an entrance, a sound effect, or a lighting change before it is to take place. For example, "WARN: phone 1: 2 rings" means that the phone is to ring twice, one page from that point in the script. Most stage managers give a "Warn" from one-half page to one page before the execution of a cue. They give a "Stand By" about ten seconds before a cue, and they give "Go" at the moment of execution. Refer to the example on the upper left-hand corner of the sample promptbook page shown on page 347.

## Application ACTIVITIES

1. Work in groups to evaluate plays for possible production in your school. Each group should review a play from a different time period, such as a Greek tragedy, a twentieth-century musical, and an eighteenth-century comedy. First answer the questions on page 344. Then analyze the production needs for each play, considering settings, costumes, actors required, and royalty costs. After each group has presented its findings to the class and made a recommendation, the class should decide which play would be the best choice.
2. After choosing a play, research its cultural, social, and political aspects. Write notes that would help the designers as they plan the play's technical and visual elements (lights, sound, scenery, costumes, and makeup).

## CASTING THE PLAY

Few phases of production are more important to the ultimate success or failure of a play than the choice of the cast. Casting demands tact, sincerity, fairness, and sound judgment. Those planning to audition should fill out an audition form similar to the one shown on the following page. The director must cast not solely on the basis of the tryout but also from past experience with the individual and especially from a projection of what that actor will be able to do after weeks of rehearsal and direction. This ability to look ahead goes hand in hand with a director's ability to visualize the final production even before the first rehearsal. A successful production demands that actors be equipped physically, mentally, and temperamentally to give convincing interpretations of the roles assigned to them.

One of the most important experiences for an actor is the **audition**. Some of the most talented actors fail to get parts because they give poor auditions. In some public schools, auditions are limited to drama and speech students. In others, they are open to all students. This is a matter to be decided by the director or by the individual school. Perhaps the director will want to use a point system based on stage experience and service to help determine eligibility for roles. In some schools, scholastic standing in other departments and good citizenship are considered before an applicant is allowed to audition.

Every possible means of publicizing the roles to be filled should be used prior to the tryouts. Posters, articles in the school newspaper, and

### FROM THE PROS

"The actor who is talented and interesting and committed is more likely to get the role than someone who is 'right.'"

—MICHAEL SHURTLEFF,  
CASTING DIRECTOR



*A Chorus Line* is a play about the drama and anxiety that accompany an audition and the necessity to relax and just be yourself.

TRYOUT INFORMATION FORM				
NAME (LAST NAME FIRST)		CLASS	AGE	PHONE
ADDRESS		SEX	HEIGHT	WEIGHT
PREVIOUS ACTING EXPERIENCE				
WHAT VOCAL PART DO YOU SING? S A T B		WHAT MUSICAL INSTRUMENT DO YOU PLAY? EXPERIENCE:		
WHAT DANCE TRAINING HAVE YOU HAD?				
LIST YOUR CLASS SCHEDULE				
1	4	7		
2	5	8		
3	6	9		
WILL YOU BE ABLE TO ATTEND ALL REHEARSALS? YES _____ NO _____ IF NOT, WHAT CONFLICTS ARE THERE?				
ARE YOU INTERESTED IN WORKING ON ANY OF THE FOLLOWING COMMITTEES?				
MAKEUP	PROPERTIES	SCENERY CONST.		
PUBLICITY	COSTUMES	STAGE CREW		
ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BEING STUDENT DIRECTOR?				
PROMPTER?	TECHNICAL DIRECTOR?	STAGE MANAGER?		
DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS				
VOICE (QUALITY):		IMAGINATION:	STAGE PRESENCE:	
VOICE (PITCH):		ANIMATION:	PHYSICAL APPEARANCE:	
VOICE (VARIETY):				
PARTS CONSIDERED FOR:				

posted descriptions of the characters are all good ways of circulating the information. If possible, the director might place a copy of the play on reserve in the school library for all applicants to read or might make the play available in some other way.

The audition arrangements must be determined by the number of people who wish to read for the play, the length of time that can be devoted to casting, and the kind of play to be presented. When possible, it is usually preferable to hold tryouts in the auditorium or theater in which the play is to be performed.

When the applicants have assembled, the director can explain all details of the tryouts, discuss the play briefly, and describe the characters. Each applicant should be asked to fill out a form giving name, address, phone number, height, weight, past experience in school plays, and any previous commitments that might interfere with attendance at rehearsals. Applicants should complete *all* requested information.

Methods of conducting auditions vary with directors. Some directors combine audition formats. This is especially true of tryouts for musicals because actors very often have to be able to act, sing, and dance.

When auditioning, it sometimes pays to know something about the director. What shows has that director done? What are his or her favorites? Be careful in your choice of material. You may strike a responsive chord, or you might find yourself competing with "ghosts of the past."

### Types of Auditions, Tryouts, or Readings

<b>Open audition</b>	For professional nonunion actors For entire school student body
<b>Closed audition</b>	For professional union actors only For certain school students only, such as drama club members
<b>Prepared audition</b>	May use rehearsed material, including memorized lines and actions
<b>Textual tryout</b>	Material from manuscript or printed play, may be either monologue or scene Same as prepared audition
<b>Cold reading</b>	Uses unfamiliar material. Must read with imagination, feeling, and confidence Not penalized for errors in interpretation if director does not summarize material May be textual or improvisational
<b>Improvisational audition</b>	Must improvise scene around assigned character and situation

If the cold reading uses a scene, the actor might have the disadvantage of playing with another actor with whom he or she is unfamiliar. On the other hand, the actor has the advantage of playing against someone.

After preliminary auditions, the director will make a list of those considered for parts. These individuals will be invited to **callbacks**, auditions to read again from the script, sometimes with candidates for other roles. Occasionally, there may need to be further callbacks until final casting can be determined. By this time, any problems concerning rehearsal attendance, dependability, responsiveness to suggestions, and general attitudes should be solved as completely as possible.

Perhaps the most important aspect of auditions is that they be conducted in a friendly and relaxed atmosphere. Each student who tries out must know that she or he is being given a fair chance. Good auditions can set morale at a high level for the rest of the production.

## Application ACTIVITIES

1. Pretend that you are preparing your own material for an upcoming prepared audition. Choose the text, either monologue or scene, and then plan your actions and memorize your part. Ask a classmate to take the role of the casting director and give you friendly feedback.
2. Look at the sample Tryout Information Form. Write a brief description of the committee on which you would like to work or the particular position you would like to fill in the production of the play.

## YOU AND YOUR AUDITION

Planning for your audition will take time and careful preparation, especially if the production is professional. Those of you wanting to pursue acting as a professional career should have a **résumé**, such as the one shown on the opposite page, and a portfolio. Your résumé should include an eight-by-ten-inch black and white headshot photograph of you as you appear offstage, not as a character in costume. The résumé should also include all the important information a casting director wants to know: name, address, phone number, type of voice (if you sing), vital statistics, experience, education and professional training, and special skills. Since all actors are typed by class of performer, include at the top of the résumé your type classification. For

example, if acting is your strongest skill, then dancing, then singing, your classification would be actor-dancer-singer. Similarly, there are dancer-singer-actors and many other classifications.

The portfolio you present at an audition should include other photographs of you as you appeared in specific roles. If possible, select roles that show your range of abilities from drama to comedy to musical theater. If available, include reviews of your performances and sample programs of the plays in which you have appeared.

JOYCE JACKSON  
4950 Cove Road  
Stamford, CT 06904

ACTRESS-SINGER-DANCER     HOME PHONE: (121) 555-1317  
OTHER PHONE: (121) 555-6071  
Soprano: low G-high C

Age Range: 16-30    Height: 5'6    Weight: 108    Hair: Blonde, long    Eyes: Blue    Dress: 7/8

EXPERIENCE:

HANSEL AND GRETEL	Wicked Witch	Courtyard Playhouse, N.Y.C.
GUYS AND DOLLS	Sarah Brown	Rochester, Minn., Civic Theatre
THE FANTASTICKS	Luisa	Highland Summer Theatre, Minn.
DARK AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS	Flirt Conroy	Highland Summer Theatre, Minn.
DIRTY WORK AT THE CROSSROADS	Nellie Lovelace	Ohio Valley Summer Theatre
NAUGHTY MARIETTA	Marietta	Ohio Valley Summer Theatre
THE SOUND OF MUSIC	Maria	Mosby Dinner Theatre, Virginia
OKLAHOMA!	Understudy for Laurey and Dancing Laurey (played by Kathleen Conry of Broadway's NO, NO NANETTE)	Mosby Dinner Theatre, Virginia
ANYTHING GOES	Hope Harcourt	Club Bone Dinner Theatre, N.J.
MARY POPPINS	Mary Poppins	Club Bone Dinner Theatre, N.J.
LAUGHING GAS (original musical)	Mrs. Krause	Cavalier Productions, Virginia
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, AMERICA!	Voice-overs	Library Theatre, Washington, D.C.
AMAHL AND THE NIGHT VISITORS	Mother	Kenyon, Minnesota
MAN OF LA MANCHA	Antonia & Housekeeper	Boulder, Colorado

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

DEGREE:	Bachelor of Music Ed. in Voice, University of Colorado		
GRADUATE:	Acting—Mankato State College, Minn., under Dr. C. Ron Olauson		
STUDY:	Ohio University under Robert Winters Private study with Richard G. Holmes (Senator Dawes in Broadway's INDIANS), Washington, D.C.		
DANCE:	Ballet—6 years	Modern—2 years	Tap—1 year
SINGING:	8 years classical and musical comedy training, some belting		
MODELING:	J. C. PENNEY CO., 3 years floor modeling and fashion shows—Denver, Colorado Print and promotional work in Colorado for Wells, Rich, Green Inc. of N.Y.C.		
OTHER:	Play piano; Teach piano and voice; Sing in Italian, German, Spanish, French		
SKILLS:	Accents: Norwegian, Swedish, Cockney, Irish, Southern Own and drive a car Public elementary school teacher		

## CUE

Most performers regard auditioning as one of the most stressful and exhausting aspects of artistic discipline. Success in a theater career or avocation demands dedication and confidence in competitive situations.

In order to have the best audition possible, you must know your own abilities well. You must be honest in your self-appraisal, neither conceited nor overly modest. Know what kind of actor you are and what kinds of roles you can play. You may aspire to play every great role ever written, but if you are objective, you know that you are best suited for certain roles. The director will be looking for certain vocal and physical attributes. Know how you sound to an audience by listening to a recording of your voice. Look in the mirror, and be objective about what you see. Bear in mind that auditioning is a selling job that begins when the director first sees you.

Dress appropriately for the audition. Line, color, and style are important. Avoid wearing anything that might be distracting or might draw attention away from you and your talent. If you know the play, you can help the director visualize you in a part if your clothes suggest the part you desire. Take care not to overdo the suggestion, however.

If you have a prepared audition, there are many points to consider as you prepare. Do not try to read dialogue between two or more characters. Monologues long enough for an audition are few and hard to find. That is why the same material is often found in monologue and scene books. Those same few books of monologues are available to everyone, every show, every year. Directors might become tired of repeatedly hearing the same audition material. One effective solution is to turn a dialogue into a monologue. This requires skill and practice, but the result is an audition selection that is fresh.



An audition may involve memorizing a monologue. Practice until you are comfortable with the material, and then relax and be yourself.

Many of the long speeches found in plays are expository, or informational. Information is important but does not provide exciting or moving audition material. Look for something that expresses emotions, conflict, and action. Avoid selections that were intended to be delivered in dialect if (a) the part you are seeking is not in that dialect, (b) you are not really proficient in that dialect, or (c) you want to do that selection without the dialect, but the selection is so well known that it probably would not “sound right.” Also, avoid speeches that have been associated with particular actors. You might find yourself competing with a star rather than with your peers.

### Preparing for Your Audition

Consider the following:

1. Whenever possible, know the play for which you are auditioning.
2. Know the character or characters you believe you can play.
3. Select a monologue or single-character scene that suits the character or play for which you are auditioning.
4. Prepare a series of short monologues rather than one long one, such as ten to twelve auditioning pieces that last from a few seconds to a minute each.
5. Be certain that each piece is just long enough to show what you can do.
6. Show the director your range of acting abilities in five minutes. This is especially important if auditioning for a whole season or a repertory group.
7. If you have a vocal audition, use the accompanist provided or bring an accompanist. Do not accompany yourself.
8. Sing appropriate music.

CUE

Develop a good audition attitude. Look forward to auditioning. Shake off the nervousness. Show a little hunger for the part. Be ready, willing, and eager to take a part, whatever part is offered to you. Also learn how to handle rejection.

### During Your Audition

Remember the following:

1. Play to the director.
2. Neither avert your eyes from nor stare at the person evaluating you.
3. Walk to your auditioning position showing confidence, even if you are nervous.
4. Pause for a moment when finished.
5. Leave the stage with poise.
6. Smile, even if you are cut off or interrupted.
7. Do not appear hurt or flustered.
8. Show the director your positive side.

# Rehearsals

The best way to become part of the play as a whole and to appreciate the director's motivation for movements and tempos is to faithfully attend rehearsals. There are different kinds of rehearsals, all of them important. You can profit from the director's suggestions to the other actors and thus avoid their mistakes and profit from their achievements. If a rehearsal is set for specific roles, however, be sure you obtain the director's permission to sit in.

## REHEARSAL SCHEDULES

When making a rehearsal schedule, the director considers the time allotted for preparing the production, the length and difficulty of the play, and the availability of the cast. For instance, if the audition-rehearsal-performance period of a full-length straight play has been set at seven weeks, after-school rehearsals should probably be two to three hours a day, five days a week.

A schedule for the entire rehearsal period should be finalized, and copies should be made for participants. This procedure helps parents understand how much time will be involved in the production.

### Sample Seven-Week Audition-Rehearsal Schedule

<i>Week 1:</i>	Auditions and first rehearsal (3 hours)
Monday	Auditions
Tuesday	Auditions
Wednesday	Callbacks (if necessary)
Thursday	Cast posted
Friday	Reading rehearsal
<i>Week 2:</i>	Blocking and line-check rehearsals (2 1/2 hours)
Monday	Blocking Act I
Tuesday	Rehearsal Act I
Wednesday	Line-check Act I
Thursday	Blocking Act II
Friday	Rehearsal Act II
<i>Week 3:</i>	Blocking and line-check rehearsals (2 1/2 hours)
Monday	Line-check Act II
Tuesday	Run-through Acts I and II
Wednesday	Blocking Act III
Thursday	Line-check Act III
Friday	First run-through Act III

*Week 4:*  
Monday}  
Tuesday}  
Wednesday  
Thursday  
Friday

Working rehearsals (2 1/2–3 hours)  
Special scenes—chases, fights, and so on—private rehearsals  
Act I concentrated  
Act II concentrated  
Act III concentrated

*Week 5:*  
Monday  
Tuesday  
Wednesday  
Thursday  
Friday

Working rehearsals (full stage crew, 3 hours)  
Acts I, II, III in sequence  
Acts II, III, I—in that order  
Acts III, I, II—in that order  
Problem scenes only  
Final working run-through

*Week 6:*  
Monday  
Tuesday  
Wednesday  
Thursday  
Friday

Polishing rehearsals (all crews, 3–3 1/2 hours)  
Run-through and dress parade  
First technical rehearsal  
Second technical rehearsal  
Problem scenes and changes  
First complete run-through

*Week 7:*  
Monday  
Tuesday  
Wednesday  
Thursday  
Friday  
Saturday

Polishing rehearsals and performances (4–5 hours)  
Second complete run-through  
Final run-through  
First dress rehearsal  
Final dress rehearsal  
Performance  
Performance

**There is a lull in the rehearsal as one of the actors checks his lines. As the production develops, the director will designate a person to supply the actors with lines when needed.**



The seventh week is important and should be carefully scheduled in an effort to accomplish many last-minute tasks. On Monday of this last week, the staff should hold its last rehearsal in which interruptions can be made, problems discussed, final costumes and props checked, and all details settled.

At least two dress rehearsals are recommended. However, if there is only one dress rehearsal, it should come on the Wednesday or Thursday before a Friday-night performance. Tuesday may be spent in a final run-through. It is wise to invite a few people to a dress rehearsal to accustom the cast to playing before an audience. Some directors leave the night before the performance free for final adjustments. Others feel that a continuous flow right up to opening night is desirable. The auditorium should probably be closed to all other activities during the last three weeks, and enough time must be given to the technical director and the crew to “hang the set.” Consider the sample rehearsal schedule when planning for your next production.

## READING REHEARSALS

The first rehearsal, called the **reading rehearsal**, is crucial in setting the tone and establishing expectations for the entire rehearsal and production process. The director should expect all members of the production team and the chairpersons of committees involved in the backstage activities to be present. This is an appropriate time for the director to discuss the value of working together toward the objectives of presenting the best production possible and the importance of maintaining the spirit of the play. The director might want to point out some factors that make a fine performance, such as perfect timing, excellent individual characterizations, and coordination of onstage and backstage activities.

At a reading rehearsal, some directors prefer to read the play themselves, suggesting the interpretation of the entire play and of the individual roles. Others prefer to give the cast the opportunity to suggest their own characterizations by reading the assigned parts, while the director merely points out important details of phrasing, timing, and inflections. Whatever the method, the reading rehearsal should build a clear conception of the play and of conduct during rehearsals. Everyone should take careful notes.

Usually, several reading rehearsals make actors feel more secure about interpretation when rehearsing onstage. In the first hours of work on the play, the director can sense actors' abilities to understand lines and project personality. The director can also judge the actors' willingness to respond to direction and the extent to which they pay attention. If there is ample time, a number of reading rehearsals can “set” the characters and

the lines. More reading rehearsals are necessary when dialects or stage dictation is required.

## BLOCKING REHEARSALS

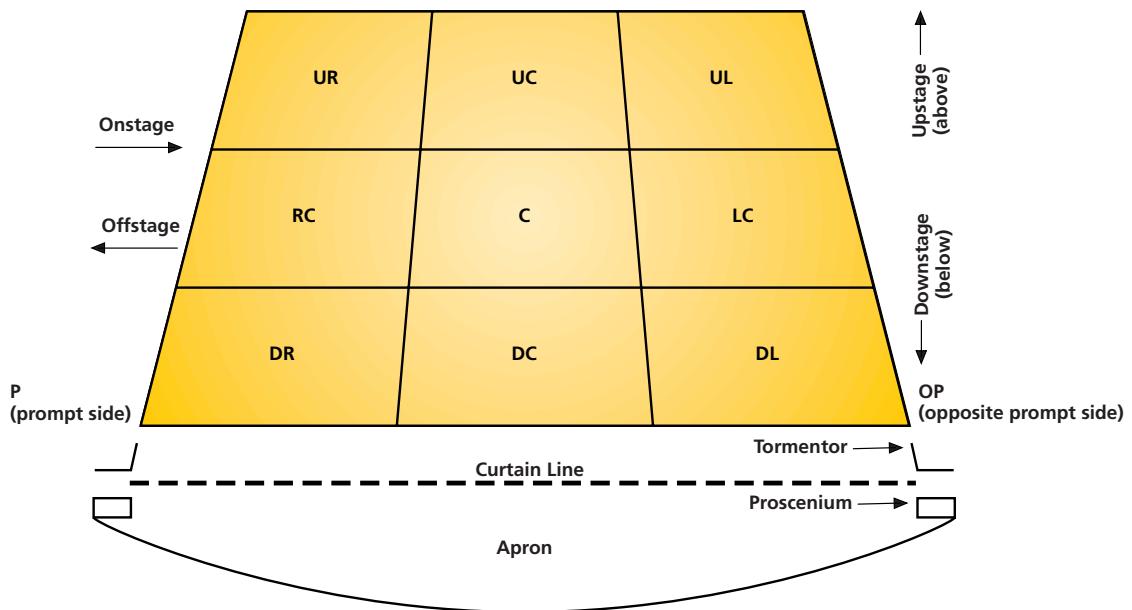
Rehearsals in which the movement and the stage business are worked out are called **blocking rehearsals**. The major blocking areas of the traditional stage are shown on the following page. Movement and stage groupings should be established before work on the interpretation of lines begins.

The director will already have worked out plans for using the stage area, emphasizing important groupings and keeping effective stage pictures. However, in early rehearsals, most directors are willing to discuss possible changes and to incorporate spontaneous reactions of the actors. When the fundamental blocking of the first act has been set, the blocking of the second act should follow. The two acts can then be brought together at a combined blocking rehearsal. Following this, the third act should be set, and the first and second reviewed. As soon as the business of the first act is clarified, the lines and blocking may be memorized.

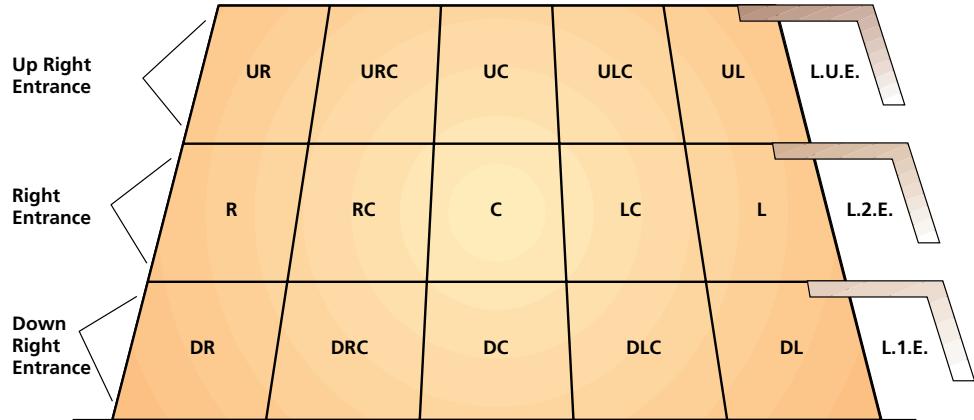


Reading rehearsals help a cast develop good timing and a unified understanding of the play.

## The Acting Areas—Nine-area



## The Acting Areas—Fifteen-area



Both diagrams indicate directions from the actor's point of view. The lower diagram shows entrance positions used with the old wing setting—L.1.E. (left first entrance), etc.—and early box sets—down right entrance, etc. These symbols are still used with many musical plays.

When planning stage business, the director must be sure that all gestures and movements are meaningful. In order to avoid later delay, the director should try in early rehearsals to eliminate tendencies of actors to fidget, shift weight, and gesture ineffectively. Actors should understand that every gesture and cross must be motivated and definite and that the center of interest should be accentuated at all times. The director must adhere to fundamental directions when dealing with inexperienced people.

If blocking rehearsals cannot be held in the auditorium, the assistant director should arrange a rehearsal area that has exactly the same dimensions as the stage. She or he should then indicate the entrances and exits with chalk or tape and obtain furniture that resembles the pieces that will eventually be used. If rehearsal furniture cannot be obtained or is not of the same size or shape, the floor should be marked with the correct dimensions to facilitate proper blocking.

During this period a feeling of camaraderie will probably develop, and the actors and crew members should feel free to approach the director with their problems and suggestions. They should receive considerate attention and advice. The director is largely responsible for establishing morale because his or her methods will be copied subconsciously by the cast and the crew.

It is sometimes difficult for actors to make the necessary movements an intrinsic part of their dialogue, especially when the real setting may be difficult to visualize. Directors can assist them in understanding their movements by explaining how character groupings, movements, and setting fit into the big picture, giving the production unity, proportion, and balance.



A set's foundation is made of platforms and ramps. These structures should be put in place as soon as possible so that the actors can get used to them.

## WORKING REHEARSALS

After all the action has been blocked, the most creative part of rehearsing begins. At the **working rehearsal** interpretation is developed, and words and action are put together. All the acting techniques previously discussed are coordinated with the director's carefully thought-out plans. Some directors use the terms *essential* and *accessory* to describe actions. The former are set by the director; the latter are worked out as a means of character delineation by the actor.

The interpretations of the roles are fine-tuned during the working rehearsals. The director should have absolute control of the production, for the director alone has planned the stage settings, the action, the tempo, and the rhythm to create an artistic whole of which the actors are only one part. The director is also privileged to change his or her mind without question. However, individual and group discussions where ideas can be exchanged and questions answered should be arranged or encouraged informally off-stage. Actors might find that writing character sketches of their roles before such discussions helps clarify their thinking about defining their characters.

By the time working rehearsals begin, memorization should be almost completed. Real characterization can begin only after the actors are "offbook," meaning that no scripts can appear onstage. At this point, actors should be left relatively free to move and speak, because spontaneous physical and vocal responses frequently improve a scene. Actors should not, however, be permitted to fix a false inflection or swallow important words and phrases. Having an actor write a paraphrase of a passage may help her or him appreciate the exact meaning of the lines. It is sometimes helpful if the director stops an actor suddenly and asks a pointed question, such as "What is happening to your character in this scene?" Only as a last resort should the director read the lines.

Speeding up or slowing down words and action to attain a certain mood or meaning is often difficult for inexperienced actors. It is during the working rehearsals that the director helps the actors develop tempo by offering suggestions such as the following:

- Pick up cues rapidly.
- Listen effectively.
- Hold for a laugh or pause.
- Point lines.
- Break up long speeches with action.
- Use appropriate body movement.

### CUE

Remember, practice and rehearsal are not synonymous. Practice, for the most part, is what you do on your own time; rehearsal is what you do in the presence of the director and the other members of the cast.



Producing a play is a collaborative process. During working rehearsals, the director, prompter, and actor work together to develop a good tempo and mood.

This phase of interpretation is especially critical. Actors tend to return to early rehearsal practices under the pressure of performance, so no false inflections or moves, especially gestures, must become set. With troublesome lines, sometimes bridging is helpful. **Bridging** is adding words before or after the difficult ones. Beginners must help each other by feeding cues properly, by listening effectively but not conspicuously, and by taking themselves out of a scene when necessary. Most inexperienced actors have trouble giving sufficient time on pauses. Here it is frequently helpful to have them count from one-half to two beats for a desired effect. Restraining movement in order to give a meaningful gesture or a glance a chance to register is very important.

The location of the director is crucial during working rehearsals. Most directors sit onstage beside the prompter during early rehearsals and quietly interrupt to ask questions and to give directions. Other directors place the prompter on one side of the stage and seat themselves about halfway back in the auditorium in order to check the entire stage area. Usually a combination of methods is preferable. When sitting too near the actors, the director does not get a good perspective of the stage picture, the sense of unity of the action as a whole, or the clear and harmonious blending of the voices. On the other hand, if the director is near, the intimate question-and-answer procedure can be used to inspire an actor to think through a problem. A good procedure is to begin working intimately with a scene, bringing out details and correcting mistakes. Then the director can

## CUE

Many actors study their lines in "blocks"—words grouped by a single idea.

retire to a distance and watch the entire action from different vantage points while checking the clarity of key lines and words, the spacing of the actors, and the continuing effect of stage pictures.

Projection of lines is the means by which the play is heard and understood and is an absolute necessity. If you have been practicing regularly, you should understand the fundamental principles. Your work now is to correlate the physical processes of correct breathing and articulation with the psychological consciousness of speaking to everyone in the audience. You should by this time be breathing correctly and relaxing your inner throat muscles, while at the same time clarifying the important words with flexible lips and tongue.

Speaking intelligibly, not necessarily loudly, is necessary to convey the exact meaning of your lines. From the first rehearsal, you should have begun marking the pauses, the words, and the phrases that must be stressed to emphasize meanings. The most common fault of inexperienced actors is to drop the last words of every sentence instead of breathing between thought groups. Often the most vital words are at the end of the sentence and must be heard. Unless you are specifically told by the director to speak upstage, it is wise to speak front or diagonally front (three-quarter front), turning your head toward the person you are addressing on sentences of little consequence.

Mock costumes and props should be used as soon as possible in the rehearsal schedule, especially in period and stylized plays. The assistant director coordinates the crews that obtain whatever the play requires, such as hand props, costumes, and furniture. The assistant director is also responsible for checking that props are stored properly after rehearsals.

In addition to the general rehearsal schedule, a second, specialized schedule should be worked out for actors who are together in a number of scenes. These scenes or fragments of scenes can be rehearsed separately under the direction of the assistant director. Important roles can often be rehearsed separately, also. This schedule of simultaneous rehearsals avoids long periods of waiting for actors. In addition, intensely emotional scenes should always be directed privately until the action is crystallized and the responses are natural and convincing.

## POLISHING REHEARSALS

The real joys of directing and acting are experienced in the **polishing rehearsals**. With lines memorized and action set, all phases of the production can be brought together in an artistic whole. From the standpoint of the actor, these rehearsals should bring the creative satisfaction of developing the subtle shades of vocal inflection and non-verbal communication that make the character truly alive.



Special effects, such as these seen in *Cats*, require many technical rehearsals. Come opening night, this scene must feel as routine as the play's simpler scenes.

# CUE

Stage stairways and balconies must always be well lit. The cast should be prepared for emergencies, however, by knowing safe paths out of the theater even in the dark.

Polishing rehearsals provide satisfaction not only among actors but also among stage crews. All exits and entrances, props, sets, and basic furniture should be onstage and in position. Sound effects necessary for cues should also be set. Only then can the actors find themselves in the environment of the play and become a part of it. Once the mechanics of fitting themselves into the sets have been mastered, the actors can complete their search for identity with their roles in relation to the play as a whole.

To a director, the most important element in play production is **rhythm**. The rhythm of a play is the overall blending of all the elements of the production with particular stress on tempo, action, and dialogue. It is during the polishing rehearsals that the

rhythm of the play is set and maintained. The entire production staff must work as a team to synchronize all aspects of the production—voices, sound effects, actions, lighting, and even the music between acts—into the rhythm established by the director. Sound, light cues, and sound effects must be carefully timed. A single extraneous sound, a slight motion, an unmotivated gesture, or a poorly timed sound cue can destroy the effect of a scene. The director must scrutinize every stage picture from all parts of the auditorium. The director is responsible for the tempo of the production. Some ways of adjusting and maintaining the tempo of a production include the following:

- Speed up cues.
- Eliminate irrelevant action.
- Clarify speech.
- Assist cast to point their lines.
- Assist cast to hold their pauses.

If the play is dragging because of pauses between sentences, it is helpful to have a rapid-fire line rehearsal, with the actors conversationally running through the play without any action or dramatic effects. To pace the timing and to make sure of clarity, some directors listen to difficult scenes without watching them.

It is only when the pieces are brought together that the director can see exactly what is still needed to make the play a success. The complete play should be put together in rehearsal about ten days before the first performance. From that time forward, remembering the following things might be helpful.

1. Rehearsals should be by acts, with as little interruption as possible.
2. Schedule separate rehearsals for difficult scenes.
3. Prop committee should have all props ready.
4. Curtain calls can be rehearsed.
5. Intermission can be timed.
6. Costume changes should be timed (now or after dress rehearsal) and worked into the overall rhythm of the play.

## Application ACTIVITY

Memorize a short monologue, and pretend you are in a polishing rehearsal. Combine any vocal inflections and actions that bring the part to life. Ask your classmates for critiques.

### TECHNICAL REHEARSALS

Settling as many matters as possible before dress rehearsals is always preferable. The best way to ensure that actors and stage crew members are ready to work together is to schedule **technical rehearsals**. During technical rehearsals, every crew member and actor must get his or her materials organized and performance duties clearly in mind. If there is no time for technical rehearsals, the group must go directly from the polishing to the dress rehearsals.

The first time the cast and the technical crew work together with the set, there will probably be confusion and delays in getting lamps to work, doors to open, curtains to come down exactly on time, and props to be in the right place at the right time. Basic scenery units should be onstage as soon as possible so that necessary adjustments can be made. Ideally, the stage should be completely ready three weeks before the performance. The cast and backstage crews should be working together so that costumes, makeup, scenery, props, and furniture can be considered simultaneously from the standpoint of color, light, and form.



A technical run-through is necessary to work out the kinks in the production. In *Noises Off*, one actor helps situate another actor's costume.

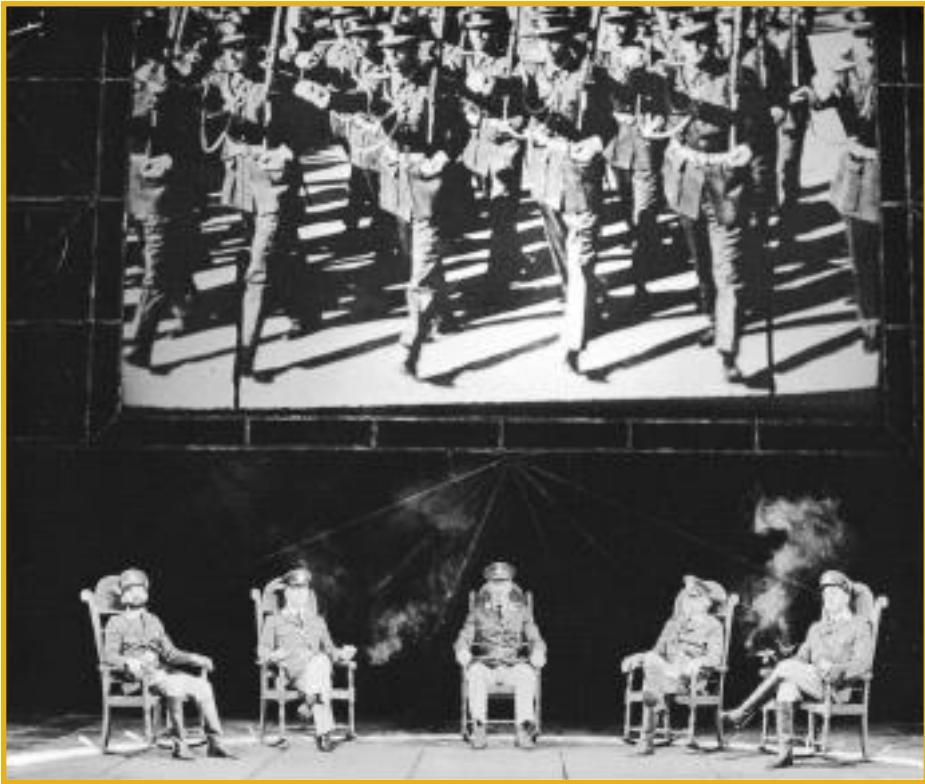
Bringing It Together	
<b>Director</b>	Move through the auditorium, checking sight lines, acoustics, and total effects. Take notes to share with cast after final curtain. Involved persons should record director's suggestions.
<b>Stage Manager</b>	Make stage plot for each scene, showing exact positions of flats and furniture. Number all pieces, and appoint stagehands to place, remove, and store them backstage.
<b>Crews</b>	Rehearse to establish the sequence of action so that changes can be made in seconds. Specific crew members should always handle the curtain, lights, and props in order to ensure exact timing.
<b>Lighting</b>	Rehearsals are imperative. Experimentation yields effective results. Use lighting for rapidly changing effects. Use lighting to establish mood and time of day. Light should not leak, reflect, or splash. Use backstage floodlights to kill shadows. Make sure no circuits are overloaded.
<b>Props</b>	Arrange pictures, props, and household effects to present a "lived-in" look. Curtains should be the right color and should drape well.

## CUE

"Eventually? Why not now?" is an excellent motto for everyone involved with a play.

Not all details of setting, costume, and makeup will be ready, but the essentials should be. A technical run-through of the whole play with changing of available costumes, coordination of all effects, and possibly curtain calls will help make the dress rehearsals run like performances.

It is easier to attend to the inevitable details before, rather than on the day of, the performance. As many matters as possible should be settled before the dress rehearsals. The planning is worth the effort if it avoids hectic dress rehearsals and a slipshod performance.



The award-winning rock opera *Evita* relies heavily on special effects. The screen must lower and the film must begin at precisely the right moment.

## DRESS REHEARSALS

The final preparations for a performance conclude in a **dress rehearsal**, an uninterrupted rehearsal with costumes and props. A dress rehearsal will feel like a real performance. It is the last chance to smooth out the wrinkles of past rehearsals. If possible, two dress rehearsals for a straight play and three or four for a musical should be held. Sometimes it is beneficial to invite a small audience to the final dress rehearsal so that the cast can learn to point lines and hold the action for laughter and applause.

Usually photographs of the cast in various scenes are taken at a dress rehearsal. The pictures should be taken either before or after the rehearsal so that the timing of the production and the establishment of moods are not interrupted.

The final dress rehearsal should begin on time and go straight to the end without interruption. The cast and crew should be instructed to adjust whatever is seriously wrong as well as possible while the action continues. The main consideration is to avoid awkward pauses and the repetition of lines or action.

Backstage organization must be efficient. Each person has specific responsibilities. The chain of command might resemble the following:

Director	Final authority—check makeup, costumes, props, lights, and stage before going out front
Stage Manager	Full responsibility for the backstage—check lights and stage before curtain goes up; see that cast is ready; get crew members in places; give signals for lights, curtain, sound effects
Prompter	Responsibility for actors' lines—should not be interrupted once the curtain is up, must remain alert every instant the play is in progress and must be inaudible and invisible to the audience

When the final dress rehearsal is finished, the actors should put away their makeup, hang their costumes, and leave the dressing rooms in order. It is the responsibility of each actor to inform the wardrobe crew if costumes need pressing or mending.

During final rehearsals, some directors sit at the back of the auditorium and dictate notes, which are written on separate sheets of paper for each performer. As these are given out, the director explains the correction and might ask the actor to run through the line or business. Other directors prefer to give critiques orally and to have the cast record the comments. Both the cast and the crew should feel encouraged and confident after a dress rehearsal. If there is continued cooperation, a good dress rehearsal should ensure a satisfactory performance.

## Application ACTIVITY

Do you think a dress rehearsal is really necessary if the other rehearsals have gone well? Explain your reasons.

## CURTAIN CALLS

**Curtain calls**—the appearance of a play's cast in response to the audience's applause—should be rehearsed and should never be considered as an add-on. The last impression that an audience has of a play is of its curtain call. Therefore, the finishing touch of a good production is a polished curtain call.

The form of a curtain call is determined by the director and by the style of the show. There are simple curtain calls in which the actors take bows in reverse order according to importance of role. There are "frozen" curtain calls in which the actors pose in suspended animation. There are also curtain calls in which the actors line up side by side, take hands and bow as a group. Thrust and arena productions usually require some type of moving or shifting curtain call that allows the actors to take their bows to the different sections of the audience.

The director will prepare the cast for a definite number of curtain calls, but the stage manager will determine how many will be taken at each performance. It is important to keep in mind that curtain calls are largely a matter of time. An audience will applaud for a certain length of time, depending on the quality of the production and the number of characters. A curtain call should be executed quickly and efficiently. Do not expect or desire standing ovations. The "everybody on their feet" attitude seen in so many high schools has robbed many students of the rare thrill of a true standing ovation.

## CUE

Every actor, no matter how small the part, should participate in the curtain call in costume and makeup. This is really the final scene of the performance.



### THE GREATS



Nathan Lane and Matthew Broderick take curtain calls after a performance of *The Producers*. Lane and Broderick won acclaim for their roles in the Mel Brooks musical.



## CHAPTER

# 8 REVIEW

### Summary and Key Ideas

Summarize the chapter by answering the following questions.

1. Briefly explain the responsibilities of the following: prompter, technical director, stage manager, property chief, business manager, publicity manager, house manager.
2. What is the purpose of a master production schedule?
3. Why is the promptbook “the backbone of a production”?
4. Define the following terms: open audition, closed audition, prepared audition, cold reading, improvisational audition, and textual tryout.
5. What information should be included in a résumé? in a budget?
6. Explain the purposes of each type of rehearsal: blocking, working, polishing, technical, and dress.
7. Why should curtain calls be rehearsed?

### Discussing Ideas

1. Considering the production facilities available at your school, discuss the kinds of productions that would be most successful for you.
2. Discuss the effect that limited facilities might have on a production. How can such limitations actually lead to a more successful play?
3. Discuss the role of the director in casting. Why is the director’s ability to look ahead of crucial importance?

### FOCUS ON

#### Collaboration

**As a student of drama, you will learn about your own strengths and weaknesses and about your effect on others.** You will also become a more communicative person. Here are some tips that will help you get the most out of your collaboration with others:

- An actor or technician who wishes to improve accepts and seeks constructive criticism. The intent of any critical comments should be to improve the performance, not to belittle the actors or crew.
- When you are given the opportunity to evaluate a fellow actor’s performance, first try to find something that deserves praise, such as the voice, animation, or

interpretation. Then comment on the things that can be improved.

**Evaluating Performances** Practice your critiquing skills with a group of six classmates. Each of you should prepare and perform a short monologue. Then each group member should critique one other group member’s performance. Make sure to be polite, fair, and impersonal, to begin with what you liked, and to include helpful suggestions about what to improve.

**Reflecting** After reflecting on the comments you heard, make a list of ways that actors might benefit from critiques.

## REVIEW WORKSHOP

# PRODUCING THE PLAY

## INDEPENDENT ACTIVITY

**Writing a Résumé** Suppose that in this weekend's newspaper you read an article about your community playhouse doing a production for children. The play is *Cinderella*. Choose a character from the play and write a résumé that someone who is interested in playing that part might submit. Based on what you think the requirements of the part are, make up the facts about this potential actor.

### Cooperative Learning Activity

**Promptbook** As a class, choose a play in the public domain (one no longer under copyright). Working in small groups, create a promptbook for the first scene or two. Photocopy the first five pages of the play, and paste them onto larger pieces of paper (to provide wide margins). One person should be in charge of markings for stage directions; another for pauses, phrasing, and emphasis; another for actors' movements across the stage; and another for lighting, sound effects, and curtain notations. Compare your completed promptbook with that of another group, and add any kinds of notations you may have missed.

Follow the sample résumé shown on page 353. If you wish, the résumé may be about yourself.

**Help Wanted Ad** Your drama club wants to present Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*. Unfortunately, your faculty adviser, who would normally act as the director, cannot direct this production. Brainstorm a list of characteristics you would like to find in a director and make a list of qualifications for the job. Use the lists to write a Help Wanted advertisement for the newspaper aimed at attracting the ideal person for the position.

### Across the CURRICULUM Activity

**Math** Using the planning form on page 341, prepare a budget for the production of a play

that is in the public domain and therefore has no royalty payments. Consider the anticipated income from all sources, such as ticket sales, patrons or sponsors, program advertising, and special school funds, against all anticipated expenses, including advertising, printing, and purchase or rental of equipment, costumes, and properties. Present your budget to the class. If the anticipated income falls short of the anticipated expenses, what adjustments can you and your classmates make to balance the budget without impairing the production?