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### Director Final

While watching these documentaries on YouTube from The American Theatre Wing Seminars I learned so much about how a director directs and even a few conversational pieces I can have with my son. Theater has always been a part of my life. Growing up in Texas there wasn't much to do around that neck of the woods, but the local theater had plays always buzzing and entertaining us country folks. I was also able to perform in several of them and enjoyed the journey. But, as I watched these directing videos I saw a whole side of the theater I had never known, the director's point of view. I never even heard the word directing until I moved to New York City in 1994 and became a part of New York City Broadway. I loved going to the Broadway plays. My ex-husband would get free tickets too and the plays my grandma and I would go enjoy when she came to visit. I never really gave the director much thought when I was young, although they have a huge position in a production of a play. In fact I think I have learned more about directing from my son this past four years than I ever had in the past.

The American Theatre Wing has some amazing people who are directors and well under way in their careers in the United States of America. The ones on the first panel were: Doug Hughes, Scott Elliot, John Rando, Leigh Silverman and John Mantello. Doug Hughes points of view when it comes to being an amazing director are very different from the rest and he places high regards on how the directors career is how you are in a premiere society but how it is a

solitary job, one you do on your own being you are the mind of the whole production. He feels that as a director you do not have to rise and act but you better well be an awesome director and know how to do this position. He sees it as a political job and one where you need a command presences. You need to be mindful when you speak. Do not over speak, especially if it is a small correction that needs to be made.

Scott Elliot was a corney type of director with an era of confidence about himself that no one could knock down. He owns his own small group theater which I found impressive and one he was sure proud of. He enjoys giving young people a chance to grow and he wants to mold the young actors as well as the assistant directors throughout his theater. He is always looking for ways to save time and money and hopes to have a crystal clear masterpiece but knows the world isn't perfect. Scott feels that you are a much better director if you were in the field of acting first. He has always done his directing with personal experience and he never attended a directing school. He enjoys creating his plays from his own experiences and for his pleasures. He cares about his audiences, but he says he fulfills his happiness and stems off to his audience happiness. He has a social conscience, but likes to focus on himself and tries not to make everyone happy.

John Rando talked about how his first play he ever produced was "The Butler Did It," He believes you need to make the best out of every situation you come across in life. He was an assistant for awhile and he feels it was an awesome way to meet other directors and have a chance to be able to eventually direct your own play. John also feels that studying as an actor you see the director's job a little clearer and it in return helps you become a better actor. He encourages young directors to try different plays and see the tones each one provides.

Leigh Silverman started her theater debut in a summer theater program and was sucked into an awe of happiness. She also did lots of director assistance but felt like she would never get

out of this position and felt terrible, but slowly started saying no to the assistance positions and started picking up actual directing jobs, this is where her career took off. She feels that communication is a very important part of being a director and working with everyone on set is the best policy for any production. She also believes in the power of flexibility. You need to bend and sway with everyone and not get too terribly upset at the small stuff. She also feels that spending time in all theater settings is an important tool to being successful. She goes to many plays of different genres and different theaters to learn something new everyday. She literally engulfs herself into the world of theater. I personally like this technique and one I would use if I ever were to go into this field of work.

Joe Mantello was a down to earth type of director who taught me that his early days were spent with directors that nurtured him and he in return learned to become a nurturing director. Not only for the other assistance but also everyone involved with his production. He would get on the levels with the actors and talk to them like he would want to be spoken to. He too was an actor in the start of his career, but found out very quickly that he would make a better director and ventured off on this road and has become one of the best.

The next set of directors that were on video number two were Pam Mackinnon, Sheryl Kaller, and Stephen Wadsworth. Pam also thought that communication takes you a long way in your career and this is the key for anything in life. She said that being kind to the actors and communicating with them like they were people was key. She also started by saying you need to be punctual and really be mindful of others' time. You need to give and receive with all you come in contact with. She said you can learn from anyone, actors to state directors. She found it simple to give stage reference points and this made it easier for your actors to see the story clear. Her designers were always making some great themes such as fly in the sky or land formations.

Conversations with all her cast are memorable and ones she will always remember. Pam feels like if you have your actors read the play and help with the ideas there is harmony among everyone. There also always needs to be room and time for mistakes to happen in the beginning of any production. She feels like the play may start in the head, but it needs to become an outer body experience for the audience to see it come alive. Also, anytime someone gives advice to not take it as a personal attack.

Sheryl Kaller says you really need to be willing to punt and see what happens. Come with the vision and go from there with your punt. She also believes in being true to everyone who is a part of your production and play fair. She feels the power of workshops are vital to becoming a stronger team player for any member of the production. She sees an imagination of a way to bring it all together and make a great production to have the audience enjoy the performance. She also feels like our world is an oyster and we can make anything happen. I like this theory and this is one I will hold onto for future references. Sheryl also feels like a good starting point is with a sound designer. Having solid music is what sets the stage and most people who buy the tickets are intrigued with the music. She feels that you need to be openly honest with your playwright, reason being, it is their play you are having it come alive. Communicate with them, and have no hard feelings.

Stephen Wadsworth caught my attention, because my best friend throughout grammar and middle school's name was Ambre Wadsworth. Stephen feels like being united is a rule all directors should follow and live by. Always getting on the same page and working out the knicks together. Having connections and working with those connections is what can get you in the door and or have a successful production. Do not be completely ego full but stay clear of egoless. You need balance. He also feels that having the actors pick the play apart along with him does help

him be a better director. He enjoys matching the actors with their wardrobes. When it comes to having a playwright in the room he has to brace himself and prepare for the moment where he needs to change a few things, but he always communicates with the creator. He makes sure that the play belongs to the playwright. The invention of the characters belongs to the playwright and he honors this.

The next documentary has Stafford Arima, Rebecca Taichman, Henry Winscamper, and Anne Kauffman. Stafford Arima said, "It is ok to say I do not know," This was the most logical quote I heard throughout the whole shows we watched. In anything in our lives, it is ok not to know. He also feels like it is ok to start small and build on your success. He started small and now is directing large scale dramas. He felt like he had a stroke of luck when he first began as a director. He gives his opinion, but does not always expect others to take it, he learned this from being an assistant and his boss always gave their opinion. He assisted for 10 years before taking off on his own and directing his own plays. He also spoke of residence assistance. He was insecure at the start, but grew into his shoes as a director and became a solid director. He said that he worked through his insecurities. He also says that the first meeting is always presented perfectly, but he knows that in the future they will hit pot holes along the way and these are spots where they need to slow down and fix. He uses a red pen and tears the piece apart and pulls it back together with the actors in serious mode. He realises that you sometimes have to work around some underlying issues and eventually everything comes together. He usually does not read actors resumes, he wants to give all actors a chance. His goal was to be an artistic director and he fell in love with directing early on.

Rebecca Taichman started out saying you as a director need to show who you are even if you are afraid. Stand up to your calling. She made a pledge to herself that she could and would

do this even if she was scared. This was a good lesson even for me. I think we all need to follow this advice and believe in ourselves. She also felt the pull to become a director and be successful at this career. She kept saying, do not fear and trust the process. She also likes the writers to speak out to the actors to give them an idea of what they want and how they see it in their heads. Actors usually like hearing all angles of the production from the writers because it gives them a chance to figure out which way is best. Value your actors and especially value the writer because the work you are working on is the writer's baby. Treat with kindness and integrity.

Flowing into Henry Wishcamper's world of directing he too never went to grad school and fell in love with becoming a professional director. It took awhile for him to obtain his first directing job and he flourished as a director. He gave the advice as to, you need to practice what you are going to say to you actors, rehersh it in your mind enough that you sound confident. Always be present in the moment and take everyone seriously. He put association with others for the first time is like making pancakes, be mindful how long each one is giving time and then switch. Give everyone your attention. A very important step as well is learning your play. Read it, absorb it and know it. Keep all your paperwork simple, but keep it organized.

Anne Kauffman also was an assistant for years and finally had her shot at directing. She finds the challenge with how you deal with different personalities and working through the play. She is a strong believer in positive affirmations and making your cast feel good about themselves. Once she left grad school she felt it was a man's job to be a director and made herself dress the part. She wore dress slacks instead of dresses to work. She was ok if a mess came along because she felt she knew enough to clean it up. Having experience is an important learning lesson she carries with her.

Anne Bogart, Daniel Sullivan, and Scott Ellis were a part of the 4th interviews. Ms.

Bogart feels like taking down to people is unneeded. She felt that there is a medium between huge ego and no ego. Finding this place is the success of being a director. Be a part of each of your plays and premieres, be the audience and see how your audience reacts. Fix the issues as you go along with rehearsals. Start with a small snowball and have it become bigger and bigger but so not to allow it to get out of control. Allow the thoughts that everyone has on the play simmer then allow for yourself to speak the play into existence. Be a part of the community and enjoy seeing and doing the plays that inspire you as a human. Know when the culture is active or passive, this makes all the difference. Allow your actors to speak, this is one rule most of the panel stressed throughout the whole five movies. Becoming a great director, Anne said is, just to do it, get the experience. She also was big on doing your research and being actively involved in the production. She never thought much in being an assistant director, she feels you need to go right into your calling. She is also always two shows ahead and keeps it moving.

Daniel Sullivan desires his plays to move people's emotions and make them remember their experiences. He looks at the production through a set of technical eyes. Once the rehearsals start he tries not to give much feedback and allows his production to move ahead. He also feels like it is a lonely profession. He wants to try to fix everything. He uses the word chemistry and feels it throughout the show. He feels like you should treat the actors the way you wish to be treated. He admitted that some plays frighten him and tries to make the best out of it all.

Scott Ellis is always swept away from 8 hours of bliss when he is working on his productions. He truly enjoys his job and works hard. He says, trust your gut and follow it. He comes in on the start of the practices with a small idea and allows his actors to make it bigger. He wants a joyful environment. He also feels like balance is important. He loves teaching and is

happy when it all starts to pull together.

The last, but not least panel of cast were Michael Halberstam, Jo Bonney Shelton Epps, and Gregory Mosher. Michael Halberstam started his own theater and club. He felt like he could not afford to pay for a procedure and a director so he had to wear many hats until he started to grow. Two to three years passed before he was able to do directing full time. His biggest accomplishment was to have his actors not lose confidence and he enjoys helping them along. He loves to do old plays and give them a fresh face. He said that it all depends on the project as to where you start. He is known for always being open minded and having good chemistry in the room. He says that lots of young actors want the best part, but he shows them where they do best. He is patient with them.

Jo Bonney has always had a curiosity for theater and grew up loving it. She enjoys being a part of the whole production. She said to never think of the ticket sales but think of the happiness. She desires to have a clear picture from everything from blocking to the set. Start with your play and hope for the best she always believes. You need to have an open mind and picture where you wish stuff to go. She thinks that new actors need to build a profile.

Shelton Epps has always thought you need to believe in yourself. He educates himself to the best of his ability on the play at hand and he thought that being a freelancer was an important part of being a director. This is what paid his bills in the start of his career. He was always patient with himself and the actors that came to him. He also feels like he wanted to get to know the actors before he even interviewed them for the position. He wants all people to be a part of the production and too enjoy themselves along the journey.

Gregory Mosher goes to watch some plays and sees how the actors act, this is how he finds his actors. He doesn't follow an ABC choice and follows his own mind in this decision

making. Some parts of his daily routine may be boring but he tries to make it fun. He wants his actors to slow down and find a pace where the audience can stay along with each event of the play. He wants his audience happy and goes great lengths for this to happen. He talks of how he knows others are directing and knows he can not see the act of directing from them, but he tries his best for his production to run smoothly. He tells a tale of sex for this scene. He realizes that the new actors have a huge pile of debt, but he talks these new actors into small jobs and allows them to grow with him and little by little pay off their school. He believes in the future video equipment for today's plays, but to use them sparingly and be smart about the production.

Over all, these were some great videos for a class in directing to watch and learn how to be a solid director. The best lesson I got was communication and believing in myself as a beginner. The people that were interviewed seemed very educated on the subjects and topics I can take with me for many years. I never really thought about directing, this is my son's cup of tea, but I have had many, around the table dinner discussions with him and others over this great communication field.