

DIRECTING FOR KINGS LANGLEY PLAYERS

THE DIRECTOR – “KEEPER OF THE CREATIVE VISION”

Directing a play is a heavy commitment – so don't plan to do anything else. Always remember, though, that you are not on your own. Apart from your own team, there are plenty of people around – the Production Chairman and your Production Co-ordinator, for a start – to help ease and solve any problems.

As soon as you officially hear from the Board that you will be directing in the forthcoming season, you need to work with your Production Co-ordinator and get together your team – Stage Manager, Set Designer, Costume Designer, Set Director and Lighting and Sound Designer for a start. **DO NOT TRY TO DO ALL OF THESE JOBS YOURSELF!** Note that this is a team. All must work in conjunction with each other and not as individuals. If yours is a musical play you must also find a Musical Director.

Production Co-ordinator: This is the central link between you, all other departments and the Board. They need to be someone you can rely on and who knows their way around the KLP. Any difficulties in finding someone, talk to the Production Chairman.

Set Designer: Without a workable set you have no production. Make sure your Set Designer knows what you want, but be prepared for a bit of give and take in the interests of practicality. Is your Set Designer also doing decor? If not, who is? (it is the Set Designer's job to sort this out, but you need to know it has been done.) Until you have at least a preliminary set design you will not be able to discuss things with the rest of your team, so make sure it is done in good time (see Timescale).

Costume Designer: If your production is a period piece, the Costume Designer should liaise with the Set Designer to ensure set and costumes complement each other. Again, you need to communicate what you want, e.g. period, styles, colours.

Set Director: This is the person who organises a team to get the set built and erected and makes it work. They need to work closely with your Production Co-ordinator. If you have any ambitious ideas for staging, make sure your Set Director is consulted first in case the ideas are impractical.

Lighting and Sound Designer (not necessarily the same person): Lighting and set design should run in parallel, if you have any ambitious ideas make sure the Lighting Designer is consulted. If you need special sound effects, give the Designer a list – don't just expect them to plough through the script and work it out for themselves.

Stage Manager: Get them involved early and keep in constant contact.

CASTING YOUR PLAY

Arrange with the Production Chairman and Secretary to obtain scripts for readings and auditions, and sort out dates with them.

Conduct your readings and auditions in accordance with KLP procedure. Make sure you have an adequate supply of audition forms (available from the Secretary).

If, after the auditions, you are unable to cast particular roles, tell the Production Chairman immediately. Some ringing around and/or cajoling should sort out the problem.

Directors Meeting: this will be organised by the Production Chairman in conjunction with the Secretary will take place after the auditions (July / August). Directors and the Production Chairman meet to finalise casts for approval by the Board. You will be expected to defend any contentious choices!

Once your cast has been approved by the Board, check with the Secretary that enough copies of the play have been ordered.

BEFORE YOU START REHEARSALS

Your Production Co-ordinator will arrange a staging meeting to discuss the set with the heads of each department.

Sort out your rehearsal dates with the Secretary – standard format is in the Back Room of the Community Centre, Mondays and Thursdays 7.30pm to 10.30pm approx. and up to 4 Saturdays for a maximum of 4 hours. Once in the main hall of the Community Centre, after move-in on the Sunday, the pattern is Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday, and Wednesday. Plan your rehearsals and produce a rehearsal schedule for distribution at the first rehearsal. You won't be able to stick to it, but at the very least it should encourage your cast to tell you when they are not available.

Your Production Co-ordinator will ensure that you will have people to build your set, a Prompt, Front of House Manager, Lighting and Sound Operators (liaising with the Lighting & Sound Designers). Your Stage Manager will find a Props person.

If your show is a period piece or requires eccentric or special costumes, talk specifics with your Costume Designer as soon as casting is completed (and approved!). Don't forget make-up and hair requirements as well.

The Publicity Officer will talk to you about any special requirements you might have.

ONCE REHEARSALS START

Communication is vital. Make sure you and your Production Co-ordinator have telephone numbers for all your cast and technical staff.

Remember you are the Director, not the dictator. Keep cast and crew well informed and give credit where credit is due.

Don't assume things will be done – check that they are with your Production Co-ordinator.

Schedule in visits to the Studio on Sundays to check the progress of your set.

If you encounter any major problems consult with the Production Co-ordinator.

Liaise with your Production Co-ordinator over move-in Sunday, and make sure all the cast know what time to be there.

At move-in be prepared to spend all your time dealing with queries from Set Director, Set Designer, Lighting Designer, Costume Designer – and almost anyone else who is there!

During the first week in the Centre your technical people will need enough time to complete the staging and rigging. Wednesday & Friday evenings are usually prioritised as technicals, and you may need to reserve Wednesday for a cast 'word bash' rather than a full rehearsal on stage.

TECHNICAL SUNDAY

Current practice is to sort out the lighting and sound plot during the afternoon and then have a run-through in costume with the cast in the evening to give the technical people a first run and to see where any problems are. This means you will be there all afternoon and evening – possibly the morning too if you are needed – so be prepared. Don't forget to ask your Production Co-ordinator to organize catering for the crew before going into the evening run!

DRESS REHEARSAL

Give cast and crew realistic notes – this is a time for final polishing not for attempting the impossible!

PHOTOGRAPHS

The Production Co-ordinator will provide a show photographer for archive pictures and pictures for the cast. Photos must be taken when cast are in costume and make-up (and preferably when the set is complete!). It is recommended that the photographer attend a couple of rehearsals to familiarise themselves with the play and where the actors move to on stage.

MOVEOUT

The morning after! Try to ensure a good turn-out by your cast (hangovers are not an excuse for not being there!).

AFTER SHOW PARTY

Organise it and make sure everyone knows about it. It is usually held in the Community Centre on the Saturday night as the raised seating and chairs need to be put away before the party begins. Some directors like to have the cast and crew back to their house – it is up to you!

PRODUCTION TIMESCALE

Readings & Auditions	JULY
Directors Meeting	JULY
Set design ready and first staging meeting	BEFORE START OF REHEARSALS
Rehearsals start	MONDAY AFTER PREVIOUS PRODUCTION (mid August for October production) EVERY MONDAY & THURSDAY 7.30pm to 10.30pm approx. AND UP TO 4 SATURDAYS IN THE READING ROOM (maximum of 4 hours – book with Secretary)
Move in to Community Centre	11 DAYS BEFORE 1st PERFORMANCE (SUNDAY)
Technical Evenings	WEDNESDAY USUALLY AND FRIDAY BEFORE 1st PERFORMANCE CERTAINLY
Technical afternoon followed by run-through	SUNDAY BEFORE 1st PERFORMANCE
Dress Rehearsals	MONDAY, WEDNESDAY
Performances	THURSDAY, FRIDAY AND SATURDAY
Move out	SUNDAY AFTER 1st PERFORMANCE

PUBLICITY

NEWSLETTER: You will need to provide some blurb selling your play to the Newsletter Editor.

POSTER: Poster designs are needed ASAP. You can ask anyone you like to design your poster (ask the Publicity Committee or Production Co-ordinator for advice if you can't think of anyone) – however the Publicity Committee has the final say on wording & format. At each show we have the publicity on display for the subsequent show.

PRESS RELEASES: If you have anything important you want to say about your play or the actors, write it down and give it to the Publicity Committee as soon as possible.

PHOTOGRAPHY: Pictures are needed for the box in the High Street, for Front of House and for sending to the press. The Publicity Officer and Production Co-ordinator will liaise with you about this.

PROGRAMME COPY: Liaise with your Stage Manager over cast and technical crew details. The Publicity Officer will be in touch with you for any other requirements.