

The Art of Writing for the Theatre

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Critical Points to Consider: Acting and Directing

Acting

- 1) Does the actor serve the play? Do they help tell the story?
- 2) Is the actor in their body? Do they appear comfortable in their own skin?
- 3) Is the actor's voice emanating from the center? Does it sound connected to the body or is it thin and disconnected?
- 4) Is the actor affecting the other characters in the scene or are they in their own world, disconnected from others in the scene?
- 5) Is the actor making strong choices and committing to them?
- 6) Is the actor living in the moment or do they appear to be aware of being watched?
- 7) Has the actor prepared enough to deliver a performance that is absolutely believable and personal?
- 8) Does the actor convey physically and vocally the style of the piece, whether it is a classic, farce, drama, musical, or contemporary comedy?
- 9) Does the performance seem forced or is it completely relaxed and natural?

Directing

- 1) Is there unity of theme in the design elements? Does it look like there was thought put into the world of the play from a design point of view? It doesn't

have to have a lot of money behind the design, but it needn't look slapped together, either.

- 2) Is the staging competent and interesting? Or does it seem like the director did not put any thought into where actors stand on the stage?
- 3) Is there an arc to the story that has been created by the director?
- 4) Did the director seem to have a good grasp of the material?
- 5) Did they bring something new and interesting to the production?
- 6) Was the play well cast? Were the performances polished?
- 7) If a style was imposed on the play, was it to the detriment or enhancement of the play?
- 8) Were the actors served well by the direction?
- 9) Were the sets and costumes appropriate?
- 10) Were music and sound effects properly employed? Is there a unifying concept for the production? Can one detect an overriding metaphor, that helps to create the world of the play?
- 11) Are there unifying production elements? The designers may design it, but the director is the final arbiter.
- 12) Has the director been true to the intentions of the playwright as can best be surmised by what's written?
- 13) Has the director made good choices that belong in the world of the play? Have they allowed anachronisms (inaccurate historical or chronological references) to exist because it's easier (or due to sloppiness)?

14) How is the rhythm and tempo of the show? Does it feel slow and draggy? Or rushed?

15) Emotion: the actors execute it, but the director orchestrates the emotional flow of the show. Does the show work on an emotional level? Do the actors make choices that seem too big or in appropriate?

16) Has the director cast the show well? Or do certain actors seem miscast?

17) Can you distinguish the difference between the playwright's intentions, the director's interpretation, and execution by the artists?