Directors are responsible for artistic integrity of the production.

The director is responsible for the overall practical and creative interpretation of a dramatic script or musical score, taking into account the budgetary and physical constraints of production. They are involved at all stages of the process, from the design and pre-production stages, rehearsal, right through to the final performance.

Directors work closely with their creative and production teams, the performers and the producer to create a performance which connects with the audience. They therefore need to be able to coordinate effectively across a wide range of disciplines and with artistic vision.

Directors work closely with the producer, production manager and cast to organise the following tasks:

- programming and budgeting;
- adapting a script and, working with the writer or collaborating with playwrights;
- breaking down a script, analysing and exploring the content and researching;
- translating and interpreting a script or musical score;
- holding auditions for productions, selecting designers, musicians, etc.;
- managing time and organising people and space;
- attending production meetings with set designers;
- organising rehearsals; Budget one hour of rehearsal for every minute of stage time. In most plays, a single page translates into approximately one minute of stage time.
- communicate and liaise with everyone; actors, creatives, the production team and producer;
- attending previews and preparing notes
- helping to publicise the production by giving interviews and leading discussions.

The director’s initial meetings with the production manager, costume designer, set designer and lighting designer typify the creative collaboration vital to theatre. Any notes the director has made on the technical needs in the script are shared with the designers. The free flow of ideas that takes place here will further refine the director’s vision of the production as a whole.

Details in the script about the specific locale(s) in which the action takes place need to be attended early in the production process, because they will determine both the basic requirements of the set and the possible movement of the actors on stage. Acting areas, entrances and exits, and furniture and props called for in the script or desired by the director will need to be a part of the set design.

The floor plan is a basic outline drawing of the stage setting as it would look from above. It is an essential rehearsal planning tool because it allows a director to work out the blocking/choreography. Leading rehearsals, they collaborate creatively with actors and technical crew to make the blocking natural, changing it when necessary and allowing inspiration.

Actors draw out character motivations and relationships under the watchful eye of the director, who strives to develop these expressions over the performance’s required transitions. Directors finish their work when they determine the final pacing of the play reverberates with the life of an artistic vision that is satisfying and complete. One of the most subtle and important jobs for a director is herding the cast toward opening night.

Most often plays are best rehearsed out of sequence. This maximizes rehearsal hours.

The director’s creative collaboration continues during his or her work with the actors in rehearsals. The actors will bring their own interpretations to the project and perhaps inspire the director to rethink their interpretation. They will work closely together to breathe life into the lines and develop a deeper understanding of the characters’ motivations and relationships, fleshing out the subtext of the play. Later the focus of the director’s work in rehearsals will broaden to the overall look and feel of the whole production as transitions between scenes are smoothed out, effective pacing is achieved and all the design and technical aspects of the production are integrated.

Once the show opens, the director’s work is essentially complete. Now it’s the stage manager’s job to make sure that every aspect of the production runs just as the director intended time after time, until the production closes.