

Directing

The Island Way

The purpose of this document is to give you a resource during your directing journey.

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Communication

With Programming Director

1. Directors will get a weekly email with:
 - a. Advertising for the week
 - b. Reminders for procedures
 - c. Notes
- Directors should read this as they are responsible for the contents and indicate they read it
2. Directors should notify the programming director when:
 - a. They are cancelling a rehearsal
 - b. Something goes wrong (it should also be notated in the stage manager report)

With Cast

1. A cast packet with the scheduled rehearsal dates, rule of the theater, expectations, contact information

As a director, you need to have two methods of communication with your cast and crew. Preferred methods should be:

2. A cast packet with the scheduled rehearsal dates, rule of the theater, expectations, contact information
3. A weekly email that updates your cast on:

Current Week schedule (call)

Next week's schedule (call)

Advertising goals for the week

Reminders about deadlines and conduct

Show information

- When emailing cast, you need to BCC them. If you do not know how to do this, you need to ask. This is non-negotiable.
 - You must copy theislandtheater@gmail.com on your correspondence
4. A FB group for the show.

- Add the programming director, program person, raffle director, social media director and production liaison to your FB group
 - Make the programming director an admin on your group
 - Establish the rules for your group as such:
 - a. Not for advertising sales or promoting shows outside the theater
 - b. Actors do not give notes
 - c. Consider making your group so you have to approve posts to keep it from being cluttered
5. Stage Manager Report
- This is a form that your stage manager sends in after every rehearsal or show
 - It is their responsibility but ultimately – you are accountable for it so if they are absent or do not send it in – you need to submit it or you may be restricted from rehearsing

Theater Maintenance

We do not have a cleaning staff so theater upkeep is part of the responsibility of the shows using the theater to rehearse. We always want to leave the theater better than we found it.

If you are rehearsing in the auditorium, these are the duties at the end of the rehearsal:

1. Vacuum the auditorium at the end of the night
2. Shut off the air conditioners in the auditorium
3. Lock all the doors to the auditorium
4. Throw out any trash left by your cast or by previous groups
5. Stack all blue and grey chairs
6. Clear stage unless it is an active set
7. Take out backstage trash
8. Lights off – including switches
9. Electronics shut off appropriately

If you are rehearsing in the lobby, these are the duties at the end of the rehearsal

1. Stock the concessions and fridge
2. Turn the air conditioner up to 78
3. Sweep if needed
4. Return all chairs to the auditorium and stack
5. Return Box Office counter if you moved it
6. Fill Bathroom papertowels and toilet paper
7. Make sure bathrooms are usable
8. Change out the trash bags if there is food in them
9. Lights off

If you are rehearsing outside

1. Return all chairs to auditorium and stack them
2. Check outside area for trash and personal items

Last group out

1. Lock doors
2. Set Alarm

Lost and Found

We do not have a lost and found. If you know an item belongs to your cast, please take it with you until the next rehearsal. Otherwise, it needs to be thrown away.

Lobby Decoration

If you are decorating the lobby for your show, you must return all items to their original location during strike

Counters

Do not put anything under the counters or in the white cabinet that you did not take from there. It is not a store all. See Lost and Found. If something is very valuable and you do not want to throw it out, put it on top of the fridge and make a note of it in your stage manger report.

Production Staff

As a director, you will need to recruit production staff to help you with your show. While our volunteer director will be happy to put needs in her newsletter, you will need to work to fill your spots. Before you promise a position to a person, you need to also get approval from the programming director. If you do not get approval first, you may be told they cannot fill this role. Appointing them anyway may result in you being removed but will definitely result in you not being appointed as a director in the future. Please abide by this requirement. Ask first – do not ask permission later.

Musical Staff Needs

Director – that's you
Stage Manager
Music Director
Choreographer
Mic Tech
Music Tech
Light Tech
Set Designer
Light Designer
Prop Person
Costume Person
Optional
Backstage Crew

Play Staff Needs

Stage Manager
Mic Tech
Stage Manager
Sound/Music Tech
Light Tech
Set Designer
Light Designer
Prop Person
Costume Person
Optional
Backstage Crew

These roles can be filled by the same person but be aware that they still need to get done as if multiple people were doing them in terms of timeliness and quality so don't stretch anyone so thinly that they can't do a great job for themselves and your cast.

Stipends

As of 2025, we will no longer be paying stipends. Instead honorariums to Music Directors, Choreographers or Directors will be provided once the show breaks even. Once the show breaks even, the rates are as follows:

Director – up to \$1000

Stage Manager – up to \$1000

Choreographer – up to \$1000

Music Director up to \$1000

To earn these stipends, the production staff must:

Director must be at 90% of rehearsals, followed all rules without major incident and attend all shows

Stage Manager must be at 75% of the rehearsals, have documentation in order and have followed all the guidelines and rules without major incident

Choreographer – must be at 50% of all rehearsals, should be at 50% of the shows available for lobby coverage

Music Director – must be at 50% of all rehearsals and run music for the show unless otherwise decided by director, must be at 50% shows to warmup cast and available for lobby coverage

Stipends will be determined at show close based on ticket sales. Honorariums are only available once a show breaks even based off the chart shared weekly with the directors and stage managers. Once a show breaks even, the additional income will be divided amongst the four above production staff for their efforts. They may choose to waive the honorarium.

For example, Show A, a musical, makes \$1500 over cost. Each of the four primary production staff members will receive a check for \$375. If a staff member waives their honorarium, the production staff gets \$500 a piece. If a staff member donates it back the theater, the other three production staff members would get a check for \$375. Waiving helps your other production staff members, donating gets you a tax receipt.

Example 2, Show B, a play, makes \$2500 over cost. Each of the two primary production staff members will receive a check for \$1000.

Example 3, Show C, a musical is at a deficit and loses \$2000 at show close. None of the primary production staff will receive an honorarium.

If the Production Manager feels a staff member did not fulfill their obligations, the board will vote on whether they will receive their honorarium.

Actor Benefits

Actors will receive two complimentary tickets to the show of their choice.

Actors will receive a free ticket to cast nights for show leading up to their production.

All actors in the 2025 season will have their names submitted for a Season Ticket Drawing to be drawn at the 2025 Island Awards. If they are in multiple shows, they will have multiple entries.

All actors (and production staff) will be eligible for Gas Give Away!

Gas Give Away

Every month in 2025, we will give away a gas card to each show to one of their volunteers. This will be randomly chosen from volunteers who have attended rehearsals. They get one chance per rehearsal they attend. The more rehearsals they have attended, the better their chance.

Cast Nights

Directors will select a cast night for each show leading up to their production. This needs to be on your rehearsal calendar as an all call event. If they are not going to attend, it should be on their conflict sheet. If a show is inappropriate for an actor, they need to put it on their conflict sheet.

Your actors will be given one free ticket to attend. If they want to buy additional tickets for friends or family, they can get the \$10 rate.

Be sure to take a picture at the show. The director needs to plan to do raffle that night so they can do something to promote their show. This can be anything from having their actors stand or even perform. This should be coordinated with the programming director and director of the current show.

Scholarships

All volunteers who are going to school will be eligible for one of three scholarships:

1. In College - \$500 for Theatrical Majors, \$250 for Non-Majors
2. Graduating High School - \$500 for Theatrical Majors \$250 for Non-Majors
3. K-11 grade – Workshop or Camp Scholarship

Applications will be out in May of 2025. To be eligible to apply, students must have completed at least one show in 2024 or 2025. Scholarships will be awarded by the board.

Auditions and Casting

How to Handle Auditions

1. Audition Materials should be sent to the webmaster as soon as you can after being appointed to the job of directing a show. It is up to the director to decide on what they want to see in auditions but if they are going to provide materials – it needs to be in a PDF form.
2. Audition are normally held on Sundays and Mondays at 7 pm. There are rare occasions where we need to hold them on a Monday and Tuesday at 7 pm. You will need to arrive at least fifteen minutes early to set up the lobby. If you are doing an dance audition for musicals, you will need to be sure you have the auditorium booked. If it is unavailable, you may work outside or not have an dance audition. Clipboard, pens and forms will be in the whit cabinet (assuming you send your form to be copied). Otherwise, just the clipboards and pens. Please put away all chairs and materials when you are done.
3. Auditions Forms need to be sent to the production manager at least five days before auditions if you want copies made. Directors need to include their predicted rehearsals schedule and all important information on the form. All forms eventually go to the Production Manager so have your stage manager hold on to them until the production closes. Be careful what you write on forms -be professional in comments
4. Video auditions are accepted until the Friday after auditions so no casting can take place until Friday.
5. After auditions, the director must provide a proposed cast list to the Production Manager before contacting anyone they want to cast.
6. After In Person Auditions
Send a quick email to all the people who auditioned saying:

Thank you for auditioning at The Island Theater. Video auditions are open until Friday. Our production team will be in touch about roles soon after. If callbacks are necessary, they will be by video. We hope to be offering roles by _____.

Be sure to send this email BCC. We do not want to share actors emails with each other. If they want to provide each other with contact information, they can do that on their own.

7. Send a similar email to each video audition so they know you received it.
8. At auditions, allow everyone the chance to audition – even if you feel they are not old enough or the right type. It is community theater and part of what we do is theater education. Auditioning is an experience – make it a good one.
9. If you have youth that are too young for your roles, be sure to send their names to the Production Manager, we may be able to get them into workshop and prepare them for a show that has a role that will be good for them.
10. Once you feel you have cast your show with all your options from auditions and video auditions, send a proposed cast list to the Production Manager.

Precasting

We do not precast. If you want to use someone in your show, you need to have them audition. They can either come in person or submit an audition video. Do not promise them a role. It will hurt your audition pool for all roles if actors start telling people they are cast and unfortunately, they do even when they aren't cast.

Casting A/B. Understudies or Swing

How you do this is up to you but you must work towards casting one of these three ways. Too often one of your cast members will get ill, drop or otherwise not be able to fulfill their role. While we will cancel a show if we must, it will effect the income your show generates and disappoint your other actors if they are unable to present their hard work. Please do not pay lipservice to this requirement.

What To Do If You Do Not Have Enough People Audition

You will need to continue to try and find people to fill the roles. You may hold additional auditions and specifically recruit after the cast list is published. However, before you offer roles to people not on the original cast list, you need to run it by the Production Manager. It will take less than a day to get feedback on this so do not “do and ask forgiveness later” or else you may find they will be asked to leave the role.

Minors/Adults

If you are casting a minor and an adult in a romantic pairing, we will not be allowing any physical romantic actions such as kissing or excessive romantic interaction during the show. Please try to cast appropriately due to this.

Physical Interaction

If your show requires or should have kissing or excessive romantic interaction, please put this on your audition form. Do not cast someone who says No and expect them to change their mind. Minors should never be required to kiss or perform excessive physical interaction on stage.

What to Do If The Production Manager Says No to a Casting Choice

You may make a case for your casting choice. So if you want to cast an actor over a suggestion of the Production Manager, the production manager will provide you with a list of concerns that you will need to address and you will need to have both actors callback for the role. You may do this in person or video but the Production Manager will need to view both callbacks.

Ultimately, you need to accept the Production Manager's decision. If you are unwilling to do so, you should step down as director prior to auditions. No one is prohibited from auditioning or being considered but there are certain combinations of actors or actors who have proven not to work well in certain circumstances and you must be willing to abide by the decision.

If you do not want to abide by the Production Manager's decision, you have one of two options: 1. Step Down 2. Fund the show yourself as a fundraiser for the theater. If you pay the royalties and costs for the show and the theater earns the ticket sales, you may cast however you like. This option needs to be taken care of financially before you can cast.

Multiple Show Actors

You can cast actors in other shows and they are welcome to audition for other shows while in your show. However, the show they were cast in first has priority over rehearsals and you should consider their availability before casting. If you choose to use an actor who is already committed to another show, you need to

make it clear – they cannot quit the other show and expect to still be in your production. You should also alter your production rehearsal schedule to accommodate their conflicts versus expecting them to be in both rehearsals at the same time. Since our actors are volunteers, you do not want to limit them as if they really want to be in shows they will just audition elsewhere but we, also, cannot cause stress to other productions.

After your cast list is approved

Send emails to your actors offering roles and CC The Island Theater. Please use email versus personal phone calls so nothing is misinterpreted. While we understand that some directors like to use a personal touch, directors words are not always understood the right way while in writing – there is not question.

Email from your leads down and wait for responses before moving to your next role. This way if people decline, you can move people around before offering. Believe it or not, people will decline a lead role even if it was something they indicated they would accept. It is much better as an actor to get the offer versus being moved into the role later.

What to Send

We would like to offer you the role of _____ in our production. Please let us know if you accept as soon as possible as we have many people to notify. So you know, this production will be (A/B, US or have an ensemble swing for major roles) so your show dates will be announced at the cast meeting.

If you accept, please do not announce your casting until we send you the official cast announcement.

If you are unable to accept this role at this time, we hope to see you at the show and be sure to look for future audition opportunities.

How to Let People Down Easy That You Can't Cast

1. Do not notify anyone that you cannot use them until your cast is full. Sometimes things change and if too many people don't accept roles, you may need to take a second look.

2. Once you have received all acceptances, send a nice but short email:

Thank you again for auditioning but at this time, we are unable to cast you in _____ your show _____. Please come out again for some of our future auditions. The next two auditions are _____ and I'm sure the director would love to see you audition.

3. You should not give feedback in the sorry email. If they email you back and ask for feedback, it is up to you if you want to give it but you should keep it light. Not the right fit for the cast or I only need so a certain amount of ensemble, etc. Do not give specifics and unfortunately, hurt people will use it against you or the theater.

Cast Graphic

1. Once you have heard back from all your actors, send a final list to the Production Manager. Triple check spelling of names.
2. The Production Manager will send you back a cast graphic to post. Double check the spelling on this and let them know if it is good.
3. Once you have double checked the spelling and know that it is good, you will be given a release date and time. You may give it to the cast at that point. We want to be able to release it on our social media and newsletter before it pops up all over the internet.

Once you have a Cast

1. You need to update the cast packet and submit it to be printed at least three days before your cast meeting.
2. Each cast member needs to contribute \$10 for their script and \$25 towards the program and this should be outlined in the cast packet.
3. Each cast member needs to contribute one raffle prize or an additional \$5 towards raffle.
4. Cast members need to be aware of the program input due date.

Production Needs

Where to Get Materials and Your Responsibilities

What We Have

We have enough supplies for many of your needs. We have a warehouse of costumes, set building materials, wigs, etc. However, it is mostly off site. You will need to make an appointment to meet in Florahome, FL to get what you need. Your plan should be to come at least twice before your show and once after to bring it back.

1. To look for things you need – you can take what you need on this visit but cannot store it at the theater until the event or production before you is done.
2. To pick up what you need – you can take what you need on this visit as well but cannot store it at the theater until the event or production before you is done
3. Additional trips are fine too.

How to request an appointment

You need to email the Production Manager at least two weeks before you want to come out with three dates that work. Hopefully one of the dates will work for The Williams as well. These days and times can be during the day or evening.

Where is the Warehouse and What do I need

1. It is an hour south of here. 1864 Bellamy Rd, Florahome, FL 32140

2. You will need a truck, van or some way to transport your materials to and from. There is no bathroom out there or air conditioning so dress appropriately.

After your Show closes

You will need to arrange times to bring the materials back the Warehouse and put them away. This needs to be done before the next event at the theater. During tech week (or prior) coordinate with the Production Manager three dates that work for you to bring the materials back. The day of set strike is USUALLY good but you need to ask. Again, you will be responsible for transport. If there is another event or show the Friday after you close, you will have very limited time to return materials. You may store them at your house if you have room until you can return them.

Things we don't have

Once you have looked through what we have if we do not have it – you may:

1. Request things via the Production Manager. Do not wait until tech week to do this. If we have it, the Production Manager may redirect you.
2. Survey the cast to see what they can provide or bring in.

Things the Theater has Built into your Budget

1. Mic Tape, Headsets and Batteries are in your budget.

Additional Items Not Accounted for

1. Paint, Costumes, Props, Building Materials have not been accounted for in your budget. However, you may request them. You will be approved within reason if the Production Manager thinks they are essential but unavailable elsewhere. If your show has broken even before your request, you will be approved

regardless. This is where sponsorships and donations will help your show immensely.

Quality

You should not plan to skimp on set, costume and props because it takes some effort to put on a quality show. It is doable on a budget but takes some pre-planning.

Tech Training

Who needs to Sign Up

Each member of your production staff needs to participate in tech training EVERY time they participate in a production. This means even if you just directed a show you need to sign up for tech training again.

What is Tech Training?

Tech Training includes: Turning on equipment, operating equipment, troubleshooting, locking up the theater and unlocking the theater.

How to Schedule Tech Training

1. Sign up for the Tech Training class
2. Send three days and times you are available and do the Tech Training as a team

Until you do your tech training, you will not be given a key, allowed to use any equipment or stay later than the person with the key in the building. If you are a board member with a key, you will be allowed to open and close up but not use equipment.

Costumes, Props, Set

Costumes

We do not have a theater costumer. You may appoint someone on your production staff or do it yourself. Ultimately your stage manager needs:

1. A List of all costumes your characters needs
2. A list of the sizes of all actors
3. A plan for getting costumes – please pay attention to period and style
4. See the Production Needs section for using the costumes we already have. ANY costume we have can be altered.
5. If you need to buy costumes, you need to submit the request to the Production Manager
6. If you are going to ask your cast to provide costumes, give specific and early guidance on this.

Props

7. A List of all props your show needs
8. A plan for getting props– please pay attention to period and style
9. See the Production Needs section for using the props we already have. ANY prop we have can be altered.
10. If you need to buy prop, you need to submit the request to the Production Manager
11. If you are going to ask your cast to provide prop, give specific and early guidance on this. Sharing your prop list with them is the quickest way to get assistance for loans.

Set

You need to share your set plan with details with the Production Manager **before auditions**. Please be creative and do not skimp to save time or make it easier – production quality can be achieved on a budget.

See Production Materials for how to get your supplies.

Production Liaison

Your show will be assigned a Production Liaison to mediate any cast and crew difficulties. The Production Liaison should attend at least one rehearsal a month – the whole rehearsal and be available for cast, crew or you to talk about any issues that arise.

These issues can be anything from an actor won't be quiet during rehearsals despite being asked multiple times and the complaint doesn't want to bother the production staff to more serious issues.

The Production Liaison should not be involved in the show in any way or have their family in the show. You will be notified who your Production Liaison is prior to auditions so be sure to put them in your cast packet.

They are there for you as well as the cast so feel free to talk to them about cast issues.

If the Production Manager needs to get involved, the Liaison will let you know and there will be a joint meeting.

Directing Best Practice

Schedule and Times

1. Be early so you can start on time
2. Do not rehearsal after 9 until the month of the show. This is our policy.
3. Do not overbook yourself so you can be present for your actors
4. Be sure to send out two weeks worth of call with each weekly email.
5. Be specific on your calls so you do not waste actor's time. Bored actors cause issues by talking, complaining or distracting.

Blocking

1. Our theater does not have great visibility for floor work. Limit blocking that puts actors on the floor of the stage or the actual house floor. People cannot see them.
2. Know what you want your actors to do before they arrive. Make a plan that extends past your end time so you do not waste time ending early on accident. If you only want to go until 8:30 – schedule to 8:30. Don't schedule until 9 and plan to end early – some people have rides to schedule.
3. Have your blocking written out before rehearsal.
4. Once you have your blocking set, do not change it every rehearsal without reason.
5. Run what you have blocked so people don't forget it before you expect Off Book or perfection.

Off Book

1. Be reasonable with your off book date. Announce it early but be sure to have finished blocking the Act at least before expecting it.
2. Have someone on book to call lines.
3. If you have actors who are having trouble with lines, give suggestions for memorizing ahead of time.

Rehearsal Time

1. Be productive, establish norms ahead of time, make sure your cast is staying in your area and not distracting other cast.
2. Opening warmups are a great way to direct energy to your rehearsal
3. Closing Circles are great ways to end rehearsals on a positive note and give shout outs.
4. Do not require cast to buy costumes, props and set pieces unless they are super personal items – ie tights, shoes. You may ask but not require.

Production Staff

1. Be sure to outline your goals and needs from your choreography before they hold a rehearsal.
2. Your choreographer needs a copy of your set plan, designated actors for what numbers and the pace you need.
3. Your music director needs to know what numbers and who you want to assign solo lines to.
4. Have your choreographer show you their notes and plan prior to rehearsal. Having a choreographer that has no plan is a one way ticket to frustration for you, them and the cast.

Director Agreement

I, _____, have read through this and understand that I am responsible for the contents. Although directors and stage managers will still get weekly emails – the contents of this manual are assumed understood.

I understand that if I am unwillingly or unable to regularly follow these procedures – I may be removed or assigned a co-director. This will be a board decision not a production manager decision.

Any costs incurred by me for props, costume, etc will not reimbursed unless they were approved prior to purchase.

If you are removed or assigned a co-director, you will not get an honorarium at the end of your production even if the show breaks even.

Your Name:

Your Signature