First Meeting with the Director

In your first meeting with the director it is important to establish a system and gain information about how to conduct rehearsals and what the director’s expectations are of you. Every director has a different process and it is important that you become familiar with the process of the director to know the type of structure or flexibility desired throughout the process.

Important questions to consider:

1.) At the beginning of the rehearsal process, how long will actors remain at a table reading and discussing? How soon does the director expect to start blocking? Does the director want you to call places and formally begin each rehearsal and scene, or would he or she prefer to ease from informal small-talk into the rehearsal work without abruptly shifting the mood?

2.) What level of rehearsal props and furniture does the director expect and at what point?

3.) Does the director want strict blocking kept from the outset or will there be a period of improvisation?

4.) How does the director want breaks called – five minutes in an hour, or ten minutes every hour and a half? Does the director wish you to call a reminder ten or fifteen minutes before the scheduled break?

5.) What policy would the director like to establish regarding visitors at rehearsals?

6.) How would the director like to structure the basic rehearsal schedule and how should you break up the script – by scene, page number, act? Your production analysis should serve as an excellent tool to devise an actors’ scene breakdown, detailing the acts and scenes and which actors appear in them.

7.) Would the director like to establish any guidelines for prompting actors with their lines? How soon does the director want actors “off-book”? And should you correct them word-for-word or allow them to paraphrase at first if the scene is moving along?

8.) How are rewrites to be handled, e.g., passed out and read through outside rehearsals or held to be distributed all at once by the director?

9.) How much discussion and leeway does the director want to allow before you prod him or her to move on and stick to the scheduled work for the day? This is a delicate and very important point that should be agreed upon in advance because there should be no sign of quarrel or disagreement between the director and stage manager in front of the cast.

10.) Establish a time when the two of you can talk privately each [week] so you continue working on the same wavelength while not having to discuss questions or problems during rehearsal periods (Kelly 36-37).