THE DIRECTOR'S CONCEPT

The director, John Shearin, plays many roles including that of Department Chairman, Producer, and Artistic Director. As a professor, Mr. Shearin not only teaches directing, but also enjoys directing at least one Playhouse production per season.

Mr. Shearin used the script, the original novel, The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn by Mark Twain, and his own personal experiences as resources for formulating his director's concept for this show. As a native North Carolinian, Mr. Shearin drew upon memories of his youth growing up and exploring rivers, streams, hills, and fields to help him understand and develop a unifying approach to the play. He incorporates the metaphorical journey on the great river with Huck's journey into adulthood and moral maturity and Jim's journey to freedom, through the artistic process of directing. Huck's experiences and journey through morality are issues our country has been dealing with for many years.

PRODUCTION ELEMENTS

There are many elements involved in the production of a play. Sometimes, as audience members, we don't realize how many people are involved and how much teamwork it takes to bring a play to the stage.

The director's job includes the selection of a script and an artistic team including the set designer, costume, lighting, and sound designers. Each of the designers must read the script several times to find clues and facts the playwright may have included in the script. After each designer has read the script, he or she must compile a list of references which may have an impact upon the design element. Designers must also create a concept which coincides with that of the director as they all work together to create the stage experience. It is the director's job to unify their ideas into one clear vision and to keep everyone on track and working towards the final artistic creation.

Big River is set in several towns along the Mississippi River and takes place during the years before the Civil War. With this in mind, the costume designer will research the era using books and paintings to inspire costume design appropriate to the director's concept and the script. Each member of the artistic team will undergo the same process of research and exploration. (See renderings of designers included in this packet.)

Designers must also select their own team of people to complete the necessary work. Their teams may consist of painters, carpenters, craftspeople, stitchers, carpenters, dyers, and electricians.

There is yet another team lead by the production manager or stage manager. The stage manager works very closely with the director and the entire artistic team. The most important job of the stage manager is keeping track of everything and making sure that rehearsals and performances run smoothly. The stage manager also has assistants with assigned duties to complete during the rehearsal process and performances.

THE AUDIENCE

The audience is a very important part of the theatre experience. In order for everyone in the audience to enjoy the theatre experience we would like to remind you of a few courtesies:

1. Cameras or any recording devices are not allowed in the theatre.
2. When the lights dim in the theatre, it is a sign that the play is about to begin.
3. Once you have found your seat, wait until intermission to get up unless it is an emergency.
4. There will be a brief intermission. No drinks or food are allowed past the lobby.
5. A bell will ring indicating the start of Act II. Please return to your seat when you hear the bell.
6. We encourage you to react to what is happening on stage. Feel free to laugh, cry, applaud, and ponder. We ask that you not talk to other audience members or actors onstage as this presents a distraction.

East Carolina Playhouse would like to thank you for including the theatre experience in your classroom. According to Aristotle, the purpose of theatre is to teach and to please. We strive to do both.