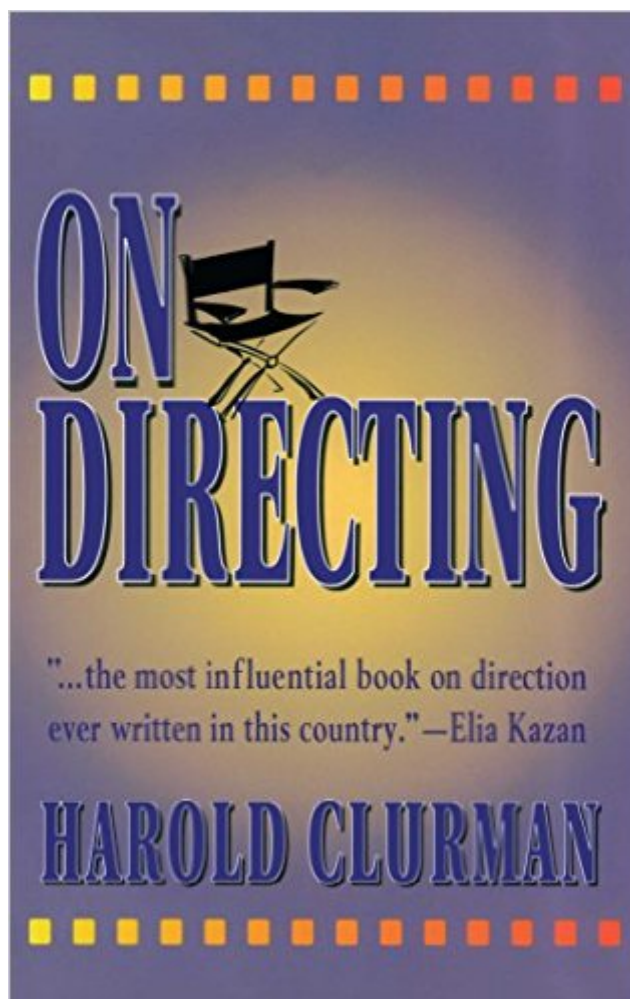


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# On Directing



## Synopsis

• A straightforward, tasteful, and articulate account of what it is to bring a play to palpitating life upon a stage • (The New York Times Book Review). In this classic guide to directing, we are taken logically from the choice of the play right through every aspect of its production to performances and beyond. Harold Clurman, director of such memorable productions as *A Member of the Wedding* and *Uncle Vanya*, describes the pleasures and perils of working with such celebrated playwrights and actors as Marlon Brando, Arthur Miller, Julie Harris, and Lillian Hellman. He also presents his own directing notes for ten of his best-known productions.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Along with Elia Kazan, who called Clurman a masterful director possessing the greatest mind he ever saw, Harold Clurman built a peerless career in American Theatre. Present here is his advice to all directors, that new (really only invented in the latter part of the 19th century) creature of the world's oldest art form. Clurman displays his analytical abilities certainly in describing script breakdowns and pictorialization, but he also reveals a real understanding of human nature. His advice on how to deal with problems and crises that always appear during a production prove most sagelike. Purchase this along with William Ball's superlative "A Sense Of Direction" along with William Converse's textbook "Directing For The Stage" to create a most helpful library for any director.

Harold Clurman, who has directed many successful plays in his time, shares with the reader some

of his wit and wisdom. Clurman breaks down his "technique" chapter by chapter to give the reader his thoughts on character analysis, rehearsals, etc. This helpful book is a great read for aspiring directors, like myself, or anyone already working in the field. Clurman's humor is woven through the book through his use of anecdotes and examples. An enjoyable, insightful read.

ON DIRECTING By Harold Clurman  
Clurman's *On Directing* has the simplicity of an introductory text, and the virtue of a career's worth of wisdom. Highly readable, conversational, and amiable, the handbook explores the issues faced daily by a theatre director. What is the spine, or main through-line, or the play? How do the characters' objectives relate? How does one deal with a truculent actor? What is the role of the audience, and how much should the director consider them anyway? Should one direct with the eye or the ear? And what exactly is Method? Clurman's book, though old, still rings true. He considers art and real estate, popular theatre and theories of the origin of drama in society. He has worked with some of the greatest artists of our time, and they turn up throughout the work: Marlon Brando, Elia Kazan, Lillian Hellman, Clifford Odets . . . the list goes on and on. Although I majored in theatre and took a year long course in directing, I found Clurman's book refreshing and useful. At the same time, I am considering mailing a copy of it to my mother, a total theatre neophyte, so that she can understand the world I have chosen for my career. *On Directing* is a great book all around.

I read Harold Clurman's book 25 years ago when I first started directing theatre, and I return to it now. I still find it fun to read, highly informational, insightful, true. I recommend it to anyone starting out as a director, and I recommend returning to it again and again. Without Harold Clurman's insightful book on directing, I daresay I may never have felt at home in the theatre. He takes you there, shows you how to thrive there, and you want to stay.

I couldn't believe how much I loved this book as I was reading it; Clurman's writing is crystal clear, and almost belletristic. I go back frequently over some of the chapters. It's a very wise book, both helpful for beginners to experts and pragmatic; it joins the best of Clurman's critical ideas to his practice. It also includes working notes on actual plays he directed, which are very helpful for seeing the theory in action. Highly recommended for anyone interested in acting, directing, or theater generally.

People told me that this is a great book so i picked it up awhile ago. It did help me prepare and

gained some knowledge for my first directing. But thing to be aware is some information may not be useful in a present time as it was back then. If you are looking for a current up to date then this book may not be for you.

After having spent years acting in theatrical productions, six years ago I was preparing to direct my first play. As part of my initial preparation, I wanted to read a couple of books on directing for the theatre. ON DIRECTING was one of two directing books (the other being THINKING LIKE A DIRECTOR by Michael Bloom) recommended to me by several theatre people I respected and admired. ON DIRECTING takes a person through the process of directing a play from selecting a show, reading through a script with a director's mindset, casting, initial rehearsals, and final rehearsals and the final production. The second section of the book is basically a thesis on the state of theatre and how to work with actors. The third part of the book contains a selection of the author's initial director's notes for various productions he directed. The fourth and final section of the book contains excerpts from the author's director's scripts and a couple of letters. Reading ON DIRECTING did help me prepare to direct my first show. I gained some basic useful knowledge and it presented me with some ideas I hadn't thought of before. However, the book wasn't as useful as I would have liked it to be. This book was originally written in the 1970s and although some of the information is just as relevant today as it was then, there are things that are really dated. Actors have changed a lot in the past forty-years as have audiences. That's not to say the information isn't still useful, because it is. However, if you're looking for a book on directing that's more current, ON DIRECTING isn't for you. Overall, I found ON DIRECTING to be helpful in my directing debut research. Some of the material appears dated and someone looking for a more current and update book with more modern examples, will be disappointed. Still, the fundamentals don't really change and ON DIRECTING does a good job of presenting those.

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