Producing Independent Film

Research

I spent three months working on the film *Light From Light*. I worked closely with producers, Kelly Williams, and James M. Johnston. Johnston and Williams are both former Sundance Institute Creative Producing Fellows whose films have been distributed internationally. I worked with them during pre-production, production, and wrap. In my research, I observed the skills of diplomacy a producer must employ to keep a production running smoothly. I observed the creative impact that a producer has creatively through casting and design team suggestions. In my research, I engaged and connected with stakeholders in the film and local businesses. I also worked on budgeting and accounting.

Challenges

Working on *Light From Light*, I observed that the four biggest challenges of any production are faced in development and pre-production: casting, securing locations, scheduling, and budgeting and working with limited resources. With this in mind, I began planning to produce a short film of my own, entitled *SM*. Specifically, the biggest challenges with *SM* were locking down a cast of student actors, planning days to film around everyone's busy schedule, finding locations to shoot the film, and working with a budget of zero dollars.

Short Film Synopsis

SM is about a stage management team, Hannah and Tessa, trying to overcome the obstacles to open their production of *Titus Andronicus* so that Hannah can get a recommendation letter for grad school.

Production

SM was filmed in Downtown Knoxville. We had 3 shoot days over the course of 2 weeks. I had a crew of 3 people to make this film happen: Savannah Smith (Director), Kendall Hayden (Cinematographer), and Delaynie Rizer (Assistant Director). The cast consisted of Maddie Poeta as Hannah and Talitha Brys as Tessa.

Impact

The target audience for this film is theatre enthusiasts and people who enjoy films with strong female leads. The goal is to screen this film at short film festivals throughout Tennessee and release it online.

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