Screenwriting and Directing: How are the Two Worlds Connected?

A screenwriter is like a composer and a director like a conductor. For sure, a composer should be able to conduct. But does a screenwriter need directing skills?
Some screenwriters direct their own screenplays, others don't. Directing screenwriters like Pedro Almodóvar, George Lucas, or Quentin Tarantino have the huge advantage of being able to interpret their script for the crew. As a consequence, they can deliver two versions of the story, a printed general version that is understandable to all participants and a verbal version that is adaptable to the special needs of all competences like camera, tone, and acting.

Moreover, the directing screenwriter can take more influence on the camera, in a way that cannot appear in his screenplay. This requires, of course, a convincing personality that, at the same time, knows to organize group actions. Some people just lack these abilities or are just happy with their screenwriting profession and rely on the directors' skills. Others simply have not got the opportunity of directing, although they might have asked for it.

But, in the end, not having directed a film does not necessarily question the quality of one's screenwriting. Screenwriting guru Robert McKee has never come to direct one of his screenplays, which are, nevertheless, as highly demanded as his screenwriting classes. However, non directing screenwriters rely more on their ability to write just one version, out of which everyone can create his own competence based story while being guided by the director.

The middle way for all those who feel that they cannot or not yet direct a film but still want to interpret their ideas is to assist the production, helping out with advices. Some multi-talents even combine screenwriting and directing with camera and acting. But this cannot guarantee a successful screenplay either. And yet, one major advantage of having directed his own screenplay remains: The obtained screen credit helps you in selling your next screenplay.