

Theatre Terminology

Acting:

AD LIB

Improvisation by an actor when:

- 1) another actor fails to enter on cue
- 2) the normal progress of the play is disturbed
- 3) lines are forgotten.

ASIDE

Lines spoken by an actor to the audience and not supposed to be overheard by other characters on stage.

BLOCKING

The process of arranging moves to be made by the actors during the play, recorded by stage management in the prompt script.

BREAK A LEG

A superstitious and widely accepted alternative to 'Good Luck' (which is considered bad luck).

CHARACTERISATION

The art of creating a character. Within the text, characters may be presented by means of description within stage directions or character descriptions which the actor must try to convey or through their actions, speech, or spoken thoughts within the text.

CORPSING

An actor who collapses into uncontrollable laughter during a rehearsal or performance is said to be "corpsing".

DICTION

The quality or style of speaking of a character within the play, consisting of components such as accent, inflection, intonation and enunciation.

GESTURE

Body or facial movements of a character during a play. Gesture can be described by the author, or suggested by the director or actor.

INFLECTION

Pronouncing a word to stress its meaning.

MIME

Communicating emotion, meaning or an idea without words, using only gesture, expression and movement.

ON THE BOOK

An actor who needs to refer to the script during a scene is said to be "on book". The ideal situation is for the actor to be "off book" as quickly as possible!

PACE The speed the dialogue and/or action is delivered to the audience.

PITCH

The highness or lowness of the tone of voice. Generally male voices are lower pitched and female voices are higher pitched.

PROJECTION

Using the voice loudly and clearly to ensure the dialogue is heard by the audience.

PROMPT BOOK

Master copy of the script or score, containing all the actor moves and technical cues, used by stage management to control the performance. Sometimes known as the 'book', Prompt Copy or Prompt Script.

RAPPORT

The feeling created by an ensemble or cast working together during a performance.

READ THROUGH

A meeting with all cast and (sometimes all) creative team members to read through the script. Usually happens at the start of the rehearsal process, to help the cast get to know each other and the text.

STILLNESS

Using a quiet voice and a subtle body language to create a calm atmosphere on stage.

TOPE

The way the words are spoken to demonstrate the emotion behind their meaning.

Costume

BLACKS

Black clothing worn by stage management during productions.

COSTUMES

Clothes worn by the actors on stage.

DRESSING ROOMS

Rooms containing clothes rails and mirrors (often surrounded with lights) in which actors change into their costumes and apply makeup.

GREASEPAINT

Name refers to makeup supplied in stick form, for application to the face or body. Needs special removing cream.

MAKEUP

Products applied to the face or body of an actor to change or enhance their appearance. See also GREASEPAINT.

MASK Form of theatre where actors' faces are covered with masks.

QUICK CHANGE A change of costume that needs to happen very quickly and takes place close to the side of the stage.

WARDROBE The general name for the costume department, its staff and the accommodation they occupy.

Features of performance texts

ACT

Subdivision between sections of a play. Acts are subdivided further into Scenes.

ANTAGONIST

The opposite of the PROTAGONIST in a drama. See also PROTAGONIST.

ANTI-CLIMAX

A climax is where everything comes together as a conclusion. An anti-climax, conversely, is incomplete so can be disappointing or unsatisfying.

CHARACTER

A named individual within the play (e.g. "There are ten characters in scene one, all of whom have speaking parts.").

CHORUS

In Greek theatre, a character (or group) representing an element in the drama which comments on the action, and advances the plot.

CLIMAX

The significant moment in the plot of a play, when things change, or reach a crisis point.

COMIC RELIEF

A comic scene (or line) included in an otherwise straight-faced play to provide a relief from tension for the audience.

DIALOGUE

The spoken text of a play – conversations between characters – is dialogue.

DRAMATIC IRONY

Where the audience knows more about a situation on stage than one of the characters in the drama.

DRAMATIC TENSION

Moments in a drama where the audience feels a heightened sense of anticipation about what is going to happen next.

DUOLOGUE

Part of a scene in a drama which is a scripted conversation between only two characters.

EPILOGUE

Scene or speech which follows the main action of the play and provides some insight or comment on the action.

EXPOSITION

The section of plot at the start of a play which provides essential background information about the characters, their situation, and their relationships to each other.

FLASHBACK

A moment during the action of a play when the natural flow of time is interrupted so that a moment from the past can be presented.

GENRE

A way of categorising different types of drama.

INTERIOR MONOLOGUE

The interior (or internal) monologue is the stream of consciousness discussion a character has with her/himself while working through problems or issues confronting them. It can be delivered as a recorded voiceover, or possibly as an aside spoken direct to the audience.

LIBRETTO	Text of an opera, or other long musical vocal composition. The script of a musical.
MONOLOGUE	A speech within a play delivered by a single actor alone on stage.
NARRATION	Dialogue designed to tell the story or provide accompanying information. Narration can accompany on stage action or be presented in its own right.
PLOT	The basic story thread running through a performance/play which gives the reason for the characters' actions.
PROLOGUE	Short scene or speech before the main action of the play to put it into context or set the scene.
PROTAGONIST	The leading character or 'hero' in a play who has to fight against/oppose the ANTAGONIST.
RISING ACTION	The events that build up the pace and perhaps the excitement in a plot/drama.
SCENE	A subdivision of a play.
SCRIPT	The text of a play or musical. Also contains stage directions and other notes.
SOLILOQUY	Lines delivered by an actor on stage as if to her/himself.
STAGE DIRECTIONS	Instructions given by the author about how a play should be staged, when actors should make their entrances and exits and how lines should be delivered.
STEREOTYPE	A role that has set characteristics, easily recognisable and sometimes exaggerated, and that follows consistently a generally agreed form.
STOCK CHARACTER	A role with set characteristics that may be used frequently in certain types of drama, e.g. melodrama.
STRUCTURE	The way a piece of drama is put together; the connections between episodes, scenes or acts; the framework. (See also Shaping)
SUBPLOT	In narratives, this term refers to a secondary plot or storyline.
SUBTEXT	In acting and character analysis, it refers to the idea that there are other meanings below the surface of what is actually said and done.

Lighting

BACKLIGHT Light coming from upstage, behind scenery or actors, to sculpt and separate them from the background.

BARNDOORS An attachment which is fixed to the front of a lantern to cut off the lighting beam in a particular direction(s).

BLACKOUT The act of turning off (or fading out) stage lighting.

BOARD

The main control for the stage lighting.

BURNT OUT A coloured gel that has lost its colour or melted through due to excessive heat in front of a lantern.

CMY

Cyan/Magenta/Yellow – the three secondary (additive) colours of light which are used in moving lights for colour mixing.

CROSS FADE

Bringing another lighting state up to completely replace the current lighting state. Also applies to sound effects/music. Sometimes abbreviated to Xfade or XF.

DIMMER RACK

A number of individual lighting dimmer circuits built into a single case. Consists of a single power input, a lighting control (DMX512) input and sockets to connect lanterns. A dimmer rack can be set to respond to any control channel by setting its start address (known as “addressing” the rack).

FADE

A fade is an increase, diminishment or change in lighting or sound level.

FLOOD

A lensless lantern that produces a broad non-variable spread of light.

FOLLOWSPOT

Usually, a powerful profile lantern fitted with its own dimmer, iris, colour magazine and shutters mounted in or above the auditorium, used with an operator so that the light beam can be moved around the stage to follow an actor.

GENERAL COVER

Those lanterns in a rig which are set aside purely to light the acting areas. The stage is normally split into a number of areas for this purpose, which can then be isolated or blended together as required by the director.

GOBO

A thin metal plate etched to produce a design which can then be projected by a profile spotlight. There are hundreds of gobo designs available – common examples are breakup (foliage), windows and scenic (neon signs, city scapes etc.).

LANTERN

General term for unit of lighting equipment including spotlight, flood etc.

LIGHTING PLOT The process of recording information about each lighting state either onto paper or into the memory of a computerised lighting board for subsequent playback.

LIGHTS UP 1) Announcement that a section of the performance has begun
2) An increase in light level – usually a note by the lighting designer for her/his own reference.

LX

Used by some as a shorthand for lighting.

Performance Style

COMEDY A performance where there is a happy ending, with the intention of amusing and entertaining the audience.

EPIC THEATRE

Features of Epic Theatre include episodic scenes, a lack of tension, breaking the theatrical illusion through devices such as direct audience address, use of songs, projections and narration.

EXPRESSIONISM A term for theatre design and performance style which places greater value on emotion than realism. The trademark Expressionist effects were often achieved through distortion.

FORUM THEATRE

In this process the actors or audience members could stop a performance, often a short scene in which a character was being oppressed in some way. The audience would suggest different actions for the actors to carry out on stage in an attempt to change the outcome of what they were seeing.

IMMERSIVE THEATRE

Theatre in which the audience is part of the action. The performers will interact and guide the audience around a site or space or the audience may be free to wander and discover scenes. These plays are often SITE SPECIFIC.

MELODRAMA A Melodrama is a dramatic work that exaggerates plot and/or characters in order to appeal to the emotions.

METATHEATRE

Theatre about theatre itself, drawing the audience away from the notion of realism in theatre. Can also describe a play within a play.

NATURALISM/NATURALISTIC

A performance that attempts to replicate nature and present events and characters on stage as in real life. Naturalism attempts to hold up a mirror to nature and give the illusion of characters as actual people in real-life situations using everyday language.

PHYSICAL THEATRE

Performances which incorporate dance elements into a dramatic theatre performance.

REALISM

Realism in theatre describes a decision by the creative team to present the audience with an accurate depiction of the real world, rather than a stylised interpretation.

STYLE

Style refers to the way the actors perform, the visual characteristics of the setting and costumes, and the choice of conventions used.

STYLISED

Stylisation is the conscious process of emphasising and often exaggerating elements of the design or characteristics of a role.

SYMBOLISM/SYMBOLIC

Using symbols to suggest and communicate meaning to the audience.

THEATRE IN EDUCATION

Often abbreviated to T.I.E. The use of theatrical techniques to educate, covering social issues or topics on the school's syllabus.

Performance Space

AISLE

A passage through seating.

AUDITORIUM

The part of the theatre accommodating the audience during the performance. Sometimes known as the "house".

BACKSTAGE

The part of the stage and theatre which is out of the sight of the audience. The service areas of the theatre, behind, beside or underneath the stage.

CENTRE LINE

Imaginary line running down the stage through the exact centre of the proscenium opening. Marked as CL on stage plans.

CENTRE STAGE

The middle portion of the stage – has good sightlines to all seats of the auditorium.

CIRCLE

The balcony with tiered seating above the stalls in a traditional proscenium arch theatre.

DOWNSTAGE

The part of the stage nearest to the audience (the lowest part of a raked stage).

ELEVATOR STAGE

A type of mechanised stage which has sections that can be raised or lowered.

HOUSE 1) The audience

2) The auditorium

HOUSE LIGHTS

The auditorium lighting which is commonly faded out when the performance starts.

OFFSTAGE

The area out of sight of the audience.

RAKED AUDITORIUM

Audience seating area which is sloped, with its lowest part nearest the stage.

RAKED STAGE

A sloping stage which is raised at the back (upstage) end. All theatres used to be built with raked stages. Today, the stage is often left flat and the auditorium is raked to improve the view of the stage from all seats.

ROSTRUM

(plural ROSTRA) A portable platform, usually in the form of a collapsible hinged framework with a separate top.

STAGE

The part of the theatre on which performances happen.

STAGE DOOR

The backstage entrance to the theatre. Performers and technicians enter here.

Large theatres normally have a stage door keeper, who takes messages for performers and acts as a security guard for the entrance.

STAGE LEFT/RIGHT

Left/Right as seen from the Actor's point of view on stage, (i.e. Stage Left is the right side of the stage when looking from the auditorium).

STALLS

The lowest audience seating area, usually just below the level of the stage, in a proscenium theatre.

TRAP
An opening through the stage floor.
TRAP ROOM
The area directly below the trapped part of the stage. Used for accessing the traps.
TREADS
General name for any stage staircase or set of steps.
UPSTAGE
The part of the stage furthest from the audience.
WINGS
The out-of-view areas to the sides of the acting area.

Performance Venues

AMPHITHEATRE
Circular or oval open-air theatre with a large raked seating area (often semicircular) sloping down to the stage.
APRON
The Apron is a section of the stage floor which projects towards or into the auditorium.
BLACK BOX
A flexible studio theatre where the audience and actors are in the same room, surrounded by black tabs (curtains).
END ON
Traditional audience seating layout where the audience is looking at the stage from the same direction. This seating layout is that of a Proscenium Arch theatre.
FOUND SPACE
A performance space that wasn't designed to be one (e.g. historic buildings, factories, public areas).
IN THE ROUND
Theatre in the Round is a form of audience seating layout where the acting area is surrounded on all sides by seating. There are often a number of entrances through the seating. Special consideration needs to be given to onstage furniture and scenery as audience sightlines can easily be blocked.
PROMENADE
Form of staging where the audience moves around the performance space and sees the play at a variety of different locations.
PROSCENIUM ARCH
The opening in the wall which stands between stage and auditorium in some theatres; the picture frame through which the audience sees the play. The "fourth wall".
SITE-SPECIFIC THEATRE
A piece of performance which has been designed to work only in a particular non-theatre space.
THRUST
Form of stage which projects into the auditorium so that the audience is seated on at least two sides of the extended piece.
TRAVERSE
Form of staging where the audience is on either side of the acting area.

Practical Exploration

ARTEFACT

An object which might be used as a starting point in a drama activity. Artefacts (which on stage become props) can signify context, actions and meaning.

BACK STORY

Providing a history to a character or plot before the events in the play, scene or drama begin.

CROSS-CUTTING

This involves changing back and forth between scenes or episodes of action. The first scene runs up to a selected point and the action freezes or the lights fade out on it. As this happens, the second scene starts and runs up to another 'cutting point'. The action reverts (cuts) to a section of the first scene. The process of switching between scenes continues.

FREEZE FRAME

A technique for allowing a character to 'step out' of a scene and reveal something to the audience, while the rest of the action freezes.

HOT SEATING

A technique used to gain a deeper understanding of a character or role. An individual sits in a chair designated as the 'hot seat'. The rest of the group asks the person in the hot seat relevant questions about their feelings, thoughts, actions or circumstances. The person in the hot seat answers the questions in role or as they think the character they are playing would answer.

IMPROVISATION

Performing quickly in response to something or acting without previous planning. Spontaneous improvisation refers to making up a role as you go along. Prepared/planned improvisation refers to working and reworking within a structure of ideas and roles agreed in advance.

ROLE PLAY

Pretending to be someone (or something) else. Role play is generally confined to taking on a clearly defined role such as a doctor, a bus driver or teacher without any attempt at in-depth psychological analysis or understanding. What distinguishes it from acting is that role play is not intended for performance to an audience.

ROLE REVERSAL/ROLETRANSFER

When, during an improvisation or rehearsal for a scene, the actors swap the roles/characters they are portraying to gain a different view or understanding of their own role.

ROLE-ON-THE-WALL

A life-sized outline of a figure is drawn on the wall to represent a character or role being developed or explored. Members of the group take it in turns to write facts and information about the character/role within the outline. Physical details might all be written in the head area, for example, whereas things the character likes might be written in the right leg. Opinions and views from other people or characters can be added around the outside of the figure.

STILL IMAGE

Creating a picture to represent a frozen moment or to sum up what is happening in a drama. It is a useful technique for exploring the effects of positioning characters in relation to one another in terms of levels and proximity and to demonstrate non-verbal communication. It is often used with sculpting and thoughts in the head. (See also Tableau)

STIMULUS An artefact used as a starting point for devising original drama and theatre performances.

STORYBOARDING A series of images and/or text showing the sequence of the action planned for a play.

TABLEAU(X)

A dramatic grouping of characters. A tableau may not necessarily be a still or frozen image. It can be a general 'stage picture' during a sequence in a scene where dialogue may be spoken and gestures used. In tableau vivant, the performers are positioned to represent a picture or 'fresco', and props and costumes are often used as an integral part of the stage picture. Tableau can also be used to describe a pause on stage where all performers briefly freeze in position. This can typically be found at the end of scenes in Victorian melodramas. (See also STILL IMAGE)

TEACHER-IN-ROLE

When a class or group of participants in a drama accepts that the teacher (or leader) is going to play a role to which they are going to react and respond. The participants may or may not be in role.

TECHNIQUE

Used here to refer to drama forms, exercises, strategies and conventions that are widely used to develop understanding and explore meaning through the drama process. In a broader context, techniques encompass the whole range of physical and psychological processes and exercises that an actor might use to develop their skills as a performer.

THOUGHT TRACKING

An exercise that allows the inner thoughts of a character or role to be heard out loud. It is often used with freeze frame or still image, where a participant is asked to say what they are thinking at that point in time.

WRITING IN ROLE

An exercise where, for example, a letter, a diary or journal is written as if by the character or role being portrayed. It is a useful technique for work on building character.

Process

CALL

A notification of a working session (e.g. a Rehearsal Call, Band Call, Photo Call).

CHOREOGRAPHY

The art and craft of designing the moves, pace, flow, structure and execution of a

CUE 1) The command given to technical departments to carry out a particular operation

2) Any signal (spoken line, action or count) that indicates another action should follow.

CUE TO CUE

Cutting out action and dialogue between cues during a technical rehearsal, to save time.

CURTAIN CALL

At the end of a performance, the acknowledgement of applause by actors – the bows.

DE-RIG

The process of removing lanterns and cabling from flying bars or grid – returning the venue to its normal state, or as preparation for the next production.

DRESS REHEARSAL

A full rehearsal, with all technical elements brought together. The performance as it will be 'on the night'.

DRY RUN

A practice run, usually a technical run without actors.

ENCORE

An extension of the performance due to audience demand.

GET-IN

The process of moving set, props and other hardware into a theatre.

GET-OUT

Moving an entire production out of the venue.

INTERVAL

Break between sections of a performance.

REHEARSAL

A session when actors are called to work through some scenes from the play in private.

TECH

Short for Technical Rehearsal.

TECHNICAL REHEARSAL

Usually the first time the show is rehearsed in the venue, with lighting, scenery and sound. Costumes are sometimes used where they may cause technical problems e.g. Quick changes.

WALK THROUGH

Session on stage just after the set has been built (or reassembled) when actors and crew can go through moves to ensure all is as it should be, and to identify any problems before the performance.

WARM-UP

The Warm-Up prepares the actor's body for the performance by exercising (literally warming up) muscles, stretching limbs, and getting the cast to focus on the performance and to forget about anything outside the walls of the theatre.

Theatre Makers

ACTOR

Person (male or female) whose role is to play a character. Although the term 'actress' is still used for a female actor, many women prefer to have the same title as the men.

AMATEUR

Member of a theatre company which is not professional.

ASM

Assistant Stage Manager.

AUDIENCE

A group of people who participate in a show or encounter a work of art, literature, theatre, music, video games, or academics in any medium. Some types of performance (e.g. street theatre) call for greater audience involvement.

BIT PART

A small role for an actor.

CAST

The members of the acting company.

CHOREOGRAPHER

Member of the production team responsible for setting dances and movement sequences during the production.

COMPANY

The cast, crew and other staff associated with a show.

COSTUME DESIGNER

Member of the creative team for a show responsible for the clothes worn by the actors throughout the performance.

DANCER

Member of the company whose role is choreographed, and who has no spoken words.

DIRECTOR

Broadly, the role involves being responsible for the overall artistic vision of a production.

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Normally in charge of the programming of a venue. May also direct shows.

TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

In charge of the technical requirements of a production.

DRAMATIST

A playwright, composer or lyricist who takes an existing story and transforms it into a play or musical.

ENSEMBLE

An acting group. Normally used to describe a group of actors who work well together, with no-one outshining the others.

LYRICIST

Author of the text of a musical/the words of a song.

PLAYWRIGHT

The author of a play. Also known as a dramatist.

PROFESSIONAL

Normally used for someone who's regularly paid for a particular job (as opposed

to an amateur, who does it for fun).

SOUND DESIGNER

Member of the production team who has the responsibility for planning and executing the layout of all sound playback and reinforcement equipment for the show. This role also includes the sourcing of music and sound effects for the production.

STAGE CREW

Member of the Stage staff who is responsible for moving props and/or scenery during the show, and for ensuring that items under his/her responsibility are working correctly and properly maintained.

STAGE MANAGER

The Head of the Stage Management team comprising the deputy stage manager (DSM) and assistant stage manager (ASM). The DSM is normally "on the book" calling the cues from the prompt corner. The ASM supervises props.

UNDERSTUDY

A member of the cast of a musical or play who understudies one (sometimes more) of the principal roles and is also in the chorus.

USHERS

Members of Front-of-House staff who guide audience members to their seats, and often sit in the auditorium during the show in case of emergency.

WALK-ON

A small acting role with no lines.

Set

ACTION PROP

A hand-held practical prop used by an actor for combat or for a specific purpose.

BOX SET

Naturalistic setting of a complete room built from flats with only the side nearest the audience (the fourth wall) missing.

BRACE

- 1) Angled strengthening timber within a flat.
- 2) Support for scenery on stage.

BRACE WEIGHT

Slotted cast iron weight placed on foot of extendible or French brace to prevent movement. Often referred to as a 'Stage Weight'.

CLOTH

A piece of scenic canvas, painted or plain that is flown or fixed to hang in a vertical position.

A Backcloth

(or Backdrop) hangs at the rear of a scene.

A Star Cloth

(usually black) has a large number of small low-voltage lamps sewn or pinned through it which gives a magical starry sky effect.

COMPOSITE SETTING

A stage setting where several locations are represented in the same space and isolated or highlighted by lighting each area separately.

CYCLORAMA

(CYC) The Cyclorama is a curved plain cloth or plastered wall filling the rear of the stage.

DOOR FLAT

Scenery item consisting of a wall containing a working door.

DRESSING

(the set) Decorative props (some practical) and furnishings added to a stage setting are known as Set Dressing.

ENTRANCE

- 1) A part of the set through which actors can walk onto the stage.
- 2) The act of an actor walking onto the stage.

EXIT

- 1) A part of the set through which actors can leave the stage.
- 2) The act of an actor walking off the stage.

FLAT

A lightweight timber frame covered with scenic canvas, or plywood. Flats are used to provide a lightweight and easy-to-move-and-re-configure backdrop to a stage set. Flats sometimes have windows or doors built into them to provide extra flexibility, for use in realistic settings. Masking flats are used to hide areas the designer does not want the audience to see, or to provide actors with an exit, or somewhere to store props.

FOURTH WALL

The imaginary wall of a box set through which the audience see the stage. The fourth wall convention is an established convention of modern realistic theatre, where the actors carry out their actions unaware of the audience.

GAUZE

Cloth with a relatively coarse weave. Used unpainted to diffuse a scene played behind it. When painted, gauze is opaque when lit obliquely from the front and becomes transparent when the scene behind it is lit.

GROUNDPLAN

A scaled plan (overhead) view of the theatre stage area or of a set design, to enable all technical departments to ensure that everything will fit correctly into the space available.

MARKING OUT

Sticking tapes to the floor of the rehearsal space to indicate the groundplan of the scenery. Also for marking position of furniture etc. within a set.

MODELBOX

A wooden box representing the walls of a theatre space in which cardboard scale models can be placed by the set designer.

PROPS

(Properties) Furnishings, set dressings, and all items large and small which cannot be classified as scenery, electrics or wardrobe. Props handled by actors are known as hand props, props which are kept in an actor's costume are known as personal props.

SET

- 1) To prepare the stage for action.
- 2) The complete stage setting for a scene or act.

Technology/effects

AV

Short for Audio-Visual, referring to projected or screened video or textual material.

DIGITAL EFFECTS

Reverb, Delay, Phasing, Flanging, Harmonising, Chorusing.

DRY ICE

Frozen solid carbon dioxide (CO₂) at a temperature of -78.5° centigrade which produces clouds of steam-loaded CO₂ gas forming a low-lying mist or fog when dropped into boiling water.

FX Abbreviation for Effect.

PYROTECHNICS

(Pyro) Chemical explosive or flammable firework effects with a manual detonation. Usually electrically fired with specially designed fail-safe equipment.

RIGGING

General term for the systems and equipment that suspend lighting and scenic equipment above the stage or performance space.

SMOKE MACHINE

A Smoke Machine is an electrically powered unit which produces clouds of white non-toxic fog (available in different flavours/smells) by the vaporisation of mineral oil. It is specially designed for theatre & film use.

Sound

ACAPELLA

A sung performance which is not accompanied by musicians.

ACOUSTICS

The acoustic of a room depends on its size and shape and the amount and position of sound-absorbing and reflecting material.

AMBIENT NOISE

The sound heard in a room with no sound sources.

CONTROL ROOM

Room at the rear of the auditorium (in a proscenium theatre) where lighting and sometimes sound are operated from. The control room is usually soundproofed from the auditorium so that communications between operators cannot be heard by the audience.

MICROPHONE

Device for converting sound into electrical pulses which can then be amplified or recorded onto tape.

MIXER

A desk comprising a number of input channels where each sound source is provided with its own control channel through which sound signals are routed into two or more outputs.

RADIO MIC

Device consisting of a microphone head, transmitter pack with batteries, aerial and mains receiver unit which allows actors and singers to be amplified with no visible means of connection.

SOUND CHECK

A thorough test of the sound system before a performance. This will include checking each speaker cabinet individually, and each playback device. In the case of a live concert, this is the session when each instrument is played in turn for the sound engineer to check and fine-tune the sound.

SOUNDSCAPE

Using sounds to create an aural environment for a scene. A director or designer might develop a soundscape to create an atmosphere appropriate to the drama. Each individual might create a sound appropriate to accompany or introduce the scene. For example, one person might make sea sounds vocally while another imitates the cry of a seagull to suggest the seaside. Repeated words and phrases overlapping each other can also be used to suggest a location or to portray sounds in a character's head from a nightmare or series of flashbacks.

SX

Used by some as a shorthand for sound.

Other

ARTISTIC INTENTION The way the director (or ensemble) decides to realise the performance including decisions on the staging, performance style and design requirements. See also **VISION**.

ATMOSPHERE
The mood of a scene as it is understood by the audience.

AUDITION
Process where the director or casting director of a production asks actors/actresses/performers to show him/her what they can do.

CONTEMPORARY
A performance for a 21st century audience. See also **PRESENT-DAY**.

CONTEXT
The situation or circumstances in which a piece of drama is set or devised, including historical, cultural or social influences. Context may be explored using the 'W' questions: What? Who? Why? Where? When?

CONVENTION
Stage conventions or theatrical conventions are practices that have become accepted over time or that can be established within a performance piece. For example, it is a convention in pantomime that the Dame is played by a male performer and the Principal Boy by a female performer. 'Convention' may also be used to describe drama activities such as conscience corridor.

CULTURAL CONTEXT
The values and attitudes explored thematically in the text.

FORM
The shape and structure of a drama. In theatre, form is determined by the content of the drama (e.g. the way the playwright has constructed the narrative elements) and by the way it is presented (the choices made by actors, designers and directors in interpreting the material for performance). Form is closely associated with genre and these terms are often confused but they do not have the same meaning. For example, a play classified as in a naturalistic genre will be recognised by the audience as naturalistic by the form it takes on stage. (See also **GENRE** and **STYLE**)

HISTORICAL CONTEXT
The time/period the text was written and the playwright was writing, and the context within the text of when and where the narrative is set.

PRESENT-DAY
A performance for an audience today. See also **CONTEMPORARY**.

PROXEMICS
Proxemics means the distances between characters/actors in a play. It shows their relationships and feelings.

REALISATION
The performance that is viewed by an audience.

REPERTOIRE
A collection of regularly performed pieces or techniques, usually attributed to a particular performer or playwright.

SEMIOTICS

How meaning is created and communicated through systems of signs and symbols of drama. All of the elements that make up a theatrical performance have meaning and an audience 'reads' or interprets them to understand the events in the performance.

SOCIAL CONTEXT

The relationships and interactions between the characters and the events in the text.

SUSPENSION OF DISBELIEF

The idea that an audience watching a drama is willing to accept that what is happening on stage (or on film) is real.

VISION The description or record of the artistic intention for the performance.