



## Glossary of Theater Terms

**Acoustics** : How sound moves in a room depends on its size and shape and the amount and position of sound-absorbing and reflecting

**Act:**

- 1) sections of a play. A short play is a "One-Act-er" - a play with one interval has two Acts, etc. Acts are subdivided further into Scenes.
- 2) The thing Actors can do which makes them different from Techies.

**Acting area** : The area within the performance space where the actor moves in full view of the audience.

**Aisle:** A passage through the seating.

**Apron:** Section of the stage floor which projects towards or into the auditorium.

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

**Auditorium:** The part of the theatre accommodating the audience during the performance. Sometimes known as the "house". From the Latin Audio - "I hear".

**Backstage:** The part of the stage and theater that is out of the sight of the audience.

**Blackout:** Shut down of stage lighting.

**Blacks:** Black clothing worn by stage management during productions.

**Blocking:** Arranging moves to be made by the actors.

**“Break a leg”:** A superstitious and widely accepted alternative to "Good Luck" (it is considered bad luck to wish an actor good luck).

**Bridge:** A walkway, giving access to technical and service areas above the stage.

**Cast:** The members of the acting company.

**Casting:** The director or others choosing actors to perform the characters.

**Color Mixing:** Combining two or more lighting gels.

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

**Costumes:** Clothes worn by the actors onstage. Handled by the Wardrobe department.

**Cue:** The command given to technical departments to carry out a particular order. Or the signal an actor uses to begin a line or movement.

**Curtain Call:** At the end of a performance, the actors acknowledge the applause by audience - the bows.

**Dark:** Theater is closed to the public. Some theatres go dark temporarily during production periods, on Mondays or holidays and when the next show is in preparation on stage.

**Downstage:** The part of the stage nearest to the audience or a movement towards the audience.

**Dresser:** Helps actors with taking care of costumes and costume changes during the performance.

**Dress Rehearsal:** A full rehearsal that brings everything together.

**Footlights:** Lights that are sometimes recessed into the front edge of the stage, used to stop shadows made by overhead lighting.

**Gain:** The level of volume given to a signal or of a system.

**“Heads On Stage”:** A shouted warning (often just “Heads!”) for staff to be aware of actions above them.

**House:** The audience. (How full is the house tonight ?) and - The auditorium (The house is now open, please do not cross the stage)

**House Lights:** The theater lighting which is usually faded right before a show.

**Marking out:** Sticking tapes to the floor of the rehearsal space to show the ground plan of the scenery. Also for marking positions of furniture etc.

**Matinee:** Afternoon performance of a show.

**Microphone:** An instrument that is used to change voice waves into electrical pulses and on to an amplifier.

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**Offstage:** A motion near the closest side of the stage from the middle.

**Prompt Book:** The main copy of a script or score, containing all actors and technical cues, used by stage management.

**Props:** (Properties) Furnishings, set dressings, and any other item large and small which can't be as any scenery, electrical, or wardrobe. Props that are handled by actors are known as hand props - props, which are mostly kept in an actors costume, are known as personal props.

**Proscenium Arch:** An opening in a wall that stands between a stage and an auditorium in some theaters; the frame through which the audience sees a play.

**Public Address System:** The sound system of an auditorium. The "P.A."

**Rear of House (ROH):** Backstage area of an auditorium.

**Spotlight:** A light that shines down on a stage that shines on a group of people or one person.

**Stage Manager:** In charge of making sure things get done.

**Sound Check:** Testing the sound system before a show and checking each speaker.

**Teasers:** flats at each side of the stage to prevent the audience from seeing into the wings

**Runners:** Two curtains in the middle of the stage running horizontally. Also - people hired to do different things during the production of the play.

**Technical Rehearsal:** Most often the first time the play is rehearsed in the auditorium, with the lights, scenery and sound, and sometimes costumes.

**Upstage:** The part of the stage furthest from the audience. Also- when an actor moves upstage of another and causes the victim to turn away from the audience he is "upstaging". An actor upstages when he draws attention to himself away from the main action (by moving around, or over-reacting to onstage events) .