17 STAGE GLOSSARY

National Theatre PUBLIC ACTS

For community members

There are lots of words used in a theatre process! Below is a glossary to make sure everyone understands what is being said. There is no pressure to learn these, they are just here for you to refer here for you to refer to if/when useful.

A

- **Associate Choreographer**: Supports the work of the Choreographer to create and teach the dance/movement within the show.
- **Associate Director:** Supports the work of the Director, working with the company to build the structure and details of the show. They also act as a link between the Creative team and the Stage Management team.
- **Assistant Stage Manager:** Supports the Stage Manager backstage.
- **Auditorium:** The area of the theatre building where the seats and the stage are.

B

- **Backstage:** The area behind the stage, including the 'wings' area at the side of the stage, dressing rooms, and other areas not visible to the audience.
- **Black out:** When the lights on stage are turned off.
- **Blocking:** The planned movement and positioning of actors on stage during a performance. In rehearsals this will involve the Director working with the actor to decide how they will stand, sit or move around the stage for each of their lines.

C

- **Call:** The time an actor must be ready for a certain rehearsal or moment in the show.
- **Choreography:** Sequences of movement created by the Choreographer to tell parts of the story.
- **Chorus:** A group of actors who comment on the play's action
- **Costume:** The clothing worn by actors to represent their characters/who they are on stage.
- **Cue:** A signal (often verbal or visual) for an actor or technician to perform an action, such as entering, speaking a line, or starting a lighting change.
- **Curtain calls:** When the actors come back on stage at the end of the play to acknowledge the audience's applause.

D

- **Dialogue:** When two or more characters talk to each other.
- **Director:** Responsible for overseeing all aspects of thes how including the creative team, staging and overall vision.
- **Direct address:** When a performer speaks directly to the audience.
- **Deputy Stage Manager:** Responsible for ensuring the show runs smoothly and that all technical elements are co-ordinated during the performances.

- **Designer:** The creative lead responsible for the visual and physical world of the show.
- **Dress rehearsal:** A full rehearsal with costumes, lights, and other technical elements in place, simulating the actual performance.

E

- **Ensemble:** A group of actors who perform together as a group.

F

- **Fly system:** A system of ropes, pulleys, and counterweights used to raise and lower scenery, lighting, or other elements in a theatre.
- **Fourth wall:** The imaginary boundary between the actors and the audience; actors typically do not acknowledge the audience's presence. However, in some shows we will 'break' this fourth wall when the performers use direct address with the audience.
- **Freeze frame:** When actors create a frozen picture of action.

H

- **House:** The audience area of a theatre, including all seating and related spaces.
- **House lights:** The general lights that illuminate the audience before the performance begins and after it ends.

L

- **Lighting Designer:** Responsible for designing and controlling the lighting effects used during a performance.

M

- **Monologue:** A speech performed by only one actor.
- **Motivation:** The reason behind a character's actions or decisions in a scene or throughout the show.

N

- **Narrative:** A storyline or plot that runs throughout the show.

O

- **Offstage**: Any part of the theatre that is not visible to the audience, including backstage areas and wings.

P

- **Physical theatre:** When the story is told through movement and action.
- **Playwright:** The writer of a play or script.
- **Projecting:** When an actor expands their voice to fill the space of the venue so that the audience can hear every word.
- **Props:** Objects used by actors during a performance.

Q

- **Quick change:** A rapid costume change that happens during a performance, often between scenes.

R

- **Rig:** A structure for supporting and using anything that hangs over the stage, such as lighting or curtains.

S

- **Script:** The written text of the play.
- **Set Design:** The visual and physical onstage surroundings for a production.
- **Sound Designer:** Responsible for creating the sound world of the show, including recorded and live music.
- **Sound Engineer:** The person responsible for the production of sound effects, recorded field music and any live sound effects.
- **Stage Manager:** Responsible for organising and coordinating all aspects of the production during rehearsals and performances.
- **Staging:** The process of organising actors and design elements on stage to best present the story.
- **Subtext:** The underlying/indirect meaning behind spoken text.

U

- **Upstage:** The area of the stage furthest from the audience.

W

- **Wings:** The left and right sides of a stage that are unseen by the audience.
- **Warm-up:** Physical and vocal exercises performed by actors before rehearsals or performances.

AREAS OF THE STAGE:

Each area of the stage has a different name. The stage name always related to the actor, for example: stage right will be on the actor's right as they face the audience.

STAGE DIRECTIONS

Upstage RIGHT	Upstage CENTRE	Upstage LEFT
Stage RIGHT	Stage CENTRE	Stage LEFT
Downstage RIGHT	Downstage CENTRE	Downstage LEFT

Audience