

## **Drama & Theatre Studies:**

### **Wyke Start Summer work**

Respond to the following statement (between 100-150 words)

*“What is the Purpose of Theatre?”*

Please submit the work during enrolment

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Drama & Theatre Studies: Preparatory Work

Please revise the ATTACHED list of theatrical terms for the start of lessons in September.

## **Terminology YR1**

### **AUDITORIUM**

Where the audience sits. In traditional theatres, the audience and performers are separated by a curtain.

### **BACK-STORY**

A back story is a relatively new term that provides a history for a character.

### **BLACK BOX**

A performance space that has no distinguishing features to define space for audience and performers and is extremely flexible. This is usually painted black, with black curtaining and is a typical studio space, often used for workshops as well as for performances.

### **BLACKOUT**

When the lights go off to create complete darkness in a performance, usually to indicate the end of a scene, change of mood and time or place or the end of the performance.

### **BLOCKING**

The defining by the director of the actor's moves and positioning on stage usually early on in the rehearsal process and in relation to how the piece will eventually look for the audience.

### **BOX-SET**

A set that consists of three walls around a proscenium-arch stage with the proscenium opening as the fourth wall of the 'box'. The audience is looking into the world of the characters. Often this is seen as a traditional approach to defining space for the performance and a location for the audience.

### **CHRONOLOGICAL**

Something that is presented in order of the events as they occur in time.

### **CUE**

The line on which an actor should enter the scene or move to a different position to get ready to speak his line. In technical terms, a line at which an effect must happen, for example a change in light, sound effect or element of staging.

### **DEVISING**

Creating performance from a given stimulus, usually a collaborative process for actors.

### **DESIGNER**

Responsible for creating the look and feel of the production. There are usually a number of contributors to design in the professional theatre, each responsible for a particular aspect of design, including set, lighting and costume.

### **DIRECTOR**

The person in control of all aspects of the production, primarily in relation to the actors but also responsible for the ideas to inspire the design considerations to support the overall vision. Most directors will work collaboratively but will exercise the right to have the final say.

### **DOUBLING**

An actor taking on two roles within the performance – doubling up.

## DOWNSTAGE

The area of a traditional stage nearest to the audience.

## ELIZABETHAN THEATRE

From the time period of Queen Elizabeth I – usually associated with Shakespeare and Marlowe, but other influential playwrights were also at work during this period.

## EMOTION MEMORY

Stanislavskian rehearsal technique in which actors are encouraged to draw on past experiences to help develop their relationship with their character.

## EPIC THEATRE

A term from Brecht in which major world events are seen through the eyes of individuals.

## EPISODIC

A play written in short scenes or episodes that help create an almost cinematic feel for the performance and encourages a fast-paced production

## EXPOSITION

The means by which the plot of the play unfolds.

## FLAT

An oblong frame of timber, covered with either canvas or hardboard and painted to help represent a location. A number of flats could create a room for a box set, for example, or a forest scene if painted appropriately and situated around the acting area.

## FOURTH WALL

In relation to the traditional proscenium arch, the opening of the arch is often referred to as the fourth wall, with the audience looking through it into the life of the characters. Characters can be confined by the fourth wall – they don't look out at the audience – or they can break the fourth wall, step through the arch and look at the audience and, in some plays, address them directly.

## FRESNEL

A type of spotlight that has a lens of concentric ridged rings and projects a variable angle soft-edged beam.

## IMPROVISATION

Exploring character and situation to gain a greater understanding of the who, why and where of the relationships. Sometimes leads to performance but often used as a means of supporting more developed work around scripts.

## IN-YER-FACE

A term coined in the latter part of the twentieth century to group together plays by Patrick Marber, Sarah Kane and others to define the style and content as extremely challenging for the audience. Nothing was merely hinted at in these plays; it was all up front and on display, often in gory expletive detail.

## IN-THE-ROUND

A performance space in which the audience is seated around the actors with a performance taking place in the middle.

## INTERPRETATION

The approach to a text a director will adopt to create a version of the play in performance that has a particular stamp on it. Look at the work of Katie Mitchell, for example.

## JACOBEAN

Of the period of King James I of England and following on from the Elizabethan period.

## KITCHEN-SINK DRAMA

A term coined in the late 1950s to mean plays that represented a slice of working-class domestic life as seen in the work of John Osborne, for example.

## MELODRAMA

A style of performance developed in the latter half of the nineteenth century which had a major influence on the early days of British cinema. Melodramas were known for their 'stock' characters of villain, heroine and hero and they were often based on real-life characters - William Corder his murder victim, Maria Marten, for example.

## NATURALISM

Representation in performance which is as close as possible to real life.

## NON-LINEAR

A play that has a structure that moves backwards and forwards in time in relation to the events unfolding for the audience. It may start with the final scene and then go back to the beginning to show how the events unfolded to create this moment.

## NOTES

The director's observations usually during final rehearsals and first performances to help the company to fine tune the performance based on audience response.

## PHYSICAL THEATRE

A term from the late twentieth century to mean an approach to performance that uses highly developed physical skills to represent character and situation, with actors often representing location as well as the characters in the performance.

## PHYSICALITY

An actor's ability to embody a character by use of movement and gesture.

## PLOT

The story of the drama – what happens to who and why.

## PRE-LIFE

A Stanislavskian technique of looking at what was going on in the life of a character before the events of the play, used to help an actor gain a greater understanding of why a character may react in a particular way in the life of the play.

## PRE-SET

The stage space as set before the production starts and what the audience sees when the curtains open or the lights go up.

## PROSCENIUM

The traditional picture frame type of stage, usually – but not always – with a curtain. The audience look through the arch to the actors who are separated from them by the frame. This type of staging is usually, but not always, associated with the box set.

#### PROXEMICS

Establishing relationships between actors and between actors and audience through exploring stage positioning and usually defined during the blocking process of rehearsal.

#### RAKE

The angle of slope from upstage to downstage in a traditional theatre space. The slope was originally included for better sightlines, in effect tilting the stage towards the audience so they could see better. Some rakes were so steep in some theatres that they created a real challenge for set builders. Most modern theatres have the audience banked rather than the stage which tends to be looked down on by the audience in a traditional Greek style.

#### RIG

A lighting term to mean to set the lights in position. The word is also used to mean the finished positioning of the lantern – the rig.

#### ROSTRUM

A platform, both moveable or fixed that raises the action above floor level.

#### SITE-LINES

Can all of the audience see everything within the performance space that they need to see?

#### SITE-SPECIFIC

A performance that takes place in a location that is reflected somehow within the piece itself – a Georgian house under renovation, for example, may provide an opportunity for site specific work looking at the generations of families who have lived there.

#### TECHNICAL REHEARSAL

Often combined with the dress rehearsal. An opportunity to go through all of the technical elements to make sure that everything works as it should do as close as possible to the performance but giving enough time to work on things that may cause concern.

#### THOUGHT-TRACKING

A rehearsal technique that involves actors speaking the inner thoughts of characters in order to indicate a level of understanding behind the lines.

#### THRUST STAGE

A stage that comes out into the audience that creates a platform for the actors very close to the audience. Traditionally this is associated with the Globe Theatre.

#### TOTAL THEATRE

Associated with Physical Theatre and arising from the work of, amongst others, Steven Berkoff. Total Theatre immerses the actor completely in the exploration of physical representation of character and situation.

#### THEATRE OF CRUELTY

The theatre of Antonin Artaud. A forerunner of In Yer Face Theatre that challenges the audience on every level and sets out to make them think about the human condition.

Artaud's use of the word 'cruelty' needs further exploration as it encompasses a range of ideas for performers and designers as well as audience.

#### TRAGEDY

A style of theatre stemming from Ancient Greece and developed through the centuries by playwrights, most famously Shakespeare, in which the protagonist or hero suffers serious misfortune, usually as a result of human and divine actions.

#### WINGS

The sides of the stage from which entrances and exits can be made.