Theatre 100: Introduction to Theatre
-- Instructor: Mr. Larry Wild --
-- Winter - Spring 2004 --

Syllabus

Sample exam questions
[First Quiz] [Second Quiz] [Third Quiz] [Final Quiz]

Supplemental Instruction
Thursday at 8pm
MJ 307
[ Lecture Notes ] [ Upcoming Area Productions ] [ Links ]

Instructor:
Larry Wild, Assistant Professor of Theatre
Office: JFAC 124A
Phone: 626-2513
Office Hours: 2pm to 3pm, Monday through Friday or by appointment
E-mail address: wildl@northern.edu
Home Page: http://www.northern.edu/wild/index.htm

Course objective:
To provide the student with the fundamental knowledge of the development of western drama and the techniques of the theatrical arts of acting, directing and design.

Texts:

Text:

Plays...
*The Taming of the Shrew* by William Shakespeare
*A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen
Both plays are available at the Book Store, the Library or on the InterNet
Supplemental material:


Expectations:

In addition to *attending class*, each student is expected to...

1. *Attend and review* one live theatrical productions *and* work four hours in the scene or costume shop, **OR**...
2. *Attend and review* one live theatrical production *and* write a short (2 to 4 pages) essay on *either The Taming of the Shrew* by William Shakespeare or *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen
   Your paper should include...
   1. A brief plot summary and answers to the following six questions...
   2. What was the playwright attempting to say?
   3. What "mood" did the play create?
   4. Which scene stood out most clearly?
   5. Which character was most memorable?
   6. Which characters, if any, were difficult to understand?
   7. Do you think this play would attract a modern audience?

   *Drama Essays are due Friday, April 23, 2004, OR*...

3. Actively participate as performer or crew in *A Doll's House* or *The Guys*.

After attending a performance the student should write a short review (approximately one page) answering the following two questions:

1. Which character did you find most memorable?
2. What was the most "enjoyable" moment in the show?

*Play Reviews* (with programs attached) are due the week following the performance. Late papers (*Reviews and Drama Essays*) will receive reduced credit.

*No papers will be accepted after Friday, April 30, 2004.*

Grading:

The class grade is determined through a point system. Points are earned on the four exams, the outside activities (play attendance, lab work, essays) and attendance. The following scale will be used to determine grades: 93% of the *top score* will be an A; 92 to 85%, a B; 84 to 75%, a C; 74 to 65%, a D; below 65% will be an F.
Attendance Policy:
Attendance is taken during class lectures. A student will earn one (1) point for each Sign-In sheet he/she signs, and one half (1/2) point for each excused absence. It is the student’s responsibility to notify me in writing of all excused absences.

Make-up Exams:
Make-up Exams will contain mini-essay, and short answer questions, not the true/false or multiple-choice questions used during the regular class exams. Make-up exams may be scheduled anytime before the end of the term.

Disability Policy:
If you have a physical, psychiatric/emotional, medical or learning disability that may impact on your ability to carry out assigned course work, I urge you to contact the staff in the Office of Disability Services (ODS), (Karen Gerety, Coordinator), Student Center 217, 626-2371. The staff will review your concerns and determine, with you, what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation of disability is confidential.

Upcoming Area Productions

- **South Dakota High School One Act Play Festival**
  Presented by the SDHAA
  Thursday, February 5 through Saturday, February 7.
  Link to the [2003-2004 State One-Act Play Schedule](#) (a PDF document)

- **A Doll's House**
  by Henrik Ibsen, Adapted by Frank McGuinness
  Presented by the NSU Theatre
  Wednesday, February 18, through Saturday, February 21 at 7:30 pm.

- **My Way, A Musical Tribute to Frank Sinatra**
  Presented by the Aberdeen Community Theatre
  Wednesday, March 10, through Saturday, March 13 at 7:30 pm.
  Saturday, March 13 at 2:00pm

- **The Guys**
  by Anne Nelson
  Presented by the NSU Theatre
  Wednesday, April 14, through Saturday, April 17 at 7:30 pm.

Lecture Notes

Introduction
1. Theatre and the Internet
2. Experiencing Theatre
3. Audiences and Critics
4. Stage Performers
5. The Director and the Producer
6. Theatre Spaces
7. Designers: Scenery and Costumes
8. Designers: Lighting and Sound
   First Little Quiz
9. The Playwright: Subject, Focus, Purpose, and Dramatic Structure
10. The Text: Dramatic Genres
11. Playwriting: The Process
12. Film History
13. Film Production
14. Radio: History and Production
15. Television: History and Production
   Second little Quiz
16. Greek and Roman Theatre
17. Medieval Theatre
18. Renaissance Theatre: Italy
19. Renaissance Theatre: England
20. Renaissance Theatre: France
   Third little Quiz
21. Theatre from 1660 to 1875: Restoration and 18th Century
22. Theatre from 1660 to 1875: Nineteenth Century
23. Modern Theatre: 1875 to 1945
24. Modern Theatre: 1945 to 1990: The Drama
   Fourth (and Final) Comprehensive Quiz

Links

Theatre and Drama

- Playbill On-Line
  A searchable listing of shows playing in New York, both on and off Broadway.
- nytheatre.com
  The internet source for the New York Theatre scene
- The London Theatre Guide -- On Line
  Answers the question: What’s playing in London?
- Shakespeare's Globe Research DataBase
  A site dedicated to providing background information on Shakespearean performance in original conditions
• **The WWW Virtual Library - Theatre and Drama**
The Theatre and Drama section of the *World Wide Web Virtual Library.*

• **Ken McCoy's Brief Guide to Internet Resources in Theatre and Performance Studies**
One of the most complete list of links to theatre web sites.

• **The Complete Works of William Shakespeare**
The title says it all.

### Film and Television

• **MovieWeb Home Page**
Links to Web Pages (and statistics) for movies released during the past three years.

• **Movies Top 25 Boxoffice Winners of the Past Weekend**
The title says it all. Updated every Thursday.

• **The Internet Movie Database**
A searchable index with more information on movies and the people who make them, than you could possibly ever use.

• **ABC | CBS | NBC | FOX | PBS**
Links to the four commercial and one non-commercial American broadcast networks.

• **KELO-Channel 3 | KDLT-Channel 5 | KSFY-Channel 13 | SD Public Broadcasting**
Links to local broadcasters.

### Search Engines

• **Google.Com**
Search 2,469,940,685 web pages.

• **AltaVista**
One of the fastest and most complete internet search engine.

• **Google Groups**
The source for almost spam-free Internet Discussion Groups. Browse or search the *rec.arts.theatre* Discussion Groups...
  - **rec.arts.theatre**
  - **rec.arts.theatre.plays**
  - **rec.arts.theatre.musicals**
  - **rec.arts.theatre.stagecraft**
  - **rec.arts.theatre.misc**

E-mail questions and comments to Larry Wild at wildl@northern.edu.
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Theatre and the Internet

Resources

Internet...
McCoy’s Brief Guide to InterNet Resources in Theatre and Performance Studies
Evaluating Internet Sources
PASS - An educator’s tool for web evaluation

The Internet, a world wide network of computers, has become a major source of information for both the theatre professional (playwright, director, actor, designer) and the potential theatre audience.

1. What is the difference between the World Wide Web (WWW)...

The World Wide Web is a HyperText information retrieval system. Web Pages are published on servers (computers) which can be accessed by a browser (such as Netscape or MicroSoft Internet Explorer) from anywhere in the world. In the entertainment industry, most Web Pages are published either by the advertising department of the producing organization (an official page) or by a fan who is in love with the show or with one of the stars (a fan page).

Discussion Groups, and an...

Discussion Groups, originally called Usenet News Groups, are organized around specific topics. Posting to these groups (also known as Forums) can be read with a NewsReader if your internet service provider (ISP) provides a news feed, or through groups.Google.com, a Web based service which can retrieve articles posted to more than 40,000 news groups. There are four theatre forums under the rec.arts.theatre classification.

- rec.arts.theatre.plays - Dramaturgy and discussion of plays.
- rec.arts.theatre.musicals - Musical theatre around the world.
- rec.arts.theatre.stagecraft - Issues in stagecraft and production.
- rec.arts.theatre.misc - Miscellaneous topics and issues in theatre.

Unlike the World Wide Web, Discussion Groups and E-mail lists are text only services. You can ask questions, make comments, but you can not post pictures or drawings.

E-mail list?
An E-Mail list, often called a listserve, is similar to a discussion group. Unlike the rec.arts.theatre forums which can be read by anyone with access to the Internet, an article posted to an e-mail list can only be read by members of that list. After subscribing, comments and questions E-mailed to the list are forwarded to all of the list’s members.

A list can either be moderated or unmoderated. In a moderated list, all posts must first be approved by the moderator (or owner) before they will be forwarded. In an unmoderated list, the forwarding is done automatically by the listserv software.

Each list has two E-mail addresses. One which handles the administrative functions such as "Subscribe" and "Sign Off" and a second which receives and forwards the members questions and comments. A directory of theatre related mailing lists is included in McCoy's Brief Guide to InterNet Resources in Theatre and Performance Studies.

I subscribe to two-- a general list (Theatre) and a technical list (StageCraft).

- Members of the Theatre Mailing List, which was begun by Theodore Soldatos at the University of Crete, are primarily playwrights, actors and directors. Many (but probably not most) are either professors or students at educational institutions.
  - To join the Theatre list, send a blank email message to:
    TheatreDiscussionLst-SUBSCRIBE@onelist.com
  - To post a message to THEATRE, send it to:
    TheatreDiscussionLst@onelist.com

- The StageCraft Mailing List is for the discussion of all aspects of theatrical production: scenery, costumes, lights, props, sound and special effects. The over 1400 subscribers include theatre professionals, vendors, teachers, and students. Go to http://www.theprices.net/lists/stagecraft/ for more information and a searchable archive.
  - To join the StageCraft list, send a blank email message to:
    subscribe-stagecraft@theatre.mtsu.edu
  - To post a message to StageCraft, send it to:
    stagecraft@theatre.mtsu.edu

- During the academic year, both lists handle a large amount of traffic. It is not unusual to receive 50 messages a day from StageCraft.
Material covered ranges from the profound to the dumb. Most of the material winds up in my computer’s ReCycle Bin. Some of the posts I read in class and others appear (with credit) on the Intro Web Pages.

2. How do I discover what shows are playing in New York?

Two Web Pages, Playbill On-Line (www.playbill.com) and nytheatre.com (nytheatre.com) publish theatre listings for both Broadway and Off-Broadway houses. Playbill On-Line (www.playbill.com) also carries information on American regional theatres, national tours, and summer stock companies.

3. I want to find out more information about Henrik Ibsen, where do I start?

Start by going to the library. A quick "Keyword" search of Northern State University’s Williams Library brought up a list of 54 titles. Next I would go to the Web and type "Henrik Ibsen” (in quotation marks) into the search box of one of the many search engines.

4. Which search engine should I use?

I would start with Google (www.google.com) and follow up with AltaVista (www.altavista.com), one of "the most powerful and useful guide(s) to the Net." Using two different search engines will give a more complete list of sites. Since each engine has it’s own ranking criteria and site index, the links, and their order, will not be the same. A Google search on "Henrik Ibsen,” (Google Results: Henrik Ibsen) yielded 79,900 hits. An AltaVista search on "Henrik Ibsen,” (AltaVista Results: Henrik Ibsen) yielded 23,894 hits. The server compiled a link-list of 200 Web pages.

5. Why do I need to enclose the playwright's name in quotation marks?

Normally, when the Keyword is a phrase such as the name of a playwright, actor or designer; or the title of a play, film, opera or ballet, that phrase is enclosed in quotation marks. Depending on the search engine, the use of quotation marks can create a more manageable, and accurate, list of links. For more information on search techniques, link to the Help Web Pages provided by each search engine.

6. Where can I research screen writers, film actors, and movie titles?

The Internet Movie Database (us.imdb.com) has information on over 200,000 film and television titles, 400,000 screen actors and 40,000 movie directors. This site will answer...

- Who wrote the screen play for Gone With the Wind?
In how many films was James (or Jimmy) Stewart cast?
What was Orson Welles first directorial assignment?

A similar site, the Internet Broadway Database (www.ibdb.com), has been developed by the League of American Theatres and Producers, the official voice of the New York Broadway Theatre. The database can be searched by...

- Show title, (Hello, Dolly!).
- Name of an actor -- producer, director, playwright, designer... (Carol Channing), or
- A specific Broadway theatre (St. James Theatre).

7. What is an "official" site?

An official site is usually developed and published by the owner of the property. Many Broadway musicals as well as most films produced within the last five years have an official Web site. The URL is usually www.titleofshow.com.

An unofficial "fan" site?

An unofficial fan site is a personal Web Page developed by a fan who has no official connection with the production. There is only one official Web site for James Cameron's 1997 Academy Award winning Titanic-- www.titanicmovie.com, there are countless unofficial Titanic Web Pages. For many older works--films, radio and early television programs--there are no official sites and their only Web presence are fan pages.

8. How do I evaluate the information I locate on the Web?

Check the purpose of the site, the authority of the author, the scope of the material and the professionalism of the selected Web Page. For more information link to Evaluating Internet Sources and/or PASS - An educator's tool for web evaluation at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota.

- What is the purpose of the Web site?
  - Why was it developed?
  - Look at the domain name. Is it a commercial (*.com), educational (*.edu) or non-profit organizational (*.org) site?
  - Is it an "official" or an unofficial "fan" page?
  - Is there advertising? If so, what are they trying to sell?
- What is the authority of the author?
  - Who created the Web page?
  - What are their credentials?
o What other articles have they published in magazines, journals, books, or other web sites.

• What is the scope of the material?
  o What information is covered?
  o Who is the intended audience?
  o Do links to other Web Pages expand the scope of the work?

• Does the page look professional?
  o How is the material presented?
  o Is it appropriate for the intended audience?
  o Can the information be verified from other sources?
  o Do the links work?
  o When was this page last updated?

Theatre Home Page
Experiencing Theatre

Resources

Text...


1. In today's world what is the primary difference between drama and theatre?

   **Drama** is the script or text. **Theatre** is either (1) the place of performance or (2) the performance of a dramatic work. As one writer put it, drama is on the page and theatre is on the stage.

2. What is the original source language of these two terms?

   Greek.

3. What is the rough English translation of the two source terms?

   **Theatre**: To see.
   **Drama**: To do.

4. Is there a difference, besides the spelling, between "theatre" and "theater"?

   No. **Theatre** is the British spelling and **theater** is the American spelling. In the 1830's, Noah Webster, of dictionary fame, created an American spelling for a number of British words. **Colour** became color, **centre** became center, and **theatre** became theater. Most of those in the acting profession, many of whom were originally British, continued to use the *re* spelling. Today, both spellings are used in the United States. Those in the profession still generally use the *re* spelling, the rest of America uses the *er* spelling. Wilson and Goldfarb chose the *er* spelling for **Theater: The Lively Art** because it is "less formal."

5. Who was Aristotle?

   Aristotle (384-322 BC) was an ancient Greek theorist who in *The Poetics* (335 BC), outlines the beginnings of drama, develops a structured approach to dramatic analysis and presents a definition of drama.
What was his definition of drama?

Drama is an imitation of men in action.

6. According to Wilson and Goldfarb, what is the "heart of the theater experience?"

The live relationship between the performer and the audience. "During a stage performance the actress and actors can hear laughter, can sense silence, and can feel tension in the audience. In short, the audience can affect, and in subtle ways change, the performance." (Wilson and Goldfarb, page 6).

7. What are the tree categories of art?

Literary, visual, and performing..

8. What are the performing arts?

Theatre, dance, opera and music. Film, according to Wilson and Goldfarb, is an art form in its own right containing elements of both the visual and performing arts.

9. What characteristics do all the performing arts have in common?

They all require a creator, interpreter, and an audience. They also require that the interpreter and audience occupy the same space at the same time.

10. What are the six major elements of theatre?

Performers, audience, director, theatrical space, the technical aspects of sets, lights, costumes and sound; and the script (or text).

11. According to Eric Bentley (1916- ), what are the three essentials for a theatrical performance?

An actor (or performer), a character (developed by the playwright in the script), and an audience.

12. Why is theatre not a pure art?

Theatre, in performance, is produced by the collaboration of many theatrical artists: performers, directors, designers, producers, managers, writers...
13. What are the responsibilities of these collaborators?

**Performer (Actor):** Takes the character developed by the playwright and turns him into a living creation on stage.

**Director:** Is responsible for developing a dramatic interpretation of the playwright’s script. He spends most of his time working with the performer.

**Scene Designer:** Develops the drawings (plans and elevations) necessary to build and paint the sets. Supervises the set and property crews.

**Costume Designer:** Develops the drawings (costume plate) necessary to build the costumes worn by the performers. Supervises the costume, or wardrobe crew.

**Lighting Designer:** Develops the drawings (light plot) and charts (hook-up chart and cue sheet) necessary to hang, focus, and cue the lights for a production. Supervises the light, or electric crew.

**Producer:** Is the head (boss) of the production company. He chooses the play, or property; and is responsible for raising the funds necessary to mount the show.

**Managers:** Are middle management. They organize, and supervise, the work of the actors, production crew, and house staff. The **stage manager**, for example, is the back stage boss. He keeps a written record of the play’s interpretation (prompt book), calls all of the technical cues (lights, scenery) during performance, and is responsible for maintaining the "integrity" of the production once it has opened.

**Playwright:** Writes the text of the play. He develops the characters, outlines the plot, and presents this creation to the audience through dramatic dialogue.
Audiences and Critics

Resources


**1. What is a performance?**

Anytime a show is presented before an audience. An audience is anyone watching the show who is not directly involved in the production.

**How does it differ from a rehearsal?**

There is no audience for a rehearsal.

**2. How does the audience participate in a performance?**

By reacting to the actor's performance.

**3. How does the audience participation effect the performance of a play?**

The actors will react to the audience’s reaction, creating a circular response.

**4. Why does Wilson and Goldfarb not include films and television in their definition of theatre?**

Because in a film or television performance, the actor can not respond to the audience’s reactions.

**5. What is aesthetic distance?**

The mental force which reminds the audience that they are in a theatre, and what is happening on stage is not real.

**Empathy?**
The mental force which tells the audience that these characters on stage are "real people" with real problems, and they should be concerned with these people's problems.

6. What is the difference between illusion, delusion, and reality, as it pertains to a live theatre production?

   **Illusion**: The audience knows what is happening on stage is not real, but will accept it as real for the two hours of the show.

   **Delusion**: The audience believes what is happening on stage is real, but they are innocent bystanders, and are not involved in the action.

   **Reality**: The audience not only believes what is happening on stage is real, but believe that it is happening to them.

7. Which is the standard audience reaction of an adult audience?

   Illusion

   Of a children's audience?

   Delusion

8. What is the difference between a reviewer and a critic?

   A *reviewer*, who describes a production and gives his opinion on how well it was done, writes for a general audience. The *critic*, on the other hand, who analyzes the play in greater detail, writes for an audience of theatre people: directors, designers, actors. It is assumed that a *critic* has a solid knowledge of theatre history, dramatic literature, and theatrical production. A *reviewer*, on the other hand, may be anyone with an opinion. *Reviews* are typically published in a newspaper are magazine; *criticism*, on the other hand, appears in academic journals and theatrical magazines.

9. What are the three criteria for theatrical criticism?

   Nineteenth century German playwright: Johann Wolfgang Goethe established the three criteria of theatrical criticism...

   1. What is the playwright attempting to do?
   2. Was it well done?
   3. Was it worth doing?

10. What is the difference between descriptive and prescriptive criticism?
A **descriptive critic**, such as the Greek philosopher Aristotle (384-322 BC), describes what is happening on stage. A **prescriptive critic**, such as Roman playwright Horace (65-8 BC), not only describes the performance, but suggests what the playwright and actors should have done. "Since the time of Aristotle and Horace, critics have tended to fall into one category or the other: either analyzing and describing, or setting down rules." (Wilson and Goldfarb, page 34).
Stage Performers

Resources

Text...


Outside reading...


1. What is the actor's function?

   To turn the dramatic character developed by the playwright into a living breathing human being. Acting is "impersonating a character in a dramatic presentation before an audience." (Wilson and Goldfarb, page 38)

2. What is the difference between the actor and the character he is creating?

   The actor is the artist, the character is the work of art. The problem is that they inhabit the same body. Acting, according to Jeremy Kareken (karekenj@idt.net) is "infusing a play's character with the life of the actor; it's offering up the soul of personality."

3. What is the mechanical external approach to acting, and how does it differ from the psychological internal approach?

   In the external approach, the actor re-creates (without becoming emotionally involved) the external signs of the character's emotions.

   In the internal approach, the character grows from within the actor. The actor is personally involved with the character.

4. What was the Delsarte System?
French actor, opera singer, and teacher, François Delsarte (1811-1871) believed that a character's emotional state could be projected to the audience through a formal set of gestures, postures, and physical attitudes. This became the basis of the *Delsarte System of Expression* published in 1885 by Genevieve Stebbins. This system was used in the actor training programs, such as the American Academy of Dramatic Arts and Emerson's School of Oratory, developed during the last fifteen years of the 19th century. Although the this approach was replaced by the Stanislavski method in the 20th century, the influence of Delsarte can still be seen in American Modern Dance. The *Delsarte Exercises* to the left from *Pastimes at Home and School: A Practical Manual of Delsarte Exercises and Elocution* (1897) illustrate a posture for discovery, mourning, and supplication. This formal, conventional approach to acting can be seen in silent films such as DW Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* (1915) and *The Phantom of the Opera* (1925) starring Lon Chaney. Links are to the Internet Movie Database.

5. Who was Constantin Stanislavski?

Stanislavski (1863-1938) was a Russian actor and director who developed a "method" to train his fellow actors at the Moscow Art Theatre. He wanted his actors to discover, and project, the "inner truth" of the character, so the performance would be real to the audience.

With which approach is he associated?

Psychological internal. As Norman B. Schwartz (*ilprof@thegrid.net*) has posted to the Theatre Discussion List

KS [Stanislavski] felt that when an actor truly experienced what the character was living under imaginary circumstances, the many layers of meaning in the play would be revealed in a way that would rid it of clichés. He contended that his method of acting was more effective than illustration or indication of emotion by calculated poses and tricks of voice and gesture. If the actor believed in the imaginary circumstances, revealing the subtleties of the text by truthful action rather than rhetoric, the audience
would see things in the play that had been hidden previously by poor or lazy acting. KS insisted upon more [from] the actor, and particularly [from] an ensemble of actors, than many directors who preceded him.

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6. When did he live?

The Stanislavski method was developed during the first two decades of the 20th century. He wrote four books: My Life in Art (1924), An Actor Prepares (1936), Building a Character (1949), and Creating a Role (1961).

Where?

Moscow.

7. What was the American home of the Stanislavski method?

The American home of "The Method" is the Actor's Studio, founded in 1947 by Elia Kazan (the director of Streetcar Named Desire), Robert Lewis and Cheryl Crawford. Only about 800 artists have been admitted to Studio membership. Collectively, they have received more than 150 Oscar, Tony and Emmy awards. In 1995 the Actor's Studio became the Actors Studio Drama School, a division of the New School University (originally the New School for Social Research) in New York City.

Who was its master teacher?

Lee Strasburg (1901-1982). In 1979 he joined George Burns and Art Carney in a film comedy about three retired men who were Going in Style.

8. Who was its first celebrated pupil?

Marlon Brando (1924- ). Other actors who are part of the studio include Alec Baldwin, Robert DeNiro, Sally Field, Gene Hackman, Dustin Hoffman, Dennis Hopper, Walter Matthau, Jack Nicholson, Al Pacino, and Gene Wilder.

What was his (Marlon Brando's) first major New York success?

Tennessee William's Streetcar Named Desire (1948) which was directed by Eli Kazan, one of the founders of the Actor's Studio.
9. Briefly outline the seven steps of the Stanislavskian approach (or method) to acting?

1. The actor needs a **trained body and voice**.
2. He must know "stage technique."
3. He must be a **skilled observer of life**, and be able to re-call what he observes.
4. He must **analyze the script** to determine his character’s *motivation* -- his *spine* or *major-objective*.
5. He should become **emotionally involved** with the character he is creating while he is on stage.
6. He must **concentrate** on the character he is creating, pushing everything else out of his mind.
7. He must **continually work** on perfecting his art and craft.

10. **How can an actor prepare his body and voice for the stage?**

   An actor can prepare his voice by taking **voice (singing) lessons** and his body by taking **fencing (sword fighting) lessons**. He must learn to sensitize his physical instrument, his body, to respond appropriately to the emotional or attitudinal changes within his character.

11. **What is stage technique?**

   The skill necessary to adapt everyday life to the conventions of the stage. There are techniques for walking, talking on the phone, opening a door, sitting in a chair, firing a gun, eating food, etc.

12. **Why must an actor be a skilled observer of life?**

   Because it is one of his primary research tools. He builds his character from these observations.

13. **What is emotional recall?**

   The actor's ability to recall an experience from his past, and re-live that experience on stage.

   **The magic if?**

   The actor, asking himself, "If I was this character, what would I do?"

14. **What is the difference between a character's text and his sub-text?**
The **text** is the lines written by the playwright. The **sub-text** is the meaning behind those lines. It is the "action" which is implied instead of stated. The cast should have a shared immersion in the playwright's text. Not an immersion that provides all the answers, but one that offers multiple possibilities. Such an immersion does two things:

1. It forces the actor to make choices, rather than respond in a way predetermined either by themselves or by their director, and
2. It makes them respectful of the choices made by the other actors in the ensemble.

**What is a character's spine, or major objective?**

A character’s **spine**, using Stanislavski’s terminology, is the character’s major goal or objective, the internal force which drives the character’s choices. For example, Hamlet’s spine may be *to cleanse the court of Denmark.*

**15. Why must the actor concentrate on the character he is creating?**

It is the actor's concentration which makes it possible for the actor to ignore everything else that is happening around him.

**16. What is an actor's most difficult problem?**

To make each performance new and fresh. To make the audience believe that this is the first time that this "happening" is occurring. The secret to keeping a performance fresh is listening. As Broadway director Warren Enters has said "Acting is about listening and responding honestly. If you really are listening you will be able to react honestly to what you are hearing. It is about being absolutely present in the moment and listening."

**17. What is the economic reality of the acting profession?**

An actor spends much of his time out of work. There may be two or three months between shows. For every fifteen auditions, he is lucky to be cast in one show. The minimum weekly salary (or "scale") for a New York based Equity actor ranges from $453 (for a small 100 seat off-Broadway house) to $1,354 (for a first class Broadway production). An actor's income is very unstable. He may make less than a thousand dollars one season, and twenty thousand the next. Most actors have other jobs (as a waiter, secretary, salesman, teacher, model, etc) that they rely on for their bread and butter.

**18. Why is an actor "always on the road?"**
Outside of New York, LA, and possibly Chicago a professional actor is usually unable to find enough shows in one community to make a living. So he will perform for four weeks in Seattle, then do six weeks in Atlanta, five weeks in Minneapolis, etc.

19. Which union represents the actor?

**AEA: Actor's Equity Association.** AEA is a member of the Associated Actors and Artistes of America (the 4As), an umbrella organization which also includes the Screen Actors Guild (SAG), the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA), the American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA), the American Guild of Variety Artists (AGVA), the Guild of Italian American Actors (GIAA), and the Hebrew Actors Union (HAU).

20. How do you become a member of this union?

You become a member of Equity when you are cast in an Equity production. You may also join Equity through its fifty week "Membership Candidate Program." The candidate learns the art through nearly a years experience in the acting company of Equity approved theatres.

Theatre Home Page

E-mail questions and comments to Larry Wild at wildl@northern.edu.
Last updated: September 16, 2003
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The Director and the Producer

Resources

Text...


Outside reading...


Internet...

*nytheatre.com* Another searchable listing of New York shows.

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The Director

1. When and where did directing, as a creative theatrical art, emerge?

   In *Germany* during the last quarter of the *nineteenth century*. Georg II (1826-1914), the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, a small city-state in southern Germany, is generally considered Europe’s first director. His company began touring the capitol of Europe in 1874.

2. Before the evolution of the modern director, who handled the interpretative/managerial responsibilities?

   The playwright, the leading actor (or star), or the company manager.

3. What is the difference between the creative director and the interpretative director?
A **creative director** places his primary emphasis on his personal vision. He will often...

- Change the period and location of the play’s action;
- Add songs, dances (pantomimes), and projections;
- Include scenes from other scripts from the same playwright (or period),
- Add a "Stage Manager" to help the audience understand the meaning of the work.

The director has become the author (**auteur**) of a new work based on the playwright’s text. This text, often one of the classic Greek or Shakespearean tragedies, is almost always in the public domain.

The **interpretative director** places his primary emphasis on the playwright’s text. There is often a fine line between a creative (**Sophocles Antigone** set in Nazi Germany) and an interpretative (**Antigone** set in 400 BC Corinth) production.

4. **What is the director's major responsibility?**

To develop a dramatic interpretation of the playwright’s script.

5. **What is the relationship between a play's interpretation and the major character's spine?**

A play’s interpretation is often directly related to the protagonist’s "major objective." For example William Shakespeare’s **Hamlet** can be presented as...

- a *personal tragedy* (Hamlet’s motivation: to avenge the death of his father),
- a *religious tragedy* (Hamlet’s spine: to cleanse the court of Denmark),
- a *political tragedy* (Hamlet’s spine: to depose Claudius as the King of Denmark),
- a *freudian tragedy* (Hamlet’s spine: to punish Claudius, his uncle, for marrying Gertrude, his mother)...  

6. **In the noncommercial educational and community theatre, who usually selects the play?**

The production director, often with assistance of a play reading or script selection committee.

7. **What must be considered when selecting the productions for a season?**
A variety in style and content,
The taste and desires of the potential audience,
The available actors, and
The production demands on sets, costumes, theatre facility, and budget.

8. What is the difference between an open and a closed audition?

In an open audition, all are welcome. In a closed audition, only those who have been invited by the producer or director may read for a part.

9. Which do we use at Northern State?

Open auditions.

10. Which is used to cast the major roles in a commercial Broadway production?

Closed auditions.

The minor, or chorus, parts?

Open auditions. Because of the number of people trying out, and the amount of time each can spend on stage, these auditions are traditionally called "cattle calls."

11. What is the function of rehearsal?

To turn the actor into the character.

12. How many weeks does a Broadway production of a play rehearse?

A Broadway play rehearses for four weeks. According to Equity rules, a week is "six days out of seven", and a day is 8 1/2 hours, producing a total of 204 rehearsal hours.

A musical?

Five weeks. Total rehearsal time-- 255 hours.

13. How many weeks does an average educational or community theatre production rehearse?

Five or six weeks. A week is usually five days, and a day’s rehearsal is three hours. Total number of rehearsal hours with a 5 week schedule-- 75.
14. What are the five types of rehearsals?

1. Reading-- 1 rehearsal,
2. Blocking-- 3 rehearsals, for a three act play,
3. Polishing-- 14 rehearsals,
4. Technical-- 1 rehearsal, and
5. Dress-- 3 rehearsals.

15. What is blocking?

Blocking is an actor’s major movements. When he enters, crosses to the sofa, sits, etc.

16. What is the difference between blocking and stage business?

**Blocking** is major actor movements-- entrances, exits, a cross from the sofa to the fire place.

Stage **business** is small character defining movements. A character looking at his pocket watch, opening a book.

17. What techniques can a director use to make one actor dominate the stage?

1. The character’s relationship to the audience [Full front is the strongest position],
2. A character’s height [The tallest actor will dominate a scene],
3. The character’s focus, [The audience will look at the character, the other on stage characters are looking at],
4. Stage areas [The strongest area is down center],
5. Scenery [A character framed in a door way],
6. Costumes [A character in a bright costume],
7. Lights [A character isolated in a pool of light],
8. Movement [A character moving across the stage].

18. Where is up-stage?

Towards the back wall.

**Down-stage**?

Towards the audience.

**Stage left? Stage right?**

Stage left (and stage right) is always from the actor’s perspective, with the actor standing on the stage facing the audience.
19. Which is the strongest stage area?

Down center.

The weakest?

Up left.

20. Why should an actor not walk on someone else's line?

If an actor walks on someone else’s line, he will steal that actor’s focus. On the other hand, if the director wants to make sure the audience catches a line, a phrase, or a word, a simple move, gesture, or turn, can be used to catch the audience’s attention. This is one of those quick "rules" a director (or actor) can use to give precision and clarity to a performance.

21. How long before opening night should the actor go off book?

Normally two to three weeks.

Off prompt?

One to two week.

22. What is the difference between running a scene and working a scene?

When a scene is run the director will not interrupt the rehearsal, but will wait to the end of the scene to make his comments, a process known as "giving notes." When a scene is worked, the director will stop the rehearsal to work on a problem.

23. At which rehearsal are the lighting Qs integrated into the action of the show?

Technical rehearsal. There are usually two types of technical rehearsals-- A dry tech without actors and a wet tech with actors. At Northern, the first tech (with actors) is usually four or five days before the show opens.

24. When are the costumes first worn?

First dress rehearsal, three days before opening night.

Rehearsal Schedule — Final Week
25. Outline the artistic organization of a typical theatre company.

See the drawing on page 69 of *Wilson and Goldfarb*.

26. Who are the four production designers?

The scene designer, costume designer, lighting designer and sound designer.

27. What are the four departments of technical production?

Sets (or carpentry), props, lights (or electric) and costumes (or wardrobe). The sound crew is generally considered part of the electric department.

28. Which designer is responsible for the selection of the props?

The scene designer.

29. What union represents the director?

**SSDC: Society of Stage Directors and Choreographers** represents approximately 1200 directors and choreographers working in the professional Broadway, off-Broadway, regional, summer stock and dinner theatre.

**The designers?**

**USAA: United Scenic Artists, Local # 829**, affiliated with IATSE, (the stage hands union) represents the three visual (sets - lights - costumes) designers as well as the scenic artist. The single local is divided into five geographic regions: New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Boston and Miami.

**The crews (carpenters, electricians, pop men, wardrobe ladies)?**

**IATSE: The International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees** is a large organization which not only represents stage hands but also projectionists, film editors and other craft people employed in the film and television industry. Of the twenty IA locals in New York City, only 6 represent the theatrical trades. There are three locals in
South Dakota: one each in Sioux Falls, Rapid City and Mitchell / Huron.

30. How do you become a member of these unions?

To qualify for SSDC membership, a director and/or choreographer must provide proof (resume and reviews) of professional credits, which the Society defines as jobs on productions with union (Equity, USAA, LATSE) affiliation.

Before you can join the United Scenic Artists (USAA), you must take an exam in the design area (sets, lights, costumes, scene painting) in which you wish to work.

Officially, you become a member of IATSE through an apprenticeship program, but often you become a member become your father, and his father before him, were members.

The Producer

31. Who is the producer and what is his job?

He is the head of the production company, the "boss." He chooses the play, or property, hires the director, and is responsible for raising the funds necessary to mount the show. In a not-for-profit regional or educational theatre, the producer is usually the theatre’s artistic director or the department chairman.

32. What is a theatre angel?

The investors who provide the necessary funds to cover the pre-performance costs of a commercial production.

33. What is the difference between a hit and a flop?

A hit is a show which repays the "theatre angels" their initial investment. A flop is a show which does not.

34. What are the chances of producing a hit?

Not very good. An investor has about a 1 in 10 chance of getting their money back.

Which has a better chance of becoming a hit, a musical or a comedy?
A musical has a slightly better chance of breaking even.

35. How does a producer determine how many performances to present?

A producer has three options when planning the number of performances. He can use the **long run**, **limited run**, or **repertory system**.

- **Long run**: the run is open ended and can be closed by management if the production does not meet operating expenses for two consecutive weeks.

- **Limited run**: the show is presented for a set number of performances.

- **Repertory**: a number of different works are alternated through the production season.

The number of performances in a **limited run** is determined by the size of the potential audience and the seating capacity of the theatre. Approximately 2% of the potential audience supports live theatre with their attendance. If the market area has a population of 50,000, a production company should be able to sell 1,000 tickets. Because a theatre manager must typically sell half the house to meet operating expenses he would schedule two performances in a 1,000 seat theatre (like JFAC MainStage), 4 performances in a 500 seat house (like the Capitol Theatre), 8 performances in a 250 seat venue...

36. Which system is used on Broadway?

Long run.

At Northern State?

Limited run. Northern presents three, or four, performances of a work. The run can not be extended if the houses are excellent, or cut if we are unable to draw an audience.

37. What is Broadway's longest running show?

*Cats*, opened on Broadway on October 7, 1982 and closed its 7,485 performance run at the Winter Garden Theatre on September 10, 2000. During its 18 years ("...a great age for a cat." ) the show grossed 388 million dollars and was seen by an audience of more than 10 million.
38. Of the top ten longest running Broadway shows, how many are musicals?

Ten

3. *Phantom of the Opera* (1988- ) - (Visit the official *Phantom* Web site),
4. *Chorus Line* (1975-1990) : 6,137 performances,
5. *Oh Calcutta* (the 1976-1989 revival of the 1969 "revue of erotica") : 5,959 performances,
7. *Beauty and the Beast* (1996- ) - (Visit the official *B&B* Web site),
8. *42nd Street* (1980-1989) : 3,486 performances,
9. *Grease* (1972-1980) : 3,388 performances, and
10. *Fiddler on the Roof* (1964-1972) : 3,242 performances,
    (Shows marked with an * were still running on September 16, 2003.)

A commercial Broadway production will present approximately 416 performances (8 a week) a year.

39. What is the longest running show off-Broadway?


On London's West End?

*The Mousetrap* (1952- ). This Agatha Christie murder mystery opened at the *Ambassadors* in November 1952 and transferred to *St Martin's* in 1974. This drama, which never played Broadway, is probably, at 50+ years, the world's longest running show.

40. What is the length of the shortest theatrical run?

One performance. The shows which opens and closes on opening night.

41. Who uses the repertory system of production?

Opera, (such as New York’s *Metropolitan Opera*), major dance companies (such as the *New York City Ballet*) and summer festivals (such as the *Illinois Shakespeare Festival*).

How does it work?
There are a set number of shows in the companies repertory, and they rotate through the rep changing titles nightly. Monday: *Carmen*; Tuesday: *Otello*; Wednesday matinee: *La Traviata*; Wednesday night: *The Barber of Seville*...

42. What are the three producing formats in American theatre?

Commercial, educational, and community. Generally, both educational and community theatres are nonprofit. In a not-for-profit theatre, if the income is greater than the the expenses, the "profit" must be invested into the facility or production program.

43 What is the major goal of a commercial theatre?

To make a profit.

44. List several examples of commercial theatres.

**In New York City:** Broadway, Off-Broadway, Off-off-Broadway.

**Outside of New York City:** The Road (National and Bus-and-Truck tours), Summer stock, and Regional (or resident) theatres.

During the 1998-1999 theatrical season, it is estimated that 11.7 million people saw a "Broadway" show in a Broadway house and an additional 14.8 million saw a "Broadway" show on the road.

45. How much is a ticket to a Broadway musical?

Tickets for *Chicago* at the 1125 seat *Ambassador Theatre* range from $43.75 (rear balcony, Wednesday matinee) to $96.25 (Orchestra, Friday or Saturday night). A few rush seats, sold the day of the show, are available for $20. A full house should bring to the box office approximately $ 85,700 per performance.

A play?

Between $ 66.25 and $ 86.25 for the limited run engagment of Tennessee William’s *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* at the 1019 seat *Music Box Theatre*. A full house should bring to the box office approximately $ 73,500 per performance.

46. What type of shows are usually presented on the Broadway stage?

Thirty five years ago, about half of the works presented on Broadway were original scripts, either musicals or plays. Today only about 30%
of the material is new while nearly half of the productions are revivals of recent Broadway successes or classics.

47. How many shows "normally" open on Broadway during a season?

During the five theatrical seasons between June 1997 and May 2002 there were, on average, 37 openings per year. The smallest number of new productions was 28 (2000-01); the largest was 45 (1998-99). Thirty eight years ago, during the 1965-66 Broadway season there were 76 new productions including 25 original plays (including Wait Until Dark and Cactus Flower) and 11 new musicals (including Mame and Sweet Charity).

Of the 35 Broadway shows which opened during the 2001-2002 season, 17 (or 49%) were still playing on June 1.

48. How many of these were plays? Musicals? Revivals? Specialities? Other?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Season</th>
<th>Plays</th>
<th>Musicals</th>
<th>Revivals</th>
<th>Specialities</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997-1998</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998-1999</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2001</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-2002</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avg</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Specialies include solo performances and the Christmas and Easter show at Radio City Music Hall. Other include revues, foreign plays (or musicals) in English, and foreign plays (or musicals) in a foreign language.

49. What book series includes the program copy for all productions mounted both on Broadway and off-Broadway during the season?

The Best Plays of...... series, edited by Jeffrey Eric Jenkins. This series of books is also known as "Burns Mantle," the well known drama critic who edited the Yearbook from 1899 to 1947.

50. Approximately how much does it cost to mount a Broadway musical?

In 1994 Walt Disney Theatrical Production’s spent 12 million dollars (a record at the time) bringing a live performance of their successful 1991 film: The Beauty and the Beast to the 1,740 seat Palace Theatre. In 1999 B&B moved to the Lunt-Fontanne Theatre, Today
(2003) this same production would cost approximately $14.90 million.

A play?

In 1993, the startup cost for Neil Simon’s small cast (9 character), single set comedy -- *Laughter on the 23rd Floor* -- was $1.2 million. (Or $1.53 million in 2003 dollars.)

51. What is the difference between a Broadway, and an off-Broadway theatre?

*Actor's Equity* and the [League of American Theatres and Producers](#) define a Broadway house not by its location, but by the seating capacity. A **Broadway** theatre seats 500 or more, and an **off-Broadway** house seats between 100 and 499. Off-Broadway is a mixture of both commercial producers and nonprofit production companies.

52. How many shows are "normally" presented off-Broadway during a season?

On average, 81 productions opened each season, off-Broadway between June 1997 and May 2002. Below is a table comparing content between the Broadway and off-Broadway seasons.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Plays</th>
<th>Musicals</th>
<th>Revivals</th>
<th>Specialities</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broadway</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12.8</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off Broadway</td>
<td>34.2</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>80.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

53. What is the difference between the production costs of a Broadway and an off-Broadway presentation?

The cost of mounting an off-Broadway production is about half that of mounting a Broadway show.

The ticket price?

Ticket prices are also about half their broadway counterpart. A ticket for off-Broadway’s longest running play: *Perfect Crime*, a murder-mystery-thriller, at the 165 seat Duffy Theatre on Times Square is $35. A full house should bring to the box office approximately $5,080 per performance.

54. What is a national tour? A bus-and-truck tour?
The **national tour** is usually a carbon copy of the Broadway production and plays open ended runs in major metropolitan areas such as Chicago, Los Angeles, Toronto and San Francisco.

A **bus-and-truck** company is a smaller version of the Broadway show which plays limited runs in small communities. The "bus-and-truck" of *Phantom of the Opera* travels in nineteen 40’ semis, and plays 6 week runs in towns like Seattle, Minneapolis and Nashville.

### 55. What is a summer stock company?

A resident acting company which normally produces 10 shows during the three month summer season. There are usually eight -- six evening and two matinee performances -- of each production.

**Where are most commercial summer stock companies located?**

Along the east coast, in the small resort communities of New England and the mid-Atlantic states.

### 56. What type of plays do stock companies traditionally produce?

The light comedies and popular musicals which have had a recent successful Broadway production.

### 57. Give an example of a commercial regional theatre.

The 70--[LORT](https://www.lort.org) (League of Resident Theatres) professional resident theatres include the Guthrie in Minneapolis, the Arena Stage in Washington DC, the Goodman in Chicago and the Seattle Rep.

**What type of productions do they usually mount?**

Classics, including modern classics, and original scripts.

### 58. What is considered the first regional theatre?

Although nonprofessional resident theatre companies have existed since the founding of the Washington Square Players in 1914, many consider the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis to be the first professional regional resident theatre.

**Why was it created?**

When the Guthrie opened in May of 1963 with a production of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, Tyrone Guthrie’s plan was to create, outside
the New York or Los Angeles metropolitan area, a permanent professional resident acting company, which would perform, in repertory, the great dramatic classics. It did not happen. Actors would not sign contracts which would keep them out of the New York / Los Angeles area for an entire season.

59. What is the major purpose of an educational theatre?

To provide students with experience in acting, stage management, scene painting... and to expose the community to "good" drama.

60. What type of plays does an educational theatre usually present?

Recent Broadway successes, and both modern and traditional classics.

61. What is the difference between a co-curricular and an extra-curricular educational theatre program?

In a co-curricular program, the production program is a part of the academic program, and often only theatre major's can participate.

In an extra-curricular program the production program is an adjunct to the academic program, and any student can participate.

62. Which type of program do we have at Northern State?

Extra-curricular.

63. What type of schools have co-curricular programs?

The major, professionally oriented universities such as Yale and New York University.

64. How is the educational theatre financed?

Most, if not all, educational theatres are nonprofit. At Northern, about a third of our operating budget comes from student activity fees and the remainder from the sale of individual tickets (box office gross).

65. What is the major purpose of a community theatre?

To have fun. Community theatres are often organized by, and for, performers who no longer have access to a stage. Many were active in their high school and college theatre programs. When they
graduated and joined the work force they discovered the only outlet for their creative energy was a community theatre. According to the 1000+ member American Association of Community Theatres, there are more than 7,000 amateur acting companies in the United States and Canada.

66. What type of shows do they produce?

Recent Broadway successes and modern classics.

67. How are community theatres financed?

Like educational theatres, most (if not all) community theatres are nonprofit. Their major source of income is membership fees (season ticket sales) and individual ticket sales. Tax deductable donations and grants from corporations and government agencies covers approximately twenty percent of the working budget.

68. Give an example of a local community theatre?

There are four AACT member companies in South Dakota-- The Aberdeen Community Theatre, The Black Hills Community Theatre (Rapid City), the Matthews Opera House Theatre (Spearfish) and the Olde Towne Dinner Theatre in Worthing.

Theatre Home Page

E-mail questions and comments to Larry Wild at wildl@northern.edu.
Last updated: January 23, 2004
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Theatre Spaces

Resources

Text...


1. What is the difference in the actor-audience relationship between the proscenium theatre, an arena theatre, and a thrust stage theatre?

   In a **proscenium theatre** the actor is on a raised platform in front of the audience (See the drawing on page 78);

   On a **thrust stage theatre** he is surrounded on three sides by the audience-- the fourth side contains the scenery (See the drawing on page 83), and

   In an **arena theatre** he is totally surrounded by the audience (See the drawings on page 89).

2. What was the name of the first proscenium theatre? Where was it built? When?

   The 3000 seat **Teatro Farnese**, the first permanent proscenium theatre, was built into the Great Hall of the *Palazzo della Pilotta* in **Parma**, Italy in **1618**. For slightly more information, link to the Question 23 on the Renaissance Theatre: Italy web page.

3. What is the proscenium arch?

   The arch (or "picture frame") which separates the acting area (stage) from the audience area (house or auditorium).

4. What is the theatrical name for the first, or main floor of the auditorium?

   The **orchestra**. In a musical or opera house there is an *orchestra* for the audience, and an *orchestra pit* for the musicians.

5. What should be the height of the fly loft?

   Between **two and three times the height of the proscenium arch**. A theatre with a twenty foot tall arch should have a 40 and 60 foot
high fly loft. The *silhouette*, or side elevation, of a typical proscenium theatre generally looks like a lazy, or tipped over "L."

**Why?**

To make it possible to hide scenic units (such as a back drop) high above the heads of the actors.

See the photograph of New York’s Broadhurst Theatre, a typical 1186 seat "Broadway musical" house, on page 80. *Note* the box set on stage, the three boxes hung from the auditorium right wall, the spot lights mounted on a vertical pipe (*box boom*) in the third (or rear) box and the lamps hung from a *font-of-house truss* over the expensive orchestra seats.

6. **Give an example of a proscenium theatre.**

   All New York Broadway theatres, and those road houses which host Broadway shows, are proscenium theatres. Aberdeen’s Capitol and the Civic Theatre and Northern’s Johnson Fine Arts Center MainStage are also proscenium houses.

7. **Which theatrical form has been the most widely used theatre space?**

   The thrust stage.

8. **Who were the first to use a thrust stage?**

   The ancient Greeks. See the photos of the ruins of the Greek theatres at Epidaurus on page 83 and Kas, Turkey on page 76.

9. **Which playwrights have written for a thrust stage?**

   The four major Greek playwrights: Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes and at least three Elizabethan writers: William Shakespeare, Christopher Marlowe and Ben Jonson.

10. **Which 20th century English director was involved in the development of the modern thrust stage theatre?**

    Tyrone Guthrie was instrumental in design of the of both the Canadian Shakespeare Festival Theatre in 1953 and the Guthrie Theatre in 1963.

11. **Give an example of a modern thrust stage theatre.**
The Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis, MN, the Canadian Shakespeare Festival Theatre in Stratford, ON, and the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles, CA.

12. What was the first modern arena theatre?

The Penthouse Theatre. Professor Glenn Hughes, the founder and Dean (1930-1931) of the University of Washington’s School of Drama wanted a small, intimate space, for his educational theatre productions. Such a space was not available on campus so his first theatre (1935-1940) was the penthouse of a Seattle hotel. In 1940 a 160 seat arena theatre was built by the WPA on the university campus at a cost of a little over $ 64,000. This became the Hughes Penthouse Theatre.

During the the 1950s and 60s many alternative spaces -- car dealerships, hotel ballrooms, grocery stores, warehouses -- became arena theatres. On a university campus the easiest space to adapt to an intimate arena theatre was the stage of the University’s large auditorium. In Columbus, Ohio, Roy Bowen of the Players Club created the Stadium Theatre, a 300 seat arena space under Gate 10 of the Ohio State University Football Stadium.

13. Give an example of an arena theatre.

The Arena Stage in Washington, DC and A Contemporary Theatre in Seattle. See the photograph of A Contemporary Theatre on page 88.

14. What is the difference between a found space and a black box theatre?

A found space is a nontheatrical space -- the rotunda of the state capitol, a church, warehouse, courtroom, carepnters shop -- which is used for a production. Typically the space is chosen because of its context to the play: Shakespeare's Julius Caesar at the capitol, The Passion Play in the church, Inherit the Wind in a courtroom... A black box theatre is a large, flexible theatrical space which can be easily adapted into any (end stage, thrust, arena) theatrical form.

E-mail questions and comments to Larry Wild at wildl@northern.edu.
Last updated: August 29, 2003
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Designers: Scenery and Costumes

Resources

Text...

Outside reading...

Scene Design

Scenic Model

1. List the four production designers.

The scene, costume, light, and sound designer.

2. Who is considered the father of American scene design?

**Robert Edmond Jones** (1887-1954) graduated from Harvard in 1910, traveled to Europe to study the "New StageCraft" and returned to America at the beginning of World War I. He shocked the New York theatre audience in 1915 with his simple presentational set for *The Man Who Married a Dumb Wife*. He is primarily remembered today for his work with the Provincetown Players (1916-1929) and the Theatre Guild (1919- ) and their staging of Eugene O'Neill's early plays and the vivid dramatic lighting for productions of Shakespeare's *Macbeth, Richard III*, and *Hamlet*.

3. What is the action-documentation-metaphor approach to scene design?

**Action**: Provide those elements needed by the director and actor to stage the show.
**Documentation:** Locating the action of the play in a specific place and period.
**Metaphor:** The poetic statement of the theme of the play through the scenery.

4. **Which American designer is credited with developing this approach?**

**Mordecai Gorelik** (1900-1975), who was an apprentice to Robert Edmond Jones, developed and taught the *action-documentation-metaphor* approach to design at a number of American colleges and universities, including Southern Illinois University in Carbondale.

5. **What is the difference between representationalism and presentationalism?**

From the *Cambridge Guide to Theatre*:

- **Representational** theatre tries to create an illusion of reality. **Presentational** theatre emphasizes theatricality and acknowledges the theatre as theatre—there is no illusion.

In scenic design, a *representational* set gives the illusion of reality, a *presentational* set is a "backdrop" behind the performer.

**Which is more realistic?**

Representationalism.

**More theatrical or nonrealistic?**

Presentationalism.

6. **What are five limitations on a scene designer's creativity?**

1. The **play**,
2. The **director**,
3. The theatre and its physical **facilities**,
4. The **budget** (in both time and money), and
5. The **experiences** and **abilities** of the crew.

7. **List five elements of scenic design.**

1. **Line:** the outline of the scenic units onstage
2. **Mass:** the bulk or weight of the scenic units
3. **Composition:** the balance and arrangement of the scenic units
4. **Texture:** the "feel" of the scenic units
5. **Color**: the color and tone of the scenic units

8. **What are the scenic designer's responsibilities?**

   1. Establish the size and shape of the acting area,
   2. Locate entrances / exits to this theatrical space: doors, arches, ramps, steps,...,
   3. Create a color and texture for the general background,
   4. Determine the number and location of scenic pieces: chairs, couches, tables, desks,...
   5. Develop a **colored rendering** or build a **scale model** of the proposed set,
   6. Draft the **ground plan**, and **designer's elevations**, and
   7. Supervise the construction, painting and rigging of the set.

9. **What is the difference between the presentational material and the working drawings?**

   **Presentational materials** are the drawings (rendering or model) a designer uses to sell his ideas to the director and producer. See the **illustrations** for *The Tempest* and *Twelfth Night* at the top of this section. Both productions and *The Taming of the Shrew* which is illustrated in Chapter 9 of *Wilson and Goldfarb* were staged on a "unit set" by the *Illinois Shakespeare Festival* in Bloomington.

   The **working drawings** are the "blue prints" used by the crew to build, paint, and assemble the set.

10. **Which product, a colored rendering or a scale model most accurately reflects how a set will look under light on opening night?**

    A rendering. Photo 4 on page 197 of Chapter 9 of *Wilson and Goldfarb* or the rendering for *The Tempest* at the top of this section.

11. **Which best reflects a set's spacial arrangement?**

    Scale model.

12. **What is the difference between a physical model and a virtual model?**

    A **physical model** (like the model of *Twelfth Night* at the top of this page) is created with illustration board and glue. A **virtual model** is created in memory by a computer aided drafting (CAD) program and is saved on the hard drive of a personal computer. As with a physical model, the virtual model can be viewed (using the programs *FlyOver* tool) from a number of different positions.

13. **What is a floor plan?**
A top view of the set. The floor plan is used by the crew to locate the set on the stage floor.

A designer’s elevation?

A front view of each individual piece of scenery. The designer’s elevations are used by the shop crew to determine the height and architectural detail of each scenic unit.

For a more complete look at the world of scenic drafting (both presentational and working drawings), link to an Introduction to Theatrical Drawing on my Scene Design web page. Use the Back Button to return.

14. What is a flat?

A wood frame (1x3) covered with canvas (or plywood). Flats are usually assembled to create the walls of a realistic interior set.

A platform?

A wood frame (2x4s) covered with 3/4 inch plywood. Platforms or used by a designer to create different levels on the stage floor.

A drop?

A large piece of painted canvas hung from a pipe (or batten). Generally used as a backdrop behind the set.

15. What is the difference between a scrim and the cyc?

A scrim is an open-weave fabric which appears to be opaque when lit from the front and transparent when lit from behind. It is often used for "ghost" effects and flashback scenes. The cyc, short for cyclorama, is a backdrop used to represent an "endless sky."

__________________________________________________________

Costume Design
16. Why is the costume design the most personal visual element on stage?

Because the costume is worn by the performer. To the audience, the actor and the costume he wears is merged into a single image: the character.

17. How can costumes help the audience understand the relationship between the characters in a play?

The costume designer, primarily using the element of color, divides the cast of characters into dramatic (or family) groups. For example, in a production of Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*, all of the Capulets might be costumed in a warm (red, orange, yellow) color, and all of the Montagues in a cool (blue, green) color.

18. What additional information about the play or its characters can costumes provide?

Costumes can help establish the *period* and *location* of the play, and aid the actor in presenting his character by indicating his *age*, *social position*, and *economic status*.

19. What is the costume designer's responsibilities?

1. Determine the dramatic groups within the play,
2. Draft a *costume chart*,
3. Determine the number of costumes needed for the show,
4. Sketch a shape or silhouette for each costume,
5. Create a color scheme for the total production,
6. Establish a color scheme, based on the *production color scheme*, for each individual costume,
7. Draft and render a *costume plate* for each costume,
8. Choose the fabric and accessories for those costumes which will be built in the shop, and
9. Supervise the construction and fitting of all the costumes in the production.

20. What is a costume chart?

A chart indicating the scenes in which each character appears.

21. What information does it provide the costume designer?

It tells the designer which characters work the stage together.
22. What is a costume plate?

A colored rendering of the finished costume. See the costume design for Bertram from the Illinois Shakespeare Festival production of All's Well That Ends Well at the top of this section.

23. What are the elements of costume design?

1. Line and silhouette
2. Color
3. Fabric (or texture)
4. Accessories: fringe, lace, ruffles, feathers, belts...

24. Which design element does the costume designer use to establish the plays period and locale?

Line, shape or silhouette.

Character relationships?

Color.

A character's social-economic position?

Fabric (or texture)

25. List five ways of obtaining finished costumes.

1. Build (or make),
2. Pull from stock,
3. Borrow (usually from the actor),
4. Rent, or
5. Buy (often from second hand stores).

26. Which technique provides the designer the greatest control over the finished product?

Building, or constructing the costumes in the shop.

27. What are the two major problems associated with costume construction?

1. The lack of patterns for period shows and
2. The amount of time needed to build a show. Most shops budget 10 crew hours per costume. If there are 50 costumes in a show, that’s 500 hours. If you have four weeks to build the show, and your shop is open four hours a
day, five days a week (a 20 hour work week), you will need a costume
construction crew of 6.25 persons.
Designers: Lighting and Sound

Resources

Text...

Outside reading...

Lighting Design

1. Before electricity, what was used to light the performer?

   From 500 BC until the 1600s, theatrical performances generally took place outdoors in the afternoon so the actor was lit by sun light. When theatre moved indoors during the Renaissance and English Restoration, the performer was lit first by candle light and later by oil lamps. In the middle of the 1800s, gas light which could be controlled, replaced oil lamps as the major source of illumination.

2. What was the gas table?

   A collection of valves used to control the intensity of the light. With the advent of the gas table it became possible to dim the "house lights" focusing the audience’s attention on actor on stage.

3. When did the electric lamp become the major source of theatrical light?

   In the 1880’s. London’s *Savoy Theatre*, the theatrical home of Gilbert and Sullivan’s operettas, was, in 1881, the first theatre to be totally lit by electricity.

4. What are the five purposes, or functions, of light?

   1. To see,
   2. To focus the audience’s attention,
   3. To reveal the performer’s three dimensional form
4. To give the audience information (time of day, weather conditions), and
5. To establish the mood

5. What are the five controllable qualities, or properties, of light?

1. Intensity,
2. Color
3. Direction,
4. Distribution, and
5. Movement.

Note how the qualities of light (color, direction, distribution, and intensity) in the color photographs on pages 127, 130 and 139 create mood, reveal form, establish time of day, and focus the audience’s attention.

6. What is gel?

The sheet of plastic (or color media) used to color the beam of light.

7. What is the difference between a flood light and a spot light?

A flood light produces a large, almost uncontrollable wash of light; A spot light, on the other hand, produces a small (up to 12’ diameter), highly controlled, pool of light.

8. Which is primarily used to light the actor?

Spot light.

The scenery?

Flood light

9. When was the computer-assisted control board introduced to the Broadway theatre? What was the show?

November 1975, with the Broadway opening of Chorus Line at the Schubert Theatre.

10. Where should the lighting control board be located?

In the back of the auditorium.

Why?
So the board operator has the same view of the stage as the audience.

11. What is a lighting designer's responsibilities?

1. Develop a Q list,
2. Specify what lighting instruments will be used and where they will be hung,
3. Determine the color and focus of each lamp,
4. Determine which units will be ganged together on the same control channel,
5. Draft a light plot, hook-up chart and Q sheet,
6. Supervise the hanging and gelling of the lights,
7. Focus the instruments,
8. Create compositions, or looks for each lighting Q, and
9. Supervise the technical and dress rehearsals.

12. What is a light plot?

The light plot is the lighting designer’s primary working drawing. It is a plan (or top) view of the stage showing where each lighting instrument (spot light or flood light) is located. See Photo 7 on page 200 of Chapter 9: Profile of a Production.

A hook-up chart?

The hook-up chart tells the electrician into which dimmer each lighting instrument is to be plugged.

A cue sheet?

The cue (or Q) sheet is the electrician’s script. It outlines each lighting change (a cue) and describes how it should be executed.

For more information on light plots, hook-up charts and cue sheets, link to the "Light Plot and Hook-up Chart" section of the StageCraft: Lighting Design web page. Use the Back Button to return.

Sound Design

13. When did the sound designer join the production team?

The first person to receive a Broadway credit as Sound Designer was Abe Jacob, president of the Theatrical Sound Designers Association (IA Local 922). The show was the 1971 Broadway production of Weber and Rice’s Jesus Christ Superstar. Three years earlier, Dan
Dugan received *Sound Design* credit in the 1968-69 Season Program for San Francisco’s American Conservatory Theatre (ACT). The title was invented by ACT stage manager Dorothy Fowler "to describe what Dan Dugan does."

Electrical sound *reinforcement* and sound *reproduction* has been used in the theatre since the 1940s. A turntable would be plugged into the theatre’s PA (public address) system for pre-show music and a couple of microphones were set on the front of the stage to pickup the lead singer’s voice. Sound equipment was usually specified by the stage manager and set up by the electric (or light) crew. Most sound effects (gunshots, door slams, thunder) were produced manually by a member of the property department.

14. What is the difference between sound reinforcement and sound reproduction?

*Sound reinforcement* is the amplification of the performer’s voice, *sound reproduction* is the reproduction of recorded music and sound effects.

15. What type of theatrical productions tend to use sound reinforcement?

Large modern *musicals*, especially those with a full pit orchestra.

Why?

Most singers need amplification to be heard over the orchestra.

16. How is pre-recorded sound used in the production of a play?

The *Sound Designer* (or *Director*) will typically select and record pre-show, scene change, intermission, and post-show music. Normally the music will reflect the period and mood of the play. Many dramas will also use recorded *sound effects*: thunder, a passing train, waves breaking on the shore... These sounds are available from a commercial effects library or off the Internet.

17. What is a sound designer's responsibilities?

1. Develop a Q list of sound effects and required music
2. Specify the type and amount of equipment to be used,
3. Determine the location of both microphones and speakers
4. Prepare the master tape or CD
5. Supervise the mounting and operation of the sound equipment
18. What types of microphones are used to "mike" a musical?

- **Foot mikes** placed along the front edge of the stage,
- **Wireless body mikes** for the major characters.

19. Where in the theatre are speakers located for sound reinforcement?

In a large theatre with a permanent sound system, a speaker cluster is generally hung over the **center of the orchestra pit**. In a smaller house, speaker columns are placed on each **side of the proscenium opening**. It is generally recommended that every member of the house be able to see at least one of these speakers.

**Sound reproduction?**

**Back stage** near the "source" of the sound. If a character reacts to gun shots being fired off stage right, the sound should come from a stage right speaker.

20. Where should the mixing console be placed?

In the **back of the auditorium**. Just like the light board operator should have a clear view of the stage, the sound board operator must be able to hear the same sound as the audience.

21. What has traditionally been the source of sound effect cues?

A **reel-to-reel tape deck**. Sound effects and music cues were recorded onto tape. White leader tape was cut in (edited) between each sound Q making it possible to quickly locate a specific piece of music or effect. Because the entire show was recorded on tape, it was easy to add additional Qs or to rearrange the existing Qs.

22. How have computers effected sound reproduction?

Today, many sound designers record the music and sound effects on a computer’s hard drive. The individual cuts can then be manipulated and edited with available software, and cut to a CD, recorded onto a MiniDisc or played back in the theatre from the designer’s computer.
The Playwright:
Subject, Focus, Purpose, and Dramatic Structure

Resources

Text...

Outside reading...

1. What are the playwright's tasks?

   1. Select the specific subject matter of the play,
   2. Determine the focus and emphasis,
   3. Establish the purpose,
   4. Establish the point of view,
   5. Develop the dramatic structure, and
   6. Create the dramatic characters.

2. Generally, what is the subject matter of play?

   Aristotle defined drama as "the imitation of men in action." Therefore, the subject matter of all drama is "man," the human being. It is the playwright's responsibility to select a specific human being, and to focus on this person's story and character.

3. What is the purpose of drama?

   To entertain, to teach, to question, to excite, to move, to thrill, to frighten...

   Answering the question: "What is theatre for?," Jeffrey Sweet, a playwright on the Theatre Mailing List, posted...

   Theatre is for a lot of things. Entertainment, of course. It’s also a social event at which groups of people jointly participate in creating / witnessing images of their culture and so see these images in a
new way. It’s also for play -- to provide an outlet for people to have a good time in a structured way. It can also be for education -- to make vivid, for instance, arguments and controversies which would look less vital summarized in historical, philosophical, sociological or anthropological texts. (Jeffrey Sweet, 1999)

4. What are Aristotle's Six Elements of Dramatic Structure?

1. Plot,
2. Character,
3. Dialogue (or diction),
4. Thought (or theme),
5. Rhythm (or music),
6. Spectacle (or the physical production).

Noted scholar Jon Berry has an interesting theory about Aristotle’s Six elements of Drama. While Aristotle ranked them in a specific order, Dr. Berry claims that in our pluralistic society, different genres of plays tend to emphasize different elements. Sample plays he chooses to use to illustrate his idea has Agamemnon ranking Plot highest, Hamlet as ranking Character highest, Iphigenia in Tauris ranking Thought highest, and Death of a Salesman ranking Plot and Character equally high. Academics can debate how much any given production stresses a given element, but it makes sense to me that some productions emphasize Spectacle more than Aristotle could have ever imagined. (Mark Harvey, Professor of Lighting and Sound Design, University of Minnesota Duluth, 1999)

5. What plays did he use as his role model?

The classical Greek drama of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes.

6. What essential element must be present for a play to have dramatic action?

Conflict between balanced opposing forces. These forces create the obstacles and complications necessary to generate the action.

A character comes upon an obstacle to his desire (super-objective) and attempts to overcome that obstacle by a dramatic action-- a moment. Sometimes he is successful; other times not. The play moves from moment-to-moment until it reaches the climax. This course of dramatic action, and the tension which it creates, does not necessity lead to an outburst of
anger or violence. In great plays, such as Shaw’s *St. Joan*, "the fullness of joy, exultation, grief," to borrow John Crowther’s phrase, is often the result of overcoming, or failing to overcome, an impossible hurdle. A great deal, if not all, of the world’s great dramatic literature is constructed in this manner. (*il professore*, 2000)

7. What are the three basic types of conflict found in western drama?

Conflict between ...

1. Man and the Universe (God, the elements),
2. Man and Man,
3. Man and Himself.

8. What is the difference between a play's story line, and its plot?

A play’s story is what happens in the drama, the plot of the play is how the playwright presents that story to the audience.

9. What is the difference between a climactic plot and an episodic plot?

In a climactic plot, the plot begins near the end of the story. The action involves a limited number of characters, unfolds in one or two days, and typically occurs in one location. The climactic play evolved in ancient Greece (5th Century BC) and was popular during the French Renaissance (1630 to 1700) and the early Realistic Period (1890 to 1940).

In an episodic plot, the plot begins near the beginning of the story. The action typically involves a large cast, unfolds over a number of months (or years) and is broken into many short scenes staged in numerous different locations. The episodic pattern is primarily seen in the work of Shakespeare (1564 to 1616) and the early 19th century Romantic Playwrights.

10. What is the climax?

The point of highest dramatic tension where the conflict of the play is resolved.

A Crisis?

A mini-climax which falls near the end of each act (except the last act) or scene.
11. Where does the climax normally fall in the structure of a play?

Near the end of the last act.

12. Why is there a mini-climax (crisis) at the end of each act?

To make sure the audience returns after the intermission.

13. What makes a character dramatic?

Dramatic characters are extraordinary, they are "larger than life." Historically, major characters in classical tragedy have been kings, queens, generals, or a member of a noble family. They have also represented either the best, or worst, of human behavior.

14. What are the four plains or levels of dramatic characterization?

1. Physical,
2. Social / economic,
3. Psychological,
4. Ethical / moral.

15. What is a character's spine, or major objective?

A character’s spine, using Stanislavski’s terminology, is the character’s major goal or super-objective.

16. What are the three dramatic techniques a playwright can use to reveal his characters to the audience?

1. By what the character says,
2. By what he does, and
3. By what other character’s say about him.

17. What additional techniques can be used by a screen or radio playwright?

Both film and television writers can, through subjective camera angles and voice overs, go into the mind of a character, and relate his thoughts directly to the audience.

18. What is a playwright's major means of expression?

Dialogue.

19. What are the six functions of dramatic dialogue?
1. Give information,
2. Reveal character,
3. Direct attention (foreshadow),
4. Reveal theme or ideas,
5. Establish the level of reality, and
6. Establish the tempo and rhythm of the play.

**20. How can a playwright reveal his drama's theme to the audience?**

There are two techniques.

1. By literally becoming a character in the play, and directly relating his ideas to the audience, or
2. By implying these ideas through the plot and the dramatic characters he creates.

The playwright normally builds his theme around "universal issues," such as love, family, power, greed, betrayal, friendship.

**21. What will happen if the pace of a performance is too slow?**

The audience will become restless and lose interest in the production.

**Too fast?**

The audience will empathize with the actor, not the character, and will become exhausted. The pace of a show is more likely to drag (be too slow) than to be too fast.

**22. What does a break in the rhythm of a show indicate to the audience?**

That there has been a missed cue, or a dropped line.

**23. How does a playwright determine a play's spectacle value?**

By his choice of characters, settings, action, and time of day.

[Theatre Home Page]

E-mail questions and comments to Larry Wild at wildl@northern.edu.
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The Text:
Dramatic Genres

Resources

Text...


1. What is *genre*?

*Genre* is a French word meaning "category" or "type." The choice of *genre* reflect’s the writer’s *point of view* towards his *subject*. The two oldest *genres*, dating back to the fifth century BC, are tragedy and comedy.

2. Using the classical definition, what is the difference between a tragedy and a comedy?

In a *tragedy*, the protagonist goes down in defeat, in a *comedy* he overcomes the dramatic obstacle and attains his major objective.

3. What is the difference between the protagonist and the antagonist?

The *protagonist* is the principal character in a play; the *antagonist* is his primary opponent: the dramatic obstacle.

4. What is the major objective?

The *major objective*, also known as the *spine*, is the major character’s primary desire or goal. If the character reaches that goal, the play (by definition) is a comedy. If he doesn’t, it’s a tragedy.

5. What is the popular definition of a drama?

A serious, but not tragic, play dealing with middle, or lower class characters. A *bourgeois* drama.

A *comedy*?

A light amusing play with a happy ending. Often a farce.

6. What is the difference between high comedy and low comedy?
The subject of **high comedy** is usually serious and provokes "thoughtful laughter". The action is both possible and probable and the comedy grows out of the character, not the situation. It is usually a realistic portrayal of life.

The objective of **low comedy** is "riotous laughter." The action is possible, but not very probable and the play is dominated by situation (plot), not character. It calls for little or no thought, and is only believable for the moment.

7. List the rungs on the **Ladder of Comedy**.

1. Comedy of ideas (satire).
2. Comedy of character,
3. Comedy of wit,
4. Comedy of situation,
5. Comedy of pain (slapstick),

   The bottom three rungs -- the comedy of pain, situation, and wit -- are generally considered **low comedy**. The top two rungs, the comedy of character and idea, are **high comedy**.

8. What is a farce?

   A wildly humorous play which emphasizes situation (or plot) over character or idea. A farce is low comedy.

**A melodrama?**

   A serious drama with a trivial theme. The conflict is usually between the forces of good and evil. The excitement comes through physical action: chases, fist fights, and shoot outs. Many of the melodramas of the nineteenth century included a musical (hence *melodrama*) score.

**A bourgeois drama?**

   A serious play which deals with the domestic problems of the middle and lower class. It is today, the most popular form of serious drama.

**A docu-drama?**

   A *docu-drama* dramatizes an actual event often using real names, dates, and places and generally drawing its text from court room transcripts or committee hearing reports. The 1925 John Scopes "Monkey Trial" in Dayton, Tennessee, inspired Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee’s *Inherit the Wind* (1955).
Musical theatre?

- **Opera**: A dramatic work which is entirely sung.
- **Musical**: A dramatic work which includes both dialogue and song.
- **Dance**: A dramatic work which tells a story (or creates a mood) through music and movement.
Playwriting: The Process

Resources

Internet...

The Playwriting Seminars -- online course in dramatic writing
E-script, the internet’s scriptwriting workshop
17 Surefire Ways to get Your Script Rejected
Copyright for the High School/Amateur Theatre Producer
The U.S. Copyright Office

1. Where does a playwright get his ideas?

   From his own personal experiences, from a news story, from history.

2. What is a scenario?

   A plot outline. It is used by the playwright to develop the plays internal structure.

3. When in the writing process is the dialogue developed?

   Writing the dialogue is one of the last steps in the script development process.

4. What type of shows are normally written on spec?

   Most Broadway and off-Broadway scripts. A few screenplays, such as Joe Eszterhas’ Basic Instinct (1992), which was bought by TriStar for three million dollars, are also written on spec.

   On order?

   Almost all television scripts, many movies, and the book, or dialogue, for most musicals.

5. How does a playwright "sell" his script?

   Most playwrights market their work through an agency. Some send their work directly to a regional or educational theatre. Scripts sent to a Broadway producer, or a film studio, will normally be returned unopened and unread. Because of the difficulty in getting a script mounted, some playwrights will produce their own work. They will rent a small fifty seat theatre, put a couple small ads in the paper and
count on good reviews and "word of mouth" to draw an audience. Budgets for these independent, non-union shows range from $ 6,000 to $ 12,000. The average for a six week, eighteen performance run is about $ 8,000. Typically, the largest budget item is the theatre rental. Charging $ 10 to $ 15 a seat, the producer / playwright, with a little bit of luck, may break even. But more likely he will lose between $ 50 (for a 10 minute play) and $ 3000. The playwright is gambling on good reviews that may lead to a major production and publication. The chance of this happening is better than winning the lottery-- but not a whole lot better.

6. What is the function of an artist's agent?

   The agent’s job is to bring a new play to the attention of a producer.

7. How does he earn his income?

   He earns his ten percent when the script is first optioned, and then produced. The agent will not earn his income until the author’s work is presented to a paying audience.

8. What is the size of the film/television script market?

   Between 4,500 and 5,000 television and screenplays are produced each year. Nearly five times that number of scripts are registered yearly with The Dramatists Guild, the union representing the playwright.

9. What factors can make a play marketable?

   The play should have a small cast (for example: 3 men, 2 women), contain a little humor, require a single set, and use contemporary, non-period costumes.

10. Who holds the copyright to a play?

    The author. The producer does not purchase the play only the exclusive performance rights for a limited amount of time.

11. How long can a play be in copyright?

    In October 1998 the Sonny Bono Copyright Term Extension Act was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Clinton extending the maximum copyright period for works written before January 1, 1978 from 75 to 95 years. Those works written before 1922 which have passed into the public domain will stay in the
public domain. A work created in 1923 will remain under copyright for 95 years, are till January 1, 2019. Scripts developed after January 1, 1978 are under copyright for the life of the author plus 70 years.

12. What rights are included in the copyright?

All rights. These include publication, performance, adaptation, and translation.

13. Who owns the rights to a film or television script?

When a studio or production company purchases a screenplay from the writer, they buy the entire property, including the copyright.

14. What is public domain?

When a script is no longer under copyright, it is said to be in the public domain—owned by the public. American plays written before 1922 are in the public domain and can be performed, adapted, copied, etc. without receiving permission from the playwright.

15. What is royalty?

The money paid to the author (or copyright holder) for permission to perform their work. The royalty fee for a commercial production of a play is a percentage, usually between 5 and 7 percent, of the box office gross. The fee for a non-commercial production is determined by the playwright’s agent.

16. Which will be higher, the royalty for a non-commercial production of a Neil Simon comedy or a Rodgers and Hammerstein musical?

The Rodgers and Hammerstein musical. The royalty for three performances of a Neil Simon comedy, such as The Odd Couple will be under $300. The royalty for three performances of a Rodgers and Hammerstein musical, such as Oklahoma!, will be between $1000 and $1500. A play usually has only one author, a musical may have as many as five.

17. What is the legal definition of a performance?

Anytime a work is presented before an audience. An audience is anyone watching the show who is not directly involved in the production.

18. What is a boot-legged production?
Performing a copyrighted work without first receiving a "license" (permission) from the playwright (or owner). The Copyright Act (Title 17 of the U.S. Code) provides for a statutory fine of $50,000.00 for the first infringement or performance. The presenter may also be sued for damages by the author or the copyright holder.

19. How does the playwright (or his agent) learn of a pirated production of one of his works?

Through stories printed in local and regional newspapers.

Some advice from Geralyn Horton (ghorton@tiac.net), a playwright on the Theatre Discussion List.

Take yourself and your art seriously. Ask for what you need as an artist -- money, advice, allies, readings. Don’t expect encouragement. There are already more good plays than can be produced, so nobody’s eager to nurture yours. On the other hand, nobody else in the world can write the plays you would, so don’t let disinterest discourage you. The road to accomplishment runs through a wilderness of rejection.

A "good school" is a big help. Not for instruction, but for contacts and resources, and because it gives you the best chance to team up with talented young acting and directing peers, especially those with good luck, generous dispositions, and family money. Twenty years from now you want to be part of a "new" movement in theatre with some of these same people, having built a common vocabulary from mutual inspiration and the hard work of learning the skills to communicate to the audience.

Whatever you do, get your stuff read, workshopped, performed. Direct other writers’ stuff. Learn dramatic and comedy construction from production, not in a classroom or from books. (Books are important, knowledge is important, but for enriching the content rather than learning the craft that goes into your work). Don’t be afraid to make mistakes, be bad, fail-- but try to do that in a forgiving environment that finds even your failures interesting.

A nurturing environment is 90% of the battle. If you have founded a tiny theatre that considers you their resident Shakespeare, or are in a town where the reviewer for the Weekly News believes that you are the next Ibsen, stay there and grow.
Don’t expect to make a living in the theatre unless you are a genius entrepreneur as well as a dramatic genius.

Theatre Home Page

E-mail questions and comments to Larry Wild at wildl@northern.edu.
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Film History

Resources

Outside reading...

Films...
Film titles are linked to their entry in the The Internet Movie Database.

The Birth of a Nation. Directed by D. W. Griffith. 1915.
Gone With The Wind. Directed by Victor Fleming. 1939.
Citizen Kane. Directed by Orson Welles. 1941.

Internet...

WideScreen Museum. From Cinerama to Super Panavision.
Internet Movie Database. A database of more than 130,000 movies.
The Palace: Classic Films Engaging and informative articles on movies and filmmaking.
American Film Institute's Top 100 American Films of the 20th Century
Some Enchanted Evenings: American Picture Palaces. A visit to the great movie palaces...
Cinema Treasurers: The ultimate guide to Classic Movie Theatres...

All film titles are linked to their entry in the The Internet Movie Database.
1. What American inventor is credited with the development of the motion picture camera?

**Thomas Alva Edison** (1847-1931) demonstrated the *Kinetoscope* (a primitive film viewer) at his West Orange, New Jersey lab in 1889, and applied for a patent for both the *Kinetograph* (Edison’s earliest movie camera) and the *Kinetoscope* in 1891. The *Black Maria*, built in 1892 was Edison’s first studio.

2. When did the first commercial Kinetoscope parlor open in New York City?

1894. Ten machines were placed in a penny arcade at 1155 Broadway. A customer could view a short 20 seconds to a minute film for only a nickel. *Kinetoscope Parlor* soon began to open through out the United States.

3. When were films first projected in a New York theatre?

1896. Koster & Bial’s Music Hall included Edison’s latest marvel: *The Vitascope* (a film projector), as the final act of its vaudeville program.

4. What was a Nickelodeon?

A small (usually under 100 seat), family owned and operated, movie house. The first *Nickelodeon* opened in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in June 1905. They tended to have continuous daily showings of a few (three or four) short "feature" films. These theatres attracted a wide clientele which included women and children. According to Eileen Bower’s *The Transformation of Cinema* (University of California Press, 1994), there were 8,000 American *Nickelodeons* by 1908.

5. What was the name of Aberdeen's first movie house?
The *Bijou*.

**When did it open?**

1906. The opening show included four short films -- *Hen Pecked Husband, Childish Match, Russian Justice*, and *On A Holiday* -- which were shown continuously from 3 to 5 and 7:30 to 11pm. Admission was ten cents.

**Where was it located?**

In the 600 block of south Main. The *Bijou* lasted about six months at that location. It reopened in August 1907 at 19 South Main (now the Dakota Prairie Museum) where it remained active, under a variety of names (*Strand, State, World*), until the late 50’s. After nearly 50 years as a movie theatre it became the *Sportsman Bar*. It burned to the ground on July 1, 1973.

**6. What is considered the first American movie with a plot?**

*The Great Train Robbery* (1903). It was directed for the Edison company by Edwin S. Porter (1869-1941), America’s first notable film director.

In 14 scenes, bandits break into the railway office, tie up the hapless telegraph operator, rob a train, and disappear into the woods. The operator’s daughter shows up at the office and unties her father. He organizes a possee which chases after and over takes the villains. There is a gun fight. All of the robbers are killed. What was revolutionary about Porter’s technique was the way he shifted scenes between the bound telegraph operator in the train station and the escaping bandits so that parallel stories developed simultaneously. Other directors had presented multiple scenes sequentially before, but their films played like condensed versions of a stage play, *The Great Train Robbery* played like a movie. Link to [Teddy Blue’s Great Train Robbery Page](#). He illustrates the story of this early western movie with 20 frames from the film. You can watch the film and read Edison’s original description at the [Library of Congress’ Great Train Robbery Page](#).

**7. What type of film was it?**

Western.
Where was it shot?

In the wild’s of New Jersey, the home of the Edison Labs.

How long did it run?

About 12 minutes.

8. What is the importance of the New York showing of Quo Vadis?

It proved to the Edison Manufacturing Company, which controlled the American film industry, that an audience would watch a film which ran longer than 32 minutes (2 reels or 2000’ of film). Quo Vadis? (1912), the Italian Biblical epic, based on Henryk Sienkiewicz’s (winner of the 1905 Nobel Prize for Literature) 1895 novel, had a running time of two hours. This spectacular film, which included chariot races, persecuted Christians battling lions, Nero’s extravagant lifestyle and Rome going up in flames was imported in April 1913 by a commercial producer and shown at New York’s Astor Theatre for 22 consecutive weeks. Admission price: $ 1.50.

9. When did the film industry move from the east coast to California?

1913.

Why?

Because there are more "bright and sunny days" in California than there are in New Jersey. Remember, at this time, all films were shot out doors. Some have also suggested that production moved to the west coast to escape the "goons" the Edison company used to enforce its rules.

10. What film is considered the first American screen masterpiece?

The Birth of a Nation (1915). The three hour ten minute film, based on The Clansman by Thomas Dixon, deals with the American Civil War and the rise of the Ku Klux Klan during the Reconstruction.

11. Who directed it?

David Wark (D.W.) Griffith (1875-1948). This innovative pioneer has been called the "father of film technique" and the "Shakespeare of the screen." Link to a Mini Biography on the Internet Movie DataBase.
When?

1915.

12. What was the name of the first sound movie?

Warner Brother’s *The Jazz Singer* (1927), the first “talking film,” had only a few patches of synchronized dialogue and a couple of songs. Most of the film was silent.

Who did it star?

Al Jolson (1886-1950), was a major Broadway attraction when he starred in this first talking picture.

When was it made?

It opened at New York’s *Warner Theatre* in October 1927. The first "all talking movie," *Lights of New York*, a backstage gangster musical/drama, opened four months later in February 1928.

A Movie Palace

Roxy Theatre: New York City, NY

13. What was the Roxy Theatre?

The *Roxy Theatre* was considered "The Cathedral of the Motion Picture." It had a seating capacity of 6,214 (making it the world’s largest), an orchestra pit which could hold a 110 piece symphony, a fully equipped stage with a 70 foot wide proscenium arch and a 5 manual (keyboard), 34 rank Kimball pipe organ.

Construction cost-- over ten million dollars.

Where was it located?

At the corner of 50th Street and 7th Avenue in New York City.

When did it open?

March 11, 1927. The Roxy, New York’s grandest movie palace closed in March 1960, and was torn down that summer. An office building now sits on the site. Most large communities had at least one major "movie palace," like the Fox in Atlanta, Detroit and St. Louis, the Chicago in Chicago, Grauman’s Chinese in Hollywood, and the Paramount in Brooklyn. Many of these theatres, like New Yorks’ Roxy, were torn down. A few have become performing arts
centers (such as the St. Louis Theatre, now known as Powell Hall, the home of the St. Louis Symphony) or the home of a local community theatre.

14. When did Aberdeen's Capitol Theatre open?

January 12, 1927. When the 900 seat theatre opened, the Aberdeen American News proclaimed it to be "one of the best appointed and most beautiful theatres in the northwest."

What was its first presentation?

A live performance of a touring production of Michael Arlen’s The Green Hat. The play, considered extremely shocking in its day, tells the story of a bride whose husband commits suicide on their honeymoon. The audience discovers in the last act that the husband killed himself because he had a venereal disease. The first film shown on the Capitol Theatre’s silver screen was Kid Boots (1926) starring Eddie Cantor and Clara Bow. The theatre screened its last film: Robocop 2 in 1990 and became the home of the Aberdeen Community Theatre in 1993.

How many other downtown movie houses were in operation when it opened?

Five. Four theatres (Princess, Rialto, Lyric, and State) were located on south Main street, the fifth, the Orpheum Theatre, was one block east on south Lincoln. The four Main Street theatres were small, store front houses, the Orpheum, which opened in 1913 as the New Aberdeen, was built as a legitimate theatre with an adequate stage. Of these six theatres the structure of only two, the Capitol and the Lyric remain. The Capitol is now the home of the Aberdeen Community Theatre and current resident of the Lyric is Pauer Sound. The remaining four sites are either office buildings or parking lots.

15. What movie do many in the industry consider America's greatest film?

Citizen Kane, a film which parallels the life of newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst.

Who was the director?

When the theatre was dark, Welles and his company of actors broadcast radio adaptations of "classical" literature on the CBS *Mercury Theatre on the Air*. In October of 1938, Welles and his company created a panic with their broadcast of H. G. Welles’ *War of the Worlds*. Now famous, RKO contracted with the group to produce four films. Only one, *Citizen Kane*, was released. That film was a commercial failure which lost $150,000.

**When was it produced?**

1941.

16. What American film holds the distinction of generating the highest domestic box office gross?


17. Why did many small neighborhood movie theatres close in the late forties and early fifties?

Starting in 1948 a large portion of the traditional film audience began staying home and watching their movies on television. During World War II approximately 85 million people visited a movie theatre at least once a week, by the mid 50’s that number had dropped to 42 million. In 1991 weekly attendance was down to a little less than 19 million.

18. How many indoor movie theatres were still in operation in Aberdeen during the summer of 1955?

**Four.** The *Orphum, Capitol, Lyric*, and *World*. The *Orphum* and the *Capitol* were the first run houses. The *Lyric* and *World* were open only on weekends, and showed films which had been released one or more years before. These four theatres plus the *StarLight Drive-in*, which opened in 1949, screened 22 films a week during July 1955.

**The summer of 1959?**

**Two.** Only the *Capitol* and *Orphum* were still open in July 1959. These two theatres plus the drive-in displayed only 9 films a week.
19. How, in the early 1950's, did the movie industry attempt to win back their audience?

The industry used four techniques to try to win back their audience.

1. Most black and white production was phased out in favor of color.
2. More big budget, large scale epic films were produced.
3. There was an attempt to "pull the audience" into the picture.
4. There was a more liberal use of sex, "adult" themes and language, and nudity.

20. What was the most successful 3-D movie?

House of Wax (1953) starring Vincent Price. The short lived (3 year: 1952 to 1954) 3-D craze began with the release of Arch Oboler's Bwana Devil in November 1952. Over 5000 American movie houses were equipped to show the approximately 45 NaturalVision (3-D) films. Several major movies which were shot in 3-D, such as Kiss Me Kate (1953) and Alfred Hitchcock's Dial M for Murder (1954), were released "flat."

The 3-D process was based on stereoscopic sight: the fact that the left eye and the right eye see slightly different images and that the mind blends these two images to create the third dimension. A NaturalVision film, used a special two-lens camera which recorded the two images on two strips of film. In the theatre, these two images were displayed using two synchronized projectors and viewed by the audience through special Polaroid glasses. Link to a 1950s illustration showing the Secret of the Greatest Thrill in Movies!

21. What was the difference between Cinerama and CinemaScope?
Both Cinerama and CinemaScope attempted to "pull the audience" into the action of the film by projecting the movie on a huge screen. The deeply curved Cinerama screen at New York's Broadway Theatre was 78 feet wide by 26 feet tall -- more than 2000 square feet. The average CinemaScope screen installed in the local "movie palace" was about 42x16 feet (nearly 700 square feet), considerably larger than the 20x15 foot (300 square foot) sheet it replaced.

Cinerama, introduced in 1952 with This Is Cinerama, used a special three-lens camera which recorded three images on three strips of film and required three sets of projectors to exhibit its very wide (2.59 x 1) image on a deeply curved screen. Only eight films were produced using the three film strip process during Cinerama's ten year life. These films were shown in 100 theatres, world wide. How the West Was Won (1962), a two hour forty-five minute all star epic western, was both the last film produced in Cinerama, and the first, using the three film strip process, to have a plot. [Link to see a line drawing of the process and to compare the three images on film with the combined image on the wide screen]

CinemaScope, introduced with The Robe in 1953, used a standard 35mm projector with a special anamorphic lens to project its wide (2.55 x 1) image on a nearly flat screen. Today "Scoped" films are shot in Panavision (2.35 x 1), the anamorphic process which replaced Fox's CinemaScope in the late 60's. [Link to compare the CinemaScope image on film with the image projected on the screen]

The aspect ratio (width x height) of a "flat" film in the 1950s was 1.33 x 1, the same as television today. Presently, the aspect ratio of a "flat," wide-screen. non-scoped film is 1.85 x 1. If the screen at the Cinema9 is 16' tall, a wide-screen film would be 26 feet wide and a "Scoped" film would be be 38 feet wide. If an episode of NYPD Blue was shown at the Cinema, the image would be only 21 feet wide.
Above is a scene from the famous roller coaster ride in *This Is Cinerama* with a frame from Fred Zinnemann’s *High Noon* (1952) superimposed over the center. (Note the vertical lines in the *Cinerama* image where the three film strips join) With the enormous disparity in image size and the difference between a monophonic and seven channel stereophonic sound it is not difficult to understand why *Cinerama* created such a sensation.

22. What was the function of the Hay's Office?

The *Motion Picture Producers and Distributors Association* (MPPDA), headed by Will Hays, was created to head off government censorship by establishing a self-administered, industry wide, "code of decency." The *Code*, which ruled Hollywood production from 1934 to 1968 stated...

1. Methods of crime shall not be explicitly presented.
2. Illegal drug traffic must never be presented.
3. The sanctity of the institution of marriage and the home shall be upheld.
4. Excessive and lustful kissing, lustful embracing, suggestive postures and gestures, are not to be shown.
5. Seduction or rape should be never more than suggested. They are never the proper subject for comedy.
6. Sex perversion or any inference to it is forbidden.
7. Venereal diseases are not subjects for motion pictures.
8. Pointed profanity (this includes the words God, Lord, Jesus, Christ unless used reverently Hell, S.O.B., damn, "Gawd"), or other profane or vulgar expressions, however used, is forbidden.
9. Indecent or undue exposure is forbidden.
10. Ministers of religion should not be used as comic characters or as villains.
23. What was the first successful film to be released without the Production Code seal?

*The Moon is Blue* (1953). It was denied the Code’s "Seal of approval" because the script included the words "virgin," "mistress," and "pregnant." The director, Otto Preminger, treated these matters as a great joke suggesting that seduction is an amusing and acceptable pastime for a single male.

24. When was the present film rating system introduced?

November 1968

25. What is the meaning of G, PG, PG-13, R, and NC-17?

**G:** General audience: All ages admitted.

**PG:** Parental guidance suggested: Some material may not be suitable for children.

**PG-13:** Parents strongly cautioned: Some material may be inappropriate for children under 13.

**R:** Restricted: Under 17 requires an accompanying parent or guardian.

**NC-17:** No one 17 and under admitted. Patently adult. Children are not permitted.

In 2002, according to the [Motion Picture Association of America](https://mpaa.org/) (MPAA), of the 20 highest grossing films, there was...

- 1 (5%) films rated G,
- 6 (30 %) films rated PG,
- 13 (65%) rated PG-13,
- 0 (0%) rated R, and
- 0 (0%) rated NC-17.

A similar rating system, known as the [TV Parental Guideline](https://www.television家长rating.org) is used in television.

26. Which rating do producers most desire?


Why?
Film producers tend to target their product to the 12 to 17 year old crowd, the demographic group which makes up 16% of the movie going audience.
Film Production

Resources

Outside reading...

Internet...

Drew's Script-O-Rama. One of the most complete film script archive on the Internet.

Film production is a three step process: (1) PreProduction (Developing the script), (2) Production (Shooting the script) and (3) PostProduction (Editing the film and adding the sound tracks).

1. How does the format of a screen play differ from that of a stage play?

A screen play is a cross between a novel and a play. It contains....

1. A description of the scene (INT. EXT.), time of day (NIGHT, DAY) and action.
2. A description of the composition (LONG SHOT, CLOSE-UP, POV), and
3. The dialogue spoken by the characters and
4. An indication of how the scenes are joined (DISSOLVE, FADE OUT).

Link to an exerpt (Scene 11) from Lawrence Kasdan’s 1979 screen play for Raiders of the Lost Ark (1981). The script is based on a "story" developed by producer George Lucas and Philip Kaufman. Following the cutting from the script is the same scene as it appeared in Campbell Black’s 1981 tie-in book.

2. Who owns the rights to a screen play, the writer or the producer/studio?

The studio or production company.
3. Briefly outline how a screen play may evolve from an idea to a shooting script.

A film script evolves in a three step process. (1) The writer begins with an idea or concept. It is (2) fleshed out in an adaption (or story), a narrative describing how the concept will be adapted to the screen. The final step is (3) the actual development of the screenplay or shooting script. Each step may be developed by a different writer.

4. Why are many films based on adaption of well known plays or novels?

Film production is an extremely expensive operation. Most producers would prefer investing their money in a property with a proven track record: a book: The Client (1994), Clear and Present Danger (1994), Gone with the Wind (1939) -- a play: A Few Good Men (1992), Inherit the Wind (1960) -- or a television series: Maverick (1994) The Fugitive (1993)-- for example. All films are linked to their Internet Movie Database entry.

5. Why are few screen plays published?

Most publishers do not believe the general public can read and understand a film script. Crown Publishers in New York have printed two collections, edited by Sam Thomas, of the Best American ScreenPlays. Some scripts are also available on the Web. Drew’s Script-O-Rama is probably the most complete archive on the Internet.

6. What is a tie-in book?

A novel based on the screen play.

What is its function?

To create excitement about the movie. Normally the tie- in book hits the market about the same time the film opens in "a theatre near you." The idea is, after you have seen the film, you will go out and buy the book. Because the tie-in book is being written at the approximately the same time as the film is being shot, scenes which have been left on the cutting room floor are often still in the novel.

7. What are the major production responsibilities of the director,

Set up the visual composition of each scene, as well as stage the action of the film...
the director of photography,

The Director of Photography or Cinematographer puts the director’s composition on film...

the film editor?

Piece the numerous shots together to create scenes. The editor is guided by the screen play and the director’s notes.

8. What is a storyboard? How is it used in the film making process?

The storyboard is a series of drawings illustrating the shots outlined by the writer in the screen play. It is a communication link between the writer, director and cinematographer.

Bones (2001)
Storyboards by Marc Vena
In the images on the left, the COP enters the building (top), and the camera PANs with him as he moves to the stairs (middle) and climbs to the second floor (bottom). Note the shape of the drawings -- Bones was a "scoped" film.

9. Why are films not shot in chronological order?

All films are shot out of sequence because it is more efficient (cheaper). Normally, all scenes set in one location are shot before the production company moves to the next location. The first scenes filmed for James Cameron’s Titanic were those staged in the North Atlantic: the underwater shots of the decaying bow of the actual RMS Titanic, and the scenes with Brock Lovett (Bill Paxton) and Old Rose (Gloria Stuart) on the Russian research ship: Keldysh. The next month, September 1996, the company began principle photography at the Fox Baja Studios.

The first scenes shot [at Fox Baja] were in Rose and Cal’s suite -- Rose unpacking her French impressionist paintings. Two days later, DiCaprio arrived on the set and for his first day of filming was charged with the formidable task of sketching Winslet’s voluptuous form. She disrobed and posed -- impudent, like Manet’s Olympia -- on an Empire devan. "Like
10. What is an establishing shot?

A long shot, usually an exterior, which establishes a scene’s location.

A master shot?

A non-committal (no center-of-interest) medium shot of the entire scene.

An over-the-shoulder shot?

A form of close up where character A (the center-of-interest) is seen over character B’s shoulder.

11. How many setups could be used to shoot a simple two character dialogue scene?

Five. A master shot, two over-the-shoulder shots, and two individual close-ups. There will probably be multiple takes of each setup. A simple two page dialogue scene, which will probably run two minutes on screen, may produce 3000 feet (33 minutes) of exposed film. Sixteen takes should produce adequate coverage for the editor.

12. What is coverage?

Coverage refers to the number of different setups used to film a scene. The more coverage, the more film exposed, the more choices the editor has in assembling the final cut.

What is a continuity error?

Because the same scene is filmed more than once, there are often subtle differences between shots. A wine glass may be full in one take, and half empty when the scene is reshoot from a different angle. When the editor cuts between these two takes, the level of the wine in the glass will magically rise and fall. This difference between these shots is a continuity error.

13. What is a process shot?

Both a process and a matt shot are forms of special visual effects (SFX). In a process shot, the actor performs in front of a blue (or
green) screen. The scene’s location is added during post production. Most scenes set in a moving vehicle (such as a cab) are process shots. Below is an establishing shot created by Matte World Digital for *Soldier* (1998).

The scene as shot on the sound stage. Note the blue screen background.

The scene as it appeared on screen after the background was added in post production.

**A matt shot?**

A **matt** shot combines, through the magic of photography, a live actor and a painted environment to create a scene which does not exist. Today, the painting is usually done on a computer screen. Below is a composite long shot created by Matte World Digital for *The Truman Show* (1998).
The original scene as shot on the "back lot" of the studio.

The scene as it appeared on the screen. The matte artist has added the upper stories to the buildings in Truman’s home town of Seahaven.

Also note the difference in the shape of the frame between Soldier and The Truman Show. Soldier was "scoped" and The Truman Show was shot flat.

Why are they used?

Because they are less expensive.

14. How many weeks is a "typical" feature film in production?

Eight weeks. 48 days. The higher the budget, the more time can be spent in shooting the film. Roger Corman, the king of the low budget movie, shot the original The Little Shop of Horrors (1960) on a borrowed set in one weekend (2 1/2 days). The production budget of an "average" film in 1997 was 60 million dollars with an additional 20 million for promotion. A summer "blockbuster" was budgeted at 150 million with two thirds ($ 100 million) spent on production, and one third on advertising. The production budget for John Cameron’s Titanic (1997), which had a 6 month (163 day) shoot, has been reported to be 200 million dollars, making it Hollywood’s most expensive movie. Cameron exposed 1.3 million feet of film (240 hours and 45 minutes) which was edited down to 3 hours, 14 minutes.
How long does it take to shoot an hour long television action-adventure show?

**Six to 8 days.** A day normally begins at 6am and runs 11 to 13 hour long. It takes between 60 and 96 hours to produce 45 minutes of program content (for a 60 minute television show). To stay on budget, a movie company must complete approximately 2 1/2 minutes of film per day and a television production company must shoot between 5 and 7 minutes of film per day. *Cleopatra*, the four hour mini-series broadcast by ABC during the May Sweeps 1999 was in production for 12 weeks and budgeted at $28 million. This breaks down to $ 7 million per hour of air time, or $2.3 million per week of filming.

15. What does the film editor do?

The film editor takes the individual shots and assembles them into the scenes which will make up the final cut of the film. Up until the 1990’s the film editor, often working with the director, usually cut and assembled the work print on a *Moviola* flatbed editing desk.

![Michael Chaskes cutting a film on a 16mm Moviola flatbed.](image)

Today the images on the film stock are transferred to videotape by the film lab, digitized and loaded onto the hard drive of a computer. The editor, using a software program such as *Avid Film Composer*, instead of physically cutting the film, electronically cuts and assembles the film on the screen of a computer monitor.
Once the final cut has been assembled, it can be output to video tape for distribution to the electronic media: television, cable, and direct-to-video. For a theatrical release, the editing software will produce a "cut list" which will be used by the negative cutter in the film lab. The cut and assembled negative will be used to make the exhibition prints which will be distributed to the local theatres.

Michael Chaskes, a Los Angeles-based freelance film editor, believes that the editor is more than a "craftsman."

The actual acts of operating a flatbed and cutting and splicing a workprint can be mastered by anyone in very little time. Even non-linear cutting on a computer requires fairly minimal training.

It's the actual decision-making of cutting that's hard: for instance, how to turn 1,000' (or more) of raw coverage into a 100' scene that delivers the maximum emotional and storytelling impact that the material is capable of. It's not just cutting by numbers--"the long shot, then the over-the-shoulders, then the close-ups." It's a creative process. Maybe you play the whole thing in the master shot. Or the whole thing in a series of close-ups. Or maybe you cut together any number of angles in any number of ways. It's a process requiring intense creativity, and the editor is the first person to tackle it. (Copyright © 1996 by Michael Chaskes)

How long does it normally take him to cut a film?

Six months. Although editing is considered part of Post Production, the film editor traditionally begins work at the beginning of the Production phase. Footage shot on Monday, will be developed and printed that night, and delivered to the editor on Tuesday. A rough cut of that sequence may be available for the director's screening on Wednesday. Usually the rough cut of the entire film will be available
six weeks after principle photography wraps. Typically it takes two to three weeks to edit a one hour, action-adventure TV show such as *JAG*.

**16. Why is the music composed after the film has been shot and edited?**

The music is composed to fit the final cut of the film. Often the director and editor will create a *temp score* with music from various albums, both classical and pop (or rock, or country), and cuts from pre-existing film soundtracks. This score is designed to give a sense of the film’s musical possibilities. Most composers ignore this *temp score* when they begin writing.

**17. Which sound tracks are recorded during the filming, and which are created in post-production?**

The only sound track recorded during the shooting is the *dialogue track*. The remainder (music, sound effects, "Foley") are created in post-production.

**18. What is the Foley track?**

The Foley track is the "sound effect" track which contains the sound of foot steps, clinking glasses, pouring drinks, etc.

**19. What is ADR (or looping)?**

ADR stands for "Automatic Dialogue Replacement." It is a technique used to replace the dialogue on the dialogue track without having to re-shoot the scene.

*Why is it used?*

Because the dialogue in the scene has been re-written or because the original dialogue track was "garbled."

**20. How many prints are normally produced for a major film release?**

Between 250 and 2500 prints.

**How does this effect distribution?**

A film can only play in as many theatres (or screens) as there are prints. An "art films" which has limited distribution has fewer prints. On the other hand Hollywood released 2,500 copies of *True Lies*.
during the summer of 1994 and over 7,000 prints of Godzilla in 1998.

21. Why do some films play the larger towns and cities first?

Because the larger towns have a larger potential audience and tend to have higher ticket prices; hence a studio can make more money showing a film in New York City, with a $10 ticket than they can in Aberdeen with a $7.00 ticket.

22. Approximately how much of your ticket price stays in Aberdeen, and how much is forwarded to the distributor?

Between 10 and 65 percent of a film’s box office gross stays in the local community. The first week a film is in release, the typical theatre’s cut is 10%, the second week it’s raised to 20%, third week--30%, etc. On Broadway, the split between the theatre and the production company is 50% - 50%.

23. How long is it before a film is available on videotape?

About 6 months. A summer release is usually available by Christmas.

24. When will it appear on pay-cable?

About the same time it’s released on tape.

On the commercial networks?

Normally a film will not appear on one of the four commercial networks until 2 to 5 years after it was shown on the big screen.

Theatre Home Page

E-mail questions and comments to Larry Wild at wildl@northern.edu.
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Radio: History and Production

Resources

Outside reading...

Internet...

Radio Program Archive of the University of Memphis
Original Old Time Radio WWW Pages
Building the Broadcast Band
The History of Broadcasting, 1920-1960
Jeff Miller's Broadcast History Pages
United States Early Radio History

1. Who is credited with developing the wireless telegraph?

   **Guglielmo Marconi** (1874-1937) transmitted a wireless signal across his Italian estate in 1896.

2. When did he first transmit a message across the Atlantic Ocean?

   **1901.** Marconi transmitted the letter "S" ("dit-dit-dit" in Morse code) 2232 miles from Cornwell in England to St. Johns, Newfoundland on the east coast of Canada. In 1909 he received the Nobel Prize for Physics for his work in wireless communication.

3. Who were the first people to exploit wireless communication?

   The **navy and merchant marines**. In 1900 the Marconi Wireless Corporation installed its first marine wireless station on the SS *Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse*. By 1910, Marconi had established a network of shore based stations and 781 ships, both naval and merchant marine, carried wireless equipment. Inefficient spark gap transmitters broadcast with 1.5 or 5 kilowatts of power on 300 (1000 KHz) or 600 (500 Khz) meters. The daylight coverage ranged from...
70 to 300 nautical miles. At night the range of the more powerfull stations was close to 2000 miles. Many ships had only one operator, and he often signed off between 10pm and 6am. It was not until the sinking of the *Titanic* on the night of April 14-15, 1912, that the ship board operators were required to monitor the air waves 24 hours a day.

4. **When was recorded music first broadcast over the air?**

   **1906.** On Christmas Eve, 1906, an Candian inventor, Dr. Reginald A. Fessenden (1866-1932) broadcast a religious program which included readings from the *Bible* (the Christmas story from Luke), a live violin solo, and a recording of Handel’s *Largo* from from the 420’ antenna tower of his experimental wireless station in Brant Rock (near Boston), Mass. This broadcast was heard by ship board wireless operators as for away as the West Indies.

5. **What was the first commercial American radio station?**

   **KDKA.** A station’s call letters are not initials, they have no meaning. The letters are assigned by a government agency (the FCC). With a few exceptions (for example: KDKA in Pittsburgh and WNAX in Yankton, SD), stations east of the Mississippi begin with "W," and stations west of the river begin with "K."

   **Where was it located?**

   East Pittsburgh, PA.

   **When did it go on the air?**

   **November 2, 1920.** The first broadcast was the returns for the Warren G. Harding / James M. Cox Presidential election. Approximately 1000 listeners heard Harding declared winner with 60.4% of the popular vote from this tiny 100 watt station.

6. **Who owned the station?**

   Westinghouse Electric and Manufacturing Company.

   **Why did they put it on the air?**

   Westinghouse was planning to market, for $ 25, a primitive radio kit: The *Aeriola Jr.*. They knew the public would not buy their sets if there were no programs broadcast to which they could listen.
In 1916, David Sarnoff (1891-1971) a New York based Marconi wireless operator wrote the following letter to his station manager...

I have in mind a plan of development which would make radio a household utility. The idea is to bring music into the home by wireless. The receiver can be designed in the form of a simple radio music box and arranged for several different wavelengths, which could be changeable with the throwing of a single switch or the pressing of a single button. Baseball scores can be transmitted in the air. This proposition would be especially interesting to farmers and others living in outlying areas.

In 1921 Sarnoff was named General Manager of RCA. He was instrumental in the creation of the first radio network (NBC) and NBCs move into television.

7. Why were the commercial radio networks established?

It soon became obvious to the broadcasters that every station could not create its own, locally produced, high quality programs. By joining several stations together, the stations in the largest markets (New York, Chicago, Los Angeles) could develop programs which they could distribute over land lines to the smaller markets (Omaha, Denver, Kansas City, etc.).

The Red network of the National Broadcasting Company, NBC-Red, began operation in December of 1926 with a hook-up of 20 stations. The following month, January 1927, NBC-Blue (the cultural network) was organized with only 5 outlets. The Columbia Broadcasting System, CBS, came on line with 16 stations in September of 1927. In December 1928, NBC-Red had completed a coast-to-coast hook-up. By 1930, the three major radio networks had been established. In October 1943, NBC-Blue was sold to the American Broadcasting System and became the American Broadcasting Company, ABC.

8. When did drama become a mainstay of network radio programming?

In the late 20s or early 1930s. The first dramatic radio series, an anthology program, was introduced on WGY, a General Electric station in up-state New York in 1922.

9. What was radio drama's first hit show?
**Amos 'n' Andy.** In 1925 two white actors, Freeman Gosden (1899-1982) and Charles Correll (1890-1972) presented *Sam 'n' Henry*, a "black" sitcom, on Chicago's WGN. Two years later they left WGN for WMAQ, also in Chicago, and the program's title was changed to *Amos 'n' Andy*. In 1929 they joined the NBC network and became radio’s first major hit.

In 1930, RKO introduced Gosden and Correll as Amos Jones and Andrew Halt Brown in *Check and Double Check, Amos 'n' Andy*, with an all black cast, starring Spenser Williams Jr. (Amos) and Alvin Childress (Andy), moved to CBS television in 1950. Growing anger over black stereotyping drove the show off the air in the summer of 1953. CBS pulled the TV series from world wide syndication in 1966. Perhaps the finest tribute to the show came from English playwright George Bernard Shaw. "There are three things I'll never forget about America:" he said, "The Rocky Mountains, Niagara Falls, and *Amos 'n' Andy*. For more information link to *The Original Amos 'n' Andy Web Page*.

**What type of program was it?**

The program began in the **serial format**. 4,090 fifteen minute episodes were broadcast (5 days a week, 52 weeks a year) between 1928 and 1943 when *Amos 'n' Andy* became a weekly half-hour situation comedy. In 1954, the year before the last broadcast of the weekly sit-com, CBS created a new show: *The Amos 'n' Andy Music Hall* with the two title characters becoming glorified disc jockeys. They left the air in the fall of 1960. When the cancellation was announced, Charles Correll told a reporter "The DJs and the newscasters have taken over -- and there’s no room for us anymore."

**From what city did it originate?**

Chicago.

10. **What is the difference between a dramatic series, serial, and anthology program?**

- **A series** has a continuing set of characters and a different plot each week. Most series shows were 30 minute programs which were broadcast once a week.
- **A serial** has a continuing set of characters and a continuing, never ending plot line. Most serials were 15 minute programs which were broadcast five days a week.
- **An anthology** program has a different plot, and a different set of characters for each show. An anthology show was usually a 30 or 60 minute programs which was broadcast once a week.
11. Give an example of each from the current television season.

- **Series**: *CSI, ER*
- **Serial**: *As the World Turns, Guiding Light, General Hospital.*
- **Anthology**: *... Night at the Movies.*

12. Where did soap opera's get their name?

Many early daytime dramas were broadcast from Cincinnati’s WLW and were created and produced by the advertising department of Procter and Gamble, the makers of Ivory soap. Between 1934 and 1939, WLW, broadcasting at night with an experimental 500,000 watts (10 times the official legal limit), was the most powerful radio station in the United States.

13. What are the four basic elements of radio drama?

- Narration,
- Music,
- Dialogue, and
- Sound effects.

14. Which element is used to establish the environment?

Sound effects

15. What are the three basic functions of music in radio drama?

- To identify the program,
- To create a bridge (connection) between dramatic scenes, and
- To underscore dialogue creating a "dramatic" mood.

16. What is the importance of the *Mercury Theatre on the Air's* production of *War of the Worlds*?

*War of the Worlds* is undoubtedly the most famous radio broadcast of all time. It proved to management that the listening audience would accept a radio drama as real; that they would believe what they heard.

**Who was the director? The star?**

*Orson Welles* (1915-1985) was both the director and the star.

**When was it produced?**
Sunday, October 30, 1938. It was, according to Welles, the "Mercury Theatre's own radio version of dressing up in a sheet and jumping out of a bush and saying boo."

How did it affect the audience?

Many listeners panicked believing the United States was being invaded by Martians. Men staggered into bars, babbling about the end of the world. Students at a college campus in North Carolina fought over the few available telephones. More than twenty people were treated for shock by a Newark (NJ) hospital. It was rumored that millions had been killed in New York when the city was devastated by a "planetoid." Families gathered on roof tops in Boston to watch the red glow in the southern sky as New York burned.

17. Who was, in the opinion of a number of writers, "the perfect radio hero?"

The Shadow. Radio’s man of mystery was originally performed by a 22 year old (in 1937) Orson Welles. The show remained on the air, with new scripts, to the end of 1954.

Why?

The Shadow was only a voice. He was never seen, only heard. As the announcer told the listening audience at the opening of each show, "Several years ago in the Orient, Lamont Cranston, wealthy young man-about-town, learned a strange and mysterious secret...the hypnotic power to cloud men’s minds..."

18. When did radio begin to lose its prime time audience?

Radio began to lose it’s evening audience in 1948 when The Texaco Star Theatre, starring Milton Berle, became a national phenomenon. In 1951 I Love Lucy became the talk of the town. By 1954 radio drama had become a memory. CBS did continue to carry a few selected programs on Sunday afternoons until the early 1960's.

Radio’s last great dramatic series was Gunsmoke (1952-1961) starring William Conrad as U. S. Marshall Matt Dillon. During it’s nine years on radio, CBS presented 480 performances of 413 (46 per season) scripts. Many of these episodes were adapted to television. Link to Gunsmoke: Radio's Last Great Dramatic Series to see a publicity photo of the radio cast and a transcript of the show’s opening sequence.
In 1974, CBS briefly revived serious radio drama with the *CBS Radio Mystery Theatre* (1974-1982), a nightly, one hour anthology program hosted by E. G. Marshall. Today only a few commercial radio stations broadcast dramatic programs.

**Why?**

Because people began watching TV instead of listening to the radio.

**19. What is currently radio's prime time?**

**Drive time:** From 7 to 9am, and 4 to 6pm. Today program content is typically either all music (country, rock, pop) or all talk (news, interview, sports).

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E-mail questions and comments to Larry Wild at [wildl@northern.edu](mailto:wildl@northern.edu).
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Television: History and Production

Resources

Outside reading...


Internet...

[ABC](#) | [CBS](#) | [NBC](#) | [FOX](#) | [UPN](#) | [WB](#) | [PBS](#) | [SD-PBS](#)
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Tim’s TV Showcase

[A U. S. Television Chronology, 1875-1970](#)

1. When did commercial television broadcasting begin?

1939: President Franklin Roosevelt’s opening of the New York World’s Fair is broadcast live from NBC’s experimental station -- W2XBS -- in New York City.

1941: In July, both NBC (WNBT) and CBS (WCBW) come on the air with a commercial station, again in New York City. Development is halted by World War II.

1946: The war is over, and both networks begin to expand.

1948: Four television networks, (NBC, CBS, ABC, and DuMont), begin a full prime-time schedule (8 to 11pm, Eastern Time), seven days a week.

In what city?
New York City

2. What was the relationship between radio drama and early television programming?

Most early (1948 to 1960) television shows, both dramatic and non-dramatic, originated on radio. For many programs -- *The Adventures*
of Ozzie and Harriet (1944-1954), Father Knows Best (1949-1954), Dragnet (1949-1956) -- the transition was easy: the cast performed in a television or film studio instead of a radio station. For the actor, a TV production required a longer time commitment. A radio show was normally produced in one day -- a read through in the morning, a "dress" rehearsal in the afternoon, and the performance that evening. A half hour television show required the actor to be in front of the camera for three or four, 10 to 12 hour days.

For other productions, the switch was much more difficult. William Conrad (1920-1994) created the role of U.S. Marshall Matt Dillon in the radio version of Gunsmoke (1952-1961). When CBS decided to bring Gunsmoke to television in 1955, the network executives decided that although Conrad sounded like a US Marshall, he didn't look like one. At 5'9" and 270 pounds, the portly, balding, mustached Conrad looked more like a villain than a western hero.

At the suggestion of John Wayne, CBS cast James Arness (1923- ), a 6'7" actor who's major acting credit at the time was the title role in The Thing from Another World (1951). Arness would be Matt Dillon for the next 40 years. First on the television series (1955-1975), then in five made-for-TV Gunsmoke movies.

William Conrad, who was one of radio's most prolific actors, would become a television producer and director. His first major on camera television role was Frank Cannon in Cannon (1971-1976). This was followed by Nero Wolf (1981) and J.L. McCabe, the Fatman, in Jake and the Fatman (1987-1992). William Conrad died of a massive heart attack in February 1994 and was inducted into the Radio Hall of Fame in 1997. Link to Gunsmoke: Radio's Last Great Dramatic Series for more information, including photographs, on the cast, characters and setting of Gunsmoke.

3. Who was television's first superstar?
Milton Berle (1908-2002)

4. What was the program?

*The Texaco Star Theatre* (1948–1956) was an old-fashioned vaudeville variety hour with a half dozen guests each week. Berle, both host and star, worked his way into many of the acts. In 1950, the first year of the Nielsen ratings, the "Milton Berle Show" was watched by 62% of those owning TV sets. It has been said that Berle was television's first great "salesman." During his tenure the number of TV homes went from a little under 191,000 to over 21,000,000, an increase of approximately 10,994%.

From where was it broadcast?

Live from New York City.

5. When was the Golden Age of Television?

1948 to 1960. Although the 12 year period between 1948 and 1960 is remembered for the variety show (*Texaco Star Theatre*), the sitcom (*I Love Lucy*) and the western (*Gunsmoke*), when we talk about the *Golden Age of Television* we are generally referring to the dramatic anthology programs, such as *The US Steel Hour* (1953-1963), *Alcoa Hour* (1955-1957), *Kraft Television Theatre* (1947-1958), and *Playhouse 90* (1956-1961) which were broadcast live from New York City. Beginning in 1957, many of these programs were taped before broadcast.

6. Name one major writer who got his start during this period.

William Gibson (1914- ), Ira Levin (1929- ), Rod Serling (1924-1975), Gore Vidal (1925- )

7. Give the title of one major work (film or play) which began as a golden age television script?


Links are to the film adaptation in the Internet Movie Database.

8. When did television production move from live from New York City to filmed from LA?

1951.
9. What network show is credited with starting the shift to the west coast?

*I Love Lucy* (1951-1958). CBS wanted to broadcast live from New York. Lucy and Desi didn’t want to leave their home in Los Angeles. They filmed the show with three cameras (which the film studios said couldn’t be done) before a live audience. Because the show was filmed, both coasts got a high quality picture. Link to the *I Love Lucy* web page at Tim's TV Showcase.

10. What is the process used in developing a television series and selling it to a network?

There are only six major broadcast clients: ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX, UPN, and WB. Five of these clients are owned by production houses. All network prime time series are produced by the major film studios (Warner Brothers, 20th Century Fox, Universal, Paramount, Disney) or the six TV networks because they have "deep pockets." Ideas come from both the networks and the studios. The concept, the story, the script, and the cast must be approved by both the studio and the network, as well as the show’s the production company.

After a concept is given the "green light", a pilot episode will be shot. The pilot is often a two hour made for TV movie. Sometimes the characters and concept will be introduced on an episode of an existing series. For example, CBS’s *Jake and the Fatman* (1987-1992) was introduced in a two hour episode-- *The Don* (1986) -- of NBC’s *Matlock* (1986-1995). Normally between 15 and 20 pilots are produced each season by the major television networks.

If the pilot is accepted, the network will order between four and six episodes. If the series is a successes, additional episodes will be ordered. There are 22 episodes in a full season.

11. What is the difference between a single camera and a multi-camera shoot?

A single camera shoot is the same technique used by the movie industry. The multi-camera shoot, which is much closer to live theatre, is the technique developed by the television industry during’s it’s "Golden Age."

12. Which technique is used for an hour long action-adventure series?

Single camera

A half-hour sitcom?
Muli-camera

A soap opera?

Multi-camera

13. How many cameras are used in a multi-camera production?

Three. The center camera is used for the "Master Shot," the left and right camera cover the closeups and over-the-shoulder shots. Most local news programs, which are mult-camera productions, use only two cameras.

14. How many days is a half-hour sitcom in rehearsal/production?

Five days. The director spends the first three days with the actors. Day four the camera crews are brought in, and the camera’s location for each scene is determined. Day five is the final dress rehearsal, and the taping of the show. Normally both the final dress rehearsal and the performance are taped.

15. What are the three program sources available to a local station's program director?

1. Network
2. Locally produced
3. Syndicated.

16. What is the major form of original programming produced by a local station?

News and information, including local high school and college sports coverage.

17. What types of programs normally appear in syndication?

Talk shows (Oprah Winfrey), game shows (Wheel of Fortune) and re-runs of old network sitcoms (Cheers, M*A*S*H. Married with Children). The top rated (Rating: 9.5) syndicated television program is Wheel of Fortune.

18. Which shows are usually picked up from the network feed?

The morning news shows (Good Morning, America), the 5:30 national news (The CBS Evening News with Dan Rather) and the prime time programs (7 to 10pm, Central time).
19. How are radio and television shows financed?

By commercials.

20. What is the basic function of the program?

To attract an audience to watch or listen to the commercials.

21. How many minutes of commercials support a half-hour prime time show?

Eight minutes. Six minutes are sold by the network, and two minutes are available for sale by the local station.

22. What is the standard length of a television commercial?

Thirty seconds.

23. How much would a prime time spot cost on Aberdeen's KABY (Channel 9)?

In the spring of 2000, a prime time 30 second spot on the Aberdeen ABC station, KABY, costs between $150 and $250. KABY broadcasts to 80,000 TV households in a 16 county area.

24. What is the difference between rating point, share and ranking?

Rating point: The percentage of TV homes watching a program. A rating of 20 points means that 20% of America’s TV homes (or 20.4 million homes) are watching the program. Each TV home has approximately 1.41 viewers.

Share: The percentage of TV homes, whose sets are on, watching a program. A 30 share means that 30% of those people who are watching TV at that moment, are watching the program.

Ranking: The position (or place) the show holds in that week's list.

25. Which, rating are share, will always be higher?

The share.

26. What readily available source can be used to determine a program's rating?

The Nielsen Ratings (provided by Nielsen Media Research) of television’s prime time schedule are published in the Life (or purple)
section of the Wednesday (or maybe Thursday) issue of *USA Today*. TV rating are also published on the Web at TV.Zap2It.com.

27. How many television homes does each rating point represent?

According to *USA Today* each rating point is equal to 1,055,000 TV homes.

28. Why can a show with a low rating still attract advertisers?

Because that program attracts the kind of audience (meaning: The kind of people who will buy their product) the advertiser wants.

29. What elements, other than the quality of production, can effect a program's rating?

The two major element are (1) a shows competition (You don’t want to be scheduled opposite the number one show) and (2) what programs lead and follow your show (You want to be sandwiched between two hit shows).

30. What is currently television's number one show? What is its rating? Its share?

As of February 22nd, television’s number one show is CBS’s *CSI* with a rating of 16.4 and a 25 share. NBC’s top rated program is *Friends* with a rating of 13.5 and a 21 share, Fox’s number one show is *American Idol (Tuesday)* with a rating of 15.8 and a 24 share and ABC’s top program is *Monday Night Football*, with a rating of 11.5 and a 19 share.

As of February 22nd, the average Neilsen rating for the six commercial networks for the current season (2003-2004) are...

1. CBS: 8.8 with a 14 share
2. NBC: 7.2 with a 12 share
3. Fox: 6.2 with a 10 share
4. ABC: 6.1 with a 10 share
5. WB: 2.5 with a 4 share
6. UPN: 2.4 with a 4 share

So far this season, four of television’s top ten shows are carried by CBS, three are on NBC, two on Fox and only one on ABC.

31. What is television's longest running prime-time dramatic series?
*Gunsmoke*. 20 years, 1955 to 1975. Link to the *Gunsmoke* web page on *Tim's TV Showcase*.

32. What is broadcasting's (radio and television) longest running program?

*Guiding Light*. 67 years, and still running. It started in Chicago on January 25, 1937 as a 15 minute, 5 days a week, soap. The show was originally about the Reverend Doctor John Rutledge (played by Arthur Peterson) and his *Little Church of Five Points* in Five Points, a Chicago suburb. The Rev. Rutledge left a lamp, the original "guiding light," burning in his study as a beacon for those who needed help. In 1948 the focus of the show shifted to the Frederick (Papa) Bauer family of Springfield. During the Christmas Episode in December of 2000, Meta Bauer, the daughter of Mama and Papa Bauer remembers...

> When I was a girl we used to listen to Reverend Ruthledge at the Church in Five Points. He was the best man I've ever known at finding hope for people in trouble, and I guess that's just about everybody at one time or another. He used to say something I'll never forget. "There is a destiny that makes us brothers. No one goes that way alone. All that we bring into the lives of others, comes back into our own."

The character of the Rev. Ruthledge was inspired by the preaching and guidance of the Reverend Dr. Preston Bradley of the People’s Church of Chicago. Link to the *GL* web pages on *soap-new.com*.

33. Which regularly scheduled television series has the distinction of drawing the largest audience for a single episode?


34. What are the sweeps?

The "Sweeps" are the television rating surveys which "sweep" North America, all 210 television markets, four times a year -- November, February, May and August. Because they use a larger, and more complete sample than the Neilsen index, they give a more accurate idea of what the "local" audience is watching in the smaller markets. It is during "Sweeps" that the networks broadcast...
• all **new episodes** of regularly scheduled shows; many featuring special guest stars,
• **made-for-TV movies** with sensational themes and major film and TV stars,
• the **mini-series**-- a multi-part, four to twelve hour, made-for-TV movie,
• **award shows**, 
• the premiere of a summer **bockbuster movie**, and
• **multi-part documentaries** on local and national newscasts.

**Why are they important?**

Ratings developed during the "Sweeps" are used by the local station and network to establish their quarterly rate card. The higher the rating, the larger the audience, the more they can charge for a thirty second spot.

**35. What effect has cable and home VCRs had on the size of the network's prime time audience?**

The commercial network's prime time audience has dropped from a 90 share in the mid 70's, to a 54 share in 2004. Today, only a little over one third (36%) of the prime time audience is watching the big three networks -- **ABC**, **CBS**, and **NBC**. When the networks lose audience, they also lose ad revenue, and their profits drop.

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E-mail questions and comments to Larry Wild at [wildl@northern.edu](mailto:wildl@northern.edu).
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Greek and Roman Theatre

Resources

Text...

Plays: Greek...
Aeschylus. *Prometheus Bound*
Sophocles. *Oedipus*
Euripides. *Trojan Women*
Aristophanes. *Lysistrata*

Plays: Roman...
Plautus. *The Menaechmi*
Seneca. *Oedipus*

Greek Theatre

1. How did religious ritual evolve into Greek theatre?

There were four major celebrations, in honor of the Greek god Dionysus. Three of these celebrations-- the *City Dionysia* in the spring and the *Lenaia* and *Rural Dionysia* in the winter --would involve drama. One of the elements of these celebrations was the dithyramb, a choral ode song to the gods. Aristotle tell us that Greek tragedy grew out of the dithyramb.

2. What was the relationship between Greek mythology and early Greek drama?

Greek mythology is the legends and stories behind the Greek gods. The earliest Greek dramas, especially those by Aeschylus (525-456 BC), drew their plots and characters from these myths.

3. The first tragic dramas were performed in honor of which Greek god?

Dionysus, the Greek god of wine, fertility and revelry.

4. At which dramatic festival were these dramas first performed?
The City Dionysia.

5. Where was this festival held? When?

Athens, in the early spring (March).

6. What was a dithyramb?

The dithyramb was a lengthy "hymn" or choral ode in honor of Dionysus which was sung by a chorus of fifty men.

How did it evolve into drama?

Aristotle, in the Poetics, tells us that one of the choral leaders, Thespis, left the chorus, jumped on to the alter, and assumed the role of "the god".

7. Who was the first actor?

Thespis.

The first playwright?

Also, Thespis. He won the first Greek tragedy contest in 534 BC.

8. What type of dramas did Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides write?

Tragedies.

9. Which of these three was the first playwright whose work has survived?

Aeschylus (525-456 BC). He won thirteen Tragic Contests. We have seven of the approximately 80 plays he wrote, including the only complete trilogy: Oresteia (458 BC).

10. What was Aeschylus' major contribution to the art of playwrighting?

He added the second actor, creating the possibility of dramatic dialogue. Thespis’ tragedies utilized only one actor and the chorus.

11. What is Sophocles' (496-406 BC) most important drama?

Oedipus Tyrannos (430-425? BC), also known as Oedipus Rex or Oedipus the King. Sophocles won eighteen Tragic Contests. Like Aeschylus, only seven of the more than 120 plays he wrote have survived. See the Play Synopsis on page 217.
How does it rank among world dramatic literature?

*Oedipus* is considered one of the great tragedies. It is ranked with Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* and *King Lear*.

12. According to Sophocles, who was the Greek king who murdered his father and married his mother?

Oedipus.

13. What was Sophocles’ contribution to the art of playwriting?

He added the third actor.

14. Why do we have more plays by Euripides than we do of both Sophocles and Aeschylus combined?

Because the Romans, who eventually over throw Greece’s Macedonian rulers (168 BC), considered Euripides (ca. 480-407 BC) a greater playwright, hence taking better care of his manuscripts. He won only five Contests, but we have seventeen of his approximately 90 tragedies. About 3.5% of the tragedies written during Greece’s Golden Age (from 534 to 400 BC) have survived. All were written by these three playwrights.

15. What is *deus ex machina*?

It is a Latin expression which literally means: *God out of the machine*. It is a playwriting term used to describe a contrived ending. It means that the dramatic problem is not solved by playwright’s characters, that a solution is forced upon them by the playwright.

**With which playwright is this term associated?**

Euripides. Contrived endings have been used by other playwrights--see, for example, Moliere’s solution to Orgon’s dilemma in the last act of *Tartuffe*.

16. What is a trilogy?

A **trilogy** is a set of three short plays tied together by a common plot line, character, or idea. Each tragic playwright, when he entered the competition for performance at the *City Dionysia*, would submit four plays, a trilogy (3 tragedies) and a satyr play. Aeschylus, the earliest of the three tragic playwrights, built his trilogies around a common plot line. Euripides, the last of the three, usually built his three plays...
around a common idea. Only one complete trilogy has survived: Aeschylus' \textit{Oresteia} ("Agamemnon," "Libation Bearers," and "Eumenides") The satyr play is generally believed to have been a comic treatment of the serious material covered in the tragedies. Only one satyr play, \textit{The Cyclops} by Euripides, has survived.

17. Which structural pattern was used by the three Greek tragic playwrights: Climactic or Episodic?

Climactic.

18. What was the major difference between Old and New Greek Comedy?

\textbf{Old Comedy} was written before 400 BC, \textbf{New Comedy} was written after 400 BC. \textbf{Old Comedy} was mostly political satire. \textbf{New Comedy} dealt with domestic affairs: Boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy get’s girl back again. \textbf{New Greek Comedy} is the beginning of the "SitCom." The reason for the change is that the new political rulers -- the Macedonians who united the independent City States under the leadership of King Philip II (382-336 BC) and his son: Alexander the Great (356-323 BC) -- would no longer accept criticism, hence playwright’s stopped writing political satire.

19. Who is the only Old Greek Comedy playwright whose work has survived?

Aristophanes (ca. 448 - ca. 380 BC)

20. What type of comedies did he write?

Political satire, high comedy

21. What is the title of one of his major works?

He is best remembered for the four plays titled after the chorus: the \textit{The Clouds} (423 BC), \textit{The Wasps} (422 BC), \textit{The Birds} (414 BC), and \textit{The Frogs} (405 BC). Probably his most often revived script is \textit{Lysistrata} (411 BC), the story of the women of Athens and Sparta who bring an end to the long war between these two city states through a sex strike.

22. How many New Greek Comedy scripts have survived?

One, \textit{The Grouch}, also known as \textit{The Grumbler} (316 BC), found in 1959. In contrast, we have eleven (of the approximately 40) Old Greek Comedies by Aristophanes.
Who was its author?

Menander (ca. 342 - 292 BC)

23. Which structural pattern was used by Greek comic playwrights: Climactic or Episodic?

Episodic.

24. At which dramatic festival were comedies performed?

Although one day of the City Dionysia was allotted for the performance of five comedies, the Dionysian festival at which comedies were the feature was the Lenaia.

25. In which city, and during which season did this festival occur?

In Athens, during the winter (January).

The Fifth Century Greek Theatre

The theatre of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes, was a temporary wooden structure built for the festival (the City Dionysia) and dismantled when the celebration was concluded. The audience probably sat on wooden benches (theatron) and the actors and chorus performed on a flat, roughly circular (85’ diameter) dirt floored acting area (orchestra). The skene, a tent or small wooden hut was probably added in the middle of the fifth century. The first permanent theatre was built under Macedonian rule in the middle of the fourth century BC.
Ground Plan of a Greek Theatre
To the left is the ground plan of a typical Greek Theatre as published by William Smith in *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* (1875). The drawing reflects a 19th century understanding based on an examination of the ruins of a fourth century BC theatre as remodeled by the Romans during the first century BC. Note the circular *orchestra* with its *alter* (*thymele*), the *theatron* which enfolds approximately 60% of the central playing area, and the *skene* -- with its three "doors" -- which just touches the edge of the *orchestra*. Note the differences between this plan and the drawing on page 219.

Theatre of Dionysus, Athens
To the left is a view of the ruins of the *Theatre of Dionysus*, the fifth century home of the tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides and the comedies of Aristophanes. This permanent Greek theatre was built between 342 and 326 BC (approximately 100 years after *Oedipus* was first performed); remodeled to fit the Roman ideal during the reign of Nero (61 BC), and last used for a theatrical performance during the 4th century AD. This historical site was discovered during the 18th century and excavated during the 19th. Note the *orchestra* (as altered by Romans), the remains of the *theatron* and the footings of the *skene*.

26. In the classical Greek theatre, what was the *theatron*?

The *theatron* was the semi-circular seating area in the classical Greek theatre. It was generally (but not always) carved out of the side of a
hill. It is the source of our word: theatre. Rough English translation: Seeing place.

**The orchestra?**

Was the circular acting area at the foot of the hill, where the chorus (and actors) performed. It was located between the *theatron* and the *skene*. In the center of the orchestra was an alter (or *thymele*). Rough English translation: Dancing place.

**The skene?**

The *skene*, the source of our word: *scene*, was the *palace* (or *scene house*) at the rear of the acting space. It was introduced in the middle of the fifth century BC and probably did not exist for Aeschylus’ early tragedies. It had at least one, and perhaps as many as three openings (doors?) which could be used as entrances. Rough English translation: Tent or booth. See the diagram on page 219 and the photographs on pages 76 and 83.

**27. What was the seating capacity of a typical Greek theatre?**

During the 4th century BC, when the temporary wooden benches were replaced with stone slabs, the 78 rows of the *Theatre of Dionysus* would seat between 15,000 and 16,000 people -- approximately one third the population of Athens. In contrast, a large Broadway theatre, designed primarily for musicals, seats about 1,200.

**28. What was the mechane (machina)?**

A crane mounted on the roof of the *skene*. See the diagram on page 220.

**How was it used?**

It was used to lower the gods into the action of the play. Hence the term *deus ex machina* -- God out of the machine.

**29. How many actors were used in a Greek tragedy?**

Two in the plays of Aeschylus, three in the works of both Sophocles and Euripides.

**In Greek comedy?**
There was no limit. Aristophanes *Lysistrata* has a cast of eleven: seven men and four women plus five choruses: Young women, old women, old men, Athenian men and Spartan men.

30. Did women perform on the Greek stage?

No.

31. What was the social rank of a Greek actor?

Acting in the Greek culture was considered an acceptable profession. As we move through theatre history, we will discover the social rank of the performer will vary from accepted to rejected.

32. What was the function of the chorus in a Greek drama?

1. They were a character in the play, usually the townspeople. This character was sympathetic to the protagonist.
2. They presented the writer’s point of view.
3. They were the ideal spectator, their reaction to a scene would cue the audience on how they should react.
4. They broke the drama into five dramatic scenes, each scene was separated from the next by a choral interlude. The five dramatic scenes will become the five acts of a five act play.

33. Who was the major critic of Greek drama?

Aristotle.

When did he live?

384 to 322 BC. He wrote about 100 years after Sophocles major tragedies were produced.

What is his most significant work?

*The Poetics*, the source of the six elements of dramatic structure.

**Roman Theatre**

34. Who were the two Roman comic playwrights whose works have survived?

Although both tragedies and comedies were written during the period of the Republic (500-27 BC), the work of only two comedy playwrights has survived -- Titus Plautus (254 to 184 BC) and Terence (185 to 159 BC). Plautus is remembered for his farcical
comedies. We have 21 of the more than 100 plays he may have written. On the other hand, Terence’s six plays, because of their simple style and high moral tone, were used as the literary models by the colleges and universities of the Renaissance.

35. What was the "source" of Plautus' comic plots and characters?

Most of his plays were based on New Greek Comedy.

36. What is Plautus' most often produced play?

*The Menæchmi*, also known as the *Twin Menæchmi*, or simply *The Twins*. It is the story of twin brothers who are separated at birth. One travels with his father to Syracuse, the other with his mother to Epidemus. After his twenty first birthday, the Syracuse boy sets out in search of his long lost brother. They finally meet after two hours of misunderstandings and mistaken identity.

37. How did he influence later comedy writers such as Shakespeare and Moliere?

Shakespeare and Moliere "borrowed" plots and characters from Plautus’ comedies. Shakespeare’s *The Comedy of Errors* is based on *The Menæchmi* and Moliere adapted Plautus’ *Pot of Gold* into *The Miser*.

38. List seven stock characters Plautus used in his comedies .

1. An **old man**, probably a miser.
2. A **young man**, possibly the miser’s son, who rebels against authority.
3. Usually a pair of **slaves**. One smart, the other less smart. The two slaves are the source of most of the humor.
4. The **parasite**. The eternal brother in law, he comes for a visit, and stays forever.
5. The **courtesan**. The live in maid who knows how to "put out."
6. The **slave dealer**. Often trades in women. Today we would call him a pimp.
7. **Miles Gloriosus**, the **braggart soldier**. He talks a mighty battle, but runs at the first sign of conflict.

39. What is the setting of a typical Roman comedy?

On a street in front of three houses.

40. Who was the major tragic playwright of the Roman theatre?
Lucius Seneca (ca. 5 BC - 65 AD), a tutor and advisor to Nero (fl. 58-64 AD), was the major playwright of the Empire (27 BC - 476 AD). Nine of his tragedies have survived.

41. On which Greek author were his plays based?

Primarily Euripides, but he also "borrowed" from Aeschylus and Sophocles.

42. Were his plays ever produced?

No. At least we don't think so. His works may have been declaimed, that is-- recited to an audience, but were probably not staged with realistic effects.

43. Why is he important to the study of dramatic literature?

Because playwrights during the Renaissance (1450 to 1700) used his tragedies as their primary model.

44. List six major characteristics of his dramas.

1. He divided his plays into five acts with choral interludes. The interludes were not part of the play’s action.
2. He used elaborate rhetorical speeches. His characters debated, they didn’t converse.
3. He was a moral philosopher. He believed that drama should preach a moral lesson.
4. His tragedies involved much violent action. They were filled with murder, torture, dismemberment...
5. His tragedies respected the unity of time (plays action unfolds within 24 hours) and place (the plays actions unfolds at one location).
6. Each of his characters was dominated by one passion (love, revenge, ambition, etc.) which brought about their downfall.

45. What is the difference between a soliloquy and an aside?

In a soliloquy, a character, on an empty stage, speaks directly to the audience. In an aside, a character also speaks to the audience, but the other characters on stage, because of the "magic of theatre," do not hear him. Probably the most famous soliloquy from dramatic literature is the "To be or not to be..." speech from Shakespeare’s Hamlet.

46. What is the function of the confidant?
To listen to and advise another, usually more important, character.

47. Who was the "Roman Aristotle?"

Horace (65 to 8 BC). In his *Ars poetica (The Art of Poetry)* (19 BC) he argued that comedy and tragedy should be distinct forms; that tragedy should draw its characters from the noble class while comedies should deal with the middle class; and that the function of drama was not only to entertain but to teach a moral lesson. These ideas will be incorporated into the *NeoClassical Rules* during the Renaissance.

**Ground Plan of a Roman Theatre**

To the left is the ground plan of a typical Roman Theatre as published by William Smith in *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* (1875). Note the semi-circular *orchestra* and *cavea*, the narrow *stage (pulpitum)*, the *scena frons* with 18 columns and five *openings*, and the *arcade* which surrounded the *cavea*. Smith suggests that two of the five openings contained *periaktai*, the three sided rotating prism that the Greeks may have used to indicate a change in location. Also note that there are no entrances into either the *orchestra* or the *cavea*. Compare this plan with the photograph of *Teatro Romano di Volterra* below.

**Teatro Romano di Volterra**

Roman Theatre at Volterra. To the left are the ruins of one of the better preserved Roman theatres. Note the three sections of the semi-circular *cavea* and *orchestra*, the footings for the narrow *stage (pulpitum)*, and the remains (including seven white columns) of the two story *scena frons*. This structure, unlike *Teatro Marcello*, was carved out of the very rocky hillside. For obvious safety reasons,
only a small portion of this
evacuation (or scavi) is open to the
public.

48. How did the Romans change the basic structure of the Greek theatre?

They cut the orchestra in half, from a circle (in Greek times) to a
semi-circle. They also cut the seating down to a semi-circle, and
added a narrow stage which was attached to the flat part of the
orchestra. See the photograph on page 229 and the diagram on page
230.

49. How did they use the orchestra?

The orchestra was primarily used as a seating area.

50. Was there a stage, as we know it today, in the Roman theatre?

Yes, the stage was probably between 60 and 100 feet long and about
20 feet deep.

51. How many entrances were in the Roman scaena?

Five. There were three entrances along the back (upstage) wall, and
one on each side wall. The three rear entrances usually represented
three houses, the two side entrances were to different parts of the
town.

52. What was placed behind each of these entrances?

We don't know. When Renaissance architect’s began to re-create
small Roman theatres in the late 1500’s, they built perspective vistas
of Roman streets behind each of the entrances. The entrances became
ornate arches framing the street scenes behind.

53. What was the seating capacity of an average Roman theatre?

The seating capacity of Rome’s Teatro Marcello, the largest theatre in the
Roman Empire, was approximately 12,000. The cavea (the semi-circular
bank of seats) would hold another 2,000 standees, bringing the total to about
14,000. The theatre was begun in 46 BC
under the reign of Julius Caesar and dedicated to Claudius Marcello by Augustus Caesar between 13 and 11 BC. The outside diameter of the cavea was about 425 feet. The theatre, which still exists, became a fortress during the middle ages, the Pallazo Savelli [designed by architect Baldassare Peruzzi (1481-1537)] during the Renaissance, and is presently an upscale apartment complex. Obviously the remains of this theatre are not open to the public.

54. Was the theatre structure enclosed, or unified?

Enclosed. Although the theatre was an open air structure, it was architecturally enclosed or unified.

55. Were the Roman theatres carved out of a hillside, or built on level ground?

In rugged country Roman architects, like their Greek predecessors, carved their theatres out of the hillside. On flat land the cavea was typically supported by two or more tiers of Roman arches.

56. What is the difference between a Roman theatre and a Roman amphitheatre?

A Roman theatre has a stage (pulpitum) on one side of the orchestra and the audience (cavea) on the other. An amphitheatre has the audience completely surrounding the "stage space." They were huge arenas used primarily for sporting events -- gladiatorial combat, mock sea battles (naumachia) and wild animal hunts. The largest (Seating capacity: 87,000 - Outside dimensions: 620’ by 513’) and most famous amphitheatre in the Empire was Rome’s Anfiteatro di Flavio (80 AD), more commonly known as the Colosseo (Colosseum).

57. What were the three major forces which led to the downfall of the Roman theatre?

1. The decay of the empire began when Constantine established two capitals in 330 AD and moved his court from Rome (the western capital) to Constantinople (the eastern capital). Rome (and the Western Empire) fell in 476 when the western emperor was unseated by Odoacer, a Germanic barbarian. The Eastern Empire (which included most of Greece) lasted another 977 years, finally falling to the Turks in 1453.
2. The **barbarians** who came down from the north (France and Germany) and plundered the cities of the western empire. The people scattered, buildings were abandoned, and soon there were no large centers of culture in what had been the mighty Roman Empire. The population of the city of Rome dropped from approximately four million at the height of the Empire to under twenty six thousand in the fifth century.

3. The **hostility of the Christian church**. The theatre was considered the shrine of Venus (a Roman god). By the fifth century (the 400s) actors were excommunicated. This ruling held in parts of Europe until the 18th century.

58. **In what century was the last Roman performance given?**

The **sixth** century. 533 AD, 1066 years after Thespis won the first Greek Tragedy Contest.

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Medieval Theatre

Resources

Text...

Plays...

Wakefield Cycle. *The Second Shepherd's Play*
*The Passion Play*
*Everyman*

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1. **What medieval institution is credited with the rebirth of western theatre?**

The Christian church.

2. **What was a tropes?**

The *tropes* was a verbal (sung or chanted) embellishment, an insertion, into the liturgical text of the Mass. The most significant of these short embellishments was *Quem Quaeritis*, (925) “Whom Seek Ye,” which was probably originally sung, antiphonally in Latin, by two sections of the choir. The four lines of text comes directly from the New Testament, (*The Gospel of St. Luke*, Chapter 24).

*Quem quaeritis in sepulchro, O Christicole?*
*Jesum Nazarenum crucifixum, O caelicola.*
*Non est hic, surrexit sicut praedixerat.*
*Ite, nuntiate quia surrexit de sepulchro.*

Whom seek ye in the sepulchre, O Christian women?
Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified, O heavenly one.
He is not here; He is risen, as he foretold.
Go, announce that He has risen from the sepulchre.

Within approximately 40 years, this short playlet is being performed not by the choir, but by *four brethren* (priests) -- three representing the women who have gone to the tomb to anoint Christ’s body with oil and the fourth representing the Angel. Bishop Ethelwold of Winchester, England, not only includes the text of *Quem Quaeritis* in *Regularis Concordia*, a book of rules and advice for the English Benedictines, but gave directions on how to stage the action.
3. During which Christian festival were these early playlets performed?

*Quem Quaeritis* was inserted into the Easter Mass. Within a short period of time, similar playlets were added to the Christmas and Epiphany services.

4. What was the source of the stories which were dramatized?

The Bible.

5. How were these plays staged inside the church?

*Quem Quaeritis* was presented near the high alter. As the playlets were extended and additional scenes were added, they were staged on a number of small "platforms" distributed around the church. Both the performer and the audience (congregation) would move from one "platform" (or scene) to the next. Giotto di Bondone (1267-1337) used the same basic concept when he painted the twenty-three scenes of the *Life of Christ* on the walls of the *Cappella Scrovegni* in Padua.

6. What was a mansion or station?

The mansion, or station, was the scenic facade used to locate the action of the play.

The plateau?

The plateau was the neutral playing area on which the actors performed.

7. Who were the actors?

The priests.

8. Why, during the 13th century, were these plays moved out of the church?

As the plays became longer and more complicated, it became more and more difficult to stage them indoors. There was also the feeling that the action in some of the plays, such as the *Slaughter of the Innocents* from the *Ordo Racheles*, an Epiphany Play, was too violent, too non-Christian, to be presented within the church. When the dramatic production moved out doors, the plays were presented (spoken, not sung) in the vernacular (the language of the people) by laymen. Although the dramas were still religious, they were no longer a part of worship.
9. Who produced these plays after they left the church?

The trade guilds. These medieval unions provided the money and personal needed to present the plays. The church continued to provide the scripts and directorial leadership.

10. What is a pageant wagon?

A pageant wagon held the *mansion*, the *plateau*, and a dressing area on one structure. This wagon stage would then be moved from one gathering of audience to the next, much like a float in a parade. See the illustrations on page 251.

In which country was it used?

England.

11. How were these plays staged on the European continent?

The *mansions* were arranged in a line, creating a "street," at the rear of a long narrow platform. At one end (stage right) of the street was the *Entrance to Heaven or Paradise* and at the other end (stage left) was *Gate to Hell*, the *Hellsmouth*. The *Spearfish Passion Play* uses the continental approach to staging. See the illustration on page 252.

12. What is the difference between a mystery play, a miracle play, and a morality play?

**Mystery play:** The plot and characters were drawn from the books of the *Bible*. It was the major form of Medieval drama. The best examples are the cycle plays of England. *The York Cycle* (14th century) contained forty-eight short plays and took approximately 14 hours to perform. Of the forty-eight plays, eleven deal with the *Old Testament* (from Creation to the crossing of the Red Sea), thirteen cover the period from the Annunciation to Palm Sunday, twenty-three cover the final week of Christ’s earthly life and His Assumption into Heaven, and one describes Judgement Day. The last known medieval performance of the *York Cycle* was in 1569.

**Miracle play:** Built its plot around the lives and the works of the saints. They were usually performed on the saint’s feast day. Some of the scripts were biblical, others were not.

**Morality play:** These dramas were based on the spiritual trials of the average man. They formed a bridge between the Medieval religious plays and the secular dramas of the Renaissance. The plays were
allegories about the moral temptations which beset every man. The location was every man’s soul. The action of the drama was the battle between good and evil to posses man’s soul.

13. Give a specific example of a mystery play? Of a miracle play? Of a morality play?

**Mystery play:** *The Second Shepherd's Play* (mid 15th century) from the Wakefield Cycle or *The Passion Play*. Probably the most famous *Passion Play* is the *Oberammergau* (Germany) *Passion Play* which has been presented every ten years since the middle of the 17th century.

**Miracle play:** The four St. Nicholas plays from the *Fleury Play-Book* (13th century France) -- *Tres Fili* (Three Daughters), *Tres Clerici* (Three Scholars), *Iconia Sanctus Nicholaus* (Image of Saint Nicholas) and *Filius Getronius* (Getron’s Son). These plays were presented, in Latin, on St. Nicholas Day -- December 6th.

**Morality play:** *Everyman* (late 15th century). Everyman is visited by Death. He is told that he can take one friend with him on his long journey. He approaches Fellowship, Kindred, Cousin, Goods, Knowledge, Discretion, Strength, Beauty, and Five Wits. All refuse. Only Good Deeds will join him on his journey. The moral is obvious.

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E-mail questions and comments to Larry Wild at [wildl@wolf.northern.edu](mailto:wildl@wolf.northern.edu).

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Renaissance Theatre: Italy

Resources

Text...

Outside reading...

Opera...
Claudio Monteverdi. *Orfeo*
Giuseppe Verdi. *Aida*

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Renaissance Theatre
Italy | [England](#) | [France](#)

1. When was the Italian renaissance?

1550 to 1700.

2. What was the *Commedia dell'arte*?

The *commedia*, the "comedy of professional artists," was the popular theatre of Renaissance Italy.

3. How did it differ from other theatre groups?

There were no scripts. All of the dialogue and much of the business was improvised.

4. What type of comedy did the *commedia* perform?

Farce. Low comedy. Comedy of pain. Slapstick. Four names for the same type of humor.

5. Why is physical comedy also known as slapstick comedy?

Much of the humor in a *commedia* presentation was produced by one character beating another. The prop used to administer these beatings
was called a "slapstick." It was supposed to produce more sound than pain.

6. What was the *scenario*?

The plot outline posted back stage.

*Lazzi?*

Bits of comic business, performed by the actors, which were inserted into the play. The specific *lazzi* to be performed was often indicated in the *scenario*.

7. Why can most of the *commedia*’s *lazzi* not be used on stage today?

Because most of these bits, especially those dealing with bodily functions would be considered obscene, or at least in bad taste, by a modern audience.

8. Describe the stock characters used by the *commedia*.

**The straight**s-- A pair of young lovers. They were handsome, well-educated and witty. The dapper young man was usually opposed in his love affair by one of the masters (or perhaps his father). The young lady was sophisticated, noble and innocent.

The character roles were divided into two major groups --

The **Masters** and...

*Il Capitano*-- a pompous braggart and coward who boasted of his great prowess in love and battle, but was usually discredited in both.

*Pantalone*-- a greedy, lustful, meddling old man. Often a merchant.

*Il Dottore*-- often a friend of *Pantalone*. He was a professor (or physician) who spouted inaccurate Latin. His standard dress was the academic cap and gown.

The **Servants**.

There were at least two servants or *zanni*. One smart and one less smart. The less smart servant was usually
an insolent liar, thief and/or drunkard. Much (perhaps most) of the humor came through the actions of the servants.

9. How do these characters compare with those used by Plautus?

The stock characters of the *commedia* were very similar to the characters which appeared in Plautus' Roman comedies.

10. What was the *commedia*'s influence on Moliere and Shakespeare?

Both Moliere (France: 1622-1673) and Shakespeare (England: 1564-1616) borrowed (or stole) both characters, bits of comic business (*lazzi*) and plots from the *commedia*. Moliere’s *The Doctor in Spite of Himself* is based on a *commedia scenario*. There are scenes in Shakespeare’s *Taming of the Shrew* and *All’s Well That Ends Well* that come directly from the *commedia*.

11. What was the first Opera?

*Dafne* (1597), text by Ottavio Rinuccini (1562-1621), music by Jacopo Peri (1561-1633) was staged during the pre-Lenten Carnival at *Palazzo Corsi*. Rinuccini's text (but not Peri’s music), which included a prologue and six scenes, was published in 1600.

What group produced it?

The *Camerata Fiorentina*, an association (or "academy") of wealthy Italians who studied the arts (including music and drama) of ancient Greece and Rome.

In what city were they located?

Florence.

12. What were they attempting to do?

Recreate an "authentic Greek tragedy." They knew from Aristotle that music was a major part of Greek drama. But they did not know what ancient Greek music sounded like, so they created their own, which was probably more Renaissance than Greek. The earliest surviving opera is Peri’s setting of Rinuccini’s *Euridice* which was performed for the marriage of King Henry of Navarre to Marie de Medici at the Medici’s *Palazzo Pitti* on October 6, 1600. Unlike *Dafne*, the score for *Euridice* was published in 1601.
13. Who do most music historians consider the first great opera composer?

Claudio Monteverdi (1567-1643), a court composer from Mantua. His first opera, *Orfeo* (1607), like both *Dafne* and *Euridice* were adaptations of Greek legends.

14. What changes did he make in the original musical style of opera?

He increased the size and importance of the orchestra. He established a formula which would be followed into the 20th century. This formula divided an opera into two units: One was musical and consisted of solos, duets, trios, and choruses; the other was dramatic and consisted of chanted, semi-sung, dialogue. The musical part gave the show color, and helped establish characters; the dramatic part moved the "play" along, relating the action of the opera to the audience.

15. What is the difference between an aria and a recitative?

Aria-- A solo sung by one of the opera's major characters.

Recitative-- The chanted dialogue which joined the opera's musical moments.

16. Who is the most often produced opera composer on the stage of Metropolitan Opera in New York City?

Giuseppe Verdi (1813-1901).

In which century did he live?

19th.

Where was he from?

Italy. He was born in Parma and died in Milan, the home of *Teatro alla Scala* (La Scala Opera).

17. What opera did he compose for the opening of the Cairo Opera House?

*Aida* (1871). It is probably his most famous, and grandest opera. It is also one of the few, perhaps only, Verdi opera which is not based on an earlier drama. It was an original story drawn from Egypt’s colorful history.

18. Who was Richard Wagner?

Richard Wagner (1813 - 1883) was a German composer who believed that opera should be a "total art work." He created music dramas (not operas), based on Teutonic myths and legends, which unified the elements of music, drama, design and movement. In Wagner's music drama, there was no longer a distinction between a recitative and an aria, instead there was one long continuous melody line. In his later work, these melody lines were created by combining musical themes (motifs) which represented different characters, objects, and emotions in the drama.

19. What is a leitmotif?

Leitmotif is a clearly defined musical theme, representing a person, object or idea, which appears at the appropriate moment in a dramatic (usually an opera or film) work. In addition to the music dramas of Wagner, leitmotifs can be seen in John Williams’ scores for the three Indiana Jones and five Star Wars films.

20. What is considered Wagner's masterpiece?

Der Ring des Nibelungen (1876). The "Ring" is actually four music dramas: Das Rheingold ("Rheingold"), Die Walküre ("The Valkyries"), Siegfried and Gotterdammerung ("The Twilight of the Gods") with a combined playing time of seventeen hours. Wagner began working on Rheingold in November 1851 and finished Gotterdammerung, the last of the series, in November 1874. The premiere performance in August 1876 was on the stage of Wagner's just opened opera house (Festspielhaus) in Bayreuth.

21. Who was Marcus Vitruvius Pollio?

Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, better known as Vitruvius (90-20 BC) was a Roman writer, architect and military engineer who we believe served both Julius Caesar and Caesar Augustus.

What was the title of his most influential work?

de Architectura libri decem (ca. 27 BC) -- the ten books on architecture -- describe existing Roman and Greek practices, not only in design and construction, but also in engineering. His ten books include topics on the manufacture of building materials, machines for heating water for the public baths, speech amplification in the theatre, and the design of roads and bridges. Book V covers public buildings including both Greek (Chapter 7) and Roman (Chapter 6) theatres. In the text he not only describes the buildings, but gives advice on how they should be built:
I have therefore given such definite directions for the conduct of works, that those already executed, as well as those hereafter to be constructed, may be by you well known and understood. In the following pages I have developed all the principles of the art.

(Preface, Book I, Joseph Gwilt’s translation, 1826).

Vitruvius’ manuscript was rediscovered in 1415 and published, in Latin, in Rome in 1486. Daniele Barbaro’s (1513-1570) Italian translation, published in Venice in 1556, contained 125 illustrations by Andrea Palladio (1508-1580). The effect this work had on Renaissance architecture is monumental.

Link to a Joseph Gwilt’s 1826 English translation of Vitruvius’ de Architectura, Book V, Chapter 6 -- Roman Theatre and de Architectura, Book V, Chapter 7 -- Greek Theatre.

22. What is the Teatro Olimpico?

Teatro Olimpico (1580 - 1584), a 3000 seat "academic" theatre, is the oldest surviving Renaissance playhouse. It is a combination of the old - a classical Roman facade (scaena frons) designed by Andrea Palladio (1508-1580) and the new -- a perspective vista of the seven road to Thebes -- designed by Palladio's student: Vincenzo Scamozzi (1552-1616). In the photo to the left, note the perspective vistas (street scenes) behind each of the archs, the level stage floor in front of the openings, the oval orchestra, and the steep cavea. Compare the Teatro Olimpico (the image on the left and photograph on page 261) with the Roman Theatre at Orange (page 229) or the Teatro Romano di Volterra.

Link to a 3D interactive view of Teatro Olimpico: Visione
Where is it located?

Vicenza.

What was the architect attempting to accomplish?

The architect, Andrea Palladio, was attempting to create for the Accademia Olimpica an accurate, miniature, indoor Roman theatre for the presentation of classical drama (Scamozzi’s vistas were created for the 1585 Accademia production of Sophocles’ Oedipus Rex). He based his design on Vitruvius’ de Architectura, which he had illustrated in 1556 and his study of the ruins of Teatro Berga di Vicenza.

23. What is the relationship between the Teatro Olimpico and Teatro Olimpico di Sabbioneta?

The Teatro di Sabbioneta (1588-1590) also known as the Teatro Olimpico di Sabbioneta and the Teatro all’Antica di Sabbioneta was designed by Vincenzo Scamozzi, the architect who created the perspective vistas for Palladio’s Teatro Olimpico. This small, intimate, 250 seat playhouse contained only five rows in the cavea and a scenic vista containing a single street. It is generally believed that this playhouse is the first European indoor theatre built specifically as a theatre. (Teatro Olimpico was built into an existing structures.) Carved into the exterior facade of the playhouse is ROMA QUANTA FUIT IPSA RUINA DOCET (How great Rome has been herself the ruins teachs).
Scamozzi’s plan and sectional study to the left the sharply raked stage floor and the location of the perspective vanishing point outside of the building.

24. What is the importance of the Teatro Farnese? In what city was it located?

The 3000 seat Teatro Farnese, the first permanent proscenium theatre, was built into the Great Hall (a former armoury) of the Palazzo della Pilotta in Parma for the 1618 visit of Cosimo II de' Medici. Because the visit was canceled, the first presentation on the stage, Monteverdi’s Mercurio e Marte, was not given until December 1628. The theatre was used, primarily for official state functions (such as a Royal wedding), for 104 years before being abandoned. The palazzo was almost completely destroyed by Allied bombs during World War II (1944). It was rebuilt, following Giovanni Battista Aleotti’s (1546-1636) original plans in the 1950 and reopened in 1962. Link to a virtual tour of three Parma Theatres including Teatro Farnese.

All three Renaissance theatres -- Teatro Olimpico di Vicenza, Teatro di Sabbioneta, and Teatro Farnese di Parma -- still exist.

25. Who was Sebastiano Serlio?

Serlio (1475-1554) was an Italian writer and court architect. He wrote one of the first stage craft manuals, Regole generali di architettura, (1545) which not only described the sets for three types of plays, but also gave instructions on how to lay out the theatre within a palace’s great banqueting hall, create the perspective scene, light the set and seat the patrons.

26. In his book Architettura he described and illustrated three sets which he believed could be used for all plays. What did they look like?
Tragedies-- Halls of government: Court buildings, war memorials, civil monuments...

Comedies-- Where the people live: Inns, guild halls, churches, homes...

Pastorals-- In the woods.

Who was Serlio's source?

Marcus Vitruvius. In Book Five of *de Architectura* he states (in Latin) ...

There are three sorts of scenes, the Tragic, the Comic, and the Satyric. The decorations of these are different from each other. The *tragic* scenes are ornamented with columns, pediments, statues, and of the royal decorations. The *comic* scene represents private buildings and galleries, with windows similar to those in ordinary dwellings. The *satyric* scene is ornamented with trees, caves, hills, and of the rural objects in imitation of nature.

*(English translation by Joseph Gwilt, 1826)*

27. Briefly describe how they were laid out.

All three used the same basic layout. There was a street center stage, with three "houses" on each side. At the back was a triumphal arch (in the tragic set), or an entrance to a church (in the comic set). A backdrop was hung upstage to hide the backwall. Scamozzi's vista for the *Teatro di Sabbioneta* is based on the writings / drawings of Serlio.

28. What is the difference between a wing, a border, and a backdrop?

**Wing**-- A piece of scenery (a wood frame covered with linen) on the side of the stage used to mask the side walls of the theatre.
**Border**-- A piece of scenery hung above the stage used to hide the rafters, pulleys, and ropes used to change the scenery.

**Backdrop**-- A large piece of scenery at the rear of the set used to mask the back wall. In many renaissance theatres the "backdrop" was actually a pair of shutters (a large wood frame covered with linen) which could split in the center for storage off stage.

29. **Who were the first stagehand to work an Italian renaissance theatre?**

Italian sailors. Much of theatrical terminology (Deck instead of floor; ladder instead of steps; line instead of rope; batten instead of pipe; shivs instead of pulley) comes from the sea.

Go to...
Italy | England | France
Theatre Home Page
Renaissance Theatre: England

Under the Reign of
Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603) - King James I of England (1603-1625)
King Charles I (1625-1649)

Resources

Text...

Plays...
English Renaissance...
Christopher Marlowe. *Doctor Faustus*.
William Shakespeare. *Hamlet*
William Shakespeare. *Richard III*
William Shakespeare. *Taming of the Shrew*

Internet...

Furness Shakespeare Library
The Complete Works of William Shakespeare
The Internet Shakespeare Editions
Index of the New Globe: A site dedicated to the reconstruction of the Globe Theatre.
Shakespeare’s Life and Times
Shakespeare’s Works

Renaissance Theatre

Italy | England | France

1. What are the two major roots of English drama?

- Through the study, adaption and performance of Classical Greek and Roman Drama at the English Colleges and Universities and...
- Through the plays written and performed by the professional acting troupes. Thomas Preston’s (1537-1598) *A Lamentable Tragedy, Mixed full of Pleasant Mirth, Containing the Life of Cambyses, King of Persia*.. (1561), written for a small professional acting company, mixes "real" characters like...
King Cambyses with allagorical characters such as Shame, Diligence, Common’s Cry, Cruelty, and Murder.

2. What is the importance of *Gorboduc*?

It is considered the first "true" English tragedy. The playwrights, two university students: Thomas Sacksville (1536-1608) and Thomas Norton (1532-1584), drew both their characters and plots from English history (legend). *Gorboduc* (1561), like much of the work of Marlowe and Shakespeare was written in blank verse -- unrhymed iambic pentameter -- verse of five feet per line, with the stress on the first beat of each foot.

3. Who was the major pre-Shakespearean playwright?

Christopher Marlowe (1564-1593).

What type of dramas did he write?

Historical tragedies.

4. What is the title of his most often revived work?

*Doctor Faustus* (1589).

5. Who was the major Elizabethan playwright?

William Shakespeare (1564-1616). In addition to being a playwright, he was also an actor and shareholder in the King’s Men and a householder in the Globe. The official Shakespeare canon contains 38 plays: the 36 works included in the *First Folio* (1623) and two works, *Pericles* (1609) and *Two Noble Kinsmen* (1634), which appeared only in quartos editions.

6. What are the three groups into which his plays are divided?

Tragedies (11 scripts), Comedies (16 titles) and History plays (9 plays). The three groups were established by the publishers of the *First Folio* in 1623.

7. Give an example of one of his tragedies?

Comedies?

*Taming of the Shrew* (1594), *Merchant of Venice* (1595-96). *As You Like It* (1599).

History plays?


8. What was the difference between his farcical comedies,

His farcical comedies, like *Taming of the Shrew* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1599), place most of their emphasis on physical comedy. *Merry Wives* is also the only Shakespearean play set in Elizabethan England.

his serious comedies, and his

His serious comedies, such as *The Merchant of Venice* and *Measure for Measure* (1601-04), are serious dramas with a happy ending.

romantic comedies?

His romantic comedies, like *Twelfth Night* (1600-01) and *As You Like It*, are those which are set in a fairy-tale world.

9. Why is the *Merchant of Venice* a dark comedy?

Because Antonio, the merchant of Venice, does not lose his pound of flesh.

10. List four basic production problems encountered when an educational theatre attempts to stage a Shakespearean drama.

- They are long. The running time for *Hamlet* is close to five hours,
- They require large, mostly male casts,
- Many of the major roles are difficult, usually beyond the scope of a college student, and
- The language is difficult to understand, and speak.
11. What is the difference between a quartos and a folio?

The quartos were small books (5”x6”) which contained a single play. Nineteen scripts were published in quartos editions between 1594 and 1622. The folio was a large book (8.5”x13”) which included a collection of scripts.

12. What is the difference between a good quartos and a bad quartos?

The good quartos were those authorized publications based on the prompt books (scripts) held by the acting company. The bad quartos were those un-authorized publications based on the faulty memory of an unhappy actor who was no longer a member of the troupe. There were bad, or corrupt, versions of only 6 of the 19 plays published between 1594 and 1622.

13. When was the First Folio published?

Five hundred copies of the First Folio were printed in 1623, seven years after Shakespeare’s death.

How many plays did it contain?

Thirty six, including eighteen plays which had not been previously published. Pericles (1609), which was printed in a quartos edition was not included in the First
14. What was the difference between a private and a public theatre?

Private theatres were the small (capacity: 700), expensive (6d) indoor theatres. The public theatres were the large (capacity: 3000), inexpensive (1d) open air playhouses. In 1600 five public playhouses -- the Globe, the Curtain, the Fortune, the Rose, and the Swan -- operated just outside the city of London.

15. What was the name of the first professional English playhouse?

Theatre. "Theatre" was not a term generally used to identify an English playhouse. When the second playhouse opened, it was known simply as the Curtain, not the Curtain Theatre.

16. When was it built?

1576.

By whom?

James Burbage (c. 1530-1597), joiner turned actor, member of the Earl of Leicester's Men (1559-1588), and the father of Richard Burbage, the leading actor of and a shareholder in the King's Men.

17. Why was it not built in the city of London?

Because the city fathers would not permit the construction of a professional theatre within the city limits. Public playhouses were built either in the suburbs north and east of the city, or just south of the Thames River in area known as Bankside. Actors were considered, just a little above rouges and vagabonds.

18. What was the relationship between the Theatre and the Globe?

The Globe was built from the timbers of the Theatre. The Theatre was built on rented land. When the lease ran out in 1597, the landlord, Giles Allen, threatened to destroy the structure. Richard Burbage and his acting company, dismantled the Theatre, took it through the city of London, and rebuilt it south of the Thames River in Bankside. When it reopened in 1599 it was renamed the Globe. From a contemporary source, in Elizabethan English:

divers ... persons, to the number of twelve ... armed themselves ... and throwing downe the sayd Theater in
verye outrageous, ‘violent and riotous sort ... did then alsoe in most forcible and ryotous manner take and carrye awaye from thence all the wood and timber thereof unto the Bancksyde in the parish of St Marye Overyes, and there erected a newe playhows with the sayd timber and woode.

Source

This theatre burned on June 28, 1613 during a production of Shakespeare’s *Henry VIII*, and was rebuilt in 1614. The Globe, along with every other English playhouse was closed in 1642. It was dismantled in 1644. A small portion of the original site was excavated in the fall of 1989. The third Globe, built about 200 yards from the original site opened in June 1997. See the Index to the New Globe Web site for more information on this reconstruction.

19. What did the Globe look like?

The Globe was a 20 (or 24) sided structure which closely resembled a circle. There was a courtyard (also known as the yard or pit) in the center surrounded by two or three levels of balconies (or galleries). The stage (or forestage) was backed against one of the sides and jutted into the center of the courtyard. See the illustration on page 269.

20. What are the primary sources of information on the layout of an Elizabethan theatre?

There are four:

- The stage directions in the texts of Elizabethan plays.
- Philip Henslowe’s contract for the construction of the Fortune. The ground plan on page 270 is based on this document.
- A Dutch visitor’s sketch of the Swan. See the illustration on page 271.
- The 1989 archaeological excavation of a small portion of the historical site of the Globe.

21. What was the yard or pit?

The courtyard, where the audience stood to watch a performance.

The forestage?
That part of the stage where most of the action occurred. This 28’ by 43’ platform jutted into the center of the pit. The dimensions are based on Philip Henslow’s construction contract for the Fortune.

The inner below?

The curtained discovery area (a small "stage") at the rear of the forestage.

The inner above?

The curtained discovery area above the inner below on the second level.

The heavens?

The roof over the forestage.

22. Who were the groundlings?

The poorest members of the audience who paid 1 penny to stand in the pit. The wealthy paid an additional penny for the right to sit in the galleries.

23. What did it mean when a flag was flown over the theatre?

There would be a performance in the theatre that afternoon.

24. What type of theatre was Blackfriars?

An indoor private theatre. Blackfriars was built into a large (101’ x 46’) room in what had originally been a Dominican Monastery.

Where was it located?

Within the walled city of London.

25. Why was Blackfriars under the control of the King?

Between 1535 and 1540, King Henry VIII, Queen Elizabeth's father, who had already broken with the Roman Catholic church, dissolved the English monasteries and transferred their property to the crown.

26. When did it become the winter home of the King's Men?
1610. After 1610, Blackfriars was their winter home, and the Globe was their summer home.

27. Why was it necessary for an Elizabethan acting company to have a patron?

Acting in Elizabethan England was not considered an occupation, therefore, if an actor was not a servant to a noble or royal family (the patron) he could be classed as a "rogue or vagabond" under the Tudor Poor Law of 1572 and could be whipped or put to death.

28. Who were the King's Men?

The leading English acting company between 1603 and 1642.

29. Who was the leading actor of the company? Richard Burbage.

The resident playwright? William Shakespeare.

The patron? King James I.

30. In which theatre did they perform? The Globe.

31. What was the economic organization of an Elizabethan acting company?

An Elizabethan acting company was a stock company in both the theatrical and economic sense of the term. A theatrical stock company cast all of its shows from within its resident company of actors.

32. What was the difference between a shareholder, a house holder, and a hireling?

The shareholder held an economic interest in the acting company, and would share in its profits or losses. On a good day, a performance of a new script would generate gross gate receipts of approximately 3 pounds. After the expenses were paid, the remaining moneys would be divided between the shareholders. Around 1600, a share (10 percent interest) in a successful acting company was worth about 70 pounds.

The house holder held an economic interest in the theatre in which the acting company performed, and would share in the theatre’s profits or losses.

and a hireling?
The **hireling** was an actor (musician, stage manager, wardrobe keeper, prompter or stage hand) employed by the acting company. He was paid between 5 and 10 shillings per week. Approximately half of his wages would be spent on food.

**What was the cost of living in Elizabethan England?**

A male journeyman laborer earned about 2s6d per week plus food and drink. 5 shillings if he had to provide his own food. A live in maid was paid 10d a week. A house rented for approximately 11s6d and food cost between 2s6d and 5s. The value of the three denominations of English currency-- 12d (penny) = 1s (shilling), 20s = £1 (pound).

33. **Were women allowed in an Elizabethan acting company?** No

34. **If not, who played the women's roles?**

Women's parts were played by young boys (age 10 to 20) who were apprenticed to individual actors in the company. They traditionally received room and board plus 3 shillings per week.

35. **How did this effect the Elizabethan playwrights?**

Elizabethan playwrights included very few women in the casts of their plays. For example, *Hamlet* 's cast includes 27 men, and 2 women; *King Lear*: 20 men and 3 women; *Macbeth*: 21 men and 6 women; and *Romeo and Juliet*: 17 men and 4 women.

36. **Who was the gatherer?**

The most trusted member of the company.

**What did he do?**

He collected the penny general admission from the audience as they entered the theatre. The same penny would purchase 24oz of bread, one pound of beef or mutton, or 2/3 gallon of beer.

37. **Who closed the theatres in 1642? Why?**

Parliament. All English professional theatres were closed in 1642 by order of Parliament to "appease and avert the wrath of God."

38. **What did Charles II do upon the death of his father, King Charles I?**
When King Charles was arrested, tried and executed for treason in 1649, his son, Charles II fled first to Scotland and then France.

39. Who was Oliver Cromwell? What title did he hold?

Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658) led the Parliament forces to victory over the supporters of King Charles during the English Civil War (1642-1649). He was the "Lord General" of the English Commonwealth, ruling under the authority of Parliament until 1653 when he disbanded Parliament, and appointed himself the "Lord Protector of England," a title he held till his death in 1658. He was succeeded by his son Richard, whose inept rule brought about the downfall of the Commonwealth and the return of Charles II from France.

40. When was the English crown restored to Charles II?

1660.

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Theatre Home Page

E-mail questions and comments to Larry Wild at wildl@northern.edu.
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Renaissance Theatre: France

Resources

Text...


Plays...

Pierre Corneille. *Le Cid*
Jean Racine. *Phedre*
Moliere. *Tartuffe*

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Renaissance Theatre
[Italy] [England] | France

1. When was the French renaissance?

1630 to 1700.

2. Who is France's greatest comic playwright?

Jean Baptiste Poquelin (1622-1673), better known as Moliere.

3. Why did Jean Baptiste Poquelin change his name to Moliere?

Jean Baptiste Poquelin's father was a minor official (royal upholsterer and furniture maker) in the court of King Louis XIII (reigned 1610-1643). When Jean Baptiste decided to become an actor, (his father wanted him to become a lawyer) and organized the *Theatre Illustre* in 1643, his father requested that he change his name so Jean would not embarrass either his family or the King's court. Acting was still an unacceptable profession in France.

4. What two types of comedies did he write?

Moliere's ten major works are divided into two groups: (1) the farcical comedies (primarily influenced by the *Commedia*) and the (2) high comedies (comedy of character).

5. List the title of one major work from each group?
Farcical comedy— *The Doctor In Spite of Himself* (1666), *The Tricks of Scapine* (1671)
Comedy of character— *Tartuffe* (1664, 67, 69), See the Play Synopsis on page 184. *The Miser* (1668), *The Imaginary Invalid* (1673)

6. How did he die? Where?

He died (at the age of 51) on stage at the opening performance of *The Imaginary Invalid* (1673).

7. Why was he not buried?

Because Moliere was an actor, as well as a playwright, and all actors had been excommunicated from the church since the middle ages. The standard practice was that an actor would confess his sin (of acting) before he died, would be reconciled with the church, and could then be buried in hallowed ground. But Moliere died on stage before he had a chance to confess his sins, so he did not die in a state of grace.

8. What is the *Comedie Francaise*?

The *Comedie Francaise* is considered by many to be the "world’s first national theatre."

Does it still exist today?

Yes. It is still the most important French speaking theatre in Paris.

9. How was it created?

It was created in 1680, seven years after Moliere’s death, by King Louis XIV (reigned 1643-1715). He combined Moliere’s company with the two other Parisian acting companies producing a much larger and more powerful organization. He also granted the *Comedie* a monopoly over all French spoken drama. In 1689 the company moved into their own facility. See the ground plan on page 283.

Whose plays does it perform?

Primarily the neoclassical works of Moliere, Racine and Corneille. They also present significant French drama from the 18th, 19th, and 20th century.

10. What type of dramas did Pierre Corneille write?
Although Pierre Corneille (1606-1684) did write comedies, he is primarily remembered for his tragedies.

11. What is the title of his most important work?

*Le Cid* (1636) was a turning point in French drama. It precipitated the literary battle which would lead to the triumph of the neoclassical ideal. This battle was settled by the *Academie Francaise* in 1638 when it published *The Judgement of the Academy on Le Cid*.

12. What was the *Academie Francaise*?

An organization, chartered in 1637, patterned after the Italian academies, and limited to "forty men of letters." The guiding force behind the *Academie* was Cardinal Richelieu (1586-1642).

13. Why was it formed? What was its function?

According to the *Academie*’s web site ([www.academie-francaise.fr](http://www.academie-francaise.fr)), translated from French by the [Google Language Tools](https)... The mission which was assigned to him right from the start was to fix the French language, to give him rules, to make it pure and comprehensible by all.

14. What are the five neo-classical rules of dramatic structure?

The five neoclassical rules established by the *Academie Francaise* were ...

1. Anything which happens on stage must be able to happen in real life,
2. Every drama must preach a moral lesson by showing that good will be rewarded and that evil will be punished,
3. There could be no mixing of dramatic styles -- a play was either a comedy or tragedy, but not a tragicomedy
4. A play must observe the three unities (time, place and action), and
5. A drama must be divided into five acts.

15. Why were soliloquies not allowed in neo-classical French drama?

Because in a realistic presentation a soliloquy is a character talking to himself, something which is not very "real."

16. What type of characters were permitted in a neo-classical tragedy?
A tragedy must draw its characters from the nobility. The plot must deal with affairs of state (who will be the next king), the ending must be tragic (everyone dies) and the dialogue poetic.

Comedy?

A comedy should draw its characters from the middle and lower classes. The plot should deal with domestic affairs (a love story), the ending should be happy (everyone gets married), and the dialogue should be written in prose.

17. What type of dramas did Jean Racine write?

Jean Racine (1639-1699) is remembered for his neoclassic tragedies.

18. What was the source of his plays?

He adapted Greek tragedies, primarily the works of Euripides. His most important work is *Phedre* (1677) based on Euripides’ *Hippolytus*.

19. Which, Pierre Corneille or Jean Racine is France's most important tragic playwright?

Jean Racine.

20. Of the works of Corneille, Racine, and Moliere, which have had the most revivals in the English speaking theatre?

The comedies of Moliere.

Why?

The tragedies of Racine and Corneille are both very talky. There is little action. English speaking audiences like to see something happen on stage, and there is quite a bit more action in the comedies of Moliere.

21. What was the Hotel de Bourgogne?

The *Hotel de Bourgogne*, built in 1548 by the *Confraternity of the Passion*, was France’s first permanent theatre. The long narrow (40’ x 96’) structure (with a 33’ deep platform stage) occupied the second floor of what had been the town house of the Duke of Burgundy. In 1402 Charles VI granted the *Confraternity*, a company of amateur
actors, the exclusive right (a monopoly) to produce holy drama in Paris.

22. Who built the first proscenium theatre in Paris?

Cardinal Richelieu built the *Palais Cardina*, Paris’ first proscenium theatre, in 1641. After the Cardinal’s death, the theatre was renamed *Palais Royal* and became the home of Moliere’s acting company.
Theatre from 1660 to 1875
Restoration and 18th Century

Resources

Text...

Plays...
Restoration...

William Congreve. *The Way of the World*
John Dryden. *All For Love*

18th Century...
John Gay. *The Beggar's Opera*
Richard Sheridan. *School for Scandal*

Internet

Drottningholm Theatre

______________________________

Theatre from 1660 to 1875
Restoration: 1660 to 1700 | 18th Century | 19th Century

Restoration: 1660 to 1700

1. When was the English Restoration?

From 1660 to 1700.

To whom was the English crown restored?

Charles II (reign :1660 to 1685 )

2. What are the characteristics of a Restoration Comedy of Manners?

Restoration (and 18th century) comedy ridiculed human failings--breaches of a "sophisticated code of manners" established by the courtiers of Charles II. They assumed (but never stated) an ideal mode of life which they expected the audience to accept.
The Ideal Gentleman was well born, dressed well, was poised and witty, skilled in love making, was able to conduct several affairs simultaneously, never boasted of his affairs, was always discreet, and never fell in love (or showed true compassion). If he was married, he could not be jealous if his wife took a lover.

The Fashionable Young Lady was familiar with the world of intrigue, but did not become involved in it. If she was a widow (or married to an older man) she could take a lover, as long as she was not found out. If she was married, she should not expect constancy in her husband.

3. What title do many consider the best example of an English Comedy of Manners?


4. What type of dramas did John Dryden write?

Dryden (1631-1700) is primarily remembered for his Neo-Classic tragedies.

5. What is the title of his most important play?

All For Love, or A World Well Lost (1677)

6. On what earlier work is it based?

William Shakespeare’s Anthony and Cleopatra.

What changes did he make?

He condensed the 15 years of dramatic time in Shakespeare’s play into one 24 hour day. He compressed Shakespeare’s large cast (30 men and 4 women) drama into a much smaller and more manageable size (6 men and 4 women). Unlike Shakespeare who had scenes in Rome and Egypt, Dryden’s play takes place in one location: in front of the temple of Isis in Alexandre, Egypt. He took Shakespeare’s episodic tragedy, and turned it into a small cast climactic tragedy which observed the unity of time and place.

7. How did the actor-manager system function?
During the Elizabethan period, the acting company was a stock company. The control of the organization was vested in the "shareholders." A Restoration acting company was owned and controlled by one man: the manager. He usually was the leading actor of the company, and chose those plays which best exhibited his abilities. The remainder of the acting company was hired and did not share in the company’s profit (or loss).

8. Who was the leading English actor-manager of the 18th Century?

David Garrick (1717-1779). In addition to being an actor with over ninety roles in his repertory and the manager and "patent holder" of Drury Lane (1747 to 1776), he was a playwright, director and designer. As a director he oversaw the entire production process. He expected his actors to be on time, to have their lines memorized, and to act during rehearsal. As a designer he introduced appropriate and historically accurate costumes to the English stage.

9. When were women introduced onto the English stage?

During the Restoration.

10. What problems did theatre managers encounter when hiring an actress?

Since acting was still socially unacceptable, it was often difficult recruiting women to perform on stage. There also were few women’s roles in the plays (primarily the work of Shakespeare) that most managers staged.

11. Who was Nell Gwynn?

Nell Gwynn (1650-1687), one of the most popular comic actress of the Restoration, performed for only four years: 1665-1669. During her tenure on stage she became the mistress of King Charles II and bore him two illegitimate sons. She was retired from the stage, by order of the King, in 1669.

12. What was a legitimate theatre?

They were the only legal theatres in London permitted to present full length (five act) dramas. These theatres were also known as Royal Theatres (because they were licensed by the King) and Patent Theatres (because the document which licensed them was called a patent).
13. How many legitimate theatres operated in London during the 17th century?

Two. These were originally (in 1660) the two playhouses managed by William Davenant (1606-1668) and Thomas Killigrew (1612-1683). After parliament passed the Licensing Act of 1737, the two legitimate houses were Covent Garden and Drury Lane.

**How long did they retain this monopoly?**

183 years, from 1660 to 1843.

14. What was a minor theatre?

A minor theatre was a London playhouse which could not perform "regular" drama.

**What type of plays were they permitted to present?**

- Short plays (two or three act),
- Operas,
- Melodramas and
- Illustrated lectures.

15. What did the Restoration stage look like?

The Restoration stage was a proscenium theatre with a deep forestage or apron. There was a proscenium opening which framed the scenery. Most of the action took place on the forestage. Entrances and exits were made through doors on the either side of the apron. The 650 seats (in 1700) were distributed between the pit, boxes, and galleries. The most expensive seats were in the private boxes (four shillings) which surrounded the first floor pit (two shillings, six pence). The cheapest seats were in the two galleries (one shilling, six pence and one shilling). See the illustration of Drury Lane on page 294.

16. What type of scenery was used on an English Restoration stage?

Restoration theatres used the wing - border - backdrop style of scenery. Because of the cost, scenic units painted for one show were usually incorporated into a theatre’s stock set for use in other productions.

**18th Century**
17. What type of comedies did Richard Sheridan write?

Sheridan (1751-1816) is remembered for his sentimental comedies. Like Restoration comedy, they were also a comedy of manners, but they reaffirmed middle class morality.

18. What is the title of his most important work?

*The School for Scandal* (1777) *(plot summary)* His other two major, often revived works are *The Rivals* (1775) and *The Critic* (1779).

19. Which legitimate theatre did he manage?

In 1776 Sheridan became a stock holder in Drury Lane, one of the two patent houses. He became a member of Parliament (repesenting Stafford) in 1780 making him a politician as well as theatre manager and playwright.

20. What is the title of John Gay's (1685-1732) only major work?

*The Beggar's Opera* (1728). With 62 consecutive performances, many consider *The Beggar's Opera* to be the theatre’s first long run.

21. How does a ballad opera differ from an Italian opera?

In a ballad opera, the music is adapted from popular folk songs and bar-room tunes. In an Italian opera, the music is specifically composed for the work.

22. What was Lewis Hallam's connection to the development of the American theatre?

William Hallam attempted to open a third legitimate theatre in London in the 1750’s. When his request to the king was denied, he sent his brother Lewis (1714-1756) and a company of twelve actors to the colonies where they established a theatre in Williamsburg, Pennsylvania in 1752. The company also performed in New York, Philadelphia and Charleston, South Carolina. Many theatre historians declare this to be the beginning of the commercial American theatre.

23. What was the major change in theatre architecture during the 18th century?

Because the size of the theatre audience grew during the 18th century, the capacity of the auditoriums also grew. In 1700, Drury Lane could seat a maximum of 650, a hundred years later, after the
addition of three new galleries, the seating capacity was 3600; a five fold increase. Not only did the capacity of the house increase, so did the size of the stage. The Drury Lane of the English Restoration had a stage that was only 34 feet deep: 17 feet from the foot lights to the proscenium arch and 17 feet from the arch to the back wall. (See the Ground Plan on page 295). In 1800 the stage house of Drury Lane was 85 feet wide and 92 feet deep. The proscenium opening was 43 feet wide by 38 feet high.

24. What is the importance of the court theatre at Drottningholm?

This small court theatre was built in the middle of the 18th Century (1766) at the summer palace of the Swedish royal family. The space was closed in 1792, "rediscovered" in 1920 and reopened in 1922. It is today a working example of an eighteenth century Italianate proscenium theatre complete with 15 complete sets of scenery. See the photographs on page 300. Visit the Drottningholms Slottsteater Web page.

Got to
Nineteenth Century | Theatre Home Page

E-mail questions and comments to Larry Wild at wildl@northern.edu.
Last updated: April 17, 2003
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Theatre from 1660 to 1875
Nineteenth Century

Resources

Text...

Plays...
George Aiken / Harriet Beacher Stowe. *Uncle Tom's Cabin*
Charles Fechter / Alexandre Dumas, père. *The Count of Monte Cristo*
Alexandre Dumas, fils. *The Lady of the Camellias*
Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe. *Faust*
Edmond Rostand. *Cyrano De Bergerac*

1. Define romantic drama.

Romantic drama is the theatre of the "long ago and far away." The audiences of the early 19th century wanted to escape the dull, petty frustrations of their lives.

2. What are the characteristics of a romantic hero?

The romantic hero makes no compromises, appeases no one. To him every issue is clear, and if he goes down in defeat, he goes down fighting knowing that his cause is just.

3. What is the difference between the knight-champion and the knight-lover?

The knight-champion was loyal to his lord, dedicated his life to the protection of the weak, rescued the innocent maiden, and fought the endless battle against the forces of evil.

The knight-lover placed women on a pedestal, and worshipped them from afar. After a brief glimpse of her beauty, he was transformed forever. He would write poems to her beauty, and sing of his undying devotion, but he could not touch her. It was better to yearn for the ideal, than to desecrate it by turning it into reality.

4. Why did England not produce any major 19th century romantic dramatists?
Because the actor-managers rediscovered the works of Shakespeare. His plays posses many of the elements of romantic drama--A broad sweep of action, many short scenes, and a dedication to love and adventure.

5. Which playwright's work was performed, in England, during this period?

William Shakespeare.

6. Which of Victor Hugo's dramas was influential in getting romantic drama accepted in Paris' conservative state theatres?

Although Hugo (1802-1885) is today primarily remembered for two novels: Les Misérables (1862) and The Hunchback of Notre Dame (1831), his romantic tragedy: Hernani (1830) helped shatter the neoclassical rules which had restrained French drama since the Renaissance.

7. What happened during its initial performances?

The audience, composed of supporters of both the neoclassic and romantic movements, "rioted" through fifty-five performances.

8. What is the relationship between 19th century opera and romantic drama?

Like many 19th century operas which were based on 19th century dramas, Victor Hugo’s Hernani is the source of Giuseppe Verdi’s Ernani (1844).

9. Which form, the drama or opera, has held the stage best?

The opera. There are few, if any, productions of the original dramas, but the operas have become part of the standard repertory. Puccini’s Tosca (the opera) is based on a play written for Sarah Bernhardt, the great 19th century French actress. No one produces the play (also called Tosca), but Pucinni’s opera is one of the war- horses of the operatic repertory.

10. Who wrote The Count of Monte Cristo?

Alexandre Dumas', père (1802-1870) first major success was as a playwright. His Henri III was successfully produced in Paris in 1829. He soon shifted from writing romantic drama to writing romantic novels. His major works include The Three Musketeers (1844) and The Count of Monte Cristo (1845).
Why was his stage adaption of *Monte Cristo* not a theatrical success?

His 1848 adaption of the 71 chapter novel required a cast of a 100, was written in 20 acts, and took two days to perform. Thirty five years later, Charles Fechter, a 19th century actor / manager, developed a more workable (9 scenes, 5 acts + Prologue, cast of 24) adaption. This version, starring James O'Neill, was first presented on the massive stage of New York’s Booth Theatre in February 1883.

11. Who performed it in the United States during the late 19th century?

James O'Neill (1847-1920), an acknowledged Shakespearean actor, played the title role of Edmond Dantes, the "Count of Monte Cristo", at least 6000 times over a 30 year period. His performance was recorded on film by Edwin Porter in 1913.

12. What was his relationship to Eugene O’Neill (1888-1953)?

He is Eugene’s father.

13. What type of plays did Alexandre Dumas, fils (1824-1895) write?

He wrote what he believed were realistic dramas. But most modern directors see his plays as being very romantic.

What was his relationship to Alexandre Dumas, père?

He was his son.

14. What is the title of his (A. Dumas, fils) most often revived work?

*La Dame aux camélias*, known as *Camille* in the English speaking world, began life in 1848 as a novel. Four years later, in 1852, Dumas, fils adapted his work for the French stage. In 1853 it becomes the source of Giuseppe Verdi’s *La Traviata*.

15. Why is it now considered a romantic, and not realistic drama?

What was "here and now" in 1852 becomes "long ago and far away" in 2002.

16. What is the title of Edmund Rostand's most important work?

Edmund Rostand (1868-1918) is best remembered for *Cyrano de Bergerac* (1897), the story of a 17th century (1619-1655) French
nobleman (with a very large nose) and his love for his cousin Roxanne.

17. What position does it hold in dramatic literature?

It is probably the best example of a 19th century romantic drama.

18. What position does Johann Wolfgang von Goethe hold in German literature?

Goethe (1749-1832) is Germany's greatest literary figure. He is to German literature what Shakespeare is to English drama, and Moliere is to French comedy.

19. What is his most important play?

*Faust* (Part I: 1808, Part II: 1831): the story of a man who sells his soul to the devil.

20. What German theatre did he manage?

He was the manager of the state theatre at Weimar. He required his actors to attend rehearsals. He permitted only two responses from his audiences. If they liked the show they could applaud. If they did not like the show they could remain silent.

21. What are the characteristics of a melodrama?

Melodrama contained a spotless hero who was usually falsely accused (but cleared by the last act) and an evil black hearted villain (who was often a banker or lawyer). Background music underscored sentimental speeches and the action sequences, just like in a film. The greatest excitement was the chase.

22. How large an audience did the 19th century melodramas attract?

Melodrama developed the largest popular audience in American theatre history.

23. What was the title of America's most successful 19th century melodrama?

*Uncle Tom's Cabin*. It was based on Harriet Beacher Stowe’s novel of the same name. The play, adapted by George Aiken, was written in six acts, included 30 scenes, and was performed by a cast of 25. There were American productions of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* into the 1930's.
24. What was the importance of the showboat to the westward movement of the American theatre?

In the early part of the 19th century, most major American cities were built along a river (usually the Mississippi or Ohio) or a canal. Mounting a theatre on a flat boat, and taking the show to the major cities along the river was an efficient way to tour, and no "western" community was large enough to support a resident theatre company.

William Chapman’s two hundred seat Floating Theatre is considered America’s first showboat. Starting in 1831, it traveled the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers from Pittsburgh to New Orleans. By the 1850s there were dozens of showboats plying the water ways of the midwest. They continued to operate into the middle of the 20th century. The American showboat was immortalized first in the novel by Edna Ferber (Show Boat, 1926), and later in the Jerome Kern - Oscar Hammerstein II operetta: Show Boat, (1928).

25. What types of plays did they present?

Melodramas

26. What French playwrights are remembered for developing the tightly wrought drama known as the well-made play?

Eugene Scribe (1791-1861) and Victorien Sardou (1831-1908). Scribe has been credited with 300 scripts, mostly comedies. Sardou is the author of Tosca (1887) a romantic tragedy written for Sarah Bernhardt (1844-1923) the leading French actress of her day. It was adapted into an opera by Giacomo Puccini (1858-1924).

What effect did this formula have on later playwrights?

Elements of the well-made-play formula were used by the early realistic playwrights, especially Henrik Ibsen.

27. What are the characteristics of a well-made play?

1. Extensive exposition and careful preparation (fore shadowing) early in the play,
2. A tightly knit cause-and-effect arrangement of plot incidents,
3. Each scene builds to a strong climax (or crisis),
4. A secret known to the audience, but not to the play’s characters,
5. A "show down" or confrontational scene between the play’s two major characters near the climax, and
6. A careful resolution of the action so there are no loose ends.
28. What was the star system? What was its relationship to the actor-manager system of production?

In the star system, the production is built around the lead actor, the "star". He owned the company. His wife was usually the leading lady, and his son and daughter would often play the "romantic" leads. Plays were selected to show off the star's talents. The supporting cast was there to assist the star.

The star-system was an outgrowth of the actor-manager system which dates back to the English Restoration.

29. How does it differ from the ensemble approach to acting?

In the ensemble approach, there are no stars. There are leading roles, simply because that’s the way plays are written. But the actor who played the lead in one production, would have a supporting role in the next show. In the star system, the star played all of the leads, all the time.

30. What were some of the acting techniques used by the stars which made it difficult for them to perform subtle realistic drama?

It was a sin for the star to rehearse. He stood at the front edge of the stage and spoke directly to the audience. The audience would often applaud at the end of a scene. If there was enough applause, the star might do an encore.

31. Why did 19th century actors perform at the front edge of the stage?

If an actor moved too far up stage (away from the primary light source: footlights), he would be in the dark.

32. Who was Edwin Booth?

Edwin Booth (1833-1893) was America’s leading 19th century Shakespearean actor. He used a subtle, psychological approach. He brought Shakespeare to the American stage, using for the first time, a full accurate script. In 1863, during the height of the Civil War, he performed Hamlet for one hundred consecutive nights, setting a record that would stand until 1923. He briefly retired from the stage after his brother, John Wilkes, assassinated Abraham Lincoln at Ford’s Theatre.

Sir Henry Irving?
Before arriving in London in 1866, **Henry Irving** (1838-1905) had performed in Sunderland (1856), Edinburgh (1857-1860), Manchester (1860-1865) and Liverpool (1865). With performances of *Hamlet* (1874), *Macbeth* (1875) and *Othello* (1876) he gained a reputation as England's greatest actor. In 1878, after forming a partnership with actress Ellen Terry, he became actor-manager of London's Lyceum Theatre where they successfully revived Goethe's *Faust* and Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. In 1895 he became the first actor in British history to be Knighted.

**Sarah Bernhardt?**

**Sarah Bernhardt** (1844-1923), "The Divine Sarah" debuted on the stage of the *Comédie Française* in 1862. After a successful 14 year career in France she arrived in London (1876) where she quickly established herself as the leading actress of the day. Her first (of nine) American tours was four years later in 1880. (Her last American visit was in 1918). In 1899 she founded, in Paris, the *Theatre Sarah Bernhardt*. The same year, at the age of 55, she played the title role in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in Paris, London and New York. In 1900 she took her talent before the camera making eleven films including both Alexandre Dumas’ fils *La Dame aux Camélias* (1910 and 1912) and *La Tosca* (1909). Even though her left leg was amputated at the age of 71 (1915), she continued to perform, playing parts she could act while seated, until her death in 1923. During her 62-year career, she played some 70 roles, all in French, in more than 125 productions. She is probably the first truly international star.

33. Who were the two men who brought about the change from the stars system to the ensemble system?

Richard Wagner (1813-1883) and Georg II, the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen (1826-1914).

34. Who was Richard Wagner?

Wagner was one of Germany’s most influential 19th century opera composers and theatrical producers. He believed that drama should be "dipped in the magic fountain of music" to combine the greatness of Shakespeare with that of Beethoven.

35. What was his theory concerning the importance of the director?

He believed all elements of a production should come under the control of one man, the all powerful director who would synthesize
the theatrical elements into a *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or "a master art work."

36. What German manager showed the world that it was possible to produce romantic drama in a realistic style?

Georg II, the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen (1826-1914), operated a small, professional court theatre. He used the ensemble system of production. He believed in a long (six to eight months) rehearsal period. His sets and costumes were historically accurate. He used a realistic style of production, but the plays he presented were romantic. He toured his company for 16 years (1874 to 1890) and influenced production techniques in Paris and Moscow.

37. What were his two most often performed productions?

William Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar* and Frederich Schiller's *William Tell*.

38. What is a stock set?

A collection of "generic" sets which the theatre manager would use for all of his company's productions

**What were some of the scenic designs theatre managers stocked?**

A small local theatre would own at least four basic designs, a...

1. Kitchen set,
2. Parlor set,
3. Woodland scene, and
4. City street scene.

The manager would decide which of these four designs would best fit the settings required for each play he presented.

39. Why did 19th century directors object to their use?

Directors, like Georg II, the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, believed that a new, and different, set (or sets) should be designed for each production.

40. What is a box set?
An interior set which uses flats (wood frames covered with canvas) to create the back and side walls, and often ceiling, of a "realistic" room.

**How does it differ from a wing-border-backdrop set?**

The side "walls" in a wing-border-backdrop set are placed parallel to the front edge of the stage. In a box set, these "side walls" are turned so they run diagonal from up stage to down stage.

**41. What changes did the box set force on the design of the stage floor?**

With the development of the more realistic box set, the raked stage floor was replaced with a flat stage floor. Stage hands discovered it was difficult to handle the side walls of a box set on a slanted floor.

**42. What is the fourth-wall concept?**

According to French philosopher Denis Diderot (1713-1784) the scenic artist should create a "real" room (four walls) then remove one of these walls so the audience can watch the action of play unfold on stage.

**How did it effect the actors?**

In a realistic production, the focus of the action should remain with in the confines of the "room". As for as the actor is concerned, there is no audience, only the other characters in the "room."

**43. When did gas lamps replace candles and oil lamps as the primary source of light in the theatre?**

In the first third of the 19th century. Philadelphia’s Chestnut Street Theatre was outfitted with gas light in 1816.

**44. What was the gas table?**

A collection of valves used by the gasman to control the intensity of light. For the first time it became practical to dim the house lights forcing the audience to focus their attention on the stage.

**45. What was a lime light?**

The 19th century spotlight which created the brilliant pool of light that followed the "star." This light was produced by heating a block
of calcium carbonate (lime) to incandescence with an oxyo-hydrogen torch.

**How was it used?**

It was used both as a follow spot and the source of theatrical beams of sun and moon light.

**46. When did the electric light replace the gas lamp as the major source of theatrical light?**

In the 1880’s. London’s Savoy Theatre, the home of Gilbert and Sullivan’s operetta’s, was, in 1881, the first theatre to be totally lit by electricity.

[Theatre Home Page](#)
Modern Theatre: 1875 to 1945

Resources

Text...

Plays, with links to brief plot outlines...

Bertolt Brecht. *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*
Anton Chekhov. *The Cherry Orchard*,
Federal Theatre Project. *One Third of a Nation*
Henrik Ibsen. *Hedda Gabler, Ghosts, A Doll's House*

The Internet...

[Federal Theatre Project Collection](https://www.loc.gov/exhibits/ftpc/) at the Library of Congress

1. Who is the father of realistic drama?

*Henrik Ibsen* (1828-1906). In 1851 he was appointed the resident playwright and stage manager of the Norwegian National Theatre in Bergen. Six years later he moved to the Norwegian Theatre in Christiania (now Oslo). He left his homeland in 1864 only to return for brief visits. His early works, such as *Peer Gynt* (1866) were romantic verse dramas drawn from the Scandinavian past. In the 1870s he abandoned verse drama for realism. The plays written during the last decade of the century, *The Master Builder* (1892) and *When We Dead Awaken* (1899) show the influence of the symbolist movement.

2. What is the difference between Ibsen's social plays and his character dramas?

His *social plays*, or thesis plays, explore the interaction of people with society. These works deal with such social problems as an unhappy marriage, the sexual double standard, and the position of women.

His *character dramas* explore the psychological, moral, and ethical conflicts within the confines of the dramatic character.
3. Give the title of one play from each group.

Social plays-- *Pillars of Society* (1877), *The Doll's House* (1879), *Ghosts* (1881) and *An Enemy of the People* (1882). See the Play Synopsis of *The Dolls House* on page 322.

Character dramas-- *The Wild Duck* (1884), and *Hedda Gabler* (1890).

4. Which group of plays has stood the test of time and are still presented today?

The character dramas. Most consider *Hedda Gabler* his most important and often revived drama.

Audiences were often disturbed by Ibsen's "unhealthful and injurious" plays. Critics had a word for his work -- it was *Ibscene*.

When *A Doll's House* was first presented, an audience sat perfectly still after the final curtain. They were waiting for the last act when Nora would return repentant to her husband. The stage manager had to appear and tell them that was all, they could go home. It was a dumfounding jolt that set wives practicing door slams and made husbands irritable and nervous. (Philip Lewis, *Trouping. How the Show Came to Town*, 1973. pg. 194.)

5. Who was the Russian playwright whose plays were first produced by the Moscow Art Theatre?

*Anton Chekhov* (1860-1904). The Moscow Art Theatre’s first production was Anton Chekhov’s first script: *The Sea Gull* (1896)

6. How many full length dramas did he write?

*Four*. In addition to *The Sea Gull*, he also wrote *Uncle Vanya* (1899), *The Three Sisters* (1901) and *The Cherry Orchard* (1904).

7. List the title of his most important work.

*The Cherry Orchard*. See the Play Synopsis on page 49.

8. What German manager inspired directors in both Paris and Moscow?

Georg II, Duke of Saxe Meiningen.
9. Who was the French director who showed the world how to produce realistic drama realistically?

Andre Antoine (1858-1943)

10. What was the Theatre Libre?

An amateur, or "community" theatre, organized by Antoine to produce the plays other theatre managers considered unproducible.

What type of plays did they produce?

One act realistic dramas.

11. Why was it necessary for the "little" or "art" theatres to be private clubs?

In much of Europe, including Paris, public performances of realistic dramas were banned because they were considered obscene. But private performances, restricted to members of the organization, were permitted. Little theatres, patterned after Antoine’s *Theatre Libre* opened in London (Independent Theatre), Berlin (Freie Buhne), Moscow (Moscow Art Theatre) and New York (Washington Square Players). London’s Independent Theatre (1891-1897) introduced the work of George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950) and Eugene O’Neill’s (1888-1953) dramas were first presented by the Provincetown Players (1915-1929) in Provincetown, Massachusetts, and the Washington Square Players (1915-1918) in New York City.

In 1919 the Washington Square Players becomes the Theatre Guild. Six years later, 1925, they move into their own playhouse: the Guild Theatre. The Guild’s most successful production, certainly its most famous, was Rodger’s and Hammerstein’s first musical: *Oklahoma!* (1943). Their last show, as listed in the Internet Broadway Database, was *State Fair*, another R&H musical, in 1996.

12. Who was Constantin Stanislavski’s?

Stanislavski (1863-1938) was both an actor and a director. In 1897 he and Vladimir Danchenko (1859-1943) outlined the organization of a professional acting company which would present realistic drama.

13. What was the name of this company?
The Moscow Art Theatre. Organized in 1897, the MAT made their first American visit, presenting three Chekhov's plays in Russian, in 1923. They are still an active production company.

In 1931, the Group Theatre, a non-commercial New York production company dedicated to producing socially relevant dramas, introduced the Stanislavskian acting approach to the American theatre. Although the company disbanded in 1941, its influence, primarily through the work of Lee Strasberg (The Actor's Studio) and Eli Kazan (the original director of both *Death of a Salesman* and *Streetcar Named Desire*) continued to be felt for the next two decades.

14. When was the Federal Theatre created?

1935

What was its purpose?

To provide work for the unemployed. It was part of the WPA (Works Progress Administration) created by President Roosevelt to help bring an end to the Great Depression. The Federal Theatre Project was our first, and last, attempt to create a "national theatre." For a closer look, link to the Federal Theatre Project Collection at the Library of Congress.

15. What type of plays did it present?

A little of everything: Greek tragedy, Elizabethan comedy, children's theatre, ballet, opera, circus...

16. How many states hosted a Federal Theatre Project?

There were Federal Theatres in 32 of the 48 states. There were no Federal Theatres in either of the Dakotas, but there were Projects in Minnesota and Nebreska. Many locations had more than one producing unit. There were 31 units in New York City, 14 in Chicago, and three in Omaha.

17. What was the Living Newspaper?

They were dramatizations of a problem using news events pulled from the front pages of the newspaper, a kind of "dramatic journalism." Many were propaganda pieces which supported other aspects of President Roosevelt's New Deal. For example, *AAA Plowed Under* (1936) dealt with agricultural reform, *Power* (1937) dealt with rural electrification and *One Third of a Nation* (1938)
dealt with public housing. Dr. Hallie Flanagan, the national director of the Federal Theatre, said the Living Newspaper sought
to make [theatre] out of everyday factual material . . .
to dramatize a new struggle -- -the search of the average American today for knowledge about his world; to dramatize his struggle to turn the great natural and economic and social forces of our time toward a better life for more people.

**How did it differ from conventional drama?**

The plays were often plotless and episodic. The two major characters were the narrator, the *Voice of the Living Newspaper* (or simply: Loudspeaker) who guided the audience through the background material, pointed out the human consequences of the problem, and suggested possible solutions; and *The Little Man* an average person who questioned and addressed the issues presented in the play.

**18. Which American director began his career with a New York unit of the Federal Theatre?**

Orson Welles (1915-1985). He left the Federal Theatre Project in 1938 to create the Mercury Theatre which produced the modern dress *Julius Caesar* (1938), and *War of the Worlds* (1938), the radio play which scared a nation.

**19. Which production was locked out of their theatre on opening night?**

*The Cradle Will Rock* (1937) a pro-labor anti-business opera directed by Orson Welles.

**What was the company's response?**

When they discovered the theatre padlocked the morning of their opening night, they searched for, and found, an empty theatre. When the audience gathered that night at the locked theatre, the actors led them to the new house where the actors performed the opera, not on the stage, but in the auditorium.

**20. Why was the Federal Theatre closed on June 30, 1939?**

Many objected to the political content of the plays, especially those presented by the *Living Newspaper* unit. The Federal Theatre was accused (by the newly formed House Un-American Activity Committee) of presenting "putrid plays" that were "spewed from the
gutters of the Kremlin and . . . directed by Communists." Congress voted down the appropriation bill which would have funded this WPA project for an additional four years.

21. Who was the first American playwright to receive international recognition?

Eugene O'Neill (1888-1953) was a son of James O'Neil, the popular 19th century American actor. He spent his childhood in cheap hotels and on late night trains accompanying his father on the tour circuit. He attended a series of boarding schools and was expelled from Princeton University in 1906. He prospected for gold in Honduras, was an actor and assistant stage manager in his father's company, sailed to South America and Africa as a seamen and was a reporter in New London, Connecticut. He contracted tuberculosis at the age of 24 and wrote his first plays while recovering in a sanatorium. In 1916, "Bound East for Cardiff," a one-act play, was produced by the Provincetown Players (a "little theatre") at the Warf Theatre in Provincetown, Massachusetts.

22. What type of dramas did he write?

A little of everything. Realism: Long Day's Journey Into Night (written in 1940, but not produced until 1957), Classical tragedy: Mourning Becomes Electra (1931), Expressionism: Emperor Jones (1920) and The Hairy Ape (1922).

23. What is his only comedy?

Ah, Wilderness (1933), in which a young man discovers girls and booze on the 4th of July.

24. Which of his plays is autobiographical?

Long Day's Journey Into Night. Written in 1940, but not produced until four years after his death, in 1957. Many consider it his greatest drama.

25. How many Pulitzer prizes did he win?

Four. Beyond The Horizon (1920), Anna Christie (1922), Strange Interlude (1928), and Long Day's Journey Into Night (1940, 1957). He also won the 1936 Nobel Price for Literature.

26. What are the two major criticisms of his work?
His plays are long (\textit{Long Day's Journey Into Night} and \textit{Strange Interlude} run over four hours, \textit{Mourning Becomes Electra} is close to five) and depressing.

27. What is the basic tenant of the symbolist movement?

"Truth" is not an external reality, it can not be expressed directly, but only through symbols. These symbols evoke "feeling's" in the audience.

28. When and where did it develop?

France, 1880 to 1900

29. Who were the two most influential symbolist designers?

Adolph Appia (1862-1928) and Edward Gordon Craig (1872-1966)

30. Where did each live?

Appia was Swiss, Craig was English

31. What was their basic theory of scenic design?

They believed that a stage presentation involved three conflicting visual elements-- a (1) three dimensional actor, with (2) a flat stage floor under and (3) acres of flapping canvas behind him. They believed that the scenery should be three dimensional (like the actor), and should not be literal, but evoke the feeling of place. See the photograph of Appia's design for \textit{Iphigenia in Aulis} on page 333.

32. Which of the two designers developed the theory of modern lighting design?

Adolph Appia. His theory of lighting, which was not practical when it was originally proclaimed, stemmed from his interest in the staging of Wagnerian opera. He published his ideas in \textit{La Mise}
enscene du drame Wagnerien (The Staging of Wagnerian Music-Drama) (1895) and Die Musik und die Inscenierung (Music and Staging) (1899).

33. Where and when did the expressionist movement develop?

Germany. 1910 to 1925

34. What was its basic philosophy?

Although man was capable of doing "great things", he was being controlled and dominated by machines.

35. Why does it function better in films and television than it does on stage?

In an expressionistic production, the audience sees the presentation through the eyes of one of the characters. In film and TV, the director has greater control over what the audience sees than he has in the live theatre. In films, the audience sees only what the director tells the camera to look at.

36. What was the most influential expressionist presentation?

Das Kabinett des Doktor Caligari (The Box of Doctor Caligari), a 1920 German film about an evil "magician" and the hypnotic victims who carry out his evil plan.

37. List the title, and author, of at least one play which could be considered an expressionistic drama.

The Emperor Jones (1920), The Hairy Ape (1922), and The Great God Brown (1925) by Eugene O'Neill (1888-1953).

38. Who is the German playwright who developed the theory of epic drama? When did he live?

Bertolt Brecht (1898 to 1956). Brecht entered the theatre as a director in Munich. As a playwright he experimented with dadaism and expressionism before arriving at his more characteristic "epic" style. His first major success was The Three-Penny Opera (1928) which ran for over 400 performances.
39. What are the basic characteristics of an epic play?

(1) There should be a broad sweep of action (Episodic structure), (2) a mixture of dramatic and narrative techniques, (3) they should assign the spectator an active role in the performance, (4) the audience should apply what they see in the theatre to life, (5) the mechanics of the theatre should be shown, (6) and the actors should see the role in the "third person", and not "become the character." He believed that the events on stage should be made "sufficiently strange" that the audience would question what they saw. This concept, *verfremdungseffekt* in German, is generally translated as "alienation" in English.

40. Why were most of his plays not written in Germany?

Although he was born in Germany, he left in 1933 after Adolph Hitler came to power. Most of his epic scripts were written in the United States.

41. Why was he not permitted to return to the American zone of Germany after World War Two?

Although he was not a member of the party, he was a communist sympathizer.

42. What is considered his greatest epic drama?

_Mother Courage and her Children_ (37). See the Play Synopsis on page 162.

Theatre Home Page

E-mail questions and comments to Larry Wild at wildl@northern.edu.
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Text...

Plays...
Edward Albee. *A Delicate Balance*
Samuel Beckett. *Waiting for Godot*
David Mamet. *Glenary Glen Ross*
Arthur Miller. *Death of a Salesman*
Sam Shepard. *Buried Child*
Neil Simon. *Lost In Yonkers*
Thorton Wilder. *Our Town*
Tennessee Williams. *Street Car Named Desire*

1. What is Thornton Wilder's (1897-1975) most significant drama?

*Our Town* (1938). Three brief days in the lives of George and Emily.

2. How does it differ from a traditional drama?

The play was written for, and was originally performed on a bare stage without scenery or props. The Stage Manager (a character in the play) acts as the audience’s guide to Grover’s Corner NH, and plays several smaller parts. Although it is George and Emily’s story, the principle character in the play is the Stage Manager. A musical adaption of the work, starring Frank Sinatra as the Stage Manager and Paul Newman (in his only singing role) and Eva Marie Saint as George and Emily, was broadcast live in color by NBC's *Producer's Showcase* on September 15, 1955. One of the songs from that production has become a Sinatra standard: "Love and Marriage." The film version, starring a young William Holden, produced in 1940 had four cast members from the original Broadway production, but the
film’s style was realistic, and Hollywood gave the movie a happy ending.

3. Which two of his plays won the Pulitzer prize?

*Our Town* and *The Skin of Our Teeth* (1942), which shows the destruction of the world by ice, flood, and war. Wilder also won a Pulitzer prize for his 1928 novel: *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*. He is the only writer to win a Pulitzer prize for both drama and fiction.

4. Which comedy was adapted into a long running Broadway musical?

*The Matchmaker* (1954), in which Dolly Levi searches for a husband for Horace Vandegelder, is the source of *Hello, Dolly!* (1964). *The Matchmaker* is an adaption of Wilder’s *The Merchant of Yonkers* (1938), which is based on Johann Nestroy’s *Einen jux will er sich machen* (Vienna, 1842) which, in turn, is an adaption of *A Day Well Spent* (London: 1835) by John Oxenford.

5. What is Tennessee Williams’ (1911-1983) most important work?

*A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947). The tragic story of Blanche DuBois, who lives in a squalid New Orleans tenement with her sister Stella and brother-in-law Stanley Kowalski. The original production was directed by Elia Kazan (1909-2003) and designed by Jo Mielziner (1901-1976). Two years later the same team would stage Arthur Miller’s *Death of a Salesman*.

How long did it run?

1 year, 8 months: 742 performances.

6. Who starred in the original Broadway production? What parts did they play?

Jessica Tandy (*Blanche DuBois*), Marlon Brando (*Stanley Kowalski*), and Kim Hunter (*Stella Kowalski*). This production was Brando’s first major role.

7. What was Williams' first major success?

*The Glass Menagerie* (1945).

8. For which two dramas did he receive a Pulitzer prize?

*A Streetcar Named Desire* (1947) and *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof* (1954).
9. Which of his plays is autobiographical?

*The Glass Menagerie* tells the story of Tom Winfield, a stock boy at a St. Louis shoe factory, who yearns to leave home and begin a career as a poet.

Williams averaged a new dramatic work every two years. He has been credited with 25 full length plays, over 40 one act scripts, a dozen screen plays, and an opera libretto.

10. What was Arthur Miller's first major theatrical success?

Arthur Miller's (1915- ) first success was *All My Sons* (1947) -- the story of Joe Keller, who knowingly sent defective cylinder heads to the US Army Air Corps during World War II. Twenty combat fliers (perhaps including one of his two sons) were killed because of his actions.

11. What is his masterpiece?

*Death of a Salesman* (1949) is considered one of America’s most significant dramas. The original production was directed by Elia Kazan and designed by Jo Mielziner. See the play synopsis on page 345.

Who is its major character?

Willy Loman is the sixty-three year old traveling salesman who believes that back-slapping and perseverance are the keys to success in business and life. Lee J. Cobb created the role in the original New York production.

12. How long did it run in New York?

Nearly 2 years: 855 performances.

13. For which play did he win a Pulitzer prize?

*Death of a Salesman.*

14. Which Miller drama was written as a comment on the hearings held by the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) in the mid fifties?

*The Crucible* (1953). Miller compares the committee’s hunt for communists in the entertainment industry with the Salem witchcraft trials of the 17th century.
15. Who were the "Hollywood Ten?"

One film director and nine screen writers who, in 1947, refused to "name names" before HUAC.

Why were they held in contempt of congress?

They pleaded the first amendment (freedom of speech), not the fifth, were held in contempt of Congress, and spent a year in a federal prison.

After a second set of hearings in the early 50's, the committee developed a list of 324 employees of the entertainment industry who were, are had been, members of the communist party. All were blacklisted. A number of these screen writers continued to produce under pseudonyms, are their work simply went uncredited. Michael Wilson and Carl Foreman, the two uncredited blacklisted screen writers who adapted Pierre Boulle’s The Bridge on the River Kwai, into the 1957 Oscar winning Best Picture did not receiver their Oscars for Best Adapted Screenplay untill 1984. When the film was restored their names were added to the list of credits. For more information link to The HUAC and Censorship Changes and Blacklist: A different view of the 1947 HUAC hearings.

16. What was the purpose of Red Channels?

On June 22, 1950, Red Channels published by Counterattack: The Newsletter of Facts To Combat Communism printed a list of 151 writers, directors and performers who had been members of "subversive" organisations before World War Two. This was the blacklist. Link to Red Channels: The Blacklist for images of the pages on Arthur Miller and Orson Welles.

Both Elia Kazan, who directed the New York productions of All My Sons and Death of a Salesman, and Arthur Miller were called before HUAC. Kazan named names; Miller did not. For more information on the Miller and Kazan controversy, link to "Kazan and Miller" by Richard Bernstein at the University of Pennsylvania.

Woody Allan's 1976 film, The Front, draws its inspiration from those blacklisted writers who could not write under their own name and were forced to use a "front."

When writer-director Eli Kazan, who had named names, won the Oscar for Life Time Achievement in 1999, approximately half of the
audience refused to rise and give him a standing ovation. The fifty year old wounds which had split Hollywood have not yet healed.

17. Which of Miller's plays is autobiographical?

*After the Fall* (1964) is the story of a successful middle aged man, married to a famous movie star (Marilyn Monroe), who refused to "name names" before a government committee.

18. Who is, today, America's most successful playwright?

Neil Simon (1927-) has written, on average, one play (or musical) per season since 1961. Most of his plays have been filmed and are available on video tape.

19. Where did he receive his dramatic training?


20. What was his first Broadway production?

*Come Blow Your Horn* (1961). The story of Buddy Baker who longs to leave his father’s wax fruit business and become a writer.

21. Which of his works are autobiographical?


22. In which American city were eight of his first nine plays set?

Which comedy was the exception?

*The Star-Spangled Girl* (1966)

Where was it located?

San Francisco

Was it a success?

No. The show ran for 261 performances (a little over seven months) at the Plymouth Theatre and has not had a Broadway revival. Simon has commented that the reason the show was not a success was because he was writing about a place and a people with whom he was not familiar. He returns to a New York setting with *Plaza Suite* (1968), a play which ran for over 2 1/2 years.

23. Why has he written the book for only four musicals?

Because all the book writer does is lay the ground work for the songs. In a Broadway musical the high points are created by the composer and lyric writer.

24. For which play did he win the Pulitzer Prize for Drama?

*Lost In Yonkers* (1991)

25. In what theatrical environment was Sam Shepard's plays first presented?

Shepard (1943- ) got his beginning in the small experimental off-off-Broadway theatres in the 1960s.

26. What title was awarded the Pulitzer Prize?

*Buried Child* (1979), Shepard's deep probe into the disintegration of the American Dream.

27. In what other theatrical area has he earned professional recognition?


28. In which American city were David Mamet's plays first produced?
Chicago. David Mamet (1947- ) was born in Chicago, calls it his home, and has used this town as the setting for most of his plays.

29. Which of his works was the first to attract immediate attention?

*Sexual Perversity in Chicago* (1974). The play reveals a couple of months in the lives of four young people: Bernie, Joan, Danny and Deborah. This early script was, for its time (pre-Aids), a cutting edge insanity about the sexual experiments of the the 70s. According to Denver acting coach, Bill Smith, "The writing is brilliant, [but] the subject matter and point of view is despicable."

30. Which of his plays has won the Pulitzer Prize?

*Gleengarry Glen Ross* (1984), a "comic drama" about the cutthroat competition between real estate agents in the same agency.

31. What is the primary concept of the absurdist theatre?

There are no fixed standards of conduct, no verifiable moral codes. Each person must choose his own set of values and live by his choice. To live by the conventions of others is the response of a robot, not the act of a human.

Most, probably all, absurdist plays are unconventional. The stage directions for Samuel Beckett’s (1906-1989) *Breath* (1969) occupy a single page and take longer to read than to perform (35 seconds). A stage strewn with debris becomes visible in a light that starts faint, becomes less faint, then fades to black. Simultaneously the audience hears a faint cry, what Beckett calls an "instant of recorded vagitus," then the sound of a human breath, followed by another faint cry, the lights fade and the curtain falls.

32. Who are its two major playwrights? Where did they write? When?

Eugene Ionesco (1912-1994) and Samuel Beckett. Ionesco was from Romania and Beckett was from Ireland, but both lived and wrote in Paris during the 1950’s.

33. What is the masterpiece of absurdism?


The objective, or spine, of Beckett’s masterpiece is the plays title. Unlike the 19th century well-made play in which the hero had a
strong objective (For example: To find true love) and, in the course of three acts, overcomes all obstacles to achieve it, the absurdist play often demonstrates the futility of conventional pursuit. As the characters deal with each moment-to-moment, the play unfolds almost as a parody of the conventional three-act structure with its beginning, middle and end.

34. Who was the major American absurdist playwright? Does he still write in this style?

Edward Albee (1928- ). He no longer writes absurdist dramas. His early plays "The Zoo Story" (1959) and "The American Dream" (1960) were short one act comedies patterned after Ionesco. In the late 50's, his first major work, "The Zoo Story," was rejected by every major American theatre company. It was not until after it had a successful, and critically acclaimed, German production that an American company was willing to present it.

What was his first major non-absurdist play?


How many Pulitzer Prizes has he won?


[The American Musical | Theatre Home Page]

E-mail questions and comments to Larry Wild at wildl@northern.edu.
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Modern Theatre: 1945 to 1990
The American Musical

Resources

Text...

Plays...
William S. Gilbert and Sir Author Sullivan. *The H.M.S. Pinafore*
Rodgers and Hammerstein. *Oklahoma!, South Pacific*
Sigmond Romberg. *The Desert Song*
Andrew Lloyd Webber. *Phantom of the Opera*

Internet...
Gilbert and Sullivan Archive Home Page

1. What do many consider America's only contribution to world theatre?
   The book musical.

2. What is the normal running time?
   Between 2 1/2 and 3 hours.

3. What is the standard conflict?
   Boy meets Girl.
   Boy looses Girl.
   Boy gets Girl back.

4. Which structural pattern, climactic or episodic, is used to reveal the plot?
   Episodic.

5. Why are many musicals adapted from other works?

6. **What is the book of a musical?**

The dialogue between the songs.

7. **Who creates the score and lyrics?**

The **score** is written by the composer, the **lyrics** by the lyricist.

8. **What three major forces led to the development of the modern American musical?**

The European operetta,

The English comic opera, and

The American musical extravaganza.

9. **What is an operetta?**

A little opera. Instead of recitative, spoken dialogue is used to advance the plot and develop the characters.

10. **When was the operetta popular on the New York stage?**

Roughly between the outbreak of World War I (1914) and the Stockmarket crash of 1929.

11. **Who are the major American composers of operetta? List the title of one of their major works.**

Victor Herbert (1859-1924): *Babes in Toyland* (1903),

Rudolf Frimil (1879-1972): *Rose Marie* (1924), and


12. **What is the strength of an operetta's plot?**
The plots are romantic and often very weak. Their primary purpose is to tie the songs together and give the characters a reason to sing.

**Its score?**

The scores are lush. Today people remember the music from shows like *Rose Marie* and *The Desert Song*, not the story line. When these operettas are professionally revised today, the book is often rewritten (with the approval of the copyright owner) but the music (including orchestrations) is usually left intact.

13. **Who were William S. Gilbert and Sir Arthur Sullivan?**

   The leading 19th century writer and composer of English comic opera.

14. **Which wrote the music?**

   Sir Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900).

   **The lyrics?**

   William S. Gilbert (1836-1911).

15. **Name three works which are still frequently revived.**

   Of the fourteen comic operas written between 1871 and 1896, *The Mikado* (1885), *H.M.S. Pinafore* (1878), and *The Pirates of Penzance* (1880) are probably the most often revived:

16. **What is the importance of *The Black Crook?***

   Many consider this extravaganza America’s first musical.

17. **Where was it first presented?**

   New York City

   **When?**

   1866

18. **How did it come about?**

   The manager of Niblo’s Garden (a theatre) was staging *The Black Crook*, a melodrama based on the Faust legend. A French ballet
company was to perform at the Academy of Music (also a theatre). The ballet company’s theatre (and scenery) burned to the ground. The manager of Niblo’s Garden added the French ballet dancers (who were shockingly dressed in flesh pink tights) to his Faustian melodrama producing New York’s first musical extravaganza. The original run of the show was 474 performances. According to one source, The Black Crook was revived at least once a year for the next thirty years.

This story was the inspiration for Sigmond Romberg’s The Girl in Pink Tights (1954).

19. What American song-and-dance man was born on the Fourth of July?

George M. Cohan (1878-1942).

20. When were his five major musicals first staged on Broadway?

Between 1904 and 1914.

21. Who played the lead roles in each of these shows?

George M. Cohan. He also directed all of his shows.

What other works did he perform in?

He acted in several non-Cohen productions. He played the father in the original production of O’Neill’s only comedy, Ah, Wilderness (1933); as well as creating the role of FDR in the New York production of Rodgers and Hart’s I'd Rather Be Right (1937).

22. Why are his musicals no longer presented?

Often when a show closed during the first decades of this century, the scripts and scores for the production were not saved. The books and orchestrations for Cohen’s five major musicals have long since disappeared. The only music we have, are for those songs which were published for the "home singer."

23. What award did he receive from President Roosevelt in 1940?

The Congressional Patriotic Service Medal for composing "You’re a Grand Old Flag," and "Over There."

24. What 1942 film is based on his life?
Yankee Doodle Dandy starring James Cagney as Cohan. In 1968, George M', a musical biography of Cohan starring Joel Grey and Betty Ann Grove opened on Broadway and ran for a little less than a year.

25. What was the first musical to win the Pulitzer Prize for drama?

George (music) and Ira (lyrics) Gershwin's Of Thee I Sing (1931). The book for this musical satire on the American political system was written by Morrie Ryskind and George S. Kaufman.

26. What other American musicals have won the Pulitzer prize?


27. What was Rodgers and Hammerstein's first musical?

Oklahoma (1943).

28. Why is it considered a mile stone?

Up until Oklahoma, most musicals opened with a large chorus number. When the curtain went up on R&H's first show, the stage was bare except for a little old lady (Aunt Eller) sitting in a rocking chair on the porch churning butter. The opening notes of the first number, Curley's "Oh What a Beautiful Morning" are sung off stage. It was also the first "musical comedy" to have a death scene on stage and it introduced the concept of a "dream ballet" to an American audience.

29. How long did it run in New York?

5 years, 4 months (2,212 performances). Oklahoma had the longest Broadway run of the nine R&H musicals. The future success of this show was not obvious. During the original production’s try out tour, columnist Walter Winchell’s secretary, after seeing a performance (then titled Away We Go) in New Haven wired back to her boss "No legs, no girls, no way!" In Boston, Rodgers and Hammerstein added a choral section to the second act ode to the state of Oklahoma. When first performed, the audience gave the cast a standing ovation and demanded three encores. Legend has it that the next day Away We Go became Oklahoma!. The show opened in New York on March 31, 1943. Because of the draft and injuries sustained by several of the dancers, that company only performed on Broadway
once, on opening night. According to the Rodgers and Hammerstein Library, approximately 700 production of Oklahoma! are licensed each year. There isn’t a night somewhere, when someone isn’t singing “Oh What a Beautiful Morning.”

30. What was their last show?

The Sound of Music (1959) starring Mary Martin as Maria von Trapp.

31. How many musicals did they write?

Nine.

How many ran longer than one year?

Five. Oklahoma (1943), Carousel (1945), South Pacific (1949), The King and I (1951) and The Sound of Music (1959).

32. What was the first musical to include a ballet sequence?

Rodgers and Hart’s On Your Toes (1936). It tells the story of a ballet dancer (originally played by Ray Bolger) and his conflict with the mob. There is a ballet set-piece (“Slaughter on 10th Avenue”) in the second act which stars the shows main characters.

33. What musical was the first to use the ballet sequence to advance the plot?

Oklahoma. The dream ballet at the end of the first act fore shadows the dramatic conflict between the two lovers: Curly and Laury, and the villain: Jud.

34. What was the first musical to fully integrate dance, music, and dialogue?

West Side Story (1956) by Leonard Bernstein (music) and Stephen Sondheim (lyrics)

On which Shakespearean play is it based?

Romeo and Juliet. In West Side Story, Jerome Robbins, the director, moved the setting of Shakespeare’s play from Verona to the west side slums of New York, up dated it to 1956, and turned the two noble families into two street gangs: the Sharks and the Jets.

35. Who is the "reigning genius" of today's American musical theatre?
Stephen Sondheim (1930- )

36. What was his first major Broadway work?

In 1956 he wrote the lyrics for Leonard Bernstein’s music in *West Side Story*. Sondheim, who received his early training from Oscar Hammerstein II, began his career as a lyricist, not a composer.

37. What was the first Broadway musical for which he wrote both the music and lyrics?

*A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* (1962) starring Zero Mostel. The book, by Larry Gelbart (1928- ), adapted the characters and common plot characteristics from Plautus’s Roman comedies. Since 1962, twelve musicals from the pen of Stephen Sondheim have played on Broadway.

38. For what show did Sondheim win the Pulitzer Prize?


39. Which English composer's musicals have dominated both London's West End as well the Broadway stage?

Andrew Lloyd Webber (1948- )

40. What was his first show to reach New York?

*Jesus Christ Superstar* (1971).

41. Which of his shows is currently playing on Broadway?

*Phantom of the Opera*, which won the 1988 Tony for the years Best Musical.

Theatre Home Page

E-mail questions and comments to Larry Wild at wildl@northern.edu.
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Sample Questions for the First Quiz

1. An action, or series of actions, taken for the entertainment or involvement of an audience is a ___ (A. Drama B. Performance C. Tragedy).

2. A literary analysis of the script of a play is a study of the ___ (A. Drama B. Theatre)

3. According to Eric Bentley, the three essential ingredients of a theatrical experience are ___ (A. Actor, Audience, Theatre B. Actor, Director, Script C. Actor, Audience, Character).

4. True or False? ___. According to Wilson and Goldfarb, the television series *Everybody Loves Raymond*, which is filmed before a live audience, is only a theatrical event for those in the studio audience.

5. ___ (A. Illusion B. Delusion C. Reality) is the standard reaction of a children’s audience--they believe what is happening on stage is real, but they are only innocent bystanders, hence not involved.

6. ___ (A. Aesthetic distance B. Empathy) is the aesthetic force which tells the audience what is happening on stage is not real, but only "play acting."

7. A journalist’s review is usually ___ (A. A brief reaction to a performance B. A critical analysis of the drama C. A detailed study of the play’s history).

8. Dramatic criticism is generally ___ (A. Published in the newspaper B. Printed in a scholarly journal C. Presented on the 10 O’clock news).


10. The three stages of an actor’s routine are ___ (A. Make-up, costume, and hair design. B. Voice, body, and facial expressions. C. Auditioning, rehearsing, and performing).

11. Which of the following does the director not look for in an audition? ___ (A. Naturalness of delivery B. Physical suitability for the part C. Ability to memorize lines).

12. Performance technique, or the ability to "read" an audience, ___ (A. Is learned B. Is instinctive C. Is instinctive, but can be improved through study).

13. In the ___ (A. External B. Internal) approach to acting the character grows from within the actor.

14. Stanislavski, although best known as an actor, was also a ___ (A. Designer B. Director C. Manager) with the Moscow Art Theatre.

15. ___ (A. Marlon Brando B. Karl Malden C. Lee J. Cobb) who created the role of Stanley Kowalski in Tennessee William’s *Streetcar Named Desire* is today considered one of America’s leading method actor.

16. The director directs all of the following except the ___ (A. Actors B. Designers C. Producer).

17. The directing process encompasses two phases: ___(A. Selection and implementation B. Reading and acting C. Collecting money and allocating funds).

18. Directing, as a creative dramatic art, ___ (A. Is about a hundred years old B. Has existed since the beginning of Greek theatre C. Was developed by the Elizabethans).

19. The chorus in a commercial Broadway musical is usually cast through ___ (A. Open B. Closed) auditions.
20. The average rehearsal period for an educational or community theatre production is ___ (A. 3 B. 5 C. 9) weeks.
21. A ___ (A. Creative B. Interpretative C. Artistic) director will often change the location and period of a script.
23. Which of the following is not true of the difference between Broadway and its "off" variants? ___ (A. Off-Broadway is less expensive than Broadway B. Some of the most creative work in American theatre is presented Off-Broadway C. Off-Broadway houses are nearly as large as Broadway theatres).
24. ___ (A. Off-Broadway B. Summer stock C. Regional) theatres are often located in resort areas and provide entertainment for tourists.
25. In the ___ (A. Long run B. Limited run C. Repertory) system of production, a different work may be performed each night.
26. The current ticket price for a weekend orchestra seat at a Broadway musical is about ___ (A. $ 75 B. $ 100 C. $150).
27. The theatre program at Northern State is a(n) ___ (A. Co-curricular B. Extra-curricular C. Professionally oriented) program.
28. The development of the ___ (A. Thrust stage B. Arena C. Indoor proscenium) theatre fostered the great period of scenic design.
29. The ___ (A. Proscenium B. Thrust stage C. Arena stage) theatre has the greatest aesthetic distance because this theatrical form has the greatest separation between the actor and the audience.
30. Aberdeen’s Capitol Theatre is an excellent example of a ___ (A. Proscenium B. Thrust stage C. Arena stage) theatre.
31. The costumes and props which are used in a ___ (A. Proscenium B. Thrust stage C. Arena stage) do not have to be very detailed because the closest members of the audience may be 30 feet from the stage.
32. The side, or sectional view of a modern proscenium theatre often looks like a tipped over ___ (A. "H" B. "L" C. "J").
33. The first people to use a thrust stage theatre were the ___ (A. Greeks B. English C. Germans).
34. A piece of canvas stretched over a wood frame and painted to imitate a wall is a ___ (A. Drop B. Cyclorama D. Flat).
35. A scene designer ___ (A. Builds and paints the set B. Drafts the blue prints used by the crew to build and paint the set C. Develops the image).
36. A ___ (A. Ground plan B. Front elevation C. Rendering) is a top view of the set on stage, as it will appear on opening night.
37. The action-documentation-metaphor approach to design was developed by ___ (A. Robert Edmond Jones B. Mordecai Gorelik C. Edwin Wilson).
38. ___ (A. Representationalism B. Presentationalism) is the theatrical style which says "Theatre is not real, only an actor on a platform."
40. The ___ (A. Set B. Costume C. Lighting) designer, through his creative work, tells the audience the social and economic rank of each character in a play.
41. The design element of ___ (A. Shape B. Color C. Texture) is normally used by the costume designer to establish the social and economic strata of each character.
42. The costumes for the servants in a Shakespearean comedy, presented by a small academic or community theatre, would probably be ___ (A. Borrowed B. Rented C. Constructed).

43. True or False? ___ A historical museum is a good source for period (19th century) costumes.

44. A ___ (A. Costume chart B. Costume plate C. Costume pattern) is the drawing which shows which characters work the stage together.

45. Electric stage lighting was introduced into the English theatre in ___ (A. 1864 B. 1881 C. 1901).

46. Focus and form are both ___ (A. Functions B. Controllable properties) of light.

47. A ___ (A. Flood B. Spot) light is normally used to light the scenery.

48. The lighting control board should be located ___ (A. Backstage B. In the back of the auditorium).

49. The ___ (A. Hook-up chart B. Cue sheet C. Magic sheet) is the chart which tells the light crew the intensity of each dimmer for each lighting composition in a show.

50. Sound reinforcement, the amplification of the performer’s voice, is most commonly used in a ___ (A. Comedy B. Opera C. Musical).

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E-mail questions and comments to Larry Wild at wildl@northern.edu.
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Sample Questions for the Second Quiz

1. "Genre" means ___ (A. Category or kind B. Origin or birth C. A work that can be performed).

2. According to Aristotle, every play should ___ (A. Have a beginning, middle, and end B. Have a prologue and an epilogue C. Begin with a soliloquy that is questioned by the chorus).

Identify the following by dramatic genre. (A. Tragedy B. Farce C. Comedy D. Melodrama)...

3. The hero overcomes the obstacle, hence achieving his major objective

4. The hero is overcome by the dramatic obstacle, hence going down in defeat

5. A wildly humorous play where the humor is often brought about thru a major misunderstanding between the characters.

6. The six elements of dramatic structure were developed in 355 BC by ___ (A. Aristotle B. Sophocles C. Thespis).

7. The ___ (A. Theme B. Concept C. Plot) is how a story is presented on stage by the playwright.

8. In a climatic plot, such as Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, the plot begins near the ___ (A. Beginning B. Middle C. End) of the story.

9. A character’s spine is his ___ (A. Age B. Social/Economic class C. Major goal or objective).

10. If the pace of a performance is too ___ (A. Fast B. Slow), the audience will become restless and soon lose interest.

11. ___(A. Stage directions B. Script notes C. Dialogue) is a playwright’s major means of expression.

12. The core of every drama is ___ (A. Character B. Action C. Theme).

13. True or False? ___. Only a few playwrights build their scripts on their own, or their families’ personal experiences.

14. True or False? ___. An original script is seldom revised during the rehearsal process.

15. A ___ (A. Story B. Treatment C. Scenario) is the plot outline developed by the playwright before he begins to "write the play."

16. The playwright in the live American theatre receives for the use of his script ___ (A. A single large payment from the producer B. A percentage of the box office gross C. The box office gross from the third performance).

17. As far as the playwright is concerned, a work is in performance ___ (A. Any time there is an audience B. Only when there is a paying audience C. Any time after the fifth week of rehearsal).

18. The scripts for most television shows are written ___ (A. On spec B. On order).

19. A new script sent to directly to a Broadway producer will normally be ___ (A. Not returned B. Returned unopened C. Read by an assistant).
20. Many believe the first Nickelodeon, ___ (A. An ornate movie palace B. A converted theatre C. A store front movie house) opened in McKeeseport PA in 1903.

21. Most consider Edwin Porter's ___ (A. Birth of a Nation B. The Great Train Robbery C. Gone With The Wind), as the first American movie with a plot.

22. In 1900, the home of the American film industry was in ___ (A. California B. New York C. Arizona).

23. In the earliest sound movies, the sound track was recorded on ___ (A. Phonograph record B. Film C. Tape).

24. ___ (A. Titanic B. E.T. C. Star Wars) is the American film which holds the distinction of generating the highest domestic box office gross.

25. True or False? ___. Both Cinerama and CinemaScope attempted to pull the audience into the action by "surrounding" the audience with picture.

26. Most Hollywood theatrical films are produced for a ___ (A. Children B. Teenage C. Adult) audience.

27. True or False? ___. New York's Roxy Theatre and Aberdeen's Orpheum theatre shared a common fate, both were torn down.

28. True or False? ___. Like the theatrical playwright, the screen writer has complete control over every line of dialogue spoken.

29. A/n ___ (A. Master B. Establishing C. Process) shot is traditionally used to give the location of the film's action.

30. In order to produce enough coverage, a simple dialogue scene will be shot from ___ (A. 1 B. 2 C. 5) different camera positions.

31. A film week is normally ___ (A. 4 B. 5 C. 6) days out of seven.

32. An hour filmed dramatic TV show, such as CSI, is normally shot in ___ (A. 1 to 2 B. 3 to 4 C. 7 to 8) days.

33. The sound of an actor's foot steps is recorded on the ___ (A. Effects B. Ambiance C. Foley) sound track.

34. Many films appear in Sioux Falls or Rapid City before they are shown in Aberdeen because ___ (A. They have a larger potential audience B. They are on the inter state C. There is more competition).

35. ___ (A. Lee Deforest B. Guglielmo Marconi C. David Sarnoff) is credited with developing "wireless telegraphy."

36. The first people to exploit the "wireless" were ___ (A. Performers B. Sea men C. Railroad men)

37. ___ (A. KDKA B. KGKK C. KBAB), which went on the air in November 1920 is considered America's first commercial radio station.

38. This station was located in ___ (A. New York B. Boston C. Pittsburgh).

39. A ___ (A. Series B. Serial C. Anthology), is the type of program which has both a continuing set of characters and a continuing, never ending, plot line.

40. True or False? ___. One of the functions of music on a radio program was to indicate a change of setting.

41. Some believe that because he was only a voice ___ (A. The Lone Ranger B. The Shadow C. The Voice) was the perfect radio hero.


43. A half-hour dramatic radio program was normally produced in ___ (A. One B. Three C. Five) day/s.
44. Most of the programs during television’s early years, 1948 to 1956, were ___ (A. Broadcast live from New York City B. Filmed in Los Angeles C. Prerecorded on video tape).

45. Television’s first superstar was ___ (A. Jack Benny B. Milton Berle C. Lucille Ball).

46. True or False? ___ . Most early television shows were first broadcast on the radio.

47. Today a television network will normally order ___ (A. 12 B. 22 C. 36) episodes per season.

48. In an hour long prime time show, there is ___ (A. 30 B. 45 C. 56) minutes of entertainment.

49. One of the four sweeps months is ___ (A. January B. March C. November).

50. Television’s longest running prime-time dramatic series is ___ (A. I Love Lucy B. Gunsmoke C. Dallas).

Theatre Home Page

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Sample Questions for the Third Quiz

1. When theatre historians speak of the "Greek theatre" they are referring to the theatre of ___ (A. Athens in the fifth century. B. Athens and Sparta from the fourth to the third century BC. C. Rome in the first century, BC).

2. ___ (A. Prophecy B. Irony C. Metaphor) is the dramatic device used to offer revelations about the future.

3. The Greek tragedies of Sophocles have no more than ___ (A. 2 B. 3 C. 5) characters on stage at one time.

4. Of the three major Greek tragic playwrights, ___ (A. Aeschylus B. Sophocles C. Euripides) is generally considered by modern critics to be the greatest.

5. The circular playing area on which the Greek chorus performed was called the ___ (A. Stage B. Orchestra C. Pit).

6. In ___ (A. Medea B. Trojan Women C. Lysistrata) by Aristophanies, the women of Sparta and Troy stop a needless war by denying sex to their husbands and lovers.

7. One of Plautus's characters, Miles Gloriosus, was the ___ (A. Evil twin B. Braggart soldier C. Long-suffering and faithful husband).

8. The Roman comedies of Plautus were based on the Greek comedies of ___ (A. Thespis B. Menander C. Verdi).

9. Seneca's tragedies were a major influence on the work of ___ (A. Shakespeare B. Moliere C. Tennessee Williams).

10. True or False? ___. The Roman theatre was an adaption of the Greek theatre.

11. There were ___ (A. Two B. Five C. Nine) entrances onto the stage of a typical Roman theatre.

12. The last recorded performance on a Roman stage took place during the ___ (A. First B. Sixth C. Twelfth) century.

13. "The Middle Ages" describes the period of history between the ___ (A. Sacking of Constantinople and the building of Chartres cathedral B. Fall of Rome and the beginning of the Renaissance C. First Crusade and the invention of the printing press).

14. The "Hellmouth" was ___ (A. Drawn on the wall of the pageant wagon B. A set piece designed to "swallow" sinners C. The central theme of the The Fall).

15. The contemporary analogy to the rolling procession of the English cycle plays may be found in the ___ (A. Half-time show at a football game B. Rose Bowl Parade C. Rodeo).

16. Quem queritis means: ___ (A. Where are you going? B. Whom seek you? C. Why do you exist?)

17. In the earliest medieval dramas, the women's parts were played by ___ (A. Priests B. Nuns C. Apprentices).

18. Characters with names like Death, Lust, and Gluttony would most likely be found in a medieval ___ (A. Mystery B. Miracle C. Morality) play.

19. When the Mystery Plays were performed outdoors in the town square, they were often presented by the ___ (A. Trade guilds B. City council C. Local merchants).
20. When they were presented in England, they were often staged on/in ___ (A. Movable wagons B. Carrier inns C. Professional theatres).

21. The French and English courts of the Renaissance were composed of the ___ (A. Landed nobility B. Newly rich C. King’s family).

22. The farcical comedies of ___ (A. Aristophanes B. Moliere C. Plautus) were heavily influenced by the comedies of the *Commedia dell’Arte*.

23. True or False? ___ Like the Elizabethan acting company, members of an Italian *Commedia* company shared in their company’s profits and losses.

24. It is believed by many that the earliest (around 1600) operas placed most of the emphasis on the ___ (A. Music B. Drama C. Staging).

25. *Aida* was commissioned by the ___ (A. Egyptians B. Italians C. English) for the opening of the Cairo opera house.

26. The ___ (A. Aria B. Recitative C. Dialogue) is the "dramatic dialogue" of an opera which is used to advance the plot.

27. ___(A. Verdi B. Monteverdi C. Puccini), is the most often produced composer on the stage of the Metropolitan Opera.

28. The *Teatro Farnese*, built in Parma in 1618, is considered the first ___ (A. Permanent Italian theatre B. Italian opera house C. Proscenium theatre).

29. True or False? ___ Italian Renaissance architects were one of the first to publish stagecraft "how to" books.

30. True or False? ___ All of Serlio’s designs were exterior scenes.

31. The Renaissance was characterized by ___ (A. A renewed interest in classical civilization B. The vigorous revival of monastic scholasticism C. A celebration of Oriental cultures).

32. True or False? ___ The U shaped courtyard of an Elizabethan carrier inn, combined with its two- or three-story height, made it a natural performance space.

33. "Blank verse" is ___ (A. Unrhymed iambic pentameter B. Rhymed iambic pentameter C. Prose).

34. ___(A. *The Spanish Tragedy* B. *Gorbovuc* C. *Doctor Faustus*), by Sackville and Norton, is generally considered the first true English tragedy.

Identify the following Shakespearean plays by type: A. Tragedy B. Comedy C. History

35. *Taming of the Shrew*
36. *Henry IV, Part 3*
37. *Hamlet*

38. Shakespeare was the resident playwright for ___ (A. Prince Hal’s Men B. The Lord Admiral’s Men C. The King’s Men).

39. The ___(A. Good B. Bad) quartos were those published plays which were based on Shakespeare’s hand written manuscript.

40. Blackfriar’s, a ___ (A. Public B. Private) theatre, was the indoor theatre used as the winter home of the King’s Men.

41. True or False? ___ Three years after Moliere retired from the stage, he died at his country estate, and was buried in Paris.

42. In the neoclassical era, Shakespeare was seen as ___ (A. A brilliant playwright B. Somewhat primitive C. The epitome of all drama).
43. Built for Cardinal Richelieu, the ___ (A. Paris Opera House B. Theatre Moliere C. Palais Royale) was Moliere’s theatrical home for most of his career.

44. The ___(A. Commedia Francise B. La Theatre Nationalle C. La Theatre daFrancise) is considered Europe’s first national theatre.

45. Today it primarily produces the plays of ___ (A. Moliere and Racine B. Shakespeare and Marlowe C. Sophocles and Aristophanes)

46. According to the neo-classical rules a tragedy should be written in ___ (A. Prose B. Poetry).

IDENTIFY THE FOLLOWING PLAYS OR PLAYWRIGHT’S BY PERIOD. A. Greek B. Roman C. Medieval D. Elizabethan E. French Rennaisance

47. Tartuffe
48. William Shakespeare
49. The York Cycle
50. The Menaechmi

Theatre Home Page

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Sample Questions for the Fourth Quiz

1. During which period were theatrical performances banned and English playhouses burned to the ground? ___ (A. The American Revolution B. The reign of Elizabeth I C. The English Civil war - 1642 to 1660).

2. The great masterpiece of Restoration comedy is ___ (A. William Shakespeare’s Taming of the Shrew B. William Congreve’s The Way of the World C. John Gay’s The Beggar’s Opera.)


4. Between 1660 and 1843, there were only ___ (A. 2 B. 5 C. 7) legitimate theatres in London.

5. True or False? ___. London’s legitimate theatres were also known as Patent theatres or Royal theatres.

6. John Dryden’s climactic tragedy All for Love, "A World Well Lost", is based on William Shakespeare’s episodic tragedy: ___ (A. Hamlet B. Romeo and Juliet C. Anthony and Cleopatra)

7. True or False? ___. Women first appeared on the English stage during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.

8. Nell Gwynn, one of the most popular comic actress of the restoration was retired from the stage by her lover, ___ (A. Richard Sheridan B. King Charles II C. David Garrick).

9. Of the many 19th century plays which were adapted into operas, which dramatic form, the (A) drama or the (B) opera is still regularly performed today? ___.


11. Victor Hugo’s most famous work, ___ (A. Phantom of the Opera B. Les Miserable C. Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde), a novel, has been adapted into a long running Broadway musical.

12. James O’Neill, the actor father of American playwright Eugene O'Neill, performed the role of ___ (A. Cyrano De Bergerac B. Count of Monte Cristo C. William Tell) for over thirty years.

13. The La Dame aux Camélias (also known as Camille) by ___(A. Victor Hugo B. Edmond Rostand C. Alexandre Dumas, fils) was adapted by Puccini into an opera.

14. Many theatre people believe ___ (A. Faust B. Camille C. Cyrano de Bergerac) by Edmond Rostand is the best example of 19th century Romantic Drama.

15. The chase scene was usually the high point or climax of a 19th century ___(A. Comedy B. Melodrama C. Tragedy).

16. ___ (A. Sarah Bernhardt B. Henry Irving C. Andre Antoine) was not a theatrical star during the 19th century.

17. True or False? ___. During the early part of the 19th century, the traveling star would not rehearse with the local acting company for more than an hour or two before the show was presented before an audience.
18. In an ensemble production, there are no ___ (A. Actors B. Major roles C. Stars).
19. One of the convention of the realistic theatre was that dialogue ___ (A. Was conversation B. Revealed philosophical truths C. Symbolized abstract ideals).
20. The problem in a realistic "problem" play refers to ___ (A. An aesthetic problem B. A social problem C. A theatrical problem).
21. True or False?_____ . Realistic playwright’s like Henrik Ibsen believed that the stage should be a laboratory where life could be examined.
22. Many believe that the concept of the all powerful, omnipotent director began with ___ (A. Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe B. George Frederick Handel C. Richard Wagner), the 19th century German opera composer.
23. During most of the 19th century, the actor on stage was lit with ___ (A. Candle light B. Gas light C. Electric light)
24. Most modern critics agree that ___ (A. Eugene O'Neill B. Henrik Ibsen C. Arthur Miller) is the "father" of realistic drama.
25. ___ (A. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe B. Georg, Duke of Saxe-Meiningen C. Richard Wagner) was the German director who toured Europe with realistic productions of *Julius Caesar* and *William Tell*.
26. Andre Antoine’s Theatre Libre was Europe’s first ___ (A. Community theatre B. National theatre C. Arena theatre).
27. True or False? _____. One of the major criticism of Eugene O’Neill’s writing is that his plays are too long.
28. True or False? ___. The symbolists major impact on western theatre was felt not by the playwright, but by the designer.
29. ___ (A. Adolph Appia B. Edward Gordon Craig C. Robert Edmond Jones) was the symbolist designer who developed the theory of modern lighting design.
30. True or False? ___. Expressionism is much easier to achieve in films or television, than it is on the live stage.
31. In ___ (A. The Merchant of Yonkers B. Our Town C. The Skin of Our Teeth) by Thornton Wilder, the production stage manager, working on a bare stage, introduces the audience to the folks of Grover’s Corner’s, New Hampshire.
32. Tennessee Williams received a/n ___ (A. Oscar B. Pulitzer Prize C. Tony) for *Streetcar Named Desire*.
33. ___ (A. All My Sons B. My Three Sons C. All My Children) the story of a man who knowingly sold defective engine parts to the US Army Air Corps during World War II was Arthur Miller’s first major success.
35. Known as a Chicago playwright by birthplace, home, and the setting of many of his plays, ___ (A. Lanford Wilson B. Terence McNally C. David Mamet) received the 1984 Pulitzer Prize for *Glengarry Glen Ross*.
36. ___ (A. Eugene O'Neill B. Edward Albee C. Arthur Miller), the author of two short plays: "The Sand Box" and "The American Dream" was America’s leading absurdist playwright in the late 50’s and early 60’s.
37. The two leading European absurdist playwrights, Samuel Beckett and Eugene Ionesco, lived in the "artist’s quarter" of ___ (A. London B. Berlin C. Paris) in the late 50s.
Match the following playwrights with their autobiographical plays: A. Eugene O'Neill B. Tennessee Williams C. Neil Simon D. Arthur Miller

38. The Glass Menagerie
39. Brighten Beach Memoirs
40. Long Day's Journey into Night
41. ___ (A. Stephen Sondheim B. Peter Brook C. Peter Shaffer) made his first mark on the American musical with his lyrics for Leonard Bernstein’s West Side Story.
42. The running time of a “traditional” musical, such as Oklahoma! is usually ___ (A. Less than 2 hours B. Between 2 and 3 hours C. Over 3 hours.)
43. True or False? ___. Only a few musicals are truly original, most draw their plots and characters from other sources.
44. True or False? ___. The composer of a Broadway show, when writing the music, shapes the melodies to the vocal abilities of the original Broadway cast.
45. American operettas are primarily remembered today for their ___ (A. Well developed plots B. Interesting characters C. Lush melodies).
46. The first American musical to win the Pulitzer Prize for Drama was George and Ira Gershwin’s ___ (A. Show Boat B. Of Thee I Sing C. Love is Sweeping the Country).
47. Oklahoma!, which opened in New York in 1943, was ___ (A. Lerner and Lowe’s B. Rodgers and Hammerstein’s C. Gilbert and Sullivan's) first musical.

Identify the following works by genre (type). A: Tragedy B: Comedy C: Serious Drama D: Opera E: Musical (comedy).

48. 110 in the Shade
49. Oedipus Rex
50. A Midsummer Night's Dream

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