Theatre Spaces, part 1

Introductory remarks:

Theatre as an expression of human needs, dreams, desires, and fears predates written history. It has always been a multimedia and a multipurpose activity. Earliest records on cave walls and in ancient sculpture indicate that performance involved a combination of music, dance, and imitation or acting. The goals of the performance were at once spiritual, social, educational, and entertaining. The conditions of production and reception of theatre today are also more complicated than many other art forms, due to the number of artists, complexity of media, and audience formation customary in the theatre.

An analysis of the audience, artists, and media in the theatre can provide a solid definition of theatre and point to the features that distinguish theatre from other art forms. The only necessary components of a theatrical production are a live performer and a live audience. However, most theatre today involves many more artists, technicians, and business employees. In this course you will learn some detail about the work of the performer, playwright, set designer, costume designer, lighting designer, sound designer, director, and dramaturge. The media of theatre range from the playwright’s words to the actors themselves to the material used in creating scenery, costumes, lighting, and sound.

The defining features of a theatre audience are that it is live and it is made up of many individuals, who bring a variety of expectations to the performance. The live presence of both actors and audience distinguish theatre from its sister dramatic arts of film and television. Along with the live presence of an audience, group reception distinguishes performing arts (theatre, dance, and music) from plastic arts like sculpture.

In the United States today, theatre exists on many levels: professional, semi-professional, educational, amateur, and personal performance. New York’s Broadway and Off-Broadway are the center of theatrical activity in the United States, and by it we tend to judge the vitality and originality of American theatre in general. However, professional regional theatres and touring productions bring shows to most urban centers across the country. In addition, many other cities have large numbers of active theatres: Chicago calls itself the "Second City" because of its theatrical activities being second in scale to New York, and Los Angeles and Toronto are almost as active. New York’s Off-Off-Broadway theatres, many local theatres in cities across the country, and most summer stock companies are semi-professional, in that they hire some professional (unionP workers, pay others on a lower scale, and may also involve volunteer amateurs. Most universities offer training in theatre, either at a pre-professional level and/or as part of a liberal arts experience; they also offer a varied season of performances to their communities at reasonable prices (as you will
Community theatres, formed entirely of amateurs, exist in most small towns as well as big cities in the United States, and most high schools offer at least one production a year by students. These varied levels of theatrical activities provide opportunities for just about anyone to get involved on stage or behind the scenes. Since the field of performance studies arose a couple of decades ago, we should also define another sphere of performance: personal performance. According to this new field of study, every time you parody a friend to another friend, engage in ritual behavior like a church service or reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, or change your behavior based on social expectations of the moment, you are "acting."

Live theatre's sister dramatic arts -- film and television dramas -- are even more pervasive in American culture; although film and television are not the focus of this course, most of what is stated here applies to these arts as well. The fundamental differences are that the live audience is usually lost and a great deal of technology is added, in the process we call "post production", in film and television. The average graduating high school senior has spent more hours in front of a television than in school, thus every one of you is a highly experienced viewer of drama. Throughout this course you will find references to film and television where they are similar to live theatre, as well as places where I will pointedly make a distinction between the two. By the end of this course, I hope your viewing of film and television continues but that you notice yourself reacting on a more sophisticated level to what you see. In addition, I hope that you will find you enjoy the live theatre experience and choose to seek out more live productions to attend.

Theatre Spaces

Theatre can take place in a variety of locations, from large and elaborately decorated opera houses to street corners. Although theatrical performances often take place in buildings specially designed for the purpose, the only necessity for theatre is a live performer and live audience -- not a building.

Theatre performance spaces fall into four categories: proscenium theatres, thrust theatres, arena theatres, and found spaces. This section will introduce you to the common parts of each theatre and the relative benefits of each type.
Theatre Spaces, part 2

Proscenium theatres, also known as picture frame stages, developed during the Italian Renaissance. The audience experiences the theatrical event by looking through the "picture frame" of the proscenium arch. All audience members are seated on one side of the arch, like in a movie theatre, and all actors and scenic spectacle are framed within the arch or just in front of it. The proscenium theatre's primary advantage is that it hides or "masks" the actors and scenery used for other scenes and the machinery needed for scenic spectacles. Areas above, below, and to the sides of the stage are hidden from the audience's view by the frame of the proscenium.

The area of the stage floor in front of the proscenium is called the apron. Descriptions of regions of the stage are given from the perspective of an actor facing the audience: thus stage right means in the direction of the actor's right, but the audience's left. Upstage and downstage are terms that date from the Renaissance, when the stage floor was built on a rake, or slope, to aid audience sight-lines and the illusion of perspective painted on the scenery. The back of the stage was higher than the front in these old theatres, and we still refer to stage areas farther from the audience as "upstage".

Most theatres have traps, or areas of the stage floor which can be removed for lowering and raising actors and scenery through the stage floor. In some theatres, the apron lowers to form an orchestra pit used in musical comedies. To each side of the stage, hidden from the audience by the proscenium, are the wings, where scenery is stored, lights are placed, and actors await entrances. Above the stage is usually a fly loft, where more lights are placed and where scenery, such as painted backdrops, can be suspended and then lowered to the stage floor or raised out of the sight of the audience.
Some of the basic scenic and lighting elements placed above in the fly loft, off-stage in the wings, or in the stage traps are flats, drops, platforms, wagons, trees, and battens. **Flats** are usually made of canvas stretched over a wooden frame, and are painted to look like interior or exterior walls, trees, or other relatively flat objects. **Drops** are large pieces of fabric suspended from pipes and usually painted to resemble a landscape, building interior, or other location. A scrim and a cyclorama are each similar to drops in that they are large, suspended pieces of fabric, but each has a special property. A **scrim** is made of loosely woven fabric, which, when lit from the front appears opaque but when lit from the back appears translucent or transparent. A **cyclorama** is used in conjunction with lighting instruments; since it is white, any color light can be projected onto it to change the color and pattern of the scenic background. **Platforms** are usually constructed of wood and placed at various heights; they may represent the second floor of a house, a higher deck of a ship, or simply a different place from the scene on the stage floor but that the audience needs to see simultaneously. A **wagon** is simply a platform on wheels or in a track that can then move on the stage. Lighting **instruments** are typically hung above the stage, over the audience in front of the stage, and/or in the wings from the sides of the stage. Horizontally placed **pipes** for lighting instruments are called **battens** and vertically placed pipes are called **trees**.

A variety of curtains called **teasers** are commonly used to hide all of these structures from the audience's view. **Legs** are long black curtains in the wings that hide objects in the wings. **Borders** are hung from pipes in the fly loft to mask objects hung above. A combination of two legs, a border and the stage floor echo the shape of the proscenium arch. Theatres typically have three sets of teasers between the proscenium arch and the upstage wall. Actors and scenery can thus enter in any of four gaps on either side of the stage. These gaps are numbered from down to upstage; for example an actor entering the stage from **right-one** would enter from stage right between the proscenium arch and first leg. The large curtain that is often down as the audience enters is called the **main drape**; in some theatres it is highly elaborate, with painted or woven images.

The audience's area of the theatre is called the **house**. In this space, directions are given from the audience's perspective when facing the stage; thus house right means to a seated
audience member's right. In the United States, the lowest area of audience seating is called the **orchestra**, and orchestra seats are normally the most expensive. Larger theatres usually also have at least one **balcony**, and many older theatres will have **boxes** along the sides the theatre on the balcony

**Theatre Spaces, part 3**

A **thrust theatre** has audience members on three sides of the stage, leaving one side for taller scenery. It is sometimes called "three quarter round". The **Ancient Greek and Elizabethan** stages were thrust stages; the major benefit of this style of stage is that it brings the actor into closer proximity with the audience. Three front rows along each of three sides of the stage means that many more audience members will be close to the actors. On the other hand, the areas for scenery storage and the methods of hiding scenic machinery are greatly reduced. Tall scenery (walls, backdrops) cannot be placed anywhere except on the one side of the stage where no one is seated. Theatrical illusion is greatly reduced on the thrust stage because most audience members will not see a framed theatrical event but will see both the events on the stage and across the stage to audience members seated opposite.

![Thrust Theatre Diagram](image)

Thrust theatres have regained popularity in the twentieth century. Famous theatres with thrust stages today include the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis (see photo), the Olivier at the Royal National Theatre in London, and the Festival Theatre in Stratford, Ontario.

Most terms for parts of the proscenium stage are the same, or slightly adapted, in a thrust theatre. For example, up and downstage are relative to the one wall with no audience seating. Some terms do not apply; there are rarely fly lofts or wings in a thrust theatre. An additional structure often found is the **vomitorium**, a structure for performers' entrances that originated in ancient Roman theatres. This is a ramp that begins underneath the audience seating and leads to the downstage end of the thrust stage; often there are two **vomitoria** -- one leading to each downstage corner. It is used to bring actors and scenery on and offstage.
An arena stage has audience members seated on all sides of a square or circular stage. It is the oldest kind of performance space, dating back to ancient rituals probably before recorded history. No such buildings remain today; however, the circular orchestra found in the ruins of ancient Greek theatres point to older performance traditions before the construction of stone theatres. An arena theatre maximizes the connection between performers and audience, while minimizing the possibility for theatrical illusion. Many arena theatres have been built in the second half of the twentieth century; they include the Arena Stage in Washington D.C. and Circle in the Square in New York City.

Throughout the twentieth century theatre practitioners have considered different theatrical arrangements appropriate to different kinds of plays or different playing styles. The German director Max Reinhardt was among the first to advocate a theatre complex in which there are several kinds of theatres, such as a large proscenium or thrust house and a smaller arena stage, and to suggest that different plays require different kinds of theatres. New York's Lincoln Center, London's Royal National Theatre and Barbican Center, Atlanta's Alliance Theatre, and Chicago's Goodman Theatre are examples of such theatre complexes. A similar twentieth century trend is to design a flexible theatre in which the audience and stage areas can be rearranged to form any of the three basic arrangements. The American Repertory Theatre's Loeb Center (see photo) in Cambridge is an example. The black box theatre (such as we have at Geneseo) is a simple solution to the theatre artist's desire to make the space fit the production: it is simply a room painted black, in which audience seating, stage platforms, lighting and scenery can be placed anywhere in the room and changed for each play.
Some theatre artists take a more radical approach than transforming a black box theatre to fit a theatrical production; they find a space that was not originally built as a theatre. This is called a found space. Such artists have mounted theatrical productions in cathedrals, city parks, rural fields, dance clubs, and street corners. Cabaret performance is similar to a "found space," in that audience members sit at tables, order food and drink, and the stage area is usually a makeshift one that must accommodate the food service. A found space can also refer to a building that has been altered from its original purpose to support ongoing theatre production. Many of New York City's Off-Off-Broadway theatres operate in buildings that were originally warehouses or churches. Found spaces also lend themselves to environmental staging, in which the space for the actors and the space for the audience are not clearly distinguished. For example, in a cabaret, a singer might come and perform at (or even on) your table, or actors might use the same entrances as the audience. Performances staged environmentally can be exciting because you never know what will happen next, or where it might happen.

Independent of the configuration of the stage and audience space, theatres require space for a range of other activities required in producing a play. You could consider the actual production seen by an audience as only the tip of a theatrical iceberg. Examples of other space requirements include dressing and makeup rooms for actors, a green room where actors wait when not onstage, scene, paint, and costume shops where scenery and costumes are built or adapted, storage space for scenery, costumes, and lights, light and sound booths from which technicians run lights and sound during performances, a box office through which the public can purchase tickets, a lobby in which the audience can relax and purchase refreshments during intermissions, and office space for administrative staff such as marketing personnel.

End of "Theatre Spaces"
Audience, part 1

The audience is one of the two essential features of a live theatrical performance, along with the performer. The performing arts exist in a finite space and time; this means that a performance, which is the work of art in theatre, has a finite existence in time. It begins, and it is over. Another, similar work of art may be created the next night, but the different audience and differences in the performers themselves will make the next evening's performance a different work of art. Compare this aspect of the performing arts to painting; different audiences may flock to the Louvre to see the Mona Lisa from year to year, or century to century, but the artwork remains constant in time and is unaffected by the presence of a different audience. Philosophers may argue the aesthetic paradox of whether or not a work of art can exist if no one sees it when they are talking about a painting, but in theatre, if the live presence of the audience is missing, the art form does not exist.

In live performance, the audience reacts to the performers who, in turn, react to the audience in a constant cyclic interchange. Actors will talk about "feeding off of" an audience's energy, especially in comedy, and complain about audiences who do not react in tangible ways. Actor's performances will vary greatly from one night to the next dependent in large part on audience feedback. Consider the differences in your reactions to a movie you have seen many times; the circumstances of your viewing will make the movie and your reaction to it seem different -- yet in this case there is no live exchange between you and the performers. Audience members will also effect one another's reactions. Large audiences are more likely to laugh or comment out loud than small audiences, in part because of the anonymity, and in part because others' reactions encourage and magnify your own reactions. You may laugh more, cry more, jump in your seat or respond vocally in a large, involved audience. Conversely, if the rest of the audience loves something that you dislike, it may intensify your own negative reaction to hear positive responses all around you.

In ancient times, theatre evolved from rituals which combined spiritual, social, educational, and artistic purposes. These rituals were highly participatory for the audiences. Like ancient audiences, theatre audiences today gather with individual expectations, a variety of levels of knowledge about the production, and a variety of personal tastes. Each audience, however, will form a collective identity for the length of the performance. Although audience members still participate in some sense in performances they attend, conventions of audience behavior today restrict the kinds of participation in the performance that was typical of ritual. Audiences applaud, laugh, boo, perhaps comment out loud, but are unlikely to offer alternative endings, to sing along, or to get up on stage and dance. Some forms of theatre requiring more audience participation remain popular today, examples include children's theatre, magic shows, or improv comedy.

While ritual performance has been universally a part of human history; each of us also has performance in our personal histories. Acting is a fundamental mode of human learning; children learn by acting out stories, games, things they see adults do, and things they imagine. As adults, we spend less time literally acting out our ideas, and we spend a great deal more time vicariously experiencing new stories or desires or dreams. When you see a play, read a novel, or go to the movies, a great deal of the pleasure of that aesthetic
experience derives from your empathy with the characters and your vicarious experience of the characters' circumstances.

Film theorists have borrowed from psychoanalytic theory to develop a more complicated model of spectatorship, or how we relate to a filmic event, that is highly applicable to theatre as well. The first form of spectatorship derives from Freud's concept of "scopophilia", which literally means "pleasure in looking". As this concept is applied to audiences, it implies a voyeuristic relationship between audience and event, which is perhaps more appropriate to film than to some forms of theatre, which can be highly participatory as opposed to voyeuristic. Scopophilia suggests that the dramatic action unfolds magically in front of the spectator, unaffected by audience responses, yet gives the watcher an illusion of taking part in, or even controlling, the events of the drama. Consider how we tend to identify with the hero of a film: we shrink back when something threatens him or feel a sense of power when he defeats a foe. At the end we would be disappointed if he did not win the heart of the heroine.

A second idea derives from the "mirror stage", a concept more fully described in psycholanalysis by Lacan. In the "mirror stage" of human development, we see ourselves literally in the mirror and figuratively in other people like us (mom or dad) and imagine ourselves to be like those we see in the mirror, who are usually more powerful than ourselves, especially given that this stage describes children around age two. But film theorists suggest that this kind of imagining ourselves as more capable than we really are continues to shape us, primarily through our relationship to characters in narratives. This does provide a good explanation for our attraction to characters in such genres as action pictures or romances, in which we identify ourselves -- and perhaps literally model our behavior on -- the super human capacities of an action hero or the extremely attractive, poised, and talented romantic hero or heroine.

Note: if the language above seems sexist, that is because the psychoanalysts who defined the terms were quite unaware of their sexism. That gender stereotypes persist in Hollywood narratives is a different problem: they purport to speak to us, now. The psychoanalytic language above is now often used to expose the sexism of Hollywood traditions.

Audiences, part 2

A critic or reviewer functions as a member of the audience with special knowledge of theatre. The good critic is trained in theatre literature and production and will judge a production for the general public, s/he may make reference to his or her body of knowledge, but only as an aid in explaining a production for a general audience.

The function of critic has existed for centuries in Europe, but it is relatively recent as a job in and of itself. Today the Broadway critic writing for the major New York newspapers has a great deal of influence over the fate of a production. The general public will not see a
show in large enough numbers for the show to turn a profit if the critics' reviews are unfavorable. Although the critic has training in areas of theatre literature and production, his or her job is not to promote a specific production, but, by judging the quality of productions, he or she should serve the art form generally.

In a review, a critic evaluates a theatrical production using some or all of the following techniques:

1. The critic puts the production in a context, which should help the audience to appreciate the more subtle aspects of the play. For example, the critic might focus on the relationship between this play and a playwright's body of work, might expand on the historical context of a play, or might explain the production's performance style in artistic or historical terms.

2. The critic examines the goals of the particular performance being reviewed. One production of Hamlet may take a completely different performance approach from another.

3. The critic evaluates the success of the writer and the production of the playwright's work.

4. The critic discusses the worth of the artistic team's attempt. For example, a restaging of a popular Broadway musical that adds no new interpretation may be highly entertaining without being as artistically worthwhile as a second production that rewrites or updates some music and lyrics, finds stars who will interpret the characters in a new way, and hires a director who applies a whole new unifying concept that makes the musical particularly relevent to us today.

Most major newspapers, radio stations, television stations, and many magazines employ either a theatre critic specifically, or an arts critic who may cover several of the performing arts.

Another kind of critic is the academic critic. These scholars have less influence on the success of individual theatrical productions, but perhaps more influence on the history of the art form. These critics put together anthologies of play texts; analyze actors, directors, and designers for a specialized audience of theatre practitioners and scholars; and examine play texts and performance texts in their cultural contexts, also for a specialized audience. Being in academia, these are the critics who teach you about theatre in university classrooms, selecting what plays you read and influencing your taste and the terms of analysis you apply to dramatic events. In other words, these critics help to determine what plays and artists are remembered from generation to generation, and they analyze what cultural issues are embodied in the theatre practice of a given generation.

PLAYWRIGHT -- Goals

The playwright's text is the only part of the theatrical experience to survive the specific time and place of the theatrical performance. Often plays are read or studied just as other literary genres, like poetry or novels. However, it is important to understand that a play is merely a **blueprint for a live production**, like a conductor's musical score. The play text
requires interpretive artists to bring it to life as an art form. On the one hand, interpretive artists may alter some of a playwright's original intentions, but, on the other hand, interpretive artists will always make the theatrical experience richer for audience members. Why do we still produce Shakespeare's plays? Why do audiences go see *Hamlet* over and over again? Because the collaboration of different interpretive artists with the playwright's text will always illuminate new aspects of Shakespeare's play.

Because s/he is writing for the live stage, the playwright has different artistic goals than other writers. The conventions of theatrical performance (length of 2-3 hours, embodiment of characters, representation of locations, etc) encourage playwrights to focus on representing **action in dialogue form**. Occasionally playwrights will find a way to include a character's inner thoughts, but in general we have to find out what they think from what they are doing, unlike characters in novels. While some playwrights will include descriptive notes, these are not seen directly by an audience and are used by the interpretive artists as an aid in presenting the dialogue. Actors and designers will get a sense of the playwright's goal from his descriptions, but will always interpret the characters and locations in their own ways. Similarly, actors and directors look for action implied in dialogue because the theatrical medium encourages action as opposed to thought, description, or other rhetorical functions.

While working within these theatrical conventions, a playwright has artistic goals similar to other authors. The playwright seeks to communicate a plot, characters, thematic material, and heightened language to an audience. The author will often work within the conventions of a specific **dramatic genre**, such as tragedy or farce, appropriate to his or her ideas; because the conventions of a genre provide a common ground for communication between author and audience. Finally, a playwright develops his or her own **style**, both within a play and over the body of his or her work. The playwright will not communicate directly, but through the participation of other artists and media, all of which will deliver the playwright's text in an immediate, sensual manner. Interpretive artists strive to illuminate a writer's story, genre, and style.

Playwrights arrived late to some dramatic styles; for example, Carlo Goldoni (see image) an 18th century Italian writer, took characters who had been popular on the improvised stage (Commedia dell'arte) for hundreds of years and wrote plays that emphasized the language and literary arts around them. A playwright's goal is to deliver his or her story in a manner that encourages action; embodiment of sights, sounds, and movements; and the excitement of live, three dimensional effects for an audience.

**Tools**
A playwright's tools are similar to other writers, though the playwright must always apply literary tools while keeping in mind the goal of live performance. On the broadest level, language and imagination are the most important of the playwright's tools. The playwright writes primarily in dialogue. With dialogue, she suggests action, intention, and state of mind for characters. She differentiates among characters by giving them different vocabularies, diction, and dialects. Simply by analyzing the diction of characters, an actor or audience can determine who will clash with whom in the play. Dialogue also suggests dramatic genre: a play in verse will, from its opening lines, imply a serious subject, maybe a tragedy; or conversely, quick back and forth dialogue full of contemporary slang will imply a lighter subject, some kind of comedy. The time and place in which the dramatic characters live is also established in part by characters' diction. George Bernard Shaw's Pygmalion, later made into the musical My Fair Lady, offers a good example: Henry Higgins demonstrates his ability to tell exactly where in England a person is from by his or her speech. Consider the range of dialects you encounter daily; also, consider how the words you use change depending on your context. You employ different diction in class, in the stands at a ball game, and on the phone with your grandmother. Imagination is used by the playwright in selecting the events in the plot and shaping conflicts among characters. Writers often base their work on events they have witnessed personally or encountered in other artists' work; but the artist personalizes these experiences and also makes them relevant to a broad audience through the use of her or his imagination. An excellent example is Tennessee Williams' The Glass Menagerie, (see photo) which is quite closely based on his own family but adapted to speak more generally about American society, specifically the south, in the 1930's.
Playwrights often write many drafts of a play, both before and after it enters production, before the play reaches its final version on stage. No matter how carefully the author revises the structure of a play, the rehearsal process will bring new problems to light and inspire new ideas. The writer finds what “works” when the play begins to be interpreted and brought to life by other artists. Many writers, such as Shakespeare and Moliere (see image), have had long term associations with companies of actors, and they find themselves writing for specific actors' strengths in performance.

There are several terms for structural elements of a plot that will help you to understand the playwright's work more fully, whether you are watching or reading the play. The story of a play is the entire history of the central character or central relationship in the play, including things that happen before and after the play or off stage. The plot is the playwright's selection of elements from the entire story that s/he wants to represent onstage. Different playwrights dramatizing the same story will select different parts of the story and arrive at different plots, depending on their interest in specific character, conflicts, or themes suggested by a story.

The exposition is the early part of a play in which the audience learns where and when the play takes place, who the main characters are, and what the central conflict of the play will be. The audience will also determine the genre of the play and style of production during the exposition. An audience expects and needs this basic information; people are uncomfortable if expository material does not set up basic expectations about the rest of the play. British writer Tom Stoppard parodies this convention in his play The Real Inspector Hound: at the beginning of the play, the maid answers the telephone saying "Hello, the drawing room of Lady Muldoon's country residence one morning in early spring?"

The inciting incident is the first major action that takes place in the plot of a play. It may be a dramatic entrance, or a conflict between two people on stage, or a piece of information uncovered that sets the plot in motion. After the inciting incident, the plot of the play normally builds in suspense until near the end; this is often called rising action. The suspense is created by the playwright's answering the early questions brought forth during the exposition while introducing further, more important problems. The higher the audience's desire to see a resolution to the conflict, the higher the suspense.

The playwright usually introduces many minor conflicts to keep the audience engaged: each scene or section of a scene has a conflict which will develop, reach a climax, then be resolved. Meanwhile, these lesser conflicts will help to build the suspense of the play as a
whole. The **climax** of the play is the point at which the action changes decisively. It may be a truth revealed, a choice made by a major character, or a reconciliation among characters. No matter what kind of event the climax is, the climax marks the "point of no return": the main action or character of the play has moved in a direction from which there is no returning to earlier states of affairs. Because the climax is the decisive turning point of the play, after which suspense diminishes, the climax of most plays is placed near the end of the plot.

Following the climax, the playwright ties up loose ends during the **falling action** or dénouement. The decisive moment of the climax will determine the resolution of subplots, relationships, and minor characters' dilemmas.

In the nineteenth century, Gustav Freytag graphed out the audience's rising level of suspense over the length of the play; this has become known as **Freytag's triangle**. Also in the nineteenth century, a play that rigidly adhered to the structural elements outlined above became known as a "**well-made play**": a term still used today and often adhered to by contemporary writers. Henrik Ibsen (see photo), a late 19th century author said to herald the Modern era of art, was the first master of the well-made play.

Some playwrights of the twentieth century deliberately avoid conventional structure. In these cases, the elements that they ignore are a good key to the playwright's artistic goals in writing that particular play. For example, Samuel Beckett's (see photo) plays, which are often called "absurdist", avoid conventional exposition. This sets up a different kind of audience suspense: the audience tries to figure out who the characters are, where and when the play is set, and what the action is about throughout the play. While this can be frustrating for the audience, it is precisely Beckett's point that our desire for neatly packaged answers to such expository questions is not reflective of life experience. Instead, we often flounder for a meaning or explanation without clear guidelines, which is just what Beckett's audiences experience in watching a play like his Endgame.

Aside from writers like Beckett's deliberate avoidance of conventional structure, playwrights' structures can be divided into two general categories: intensive and extensive. **Intensive structure** means that a play is highly economical in its use of all elements. "Well-made plays" are intensive in structure. The plot begins late in the story, very near the climax and the plot unfolds in real time or with very little compression of time. The plot unfolds quickly and in a logical manner based on cause and effect or psychological motivation. The inciting incident is like rolling a snowball from the top of a mountain: it gains size and velocity very quickly and moves inexorably toward a the valley floor below where it smashes to earth, in other words towards a climax that will change the characters' lives. All characters and subplots are directly related to the main plot of the play; typically intensive plays will have short cast lists and no subplots. Settings and properties will also
be kept to a minimum. When everything extraneous is stripped from the stage, the remaining characters, locations and properties that are placed on stage by the author take on added importance. For example, if you see a gun on stage, it will go off before the play ends, like in Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*. Along with Henrik Ibsen's and other nineteenth century "well made plays", Greek tragedies like Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, neoclassical plays like those of Moliere, and many contemporary domestic dramas like Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie* or Lorraine Hansberry's *A Raisin in the Sun* share an intensive structure.

An **extensive** plot structure will often select dramatic highlights of a story to string together into a plot; such plays will jump easily from one time and place to another time and place. Characters may age significantly or the plot could encompass generations. Most extensively structured plays will feature subplots that reflect the themes and actions of the main plot, and they will have many characters who contrast with or clarify the main characters. The effect of an extensive plot structure on the audience is less like a runaway snowball or train; while an extensive plot should have some momentum, its central themes and the roles of all of the characters will probably fall together more like a puzzle: the pattern becomes clearer as the play progresses, but the full breadth and scope of the playwright's design is not clear until the end of the play. Shakespeare's plays, Brecht's plays, and more recently, Tony Kushner's *Angels in America* are examples of plays with extensive structure. At the extreme end of the extensive spectrum are plays with episodic plots, such as some of those by Bertolt Brecht (see photo). In episodic plays, each scene functions like a miniature play of its own, complete in and of itself.

**Characters** also serve **structural functions** in drama, like in novels. Many character types and the structural functions they serve within the play have been passed down through centuries of dramatic history, with each generation of playwrights altering the dramatic type to serve contemporary purposes. Characters in serious plays tend to be particularly well defined, or three dimensional. We are expected to identify with these characters and experience them as like ourselves or like people we know.

A different purpose for dramatic characters, equally valid, is to make us laugh. If we are to laugh at characters, we do not want to identify with them too closely. Thus, comedies, especially the broad comedies called farces, tend to have more two dimensional or **stock characters**. These characters are intentionally drawn in broad strokes; they have just a handful of defining features, which are usually exaggerated to a humorous level. Consider the *Three Stooges* as an extreme example of farcical characters.

Most plays, dramas or comedies, will have a **protagonist** and an **antagonist**. The protagonist refers to the hero of the play and the antagonist creates the conflict, and is usually a "bad guy". These terms come from Ancient Greece, where each scene of a play was called an *agon*, or struggle. In Greece, the 1st actor always played the protagonist, who is the character with whom the audience empathizes.
Melodramas also make the protagonist and antagonist crystal clear; in such cases we can refer to the protagonist as the "good guy" or the antagonist as the "bad guy". In westerns, which are a direct development from the 19th century melodramas, the protagonist-good-guy often wore a white hat and the antagonist-bad-guy often wore a black hat; thus, before either character uttered a word, every audience member recognized the character's structural function in the drama. Today the protagonist and antagonist are not always so distinctly defined; a protagonist could be battling abstract forces, such as an illness, the government, or a side of himself he does not like, rather than the traditional antagonist. Whatever the play's conflict, the opposing forces tend to be equally well defined and relatively equal in power because audiences don't want to know the play's outcome from its exposition. Theatrical terms sometimes used are leading man or leading lady for protagonist and heavy for antagonist.

The confidant character is one that supports a main character, either the protagonist or the antagonist, and offers him a way to speak his mind in dialogue form. For example, a protagonist in scene with an antagonist is likely to use rhetorical strategies, or even to outright lie, to achieve a strategic purpose, but the audience can recognize the character's action if he has told a confidant, in a previous scene, that he intends to lie. A confidante is a female version of a character with this function. These characters can be a best friend, maid or manservant, governess, or tutor. The ingenue and juvenile are roles that descend from the Commedia Dell'arte (see picture) of the Middle Ages in Italy. These are characters, most often found in comedy, who are young, naive, and destined to fall in love. They often serve as "straight" characters around whom more comical stock characters operate.

Servant characters became popular in Ancient Roman comedies and have remained popular to the present in modified forms. There are many types of servant characters; one of the oldest is the parasite, who is a clever, greedy, fast-talking schemer. The parasite usually fools a protagonist or antagonist out of money, often performs comic, physical feats of skill, and tends to like earthly pleasures. Another servant character is the fool, perhaps best known now from Shakespeare's fools in such plays as King Lear or As You Like It. The fool is often shown to have a certain wisdom behind his clowning that the audience may comprehend but the other characters on stage will tend not to understand. An analogous female character for the parasite is the soubrette. This term comes from the French in the 17th century, when the playwright Molière wrote many brilliant soubrette parts. She is usually young, outspoken, clever, and flaunts a brazen sexuality. among the many other character types and functions is the grande dame: a middle aged woman's role; usually she drives the plot or characters with money, power, or sexual politics.

There are also typical functions associated with other minor characters; for example an old man or old woman is likely to be either a wisdom figure or a fool, a foil has some
characteristics opposite to a protagonist, and a **straight man** sets up a comic character's jokes, often while pretending not to understand the humor.

**Historical Conventions**

Today the playwright is a respected artist in her own right. She earns a living by collecting **royalties** every time a play is produced or when copies of a play text are sold. However, copyright laws which exist to protect authors have only been strictly and internationally enforced for about a century. Before that time, it was harder to earn a living as a playwright. In Ancient Greek theatre festivals, three playwrights were chosen each year to compete in the following year's festival. The chosen writers were then supported by wealthy citizens while they wrote and rehearsed four plays for the competition. Most writers also had other specialties outside of theatre; Sophocles (see image), for example, was also a general in the Athenian army. There was no public theatre that produced a regular season of plays; theatre was offered only as part of religious and civic holidays.

In the European Renaissance, playwrights were learned men who earned their living in other ways, members of the landed gentry who had independent means, or members of theatre companies who also participated as actors and/or managers of their companies. Shakespeare (see image) was a **shareholding** member of the Lord Chamberlain's Men, later the King's Men, and he acted in his own plays and took his part in the shared management of the company. Shakespeare never considered publishing his plays; he received a modest sum from the company for each new play, after which the play became the property of the troupe. Molière, the 17th century French playwright, was also an actor and manager within his company. He became a favorite of the King of France, Louis XIV, who helped to support Molière's troupe. Royal or noble patronage became another model by which writers and actors earned a living. Beginning in the 17th century, playwrights or companies did **publish** plays that were successful on the stage. However, no copyright laws existed to regulate productions of the plays once they were published. The playwright of a successful play would receive extra money from a **benefit performance**, usually the third night of a play's run; at a benefit the writer received all profit (total income minus expenses) from the night's performance. In the 18th century, plays began to have longer runs, or to play more successive nights after the premiere. At this point playwrights often received the profits from every third night of the initial run of the play.
The first women to earn a living as playwrights were English women during the time of the Restoration, or the late 17th century. Aphra Behn (see image), for example, became a model for many later women who hoped to make a living by the pen. Virginia Woolf, writing in the early 20th century, paid homage to Behn in *A Room of One's Own*. During the nineteenth century, when the star system arose which allowed a few "star" actors to command very high salaries for their performances, a few playwrights gained similar "star" status and profited enormously from playwriting. The first of these was the melodrama author Dion Boucicault, who lived and wrote in England, France, and the United States at various points in his career. England passed its first copyright law in 1833, and the United States followed suit in 1856. An international copyright agreement, protecting a playwright's interest in any production of his play anywhere in the world, was not achieved until the end of the 19th century.

Professional American playwrights today are members of the Dramatists' Guild, a union that ensures their financial rights and artistic control of their plays in production. They By contrast, the Screenwriters' Guild, the union for American television and screenwriters, does not allow the writer artistic control of a script once it is sold. Playwrights also often publish their plays; writers earn money from the publication and sale of their plays as well as from royalties collected for every production. However, playwrights' works rarely become bestsellers and royalties are only sizable for professional productions. Very few American playwrights today make a living purely by the pen. Most also teach writing or hold other jobs, in or out of the theatre.

**Dramatic Genres**

Historical conventions of playwriting can also be expressed in terms of genre. At many points in western history, genre definitions were inextricably linked to evaluations of the quality of dramatic writing. Hence, playwrights wrote plays that fit the conventions of their time and place. The twentieth and twenty-first centuries are unusual in that, in spite of the rapid rise of many new artistic ideas about theatre, new artistic movements have not supplanted earlier ones. Instead, we have a broad range of kinds of drama being produced all around us.

The oldest definition of dramatic genre is *Aristotle's Poetics*, written circa 335 BC in Greece. The forms of tragedy and comedy that he described over 2000 years ago still exist today. *Tragedy* in its oldest sense deals with human beings taking on superhuman forces, such as gods or fate. In the end the humans lose, but, because of the magnitude of their struggle, the mere effort is ennobling for the character and for the people in the audience. The ancient tragic characters were invariably kings, heros, or demigods. The diction of the
plays was poetic and formal in style. The plays were intensive in structure, with the climax following logically from the action on stage. The goal of tragedy, according to Aristotle, is **catharsis**, or a purgation of pity and fear in the audience. In other words, the audience should empathize completely with the protagonist, emotionally following all the turns of the character's fortunes, until, when the character is ultimately defeated, we are purged of all of the (negative) emotions we have been vicariously sharing.

In the early 1700's, when the middle class began to supplant the aristocracy across Europe, **common man tragedy** as a new sub-genre of tragedy began. In the 20th century, the American Arthur Miller (see photo) has argued that tragedy need not and should not be about characters of elevated social station; instead, what a democracy like America proves is that each of us is capable of taking on the superhuman forces in life and that a simple, middle class hero is more representative of us today than a god or king. Miller's *Death of a Salesman* is one of his most famous plays and his best example of common man tragedy: a salesman believes his whole life in "the American Dream", that hard work and being well-liked will lead to prosperity for himself and his children, but he finds as an old man that he has been deceived and ultimately is worth more to his family dead than alive.

**Comedy** has a range of subgenres that can be understood along a spectrum from high comedy to low comedy. **High comedy**, while funny, shares the most with tragedy and tends to be specific to the culture that created it. For example, comedy of manners is a form of high comedy that emphasizes an "in group's" manners, speech, dress, and tastes. Much humour is made at the expense of those who are trying unsuccessfully to enter the "in group" or those who are completely ignorant of the "in group's" tastes. This style of comedy was particularly popular in 17th century France and England among the aristocracy. Recent movies like *American Pie* or other movies about teenagers have much in common with comedy of manners.

**Comedy of character** is comedy based on one or more comically exaggerated characters. The French writer Molière (see image) wrote many plays in which one central authority figure, for whom the play is usually named, has a greatly exaggerated fault which in turn causes comic problems for his family and friends. Examples include *The Imaginary Invalid* and *The Miser*. Even though he wrote in the 17th century, the idea is still common in television comedies: consider how many have been based on a single comic character: *Roseanne* and *Seinfeld* were two wildly successful ones.
**Comedy of situation** is familiar today as television "sitcoms," an abbreviation of the older term which means comedy based on situations, or plots. *Seinfeld*, while begun on Jerry Seinfeld's reputation, is an excellent example of a situation comedy. The characters may be funny, but it is primarily the situations in which they find themselves that are the source of humour and the longevity of the series. A television show that revolves more on comedy than plot would be *Fraser*.

Many comedies of character and sitcoms are also **domestic comedies**, meaning that they deal with domestic plots and relationships. A very typical comic plot, typical of theatre and feature films, is boy-meets-girl, then some impediment to their relationship arises, often in the form of the girl's or boy's family, problems are cleared up, and finally boy-gets-or-marries-girl. This is the most typical domestic comedy, but domestic comedies might also revolve around marital or family problems, like *Married With Children*, or even *The Osbournes*.

**Satire** is a form of comedy that uses contemporary events in an exaggerated or altered context as its primary source of humour. Often satire is aimed at politics, such as in the *Saturday Night Live* skits where cast members impersonate presidents or other Washington figures, or Comedy Central's *Daily Show*. Because it parodies current events, satire loses its relevance more quickly than many other forms of comedy. **Parody**, closely related to satire, usually makes fun of another art or cultural form. Mike Myers' grotesque seventies detective Austin Powers is a parody of James Bond; even the films' titles make the parody clear ( *Gold Member* as opposed to *Gold Finger*; *Spy Who Shagged Me* as opposed to *Spy Who Loved Me*).

**Farce** is an example of "low comedy." Because it relies more on physical than verbal humour, it can appeal to people from a variety of cultural and linguistic backgrounds: the comedy of a character slipping on a banana peel need not be translated. Characters in farce are often one dimensional or cartoonish. Examples of farce are the Marx Brothers movies, many Monty Python sketches, or recent movies like Jim Carrey's *Ace Ventura*.

**Melodrama** is neither comedy nor tragedy, but combines some elements of each into its own unique form. It arose originally in the late 18th century, and several authors gained international fame writing melodramas by 1800. The defining elements of melodrama are an elaborate plot with many twists and turns, clearly defined hero and villain characters, and plots selected for maximum stage spectacle. Melodramas packed theatres throughout the nineteenth century; at this point in western history, cities were growing rapidly and theatres were the most popular entertainment for the growing middle and working classes in the new urban areas. The stage adaptation of Stowe's novel Uncle Tom's Cabin remains the most popular play in American history: it held the stage consistently from 1852 until 1930, often playing in up to ten cities at once. The melodramas of the 19th century mark the peak of popularity of live theatre: more people went to see theatre than at any other point in western history. Melodramas are also important for us to understand in the twentieth century.
because the film industry copied melodramatic plots, characters, and use of spectacle when
it began to seriously compete with theatre for the popular audience in the early twentieth
century. Many of the most successful movies and television shows produced in the United
States today follow the same formulas as stage melodramas. Consider the last western,
mystery, or action movie you saw, and compare it with the defining features of melodrama:
lots of plot twists, clear good guys vs. bad guys, and many special effects.

**Tragicomedy** is a twentieth century name given to plays that combine aspects of comedy
and tragedy to make essentially serious points. It was applied retroactively to Shakespeare's
late plays and seemed to capture the funny yet profoundly sad state of Beckett's characters
in "Theatre of the Absurd" as well. In the 2000's, we are more likely to use the word **drama**
to describe plays, movies, and television shows which are essentially serious but may have
funny characters or episodes. In fact, serious writers today are likely to infuse some humour
into their plays, allowing us to defuse our anxiety while watching difficult events on stage.
Kushner's *Angels in America* is an excellent example of a drama that allows audiences at
least as much laughter as anxiety over the very serious topic of AIDS.

The above genres are defined broadly, and many more subdivisions of each genre exist.
Genres are most useful when used to understand plays, as guides against which to measure
your experience of plays. When used prescriptively, as the way plays "should be" written or
as a way to judge the quality of plays, genre definitions can be too restrictive. However, it
is by recognizing genres -- by characters, plot elements, and themes -- that we know what
to expect of a play or film and can settle in to enjoying it.

End of Playwright readings
ACTOR -- Goals
An actor's goal is to communicate a character to an audience. This is the only necessary and defining aspect of theatre. All other artists, including the playwright, serve primarily to aid the actor in this central goal. At the Renaissance, commedia dell'arte actors improvised an full-length play with every performance, based on a framework of a plot, as in the picture. Secondary actor's goals are to entertain an audience and to function as part of an ensemble.

Audiences judge an actor's performance by several criteria, all of which are dependent on theatrical and other social conventions. Today, in most kinds of performances, we say that an actor whose performance we enjoyed was "believable." This means that his or her actions, movements, and voice were appropriate to the character, plot, and performance style of the play. When we consider virtuosity in acting, we tend to think of actors' abilities to transform themselves, so that they appear substantially different from role to role. In some performance styles, virtuosity depends on other aspects of an actor's performance; for example, a musical comedy actress such as Carol Channing does not transform herself significantly from role to role, but she delivers songs and dances that are tremendously entertaining.

The actor's secondary goals are also important. First, an actor's performance should draw audience members into the theatrical illusion being presented on stage. The energy projected by the actor begins the cycle of feedback described in the last section: the live audience responds to the actor's performance and the actor in turn adjusts his or her performance in response to the audience. Second, since acting is usually a group art form, the actor must work within stylistic constraints established by the playwright and director, and the actor must work effectively with the other actors in the cast. We often refer to "chemistry" between actors or a "strong ensemble" when many actors work together effectively.

Tools
An actor's tools are unusual among artists. Whereas a painter's tools are his watercolors, brushes, and paper, and a pianist's tool is her instrument, an actor has no tools but himself. An actor uses voice, body, and mind/spirit to create a character. Like the pianist or other performing artists, the actor is usually an interpretive artist, meaning that the actor is part of an interpretation of a primary artist's work -- in this case the primary artist is the playwright. Because an actor is usually interpreting a role written by someone else, the play text is also a tool for character creation.

The actor usually begins with an analysis of the play: he searches for all clues about the character's past life, present actions, relationships with other characters, and function within the plot. From there he can begin to create the character. Anything not supplied by the playwright directly is up to the actor's imagination.

The actor then uses her own body, voice, and mind, adapting aspects of herself to become the character. The actor may alter her voice by varying her pitch range, dynamic range, timbre, and tempo or by speaking with a dialect.
The actor will also use his body in ways specifically chosen to express his character. He will select gestures, postures, and movement patterns that may be different from his own. Some of these physical aspects of the character may be determined by the customs of another historical time; for example an upper class, male character from the English Restoration may gesture with a handkerchief or fan for effect, carry a snuff box, and stand with his legs turned out at a ninety degree angle and the weight resting slightly into one hip. A woman, like this character played by Ann Bracegirdle, might carry a handkerchief of parasol, but her posture would be similar to a man's.

The character's mental processes are also important; these include thoughts, emotions, and psychological traits. Analysis of what a character says and does in the script of the play will be an important beginning for an actor in finding her character's "inner life".

Actor's Processes
An actor's process can be considered in two ways: 1. the general training process for an actor, and 2. the specific rehearsal process for a given play.

1. Most actors in the United States today have been trained to use a process of character creation called "The Method." This process is based on the groundbreaking work of the Russian actor and director Constantine Stanislavsky (see image). The American Method is distinct from Stanislavsky's work, however, mostly because of the difficulty publishing and traveling between the USA and the USSR during the early years of the Soviet regime. Therefore, American actors and acting teachers such as Lee Strasberg and Stella Adler created their own systems based on what they knew of Stanislavsky's work and on their own experience.

Stanislavsky's most revolutionary principle was simply that acting could be taught as a system; that it is not achieved purely through some mixture of talent, intuition, and inspiration. Stanislavsky spent the last few decades of his life altering and revising his ideas on acting, but several general principles are unchanging.

A. *Given circumstances* is the name given by Stanislavsky to the material given by the playwright in the text of the play that directly reveals things about the character's life, action, relationships, and goals. Stanislavsky emphasized an actor's duty to the playwright's work.
B. An actor's voice and body should receive thorough training so that voice and body are as responsive and flexible as possible. After all, these are the actor's major communication tools. Further, an actor's training is lifelong.

C. Actors should have keen observation skills; characters should begin from the actor's observations of life.

D. Actors must translate the playwright's ideas and their own ideas into living theatre by undertaking real actions on the stage. He taught actors to find a character's objective, or goal, and to undertake real actions to achieve the objective.

E. Actors must be fully engaged in the stage illusion; Stanislavsky observed children playing and held them up as a model for how actors should be completely immersed in the fictional world of the play. This complete concentration allows actors to appear as if the events of the play are happening for the first time in spite of the facts that the play was rehearsed and that it is repeated nightly.

F. Each thing an actor does on stage must have an inner justification; it must spring from a character's emotional, psychological, or intellectual need.

In developing "The Method", American teachers tended to focus on this last principle, finding an inner justification. They emphasized Stanislavsky's idea of "emotional substitution" for finding a character's emotional state; in this technique an actor substitutes events from his own life that really trigger the emotions the character is supposed to feel in the fictional circumstance of the play. Because of this emphasis, Americans tend to act "from the inside out", meaning they find the character's inner life first, and then work to make the inner life communicate to an audience through body and voice. In some other countries, such as England, actor training tends to be "from the outside in", meaning that acting students receive a great deal of training to develop their voices and bodies, and then work to justify character choices with appropriate mental states. This has led to some disagreements about the degree to which an actor "becomes" a character, for instance, must an actor "really" feel everything that the character feels? While the arguments are interesting, the final answer must be that it does not matter, as long as the actor achieves her goal of communicating the character to the audience.

2. In the rehearsal process, an actor develops a character interpretation that fits with the director's overall vision for the production and that meshes appropriately with the other actors' interpretations of their characters.

An actor will typically know the play before auditioning for a role, and, once he has been cast in a role, study the play prior to the first rehearsal. At the early rehearsals, which are typically "read throughs," the director will give the actors basic information about the style and emphasis of the production. For example, it is common to set a Shakespearean play in an entirely different time and place; for an actor, this means he will use his knowledge of Shakespearean verse but must use a different vocabulary for movement, and possibly a dialect, that will be appropriate for the director's vision.
Throughout the next rehearsals the actor refines her interpretation of her character, develops the character's relationships with the other characters, discovers blocking and business, and learns her lines. **Blocking** is a term that means where an actor moves on stage when, and **business** is the term for the gestures and use of hand properties executed by an actor. Actors are often given a date by which they must be off-book, or have all lines memorized.

Once actors are off-book they enter a third stage of the rehearsal process. Now relationships, blocking, and business can be refined because actors are no longer looking at scripts but at each other and have both hands free to work with hand properties. If the costume an actor will wear is substantially different from what he wears every day, he will normally begin to work in a rehearsal costume by the time he is off book.

Technical elements are added to the performance in the final stage of rehearsals. During technical rehearsals the actor works on the actual stage setting using actual properties, and he learns how the sound will be integrated and how and when the lights will move. Finally, at dress rehearsals, the actor adds costume and make-up.

The final element for the actor to integrate into her performance is the audience. Plays, especially new plays, will often have previews before the opening night. During these preliminary performances the actor learns what parts of her work are achieving her goal of audience communication, and what needs to be altered by opening night.

**Historical Conventions**

Acting styles are set by the public taste of the time and place. For centuries critics have used the terms "real" and "life-like" and "nature" to describe good acting, but it is a relatively recent phenomenon to value acting that could literally be mistaken for life. Today, good acting on small stages or on the screen is often so "realistic" that, if not for the artistic context, it could be life. Before the artistic movement called "Naturalism" in the mid-Nineteenth century, acting was always regarded as an art form with artistic laws quite distinct from life. These artistic "laws" also varied from culture to culture.

In ancient Greek theatre, actors wore masks that covered their full heads and enlarged their stature. They spoke in a chant-like manner and frequently broke into song and dance. Only three actors participated in each play; if more characters were required by the script then the actors changed character and costume as necessary to fill the roles. In the Golden Age of Greece, in the 5th century B.C., acting was a highly regarded craft and actors competed for annual prizes along with the playwrights.

In Shakespeare's time, in Elizabethan England, the business of public theatre was just beginning. Actors were formed into sharing companies, with each full member getting one vote on all matters of company policy and one share of all profits. Companies changed plays with great frequency and little rehearsal, so each actor had to have a quick memory and retain many roles in his head at once. While use of language and vocal qualities were
highly prized, many audience members enjoyed the farcical behavior of clown characters. Many actors specialized in one kind of role or another: Richard Burbage (see image) was the leading tragic actor in Shakespeare's company, while Will Kempe was the favorite clown, later replaced by Robert Armin, pictured to the right. Companies were all male, therefore, women's roles were played by boy apprentices. Music and dance were often featured in comedies, though they were less integral than in ancient Greece. Elizabethan theatres had very little scenery, therefore actors had to fill out the environment for the audience with their text, voice, and bodies. Actors did not generally hold a respected position in Elizabethan society; without an aristocratic patron for their company, actors could be thrown in jail as common vagabonds.

The Christian Church participated in the prejudice against acting and actors. The Roman Emperor Constantine accepted Christianity and forbid performances, many of which had grown highly decadent in the early centuries of the Christian era. Throughout the Middle Ages, acting as a profession continued to be actively discouraged by the Catholic Church. Actors pretend to be what they were not, which is the same means used by the devil, argued some Christians. Even by Molière's time, in 17th century France, actors were forbidden all sacraments of the Catholic Church; the Church refused Molière burial in sacred ground when he died in 1673.

In the late 17th century in Europe, the organization of acting companies began to shift from the older sharing system to a salary system, in which actors are hired by managers for a set period of time at a set annual salary. In France, the first national theatre, the Comédie Française, was formed by King Louis XIV in 1680. Although it was supported by the King, the Comédie Française was organized like the older sharing companies.

The 18th century saw the rise of the "star system" among actors. Actors who became audience favorites were dissatisfied with their annual salaries. These "star" actors were very important in drawing large audiences and demanded special consideration from managements. The first concession was to grant star actors benefit performances, at which ticket prices were higher and the star actor received all profits from the evening's performance. Later in the century, star actors began to demand higher and higher salaries. By the 19th century, many stars organized their own productions of shows, with themselves in the leading roles, and took them on tours. In such cases the actor received the profits of the tour. Touring was greatly facilitated by the development of railroads across Europe and the United States in the mid-nineteenth century.

One of the first great American actors, often considered the best ever, was Edwin Booth. He was noted for his performances of Shakespeare's tragic heroes and was one of the first American star actors to successfully tour in Europe. 19th century Americans saw him as a symbol of the triumph of American culture as distinct and separate from European culture, and, especially, that of England. He also built the Booth Theatre on Broadway, which introduced such innovations as a fan shaped auditorium, elevators in the stage floor, and an enormous fly loft to New York; the Booth Theatre is still an active Broadway theatre located just west of Times Square.
Around the turn of the 20th century the acting profession underwent major shifts in aesthetic goals, which were cemented when Stanislavsky's system became standard actor training in the United States. In the late 19th century the artistic movement called Naturalism began to demand absolute truth to life on the stage as in other art forms. Actors until this time had usually spoken much of their text directly to the audience, but the new aesthetic demanded that they focus on their stage environment and the other characters more intensely. The term *fourth wall* is used to describe a staging style in which three walls are represented on stage and the audience is seated along what the actors imagine as a "fourth wall" of the fictional room. Naturalism also encouraged *ensemble* playing among actors; since actors no longer addressed the audience directly, the relationships among characters on stage became more important. 19th century star actors were reluctant to embrace these new aesthetics of acting because their high salaries depended on their energetic connections with audiences and they feared to lose their star status if they played too equally off of other ensemble members. Thus, the new style of acting begun with Naturalism was slow to spread across Europe and the Americas.

Actors in America today are usually members of unions; *Actor's Equity* is the union for live theatre actors, Screen Actors' Guild for film, and American Federation of Television and Radio Artists for TV and radio drama. Actors hire agents who get them auditions for parts in stage or screen work, and, if hired, they sign contracts for the length of that specific job. This is called the "contract system." Today in the United States acting is an overcrowded profession: only about 15% of union actors are working at any given time, and young actors often work for years before gaining admission to a union. Remnants of the star system still exist; popular actors like Kevin Costner or Julia Roberts command very high salaries in their film contracts because film executives know that stars are required to make big profits at the box office. But for every star earning millions in the acting industry there are hundreds of actors barely earning a living or supplementing their acting income with "day jobs".
DIRECTOR Part 1

Director's Goals
The stage director's role is one of the most recent additions to the central team of interpretive artists who bring a play to life. The director's job as described here has existed for just over a hundred years.

The director's goals are to provide the central interpretation of a playwright's text and to coordinate or unify all other artists' work.

A director's interpretation of a text can also have one of two goals: he may choose to create an interpretation that is as faithful as possible to a playwright's intention, or he may choose to bring his own vision, usually inspired by a writer's text, to the stage. In the first case, which we can call editorial directing, a director looks to the text to determine all questions of performance style, thematic emphasis, visual style, and character definition. Such a director seeks essentially to make his own work invisible, much like an editor works with a novelist before it is published. In the second case, which we can term creative directing, the director functions somewhat like the playwright: she is also a primary artist and might extensively revise or cut a playwright's text. Communicating her interpretation of the text to the audience is her primary goal. This is often seen with classic plays, like Shakespeare's, which have been produced many, many times. Sometimes a theatre company creates a performance piece without a playwright at all, leaving the director to fulfill the usual playwright's function of structuring the performance piece. Even when the most editorial of directors intends to faithfully produce a writer's intentions on the stage, a director makes many interpretive decisions based on the director's aesthetic sensibility and experience, the styles and expertise of the other collaborative artists, and the specific audience for which the play will be produced. After all, the most historically accurate production possible of, for example, a Shakespeare play can never reproduce the original audience with its expectations, experiences, and world view.

The director's interpretation is often called a production concept. The production concept is an analysis of the text that determines how it will be brought to life: the director will emphasize certain thematic material, interpret major characters and relationships, determine a basic visual and sound environment, and select a performance style with his production concept. The director who is working with an existing text will develop his production concept before the first production meeting with other visual and aural artists and before casting actors. If the actors and designers will be helping to create the text, then he may finalize a full production concept later in the production process.

The director fulfills her second goal by communicating the production concept to the other artists and then using her concept in directing and approving the other artists' work. The production concept is presented to designers, who will create the play's visual and aural environment, at the first production meeting, and is usually communicated at least in part to actors at an early rehearsal. Some directors work more collaboratively than others; a more collaborative director may involve designers and actors in determining a final production concept. However, the director must define a production concept because other artists need it in developing their own artistic goals for the production. The
production concept defines the artistic limits, or sets the rules of the fictional world, for a given production; when all artists work within the production concept defined by the director, the production will have a unified or coherent effect for the audience. If a certain designer's or actor's work does not fit within the director's concept, then it will not cohere with the work of the other artists. If such a problem arises, it is the director's job to work with the artist to alter her interpretation until the entire production gains coherence.

**Director's Tools**
A director's tools are the text and the other artists. The director is unique among the theatrical artists in that her work will be seen only indirectly on the stage. The director's interpretation of the text will be embodied by actors translated into sights and sounds and movement by the designers. The coordination of actors' and designers' work is vital to a fresh and clear theatrical interpretation, but all of the choices made by the director throughout the production process will be literally carried out by other artists, not the director.

In creating a production concept, the director uses several intellectual and practical tools: literary and theatrical text analysis, knowledge of the theatre space, knowledge of designers' styles, perhaps knowledge of actors' strengths, knowledge about the intended audience, as well as his own broad experience of performance styles. Many of these tools can only be gathered through practical experience.

In carrying out the production concept, the director uses essentially the same tools. However, in the production process, a director who also has practical skills in costuming, set construction, lighting, sound, and acting will find this knowledge useful in making decisions about how to coordinate all of these elements. Therefore, the director must have some experience in all areas of theatrical production. The director spends the majority of his time working with actors in rehearsal, therefore extensive experience as an actor or working with actors is essential. The director must be able to communicate ideas about the text in terms that the actor can translate into stage action and thus communicate to the audience.

Because of the essentially collaborative nature of the theatre and the fact that all of the director's work is mediated by other artists before it reaches an audience, a director requires a third, related set of tools. The director must possess management skills. Management skills include inspiration, clear communication, collaborative abilities, ensemble building, and organization.

**Director Part 2**

**Director's Processes**
The director's process extends from the selection of a play for production through to opening night. The director works closely with all members of the artistic staff and some members of a theatre's administrative staff, but the bulk of his time will be spent working with actors on the text in rehearsals. The second largest amount of time will be spent in
analyzing the text, which is a process that continues and evolves throughout the production process and often involves extensive research.

A director and play may be brought together in a number of ways: if the director is a member of a theatre's artistic staff then he may select a play himself or in consultation with the governing artistic and financial bodies of the theatre; he may be hired by a company to direct a play chosen by that company; or, he may select a play and then seek producers to fund the production or an existing company to sponsor his work.

No matter how she has been hired, the director's next step is to **work with the text**. She will analyze the plot, characters, themes, style, diction, environment, and actions. She will envision and hear parts of the play in her head. She will consider the audience for whom the play will be presented and ask herself what in the text will be most exciting and pertinent to that audience, and also to herself. This analysis and imagining will lead the director to a production concept.

The **first production meeting** is where a director communicates the production concept to set, costume, lighting, and sound designers, stage managers, producers, technical directors, and publicity managers. A more collaborative director will seek feedback, clarifications, or revisions of her ideas from the designers. The producers, who provide the necessary funding and want to see a production turn a profit, might also provide input. The technical director, who will be responsible for building scenery and other effects and is usually familiar with the special needs or problems of working in the theatre space, might provide valuable advice to designers at production meetings. Publicity managers also use the work of the director and designers, presented in production meetings, as they develop marketing strategies for a production.

At an early meeting, the production staff must establish a **production schedule**, which sets deadlines for design approval, deadlines for set and costume construction, dates on which the lighting crew works in the theatre, press release deadlines, program copy deadlines, and dates of technical and dress rehearsals.

At **subsequent production meetings** designers will present sketches or samples of their ideas. The director's job is to coordinate and refine the designers' artistic ideas so that the resulting production will cohere. The director approves final design plans, usually presented in the form of renderings, or detailed depictions of a set, costume, or lighting effect as an audience member will see it. Production meetings typically occur at least **weekly** during the play's rehearsal process. Thus, as the director shapes the play with the actors, she informs the designers of developments at production meetings. In turn, the designers can respond to changes in interpretation of the play or to new practical needs.

The director may **cast actors** in a variety of ways. She may hold auditions and select a cast herself, or she may be working with a company of actors who must be cast in the major roles, or the producers may already have a star cast in a major role, who may then have input into which other actors are cast. Depending on the play's producing organization, the director may have to cast all Equity (professional, union) actors contacted
through their agents, or a certain number of union actors, or be restricted from using Equity actors at all.

In professional theatre, the director usually hears actors present monologues of their own choosing at an initial audition and then holds call-backs for actors whom she thinks she may cast. At call-backs the actors read from the play text, either cold readings, meaning unprepared, or with time to prepare their characters, called prepared readings. Many directors structure auditions according to their personal tastes or the unique needs of a play: for example, a director might ask actors to improvise or tell a story in an audition. For musical theatre, an audition typically consists of a monologue, a song, and a dance audition. Actors may audition privately in individual sessions, in small groups, or all together -- often referred to as a cattle call.

Once the play has been cast, it enters rehearsal. The director is responsible for scheduling and structuring each rehearsal. While each director will run rehearsals in her own unique manner, there are several categories of rehearsal that illuminate the director's process of working with actors; a typical progression is from reading, to blocking, to character building, to refining, to technical, to dress rehearsals, and finally to previews and opening night.

At a reading, the actors may simply read the play or they may analyze the text and characters as they read. In blocking rehearsals, the director sets where and when actors move on the stage. By this time the director will have a groundplan from the set designer, which is a scale drawing of the stage from a bird's eye perspective; it indicates where all walls, doors, furniture, platforms, stairs, or other scenery is placed. The stage manager usually places tape on the stage floor to indicate the boundaries of the set pieces for the director and actors to use while blocking. Some directors encourage actors to improvise blocking based on character motivation in the stage environment, finalizing blocking much later in the rehearsal process. In character rehearsals, actors work intensively on their characters. These rehearsals will often be held with small groups or individuals, and the actors will depart from the playwright's text in order to flesh out their characters. The director clarifies points of character, orchestrates relationships among characters, and ensures that characters fulfill their structural purposes within the text.

Once the whole play is blocked, characters defined, relationships among characters developed, and the shape of the play determined, the director changes his focus. In early rehearsals he was often focused on minutiae: a character's reaction at a specific moment or a bit of stage movement. Now the director must shift his focus to the shape and movement of the overall production and the effect it will have on an audience member seeing it for the first time. In refining rehearsals the director may work on pacing, comic timing, transitions among scenes, heightening climaxes, or shifting the tone of scenes. Since refining rehearsals fall later in the rehearsal process, when the play is usually being rehearsed off-book and as a whole, with work-throughs -- which stop and start to address problems -- or with run-throughs, the director is able to see the overall shape and to put himself in the shoes of an audience member.
In technical rehearsals the work of the actors is finally put together with the work of the designers. Usually scenery, lights, and sound are added first, reserving costumes for the dress rehearsals, which are typically the last couple of rehearsals before previews or opening night. A first technical rehearsal, or "tech", is often a cue-to-cue, or rehearsal which skips from one sound or light cue or scene change directly to the next one, leaving out all intervening dialogue. The director's role in the technical and dress rehearsals is to observe and adjust how all of the elements fit together. Just before entering technical rehearsals, he usually sits down with the stage manager, lighting and sound designers, and possibly the set designer to set all cues and how they should be called by the stage manager. The stage manager marks in her prompt book when light, sound, and set cues should be called; whether they correspond to lines, movements, and music; how they correspond to one another; and how long they take. This meeting is often called a paper tech. Once in tech rehearsals, he may find that the scene changes are longer than expected and ask the sound designer for more music, or decide that the lights should not go to black between scenes but that actors should be seen by the audience as they move into place for the next scene, or find that the color of a light produces an unattractive color when it hits an actor's costume. The director makes the aesthetic choices about how to reconcile such unforeseen events during the technical and dress rehearsals.

If there are preview performances, as most professional theatres have, the director gets to make final adjustments to actors' performances and technical elements based on audience responses. By opening night, the director's job is done. Often she will come to opening night to hear and see how the final product works in front of an audience, but her role is over once the play opens.

**Historical Conventions of Directing**

Until the middle of the 19th century, the job of director as described in the preceding sections did not exist. One of the best explanations for the sudden creation of the director's job is that staging in past eras was highly stylized and regularized, as was set design and acting; in other words, each Greek tragedy looked and sounded approximately like others, and the same with each Restoration comedy. However, once set designers began to create entirely new environments for each play, electric lights brought the job of lighting designer, and artistic movements began to define radically different goals for different theatre texts, the need for a single, unifying artistic vision, as supplied by a director, also arose.

Throughout theatre history, there has always been a figure who did some of the functions assigned to the contemporary director. For centuries, either a company's lead actor or the playwright himself made whatever staging decisions were necessary. Theatre or company managers bought whatever scenery or properties were required by the current repertory of plays when they had the money for it. This was true both of the sharing companies of Shakespeare's time and the later companies managed by businessmen. Costumes were left to the whims and financial resources of the individual actors. Financial, more than artistic, decisions dictated what theatre companies purchased. For example, in the 18th century, theatres across Europe began to attract patrons because of spectacularly painted scenery; since opulent scenery brought audiences, companies began to hire designers who gradually
replaced the older system of stock scenery with scenery built and painted for a specific production.

The German author Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was one of the first theatre practitioners to take decisive steps toward the art of stage directing. In the late 18th century, he assembled a company of actors at the small court theatre in Weimar. He greatly extended the normal rehearsal period for plays, from a week to at least a month. He coached each actor individually on his diction and character interpretation, and encouraged actors to create new characters for each play rather than repeat successful types of characters. Finally, he approached the stage like a canvas, composing the actors in each scene so as to fill out the three dimensional stage space; this replaced the older practice of actors standing front and center whenever they had a sizable speech. This is the first decisive step toward blocking as we know it today.

Two other Germans of the mid-19th century, Richard Wagner and Georg II, Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, are usually credited with defining the director's role and accelerating the spread of directing among European and American companies. Wagner, who is better known for his work composing operas, also directed his own productions and designed and built a theatre to house his operas. His major contribution to the development of directing is his concept of gesamtkunstwerke, which translated literally means "assembled art work." From his experience of operas, Wagner saw clearly that each element of a production must support all of the others towards a specific overall effect on the audience. Although actors and playwrights had relied on the work of painters and fashion designers for centuries, the idea that they should be an integral part of a theatre company and the process of play production was new. Wagner articulated the need for a central, unifying artist, himself, to direct the visions of other artists in the opera.

Saxe-Meiningen produced plays with elaborately researched, historically correct details in scenery, set dressings, and costuming. Some other 19th century men were also interested in historically accurate productions, but the Duke had the time and money to work in detail. More importantly, he applied the same detailed approach to his work with actors. Building on Goethe's innovation of composing the stage picture, he made the stage picture dynamic and extended stage action off the sides of the stage into the wings. He rehearsed his supernumeraries, who are actors with non-speaking roles in crowd scenes who had typically been hired off the street and put on stage with no rehearsal, and formed them into groups with a trained actor in each group. In Saxe-Meiningen's productions, each individual in a crowd scene had his or her own character and each reacted and moved differently in response to the stage action around him. When the company toured Europe, starting in 1874, theatre artists were amazed at this new approach to staging and immediately adopted the Duke's ideas.

The early 20th century saw the rise of auteur-directors, or directors who viewed themselves as a species of author, either writing their own texts or significantly altering a playwright's text to fit their own visions. These are an extreme example of the creative directors describe in part 1. Many auteur-directors also designed their own scenery and lighting, taking a desire for artistic unity to an extreme. Perhaps the most extreme was Britain's Edward Gordon Craig, who not only radically adapted classical texts and
designed his own productions, but also suggested that actors should be übermarrionettes, or superpuppets, responding entirely to a director's vision, without imposing any ideas of their own. In such an extreme viewpoint, the director becomes not the unifying artist of theatre but the only artist. Max Reinhardt introduced the idea of finding or building the right theatre for a production in the 1910's; he believed that we should not have a single kind of theatre space but many options so that a director might choose the most appropriate theatre for his vision of the play. Reinhardt staged plays outdoors, in sports arenas, in cathedrals, and in small and large playhouses.

Many 20th century directors have helped to define new styles of performance, which in turn increases the need for directors generally. Today many options exist for how a play should be produced and how the various elements of theatre should fit together, that the controlling vision has almost become a necessity. Expressionism in the 1920's opened up a new theatrical style, as did Brecht's Epic Theatre over the next two decades and Absurdism in the 1950's and 60's. These theatrical styles were defined by directors and critics in response to new theatrical literature; the best embodiment of the writers' texts required new acting styles and new relationships among performers, designers, and audiences. Since the 1960's, some directors like the Polish Jerzy Grotowski and English Sir Peter Brook began to create theatrical effects with actors' bodies and voices instead of many technical effects, turning theatre away from illusion and spectacle and back to an experience of the imagination. This is called poor theatre. Today most directors use a combination of these twentieth century techniques as they find them useful in a specific production.

Over the last 30 years, some companies have moved away from the traditional view of directing because of its autocratic implications; in such companies decisions are made collectively or by a governing group. Many of these groups also have had political or social goals, like women's theatres (At the Foot of the Mountain in Minnesota) or chicano theatres (El Teatro Campesino in southern California), and felt that the theatre's artistic structure ought to mirror the artists' ideals for larger social organizations.

**Director Part 3**

**Musical Director**
The musical director works with the stage director in musical theatre productions or other plays with music. She works within the director's production concept for the overall show. Her functions include teaching the music and coaching singers on interpretation, vocal technique, and the style of music. Musicals today are written in a variety of musical styles, often combining several styles in one show. The musical director works with singers to achieve the appropriate style, whether it is jazz, classical, rock, or gospel. Many comic characters will also use a character voice to both speak and sing on stage. By coaching in rehearsals, she helps singers to create the dramatic intent of their songs. The musical director may work as the rehearsal accompanist, or another musician may be hired to accompany rehearsals. The musical director is often responsible for hiring, rehearsing, and conducting the pit orchestra. In performance, the musical director may conduct the pit
orchestra, may play keyboard or another instrument, or other musicians and a conductor may be hired for a show's technical rehearsals and run.

**Choreographer**
The choreographer works with the director in musical theatre or other plays that involve dance or stylized movement. Some plays set in other time periods will have a movement coach who teaches movement appropriate to the time period that may or may not include dance. The choreographer, like the music director, works with the director's production concept in staging dances. He selects movement styles appropriate to the music and the director's concept, composes the dances, teaches them, and rehearses them for proper technique. Unlike the choreographer working for a dance company, the theatre choreographer must consider the **dramatic effect**, the purpose of the dance within the plot, and the motivations of the characters involved when composing.

**Fight Director**
A final kind of director is the fight director. He is skilled and usually **certified in stage combat**. Like the music director and choreographer, the fight director works with the director and follows her production concept. Fight directors stage **hand-to-hand combat** as one might see in a western's bar room brawl, fighting with **historic weapons** such as the epee which is found in the final scenes of *Hamlet*, and fighting with **contemporary weapons** as we often find in a murder mystery. Fight sequences are said to be "choreographed" and are **composed and rehearsed** move by move like dances. Many period plays like Shakespeare's Hamlet require detailed period fight choreography in their climactic moments which must be minutely choreographed with lines and dramatic intentions. Mysteries and action plays and movies often require extensive stage combat as well; consider the extensive chase sequences in movies like *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

End of Director Readings
SET DESIGNER Part 1

The set designer creates the primary visual environment for the theatre production. There are five basic goals which reflect the set designer's balance of aesthetic and practical considerations.

1. The set designer creates a design concept, which extends the director's production concept into a complete plan for the visual aspects of the production. The design concept will include the style of the scenery, the number of scenic locations and how stage action will move from location to location, and other information gleaned by the designer from a text analysis. The concept may include a central metaphor or visual image, like the musical Chess, for which the entire visual environment was an enormous chess board.

2. Set the style and tone of the production. Today many theatres do not use the main drape, or curtain which separates the stage and audience; instead, the audience sees the set when it walks into the theatre. Therefore, the audience makes assumptions about the play's style and tone based on the set designer's work, before an actor walks on stage or a line of the play is delivered. The style might range from a highly illusionistic setting, in which we might recognize three walls of a room with complete furnishings, to a more theatrical setting in which we recognize some practical objects which only suggest the full environment. The tone of the set usually reflects the dramatic genre: for example, tragedy may use a darker or less varied color pallete and a few, large objects, whereas comedy may use a brighter and broader color pallete and many realistic or comically exaggerated details.

3. The set gives the first information on time period and location. A gothic cathedral will tell the audience the play will be set in Medieval Europe, but a fast food restaurant will probably indicate contemporary America.

4. Each script presents unique practical problems which must be solved by a designer; often these practical problems will help determine the concept and other design decisions for a play. For example, Miss Saigon requires a helicopter to land on stage, and Phantom of the Opera requires a chandelier that swings from high over the audience down to the stage. Once a designer has found a way to achieve either of these effects, he has begun to establish a style and determine how the stage must be used in the production.

5. The set designer must coordinate and integrate the scenery with the other elements of the production: costumes, lights, sounds, actors, staging needs, and special effects. The effect of all of these elements should be an integrated whole. The director works most closely with a director and lighting designer; because the set designer's the groundplan is necessary to a director when blocking, and the lighting designer must know all about the scenery she will have to light.
Set Designer's Tools

The set designer has two different sets of tools. One set, the aesthetic elements of visual composition, is similar to those of other visual artists. The other tools are the practical objects used to create stage environments; while almost anything can be put into a stage setting, in practical terms the same basic structures are used over and over again.

Visual artists' aesthetic tools:
1. **line**: the dominant lines of a composition might be vertical, horizontal, diagonal, curved, or spiral. Line itself may dominate the composition or only define the edges of masses. The composition below is dominated by lines that move radially from the center of both the ground and the background.

2. **mass**: the size of the elements on the stage. On stage, mass relative to the actor's body is important: does the scenery dominate an actor (a big cathedral, huge stone palace, large forest) or is it in scale with the actor (an everyday kitchen, a subway car, a corporate office)?

3. **composition**: how are the scenic elements arranged in space (along an x, y, and z axis)? Along any given axis, the composition might be symmetrical, balanced, or unbalanced.

4. **space**: positive space is three dimensional space taken up by scenic objects. Negative space is open space, which may be taken up by actors and perhaps by movement of actors and other pieces of scenery. The example below leaves a great deal of negative space, and dwarfs that actor with its massive size and scale.

5. **texture**: can be two dimensional or three dimensional. Two dimensional texture is variation in color, pattern and material. Three dimensional texture is a tactile property: objects could be rough, smooth, silky, bumpy, gritty. Because stage lights tend to hide an object's texture and because texture is harder to see across a distance, a scene designer usually exaggerates stage objects' textures.

6. **color**: has four properties. **Hue** is what we normally think of as color; in paint it is a specific mix of primary colors red, yellow, and blue; in light it is the wavelengths absorbed by the object while the rest of the wavelengths are reflected and caught by the eye. **Saturation** is how much of the hue, the hue could be faintly or strongly present. **Value** is the scale from black (value=0) to white (value=100); if you think of converting the colors
of a picture into a black and white movie, which is really a grayscale with black and white at either end of a spectrum, you will arrive at the picture's values. **Temperature** is a metaphor used for the emotional qualities of a color: reds, oranges and yellows are warm colors while blues, greens and purples are cool.

All of these aesthetic tools will have metaphorical and emotional qualities for an audience member. Vertical lines might be described as "imposing" and the color red as "passionate" or "violent". These associations are culturally relative; in other words they are not innate but learned. Nevertheless, they can be put to use by a designer who wants his set to have a specific emotional impact on an audience.

**Set designer's practical tools:**
While it is usually not a set designer's job to decide how her set will be constructed or to actually build her set, she needs to know the common structures used to create stage environments.

**Flats**: are used to make two dimensional, painted scenery. Often they are painted in perspective or with other trompe de l'oeil to give the impression of three dimensional objects. They are usually constructed of canvas stretched over a wooden frame. Walls, whether interior or exterior, are often built from flats, which are then painted and textured to resemble a real building material or interior decoration. Often flats are used together, by hinging them or lashing them, to represent three walls of an interior. They are often anchored to the stage floor with stage braces.

**Cutout**: is a piece of thin wood or other firm material that is cut to represent an exterior outline of an object. It may be used on its own or attached to a flat; for example, a flat representing the edge of a forest might have a straight edge (the flat) along a tree trunk and then a cutout representing leaves higher up where the foliage begins.

**Platforms**: are used to add levels to stages, whether a few steps up into another room of a house, a second story to a building, or a higher level representing a different location.

**Wagons**: are platforms that move into place onstage or move around the stage. The simplest way to make a wagon is to put castors on a platform. For some shows, tracks and elaborate electrical systems are installed to run wagons electronically. To raise a wagon or other set piece vertically, a hydraulic lift is often used.
A **turntable**, or **revolve**: is a large circular area of a stage floor that is built to revolve, like an enormous turntable. Anything from an actor to an entire set can be loaded onto the revolve and then spun around into place facing the audience. This was the central scenic device of *Les Miserables*.

**Drops**: are large, painted canvases hung from battens. They could be painted to resemble a city street, a cornfield, or a night sky.

**Scrim**: are large, loosely woven drops, usually unpainted. Because of the loose weave of the fabric, the scrim appears opaque when lit from a front angle but transparent when lit from behind.

**Cycloscera**: is a large white canvas or plaster structure along the back of the stage. Lighting designers make most use of a "cyc" to create the effect of sky or washes of color across the background.

**Projections**: have been used increasingly through the 20th century as integral parts of set designs. Projections might be still pictures, like slides, or moving images shot on video or film. They might be projected onto a cyc, a flat, or any other object.

**SET DESIGNER Part 2**

**Set Designer's Processes**
Although each set designer works somewhat differently from others, they follow similar
steps in the design process, beginning with an analysis of the play text and ending with a rendering and/or working drawings for the technicians who will build the scenery.

The designer's text analysis is somewhat different from the actor's and the director's. While a designer must analyze plot, characters, themes, and language, her focus will be on the visual needs of the play. She specifically looks for the locations needed in the play, objects needed by the action in each location, and suggestions as to the theatrical style. If a play involves multiple locations, one of the first decisions a set designer must make is how to change locations. A unit set is a single set which will stay the same throughout the play. A unit set might represent one single location; however, it might be varied by adding and subtracting wagons for other locations, or it might be a simultaneous setting, which means it represents many locations at once and requires the audience to imaginatively provide the distance among the various areas in the set. A box set is a setting made of flats positioned to represent three walls of an interior setting; these can be changed by flying the flats in and out, rotating the flats to show the reverse side, or placing several box sets on a revolve which only reveals the set currently turned toward the audience. The designer must also decide how theatrical or illusionistic a visual environment to create; a theatrical environment suggests a fuller environment by providing a few key set pieces, whereas an illusionistic environment seeks to fill in all pertinent details with a life-like accuracy. Whereas earlier in this century audiences were content to see a curtain descend, wait for the set to be changed, and watch the curtain rise to reveal the new set, audiences today enjoy watching elaborately choreographed, spectacular set changes. Using a curtain to hide set changes also interrupts the action of a play more than many designers and directors desire.

Once the designer has a basic grasp of the needs of a play and the style of scenery and set changes, he goes into production meetings. In production meetings he hears the director's production concept and perhaps helps to shape that concept. He refines his design concept in dialogue with the other designers and the director. If he has not worked in the specific theatre building before, he learns details about the capabilities of the stage.

The scenic designer's next step is to begin to sketch out his ideas. These preliminary drawings are called thumbnails; because he is describing visual elements, thumbnails communicate his ideas to the other artists far more effectively than words. At this stage a designer will also fill in his ideas for set dressings and perhaps properties. Set dressings are objects like furniture, fences, shrubbery, and carpets. Properties fall into three categories:
they are "set props" if they live on the set, even if they are used by actors; they are "costume props" if they accessorize a costume; and they are "personal props" if they are carried on and off by actors. The set designer is often responsible for designing or approving set props.

The first element that must be finalized is the groundplan, or map of the stage floor looking down on it. The designer usually drafts a groundplan so that the other artists, especially the director and lighting designer, will have the exact locations and measurements of each element of the final set. Once scenic ideas have been agreed upon among the producing staff, set designers paint renderings or build models to represent their finished designs. Many designers' renderings or models are treated as works of art in their own right and displayed in museums or published in art books long after the theatre production has closed. But the initial purpose of the rendering or model is to communicate to the rest of the production staff how the set will look to an audience member. Renderings and models each have their advantages; renderings can be painted to give the full effect of actors, costumes, and lighting on a set, but models give a more accurate sense of how a set will work in three dimensions or as set pieces are added and moved over the course of the play.

Finally, once the entire set design has been coordinated with the director and other designers and all designs approved, the set designer translates her artistic vision for the technicians who will build and paint the units. Either the scene designer or the technical director creates working drawings, or elevations, which are scale drawings of each set piece that indicate materials, size, shape, color and texture. Often a separate set of elevations is drafted for the builders and for the scene painters.

Historical Conventions of Set Design

Scholars argue about the oldest conventions of scene design because history has left us incomplete records. Ancient Greek theatre festivals may or may not have used painted scenery, and they may or may not have changed the scenery to represent different locations. Ancient Romans acted in front of an elaborately carved, large-scale wall with several doors leading to a backstage area. This wall, or scaenae frons, was a permanent structure, serving as the background for every performance given in the theatre. Many scholars believe that in late Greek theatre and in Rome, there were spaces along the permanent back wall in which triangular periaktoi were placed; these periaktoi had different scenes painted on each of three sides. Until the Italian Renaissance, most performers across Europe used little scenery, instead describing locations with dialogue and
using set dressings and properties to suggest an entire location. This approach was practical, given that many companies toured, like the Italian Commedia dell'arte, and few had much money.

At the Italian Renaissance, interest was reborn in all aspects of Ancient Greek and Roman culture, including theatre architecture, play texts, performance, and design. In 1545 Sebastiano Serlio published part 2 of his Architettura, in which he demonstrated how to build a theatre following Roman models, and in which he advocated three stock settings. Based on what he read about the ancients' use of periaktoi, Serlio advocated one stock setting for tragedies, one for comedies, and one for pastorals. The theatre designers of the Renaissance made several adaptations to accommodate the recent innovation of perspective painting; they added depth to the Roman stages and built the upstage area on a rake up toward the back wall, and they painted the three stock settings in perspective. All of the settings, especially when placed on the raked stage, appeared to converge toward a central vanishing point. All three scenes were exteriors, all emphasized straight lines and right angles, all the masses were sizable, and all scenery was placed upstage while actors remained in front of it.

Serlio's ideas about scenery were generally carried out by painting sets of parallel flats, called wings, which were placed in pairs at the sides of the stage, with the pair upstage being placed slightly further on stage than the pair in front of it. At the back of the stage was a painted drop. This system of executing scenery became known through Europe as Italianate scenery or wing and drop scenery, after the method of building it. This style of scenery spread quickly throughout the courts of Europe during the 17th century.
Italianate scenery became increasingly elaborate and new innovations increased its efficiency. During the Baroque era -- the late 17th century -- in France, many Italians and native Frenchmen experimented with scenery under the generous patronage of King Louis XIV. Giacomo Torelli, an Italian lured to France to work for the French court, devised a method for changing scenes that was to become the standard in Europe for three centuries. He devised a system of parallel slots in the stage floor, with chariots on which scenery was mounted and which were controlled by ropes and pulleys attached to the part under the stage floor. A flat was mounted on the poles, or upright vertical pieces of a chariot, while the chariot was offstage, while another chariot was onstage displaying a flat of different scene. Each stage was outfitted with 3 or 4 double sets of slots on each side of the stage, and backdrops that could roll up. Onstage chariots, offstage chariots, and ropes controlling the backdrop were all connected under the stage floor to a rope and pulley system. Thus, stagehands could control and entire setting at once, changing all flats and the backdrop in unison. Audiences were so excited with Torelli's chariot and pole system, that he instigated a vogue for machine plays in France in the mid-17th century. Machine plays were written purely to show off scene changes, with minimal attention to plot or character.

In the 19th century, the box set challenged the popularity of "wing and drop" scenery controlled by Torelli's chariot and pole system. A box set merely turns the parallel flats, "wings", along the sides of the stage to form an angle with the upstage scenery, which is now made up of more flats rather than a drop. When placed at these new angles, the flats resemble three walls of a room or box. Box sets are much more effective at depicting a realistic interior location, but they are much harder to shift.

The 19th century also saw the culmination of a trend toward historical accuracy in scene design. This trend coincided with increasing interest on the part of historians, new archeological finds, and publication of new books on, for example, historical costume or armour or interior decoration. Interiors, exteriors, set dressings, properties, and costumes were regularly researched according to historical place and locality. If historical objects were unavailable, then stage objects were constructed to look like the originals. At its most extreme, the trend toward historical accuracy led to stages that were filled to the point of clutter with "realistic" objects. Some designers felt that too many stage objects could detract from the play itself, and that objects should be selected for their significance.
At the turn of the 20th century, stage design took a decisive turn away from theatrical trends that had dominated since the Renaissance. Spurred primarily by the Swiss Adolph Appia and the English Edward Gordon Craig, scene design turned away from painted perspective scenery to three dimensional scenery. The focus also turned from creating lots of realistic detail to selecting a few representative or metaphorical objects and allowing the audience to imaginatively fill in the details. With this selective approach to scene design, each object placed on the stage becomes more important and is often invested with symbolic weight.

Throughout the 20th century, scene designers have made use of the technological advances that have effected all areas of our lives. First, use of electrical power allowed areas of the stage and house as well as the scenery to be operated electrically. From the 1930's designers have made increasing use of projections; internationally known designer Josef Svoboda uses projections as the major element of his designs. In the 1960's and 1970's, many directors experimented with simplifying scene designs and creating stage objects with actors bodies or a few simple, multi-purpose objects. Since then, scene design has become increasingly fragmented and suggestive.

Some cutting edge contemporary designers are incorporating computer-generated 2D images or 3D environments into their designs. With advances in the technologies used to create
virtual reality, it is now becoming possible to create interactive environments in which actors or audience members can have an effect on the computer generated scenery. Such experiments are being conducted at the University of Kansas, for example.

Scene designers today, like the other artists of the theatre, have no single standard way of creating scenery. Instead, they can design scenery drawing on hundreds of years of different styles and traditions, perhaps being true to the conventions of wing and drop scenery for one production while, for another production, they might use projections and fragmented scenery made up of three dimensional structures.

SET DESIGNER Part 3

Scene Painting

There are two main difference between painting scenery and painting for a gallery display: the scene painter adheres to the scene designer's ideas and the scene painter must compensate for the distance between audience members and the scenery.

The designer may paint his own sets or it may be a specialized job. In either case, painter's elevations are prepared to give an exact miniature of how a piece of scenery will look when painted. The set designer will have already considered the coordination of color with the costume and lighting designers before scenery can be painted. For example, a red dress against a red scenic object will make an actress disappear into the very red environment. Lighting can similarly enhance a painted set or distort the colors.

Scale of painting for the stage must be generally large to compensate for the distance between stage and audience and the strength of lighting instruments which will both tend to make details disappear. However, a small arena stage with close audience members will require more detailed painting than a large proscenium house with an orchestra pit between the stage and seating areas. To understand how painters use this distance, consider an impressionist painting (Monet's water lilies, for example) and how it's effect varies depending on how close you stand to the canvas. Close up you may see only incoherent blotches of color, whereas at a distance your eye creates the pattern of the landscape in some detail.

The scene painter translates a painter's elevation to a piece of scenery by marking each into grids and copying the information from the small scale elevation to the corresponding larger scale scenic object. The scene painter often uses a paintframe to attach large pieces of scenery vertically and then be able to move it up and down to reach various parts of the object while standing on the floor.

The scene painter is also concerned with adding depth and texture to both flat pieces of scenery and pieces that are built with some texture or three dimensionality. She uses line to create the illusion of shadow from three dimensional
objects or emphasize shadows on three dimensional objects, like the molding of a wall or the underside of stones. She has many possible ways to create texture. One possibility is to mix something like sawdust into the paint itself. Another is to layer the paint colors with such techniques as spattering, sponging, dry brushing, wood grain, or marbling. Finally, she might use stencil or actual wallpaper.

Painted scenery usually has a **minimum of three colors** applied in some format; these colors may not be obvious from the distance of an audience seat, but they are useful both to add texture to the set pieces and to pick up changes of color in the stage lighting.

**Properties Design**

**Set dressings**, which includes objects like furniture or shrubs, will usually be selected by the set designer. Stage and hand properties may be selected by the set designer and costume properties by the costume designer, or a separate properties designer may take on the "props." **Set or stage props** are objects like pictures, candles, dishes or other elements that stay on the set. **Hand props** are those objects that actors actively use, like money, food, or cigarettes. **Costume props** include makeup, fans, umbrellas, walking sticks, snuff boxes, and gloves.

Props for period plays, like Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, may be quite involved, depending on the degrees of detail and of historical accuracy desired by the director. Like the other designers, the properties designer must support the director's overall concept for the production. The props designer must also coordinate closely with the set and costume designers. Since many props are actively used by actors, a props designer must also be sensitive to actors' needs within a scene. Canes, telephones, dishes, books, and suitcases must normally be functional for actors. Even a contemporary play performed in a realistic style will cause the props designer to make many choices about the best objects for the stage. Every lamp, framed picture, and letter used on the stage will communicate about the characters' personalities, tastes, and interests. And each property must look appropriate with the scenery and costumes.

Some properties require daily maintenance or replacement, like food that is eaten, a mirror that is shattered, cigars that are smoked, or letters that are torn up. In such a case the designer must acquire many copies of the same objects.
Costume Design Part 1

Costume Designer's Goals
Costume design is the most personal aspect of design. The costume designer must create clothes for characters that, on the one hand, reflect the ideas and goals of the play, but, on the other hand should look like the character chose the clothing in the same way you choose yours every day. Similarly, because we all wear clothes but probably do not design houses, audiences and actors will make strong, personal associations with what a character is wearing on stage.

The costume designer's goals are similar to the set designer's goals. These goals can be broken into five categories: costumes should help establish tone and style, time and place, and character information, and costumes should aid the performer and coordinate with the director's and other designers' concepts.

Costumes give information on the tone and style of a play. They may look just like what we wear today, or they may look like what people really wore at the time in which the play is set. Both of these would be illusionistic costuming. On the other hand, costumes might be representative of an idea in the play; for example, actors costumed in robes or unitards of various colors will establish a theatrical style. A different, stylized approach to costuming might also use some period elements mixed with contemporary dress; this would give the audience a flavor of a historical period without trying to create a full, theatrical illusion of another time and place.

Costumes tell us a great deal about the time and place in which a play is set. Dresses with an empire waist made of light fabrics in light colors place us in the early 18th century, such as in Jane Austin's novels. Blue jeans with bell bottoms and painted or embroidered with many bright colors tell us a character belongs in the late 1960's.
Costumes give us **information on individual characters**, on the relationships among characters, and on groups of characters. First consider your own wardrobe, and what you would choose to wear on a job interview, on a big date, to wash the car, or to come to class. What you wear says a great deal about who you are and about what you are intending to do. The same is true on the stage, but on stage we make even more associations with a character's clothing because we know it is specifically chosen for the play. If we see a woman on stage in a bright red dress, we will make associations with the dress's cut and color. For example, we might decide that the character is dressed for a night on the town. We might associate either passion and love with the red color, or perhaps blood and violence, or perhaps images of the devil. If other characters on stage wear subdued tones or cool colors, then the character in red will contrast with the other characters. On the other hand, other characters in shades of red will be visually linked the character in the red dress. Similarly, characters will be visually linked on stage if they wear clothing with similar silhouettes or colors.

The costume designer **works closely with actors**. He designs costumes for that specific actor's body as much as for the role the actor is playing. For example, if a designer had planned the red dress mentioned above for the central female character in a play, but the director casts a woman with orange hair and freckles, the red dress will no longer have the intended effect when worn by that actress. A more complimentary color will be chosen. Similarly, costumes can be used to enhance an actor's height, girth, natural coloring or to draw attention to any part of the actor. In the end, the actor must be comfortable wearing her costume: the work of the actor and of the designer can be undermined if an actor is uncomfortable in the clothing or does not know how to wear it and move in it correctly. For example, actors today must practice walking around in full length, hooped skirts or in a top hat and tails so that the character can appear to the audience to be comfortable in such clothing.

Finally, the costume designer must **support the director's concept** and must work with the other designers to create a coordinated visual effect.

**Costume Designer's Tools**

Like the set designer, the costume designer has two sets of tools: the elements of visual design and the practical material needed to create costumes.

As discussed in the last chapter, the elements of visual design are line, mass, composition, space, color, and texture. The costume designer uses the design elements somewhat differently from a set designer. The first important element of a costume is its **silhouette**, which combines its line and mass.
Silhouette is the fastest way to identify the time and place of a period costume. Silhouette also tells what parts of the body are emphasized, hidden, or displayed by the clothing. Contrast a Restoration woman's silhouette with a woman dressed to go out today: the Restoration woman wore an enormous skirt with underskirts and panniers to increase its mass yet wore a bodice with an extremely low, wide neckline; the woman today might wear a mini skirt, heels, and blouse emphasizing the length of her legs. The Restoration woman would never show her legs, while few contemporary women would dare wear a Restoration neckline.

A costume designer considers composition on several different levels. She composes a single costume, she creates a composition of a single character over the duration of the play, and she composes how the entire cast should look when on stage together at any moment of the play. Usually a central character will change radically through the play's action (Oedipus blinds himself, Nora in A Doll House decides to leave her husband) and the character's successive costumes should show the character's evolution. Factors that a costume designer considers when composing the costuming of the entire cast might include putting the leading characters in more noticeable clothing, working within a restricted color palette, or demonstrating relationships among characters through silhouette or color so that some look good and some silly together.

Space is less a factor for costume designers than set designers, because their canvas is always the human body. Color in costumes functions similarly to color in set design; it has its four properties, we associate certain colors with comedy versus tragedy or with other kinds of moods, and color must be used with less subtlety than in life to compensate for the distance between audience and actors.

Texture in costume is slightly different from set design. The first element of texture is in the fabric itself: satins are smooth and shiny while lace is light and highly textured and tweed is heavy and highly textured. On the stage, plastics, leathers, furs, feathers, and other materials may also be combined with fabric. Two dimensional texture is provided by the fabrics' patterns: paisley, plaid, and polka dots have a busy visual texture, for example. Many costumes are composed of multiple fabrics making up multiple articles of clothing plus accessories, making an elaborate visual texture.

Movement is an element of visual design only in art forms that move through time (video, film, theatre, kinetic sculpture) Costumes must move with an actor through space, and the amount of movement should reflect the character and action of the play. Light or loosely woven fabrics move more freely than heavy or tightly woven fabrics or than other costume materials like leather or plastic. Consider the Romantic ballerina's tea
length tutu of gauze versus the armor worn in a Shakespearean history play.

**Practical Tools**

In a more practical sense, the tools of the costume designer are the *fabrics* or other materials out of which costumes may be created; the various methods of putting costumes together, such as *sewing* machines or hot glue guns; and the *bodies of the actors* themselves, because no costume will make it onto the stage without an actor in character in it.

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**Costume Design Part 2**

**Costume Designer's Process**

A costume designer's process parallels the set designer's process, but with many important differences.

1. **Text analysis**: the costume designer looks specifically at the characters, the characters' actions, how the characters change through the play, the times and locations of the play, and the style of the play.

2. **Production meetings**: the costume designer must also work within a director's concept for the play, which may shift the time, place, or style from that indicated by the playwright, and coordinate with other designers' ideas.

3. The costume designer may present initial ideas in the form of *thumbnail* sketches, color *palettes*, fabric *swatches*, or pictures drawn from outside sources.

4. Once final designs have been approved, the costume designer creates *renderings*. Unlike the set designer, who may create only one rendering if the play takes place on a unit set, the costume designer normally creates a different rendering for
5. The costume designer gives the renderings to the costume shop for use in constructing the costumes. Thus, renderings may also contain verbal instructions. The designer may also sketch other views of the costume to aid the shop in building the garments, for example, an elaborate bustle on the back of a skirt would need a separate drawing if the rendering showed the skirt from the front. Outer garments or accessories might also be sketched separately. The costume designer does not provide the equivalent of the set designer's elevations or working drawings because costumes must be cut and fitted to the actor's body, not simply the designer's specifications.

6. The costume designer does not usually build or buy the costumes; this is the job of the costume shop. A designer will attend fittings when actors try on the work of the costume shop. The designer may make adjustments at that time, depending on how the garments suit the actor and character and the actions that character engages in onstage. For example, dancing or swordplay require very flexible costumes, which might be achieved either by enlarging a costume or using fabrics which move easily, like stretch knits. A single costume for a single character usually requires multiple fittings.

7. Designers join the entire group of artists, in the theatre where the play will open, during technical and dress rehearsals. Normally, sets, lights, and sound are handled in tech rehearsals, and the costume designer comes in for the first dress rehearsal, which is when costumes and makeup are added. Sometimes, when the costumes are elaborate, the designer, costume shop foreman, and director watch a costume parade. A costume parade is when actors come out singly or in groups in their costumes outside the context of the play, simply to examine the look of each costume, its appropriateness to a scene, and how groups of actors will look together.

**Historical Conventions of Costume Design**

Of course actors have always worn costumes, but the job of costume designer evolved only in the 19th century with the general theatrical trend toward historical accuracy.

While in rare cases a set designer might create costumes, like Inigo Jones' fanciful costumes for the Stuart Court Masques in the early 1600's or Jean Berain's costumes for the
spectacles of Louis XIV's court, but in most cases costumes were **left up to the actors**. In Shakespeare's company, the Lord Chamberlain's Men, each actor in the company provided his own costumes. Except for certain conventional costumes for characters like Ancient Romans, Shakespeare's company wore contemporary clothing of as fine a quality as they could afford. The company was given the cast-off clothing of the aristocracy and thus had a small stock of costumes belonging to the company. Hirelings and apprentices, who were not sharing members of the company, were probably costumed from this stock wardrobe. Audiences did not expect historical accuracy in costuming, but they did want visual splendor.

The practices described for Shakespeare's company lasted for hundreds of years. It often led to strange character inconsistencies; for example, a famous actress who commanded a high salary could appear in the best gown in the whole play, even if she were playing the maid within the story of the play.

A few companies in the **18th century** experimented with historically accurate costuming of period plays. This was mostly done to draw an audience, as an extra piece of publicity about the play. In these cases, it was usually the set designer or an actor-manager who selected the costumes. Often, only the lead characters were costumed in period clothing.

In the 19th century, accuracy to the time and place of the play slowly became the normal means of production of period plays. **Books** of plates depicting costumes of various lands through history were published by the middle of the century, making it easier for theatre companies to copy old or foreign styles of dress.

With the rise of the director toward the end of the 19th century, the role of the costume designer was firmly established, even for **contemporary plays**. Directors by the end of the century wanted the costumes to be appropriate to character as well as to time and place, and this required the artistry of the costume designer.
In the 20th century, costume design for the stage and cinema has often been stoutly **realistic**, even when the style of scenery and lighting is stylized. Some kinds of productions, like musical comedies, musical reviews, science fiction, and children's theatre allow the costume designer more imaginative freedom. This century has enlarged the range of resources for the imaginative designer: a variety of synthetic fabrics, furs, and plastics can be used to make costumes for *Cats* or *Star Trek* aliens, for example.

**Costume Design Part 3**

**Make-up Design**
Sometimes make-up is designed by the costumer, sometimes there is a separate make-up designer, and sometimes actors are responsible for their own stage make-up. In shows with more complex make-up needs, a make-up designer is more hired.

Make-up has three purposes on the stage: 1) to **make the actor's features visible**, 2) to **create character**, and 3) **corrective purposes**.

Because stage lights tend to wash out an actor's face and because greater distances between spectators and actors makes visibility difficult, all actors wear makeup on stage. A **base** gives the face color and evens out the facial tones; stage bases may be water-based, greasepaint, or pan sticks. **Eyeliner** and **rouge** for the lips and cheeks are also used by all actors. While greater distances call for more saturated colors, in a smaller theatre actors will use less make-up and colors that resemble their natural tones.

Make-up may also be used to **create a character**. Smaller character effects include changing the shape of eyes or eyebrows, aging the face and hands, or adding facial hair. Different countries and time periods also had different notions of beauty; by following these with make-up design, make-up can help to establish period and time for a character. Consider silent film actress Clara Bow's "bow" shaped lips, or the heavy liner and bright colors used on the eyelid by women of the 1950's. Larger effects may be created with putty or prosthetic devices (latex foam or plastics), such as building up the nose and chin with putty for the Wicked Witch of the West in *The Wizard of Oz*, or building entire prosthetic heads and limbs for the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. Other character effects might be bruising, bulletholes, scars, or disfigurements.

**Corrective** makeup is used to help an actor look his or her best on stage. The actor uses highlight and shadow to enhance the bone structure and features of the face toward standard proportions.
For both character and corrective makeup, the most common techniques are **highlighting/shadowing** and stippling. Highlighted areas will stand out, whether or not they follow the normal structure of the face, and shadowed areas will recede from view. **Stippling** is pressing the makeup onto the face rather than wiping it, and it is used to give texture to the face and to blend together areas that have been highlighted and shadowed extensively. Alone, it can be used to create a "5 o'clock shadow." Stippling may be done with sponges or brushes.

**End of Costume Designer readings**
LIGHTING DESIGN Part 1

Light Designer's Goals
Lighting design is a more subtle element of a theatre production than those you have encountered thus far. Until you specifically look for shifts in light or how the light is effecting your perception of a scene, you might not have any conscious awareness of the lighting. The goals of the lighting designer can be divided into five major categories.

1. **Selective visibility**: the lighting designer makes the stage visible to the audience; he also selects what should be seen and what should not be seen at any point in the play.

2. **Establish time and place**: although lights are more subtle than the scenery and costumes in giving the location of the play, lights can also provide important information such as time of day, season of the year, or places like a city, desert, or forest.

3. **Influence mood**: lights are an important tool for creating the mood of a production. Simply shifting the color or intensity of the lights will change the emotional quality of a scene. Consider how you feel on a dark, gray day in March versus a bright, sunny day in July. Consider how sunsets or moonlight effect your mood. Look at the two examples of the same set with two different light cues.

4. **Reinforce style**: lighting designers can either create an illusionistic effect by simulating real light sources like the sun or chandeliers -- called *motivational* lighting -- or a highly stylized effect by lighting the stage in a way that could not possibly come from "real" sources.

5. **Visual rhythm or movement**: the lighting designer is important in establishing the rhythm of a production: he determines how lights change from scene to scene, within scenes, and into intermission and the end of the play. Use of lights will encourage or discourage applause at the end of musical numbers, scenes, or acts, for example.

Light Designer's Tools
Like the other designers, a lighting designer has both artistic and practical tools. However, the properties of light are distinctly different from the elements of design used by scene designers and costumers.
Artistic properties of light:
1. **Intensity** means how much light is given off by a single lighting instrument. This is determined both by the **wattage** of the bulb and the setting of a **dimmer**, which works much like a dimmer switch you might have at home.

2. **Color** of the light is determined by a piece of gelatin, or **gel**, placed in a metal frame and attached in front of the lens of the lighting instrument. Lighting designers always use colored gel because a bare instrument gives off very harsh light that will wash out details of stage objects, including actors' faces.

3. **Direction or angle** of light means where the light is placed in relation to the stage action. To preserve the 3 dimensional effect of stage objects, which appear 3D to us largely because of ambient light, several lighting instruments are used. The **key light** is the major source or light while 2 or more **fill lights** are placed at different angles to light stage objects and actors from all sides. Lights can be placed to any side of the stage and are named according to their relationship to the stage: top light, back light, side light, or front light, for example.

4. The **distribution or shape** of light refers to where on the stage the light falls. Some types of lighting instruments give off a more diffuse light, whereas other instruments have a beam that can be focused and/or shaped with shutters built into the barrel, helping the designer with selective visibility. Another way to shape the light beam is by placing a metal cutout in front of the light; these cutouts are called **gobos or patterns**. They might be used to project foliage or cloud patterns, for example.

5. The **movement** of light is created by shifts of light over time. Lights rarely remain static for an entire scene, instead they are likely to shift subtly as the mood of the play changes or as the actors move from one area of the stage to another. **Dimmers** are used to control the movement of light. Designers almost always want lights to **fade in** or fade out or **cross fade**; the last of which means to move slowly from one set of lights on at a certain intensity to a different set at a different intensity.
The light designer's practical tools include the various kinds of lighting instruments, gels, gobos, cables, dimmer boards, and a knowledge of the circuits in the theatre and electricity generally.

Most important are the lighting instruments themselves, which fall into three basic types: spotlights, floodlights, and strip-lights.

1. There are several types of **spotlights**, all of which share the cone shaped beam that defines a spotlight, but each of which has different capabilities. Most familiar are **follow spots**, which are operated manually and throw an intense, focused beam of light and are usually used to "follow" an actor or singer. An **ellipsoidal** spotlight is also an intense light that can be focused tightly; unlike the follow spot, its beam may be shaped and it is usually static. The **fresnel** is the least sharply focused of the spotlights and has little ability for adjustment; its lamp slides within the barrel to adjust the hot spot in the center of the beam.

2. **Floodlights** throw light over a broad area and can not be focused. They may be used to light a background or large stage areas. Lamps may be as bright as 2000 watts. The most typical floodlight used on stage is the **scoop**.

3. **Striplights** are typically used either as footlights or to throw lights across a drop or cyclorama. Typically striplights come in 6 foot sections, each containing 12 lights that may be operated together or used to send strips of light comparatively short distances. Often they are gelled in multiple colors.

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**LIGHTING DESIGN Part 2**

**Light Designer's Processes**

The lighting designer's process is similar to that of the scene and costume designers, but most of her work begins later in the production process. A lighting designer can not make concrete decisions about her design until she knows the set design and director's basic staging.
1. **Script analysis.** The lighting designer looks for basic plot, characterization, and thematic choices, then more specifically for indications of **time, place, mood, and style.** If there are many short scenes or scenes that take place in more than one location at a time, the lighting design will be important in establishing a style of movement in time and space for the production. The following example shows a highly theatrical, as opposed to motivational or illusionistic, use of lights.

2. **Production meetings.** The lighting designer's ideas must fit within the director's overall concept and support the scene and costume designers' work. Although her busiest time falls later than the other two designers, she is part of the design discussions from the beginning to be sure that all visual elements will be well coordinated.

3. Once the lighting designer has seen the renderings for the set and costumes, received a groundplan and attended a rehearsal to see how the actors use the stage space, the lighting designer can **firm up her ideas and concepts** for the use of light. She may make a **rendering** to demonstrate the look of light on the set, or she may use a **light lab** or light a **model** to see how the lights will look in three dimensional space and in movement.

4. The lighting designer communicates her ideas to the light crew, who will actually hang the lights, by creating a **lightplot.** The lightplot, like the groundplan, is a bird's eye view of the stage and shows the locations of the major pieces of scenery. Unlike the groundplan, it breaks the stage into areas which will be lit together, shows at least the part of the house over which lighting instruments are to be hung, and shows the exact position where each lighting instrument is to be placed. The designer uses **templates** to draft each distinct kind of instrument, and she includes a **key** describing what color (and pattern) should be placed in each instrument and how the instruments should be **cabled** and **patched** into the dimmers. When lights are patched together, a single dimmer can control multiple instruments.

5. **Light hang and focus:** The lighting designer in professional theatre does not hang instruments, just as the professional scene designer does not build scenery or the costumer construct the costumes. After all instruments are hung and cabled, they are focused one by one, which means aimed at the appropriate area of the stage; and, if they are spotlights, lights are focused and shaped, or **shuttered.** Again, the
professional lighting designer may not be present for the light focus.

6. **Set cues**: The lighting designer meets with the director and stage manager before technical rehearsals begin; they determine when, where, and how quickly each light cue, or change in any or all lights, should occur. The stage manager will be responsible for calling cues to the light board operator during technical rehearsals and performances.

7. During **technical rehearsals**, the lighting designer, director, and other designers see how the results of their collaboration fit together for the first time. Any of the designers’ work or the director’s staging may be adjusted during "tech" for a greater coherence of the entire production.

**Historical Conventions of Light Design**

Before the Renaissance, theatre was typically performed outdoors, weather permitting, with light provided at the whim of Mother Nature. When productions began to be mounted indoors at the Renaissance, **candlelight** was used. Candles had many drawbacks: it took enormous numbers of candles which had to be replaced as they burnt down, candles dripped and smelled badly, and the fire hazard was extremely serious.

The next step from candles was **oil lamps**. Oil lamps eliminated the problem of replacing candles and of dripping wax and reduced the fire hazard because the flame was now enclosed. However, they were still dangerous, smelled badly, produced a great deal of smoke, and required individual lighting and extinguishing. The first experiments in coloring light were performed in the 18th century: light, colored fabric or colored water was placed around the lamp.

In the early 1800's, **gas lines** were invented and installed quickly through major cities. One of the first theatres anywhere to use gas lighting was Philadelphia's Chestnut Street theatre in 1816. Gas again reduced the risk of fire because the entire gas supply could be extinguished at a central point. But gas lights were still flames, and the gas lines made explosions possible. Artists continued to experiment with color in light. Gas lighting also enabled the **gas table**, the earliest version of a dimmer.

Early in the nineteenth century the first spotlights were invented, the **limelight** and carbon arc. The limelight was invented in 1816 and pioneered in theatres in the 1830's. It uses gas plus cylinders of oxygen and hydrogen to heat a column of lime until it gives off light. It was so bright that at first it was used mostly to represent a sun or moon on the background. The **carbon arc** began to be used widely in the theatre in the 1840's; it involved giving a positive charge to one stick of carbon and a negative charge to another and then bringing the carbons close together to produce light. In the 1860's the carbon arc was placed inside a casing with a lens to create the cone shape of the spotlight. Carbon arcs are very bright, but inconsistent in intensity and noisy.
It was Thomas Edison's patenting of the **incandescent light bulb** in 1879 that led to real control over stage lights and therefore the profession of lighting designer. Adolphe **Appia** and Edward Gordon **Craig** were the earliest designers to champion light as a major design element in lighting their simplified, three dimensional, symbolic sets. Appia in particular wrote of that it shifted constantly with the mood of the scene, evoking response in the audience the same way that music constantly produces subtle variations in tone and mood.

In the twentieth century, lighting has become easier to control and has even more possibilities through new technological inventions. Many designers have used **projections** as an integral part of scenery, whether as abstract commentary on the action or setting or to evoke a literal setting. Projections may also be still or moving images, and today they may be shot with a camera or created by computers.
SOUND DESIGN Part 1

Sound Designer's Goals
The sound designer's goals fall into two distinct categories: the designing of sound and music effects for the production and the amplification of the stage.

In sound and music design, the designer is responsible for the auditory environment of a production. Every sound not produced by the actors onstage is chosen by the sound designer. In selecting the audio, the sound designer's goals are closest to those of the lighting designer.

1. **Establish time and place.** For example, a medley of 1950's rock and roll songs played before a play begins, in the pre-show, will clearly establish 1950's America.

2. **Create mood.** Sound, like light, is extremely effective in creating a mood, whether in preshow, at chosen moments within a script, or as **underscoring** for an entire scene. Consider the impact of the music under the opening titles of Jaws: while the picture on screen depicts the ocean, the music gives us the feeling of menace.

3. **Establish style.** In some cases, sound or music will establish a style because we associate the sound with an artistic style (the 1950's medley again). In other cases, sound that does not have a clear motivation onstage (a jukebox, a radio, etc.), establishes a theatrical style for the production.

4. **Movement.** Sound is often used with changes in lighting as transitions between scenes. In a musical, music moves us from the more realistic tone of the book scenes to the clearly stylized song and dance numbers. **Montage,** a term developed in the cinema for the collapsing of time and/or space through a series of visual images, almost always relies on sound as the link among the disparate images.

5. **Work within the director's concept and coordinate with other designers.** The sound designer may also need to coordinate closely with a composer or musical director, the other theatrical artists who work exclusively with the auditory aspect of theatre.

The sound designer may also have the goal of **amplifying** all sound from the stage. Broadway theatres, outdoor theatres, and most sizable Regional and University stages are amplified today. In addition, there are many forms of amplification for the hearing impaired.

Sound Designer's Tools
The sound designer's tools vary with the two different sets of goals. For sound design, there are two basic kinds of sounds: live/practical or taped/canned.

**Live sound effects,** or **practicals,** are produced live on or just off stage. These could include door slams, offstage footsteps, explosions, gunshots, thunder, or music made by onstage performers. In the days of radio dramas, the 30's and 40's, manipulation of practical
sound effects by a skilled sound man reached an artistic peak, allowing radio audiences to vividly image settings from the sounds produced live on the air by the sound man.

Sound effects can also be recorded, which is usually referred to as taped or canned. Some sounds are more likely to be recorded, such as car crashes, earthquakes, or violent storms. While in a musical most of the music is produced live, in straight plays most music that would be used in pre-show, between scenes, as underscoring, or in post-show will be taped.

Canned sound effects are available in collections on CD, and the designer may then digitally remaster these pre-produced effects to create exactly the right sound, of exactly the right duration, for the production. Sounds or music can also be created entirely digitally. Synthesizers and other computer software for sound synthesis have become increasingly sophisticated over the last decade, allowing a designer to create a tremendous range of sounds.

Sounds might be stored in analog or digital form for playback in production. Examples of analog formats include reel-to-reel and cassette tape or LP's. Digital media include CD's, CD-ROM's, and DAT. Until recently, a reel-to-reel deck was commonly used in production, because it stores high quality sound and can be cued very specifically. Today digital formats predominate, with DAT tape an increasingly common format. Digital systems are higher quality, more compact, can also be cued specifically, and maintain a higher quality when dubbed.

The sounds designed for a production are played in the theatre on a sound system which comprises at least an input source (DAT player), mixer, amplifier, and speakers. The mixer determines which input signals - from such devices as live mikes, CD's, reel to reel or DAT tape - are played at which levels, and then outputs those signals. Many systems also include an equalizer and synthesizer. Equalizers allow a designer to selectively enhance or dampen specific frequencies contained within a sound. Synthesizers allow the designer to add a range of special effects to the sounds. Like with lights, it is now common to have a computer controlling the sound designer's cues.

If a sound designer will also amplify the stage, he uses the same sound system but patches the additional sound reinforcement equipment into the mixer. Most theatres have a system specially designed for the acoustics of that space and the kinds of productions normally done, whether straight plays or musicals.

Several types of microphones are used to amplify stage speech or singing. In amplifying the stage, the designer may choose to mike the stage, the performers, or, most commonly, both. To amplify the stage, mikes such as PZM's may be placed along the front of the stage floor.
and/or shotgun mikes hung from the ceiling. Performers may be miked with wireless mikes, which consist of a small, omnidirectional microphone and a body pack, which sends the signal to a receiver, usually via a specific radio frequency.

SOUND DESIGN Part 2

Sound Designer's Processes
The sound designer's process is similar to other designers unless he will be working with a composer.

1. **Text analysis**: The sound designer looks in general for plot, characterization, themes, and style and then specifically for required sound effects or specified music.

2. **Production meetings**: Depending on the style of the production as defined both by the text and in the director's production concept, a sound designer's job may be short and simple, or quite complex. For a simple, straight play with few sound effects and a director uninterested with adding sound, the sound designer simply finds the sounds indicated in the text and creates a mix of pre-show and post-show music. For a more interpretive approach to the same, simple text, he may decide to add underscoring, music for scene transitions, or add more sound effects. The decision to amplify the stage or not will also be made in production meetings. A sound designer will discuss his ideas with the other artists and bring in clips of sounds and music to clarify his ideas.

3. The sound designer finds all of the necessary sounds and music, and he may remaster them to sound exactly as he wishes and to last an appropriate amount of time for the production.

4. Like the lighting designer, the sound designer will probably meet with the director and stage manager to set cues. Here the artists agree on how and when the sounds should be brought in and out, what volume levels to play them at, and how long they should play.

5. The sound designer prepares a cue sheet that indicates what sounds are to enter the performance when, whether they are live or canned, how long they last, and what levels they are to be played at. Often the designer will place all of the taped cues onto a single tape that can be preset to the next cue as soon as the first one is finished playing, minimizing the possibility of error.

6. **Technical rehearsals**: the designer sets levels and adjusts the lengths of sounds to coordinate with the other artists work; for example, sounds must balance with the performers' voices, scene change music must fit the length and tone of scene changes, and explosions must sound exactly when the visual effect explodes. If the stage is amplified, levels must be set on the mikes to pick up appropriate noise from the actors and minimize the amplification of ambient sound (such as actors' feet when walking across the stage), and
the positions of mikes may be altered. The **stage manager** calls the sound cues in the techs and actual performance, and they will be executed by a **sound operator**, who runs the actual sound check before a performance and plays the cues prepared by the designer.

**Special Effects Design**
For intricate special effects, a theatre company might hire a special designer. However, some effects are used in so many scripts that theatre's **technical director** can usually create them themselves. Such effects include, smoke, fog, explosions, and gunfire.

**Smoke or fog** may be created in a variety of ways. One is to use **dry ice**, which tends to hang low over the floor and has the unfortunate side effect of slipping over the apron and settling around the audience in the orchestra section. **Fog machines** create a different kind of smoke, when "fog juice" is heated, a mist is given off which then rises quickly, disappearing from the stage.

Explosions, which give off some smoke of their own are created with **flashpots**. Flashpots are usually commercially produced; they are built to trigger highly explosive **flash powder** on cue.

For **guns** that go off onstage, **blank cartridges** are used and the guns are never pointed directly at another person. If objects or characters appear to be hit, then the reactions are created separately. Bursting blood packs on actors (created in the costume shop) or shattering bottles (rigged by a property manager) are usually triggered electrically to coincide with the gunshot.

**End of Light and Sound Design Readings**
Musical Theatre Part 1

Musical theatre is the one genre of live theatre that is arguably a part of popular culture in America today. Although centered on Broadway in New York City, Broadway musicals tour all major urban centers in the country, giving the larger population a chance to see Broadway hits within a few years of their opening. Many people who have never seen a Shakespeare play or a new straight play by a contemporary author have seen a Broadway musical, whether a Broadway tour or a summer stock production.

Origins in Nineteenth Century Popular Entertainment

Musical comedy is the one theatrical genre we will study this semester that is an American creation. Early influences, like variety shows, originated in other countries, but the particular synthesis of many different influences is original to the United States.

Antecedents of musical comedy include minstrelsy, vaudeville, and revue/follies shows, all of which are American forms of variety shows. Also important are the evolution of *ragtime and jazz music*, which are the original musical styles of musical comedy. Both ragtime and jazz grew out of the melding of European music of the 19th century with African American music. Irving Berlin is often said to have popularized ragtime for general audiences with his song "Alexander's Ragtime Band". As a composer, Berlin played an important role in the transition from older musical entertainments of the 1900's, 1910's and 1920's to musical comedy in the late 1920's. The dance style of musical theatre, which we often loosely refer to as jazz, developed from the popular dance style of African American nightclubs in the 1910's and 1920's. The popularity of the music and dance styles on the early Broadway stage provides an important contrast with today's musical theatre. The earlier forms of variety shows all included comedy, music, and dance to varying degrees.

Minstrelsy was the earliest forerunner of the American musical. Beginning in 1828, Thomas D. Rice, a white man, presented a comic caricature of a lame black man singing and dancing. He named his character "Jim Crow", and Jim became an immediate favorite of white audiences. It is important to note the historical difference between audiences of the 19th century and audiences today: 19th century audiences were highly entertained by racial and ethnic stereotypes and also laughed at physical disabilities. Not only Jim Crow, the slow, drawling character on an antebellum plantation, and also Zip Coon, the blackface "city-slicker" character who was fast talking and clever; but also other ethnic stereotypes such as a drunken Irishman, the American Yankee named Jonathan, or the Jewish street ruffian Mose. As more immigrant populations became citizens in larger numbers, more stage stereotypes appeared. Just as we are less likely to laugh at ethnic stereotypes today, we are unlikely to find jokes at the expense of the disabled funny, like Jim Crow's limp while dancing or a blind man walking into objects. On the other hand, we, like 19th century audiences, tend to make light of things in our culture that are continuing problems. Consider the rash of jokes that appeared in the wake of Bill Clinton's affairs or that follow a serious plane crash or natural disaster.

The minstrel shows that arose in the 1830's were made up of three parts: a first section with the whole company on stage, the olio, and a comic afterpiece. In the first section, the
A minstrel company sat on the stage in a semi-circle, with the MC "Mr. Interlocutor" in the middle and the two musicians, Tambo (who played tambourine) and Bones (who played pig's rib bones) on either end. All minstrel performers were white men in blackface, which they achieved by rubbing burnt cork on their faces. A few black performers rose to prominence as well, but African American minstrelsy did not really take off until after the Civil War. Women were never members of white or black companies, thus all female roles were men in drag. This first section included comic patter among the Interlocutor, Tambo, and Bones, along with songs and comic skits. The second section was called the olio, and it consisted on specialty acts -- songs, dances, and comic speeches or dialogues. The olio of different companies varied substantially according to the talents of each company's members. Finally, an afterpiece was performed, which was a short, farcical play on antebellum plantation life, usually featuring the characters Jim Crow and/or Zip Coon.

By the time of the Civil War, minstrel companies had become quite large, often containing 40-60 members. The olio had become the most popular section and had grown quite long in large companies. Similarly, jokes centering on antebellum slave life were getting old, while much else in American culture cried out for humorous treatment by comedians. Vaudeville evolved out of the minstrel oios, and years after it separated from minstrelsy it still featured some blackface acts, betraying its origins. By the turn of the century, minstrelsy had all but died out. Vaudeville was at its height from 1880-1930. A second source for vaudeville was burlesque, which had begun as a series of comic sketches parodying current social trends or artistic trends or other plays to increasingly show off scantily clad females with a small amount of song and dance ability. Both the element of parody and the chorus of women became typical elements of vaudeville. A producer named Tony Pastor is usually credited with solidifying the genre in the 1880's. Vaudeville, like minstrelsy, was a touring art form. It consisted of songs, dances, and comic routines, each of about three minutes in length. Theatres were organized into circuits for either white or black vaudeville companies. Producers were centered in New York, and owned an entire circuit, on which they would send headliners and supporting entertainers. The Orpheum circuit was the most famous white circuit while TOBA (often referred to as "Tough on Black Actors") was the largest African American circuit. Like in most areas of American life, the theatre was strictly segregated until well into the 20th century. Local theatres often provided back-up dancers, generally 8-12 young women, who knew a few set routines that they performed behind any star's act. The Marx brothers and Fred Astaire began their careers touring in vaudeville.

Follies and musical revues were much like vaudeville in their organization, but they did not tour. They opened and closed in one city, usually in a large theatre, and tended to have large budgets that encouraged spectacle in scenery and costume. The Ziegfeld Follies is the most famous example of a follies style show. Florenz Ziegfeld staged a new follies show each year. Each one outdid the next in extravagance. Costumes were full of feathers and jewels and scenery shifted spectacularly. Flying effects were popular. And he hired an enormous chorus of dancing girls, who generally appeared somewhat scantily clad. Musical revues were essentially the same thing, but were not generally annual events put on by a big producer; instead, they featured the music or comic dialogue or one or more writers. Into the 20th century, some writers of follies shows or revues began to string together an evening's entertainment with a loose theme, location, a reappearing character, or a sketchy
plot. This stringing together of what were diverse numbers in minstrelsy and vaudeville was a significant step toward musical comedy.

The first Broadway show to include a full plot, with music and dancing as relatively equal components was an historical accident. In 1866, the melodrama The Black Crook incorporated a stranded troupe of ballet dancers into the show, hoping to attract a larger audience with this novel presentation. It worked: The Black Crook ran for sixteen months, a tremendous success in the 1860's. These kinds of combination shows appeared again from time to time for the rest of the century, but never with the same success. With the evolution of follies and musical revues around 1900, these shows were the most popular on Broadway. Often these shows featured new music and dance trends evolving in popular nightclubs, like the cotton club. Ragtime and jazz music, and dances like "The Turkey Trot", "Charleston", and "Black Bottom", all of which originated in African American culture, were introduced to the larger American public through Broadway shows in the 1910's and 1920's. Some of these revues were all-black casts, and some all-white, because Broadway was still strictly segregated, but the music and dances became popular with all of America.

Development of the Book Musical

1927 was a landmark year in American entertainment for many reasons: it was the height of Broadway or the year in which the most plays opened in the most theatres in American history, it was the year of the first feature length "talkie" - The Jazz Singer starring Al Jolson, and it was the year musical comedy was born. Show Boat, with music by Jerome Kern and lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II and a libretto by Edna Ferber adapted from her novel, opened late in 1927. It was the first book musical, the style that came to define and dominate the American musical theatre. The musical has a serious plot in which every character contributes to the story. Music is introduced when and where it is appropriate to character. If a chorus is needed, it is justified in the plot. The book musical reflects the Modernist value on unity, which had led to the development of the modern director about 30 years previously. The director's role evolved to bring unity to a play's text, staging style, acting style, and design elements in the late nineteenth century. Unity applies in a similar way to the ideal book musical: it should be a demonstrate a complete integration of plot, character, music, dance, and design.

In the case of Show Boat, the characters are mostly performers and workers on the showboat, loosely justifying their ability to sing and dance on cue. Show Boat is set in the reconstruction south, on a steamboat fitted out as a theatre that toured to cities up and down the Mississippi River. Show boats were in fact a kind of vaudeville serving cities on major rivers in the US through much of the 19th century. The major conflict of the play involves our definition of what makes a person "black" or "white" in America. Julie, a performer on the showboat, is discovered to be descended from a black person, but, to work on the white showboat, she is "passing" for white. By law, she can not work on that boat and is forced to leave. The plot follows Julie and follows the daughter of the showboat managers as she grows up. Other characters include the managers, other performers, and Jim, a black man who works on the ship and sings the most famous song in the show, "Old Man River", in response to Julie getting fired.
The production history of *Show Boat* is significant not only in that it is considered the first, mature example of the musical comedy form, but also in that it was the first integrated cast of any Broadway show. It set the style for many future musical comedies in that, in spite of the genre name "musical comedy", it contained both comic and serious elements and thus would better be described as a "drama". *Show Boat* is still frequently performed in summer stock, regional repertory and university settings, and had a major Broadway revival in the 1990's. As it was a period piece when written in the 1920's that brought up issues that still effected 1920's America, it plays well today too. While it is a period piece even more removed from us today, we have yet to fully solve our country's deeply embedded racism.

The development of the book musical corresponds to the birth of Hollywood feature films. Much early Hollywood material was taken from the live theatres, including musicals. The ideal of unity arrived later in Hollywood musicals than in Broadway musicals, and corresponded to directors' and editors' ability to define and manipulate the possibilities of the new medium of film. Early Hollywood musicals tended to import vaudeville acts at regular intervals, or whenever the plot began to drag, whether or not that vaudeville act had anything to do with the rest of the movie. This was an accepted convention, and, as the vaudeville acts filmed were popular headliners, the public enjoyed the performances without worrying about the disunified effect. Many great vaudeville stars are preserved on film in this manner, like the great tap dance duo "The Nicholas Brothers". Fred Astaire, who starred in vaudeville and on Broadway in musical revues for 25 years with his sister Adele then headed for Hollywood after she married and moved abroad, was an important influence in unifying the Hollywood musical and establishing a filming style. In such films as *Flying Down to Rio* (1933), *The Gay Divorcee* (1934), and *Top Hat* (1935) the songs appear at appropriate moments within the plot and are appropriate to the characters who sing them. Dance sequences and choruses are minimally justified within the plot. In terms of filming style, Astaire insisted that the virtuosity of live performances ought to be maintained in films by shooting such things as dance sequences in one take, and placing them, unedited, into the film.

Well known composers and lyricists from the this first stage of American musical comedy (roughly 1927-1942) include Kern and Hammerstein, Rodgers and Hart (*On Your Toes*, 1936; *Babes in Arms*, 1937; *Boys from Syracuse*, 1938; *Pal Joey*, 1940), Irving Berlin (*As Thousands Cheer*, 1933; *Annie Get Your Gun*, 1946), George and Ira Gershwin (*Strike Up the Band*, 1930; *Of Thee I Sing*, 1931; *Porgy and Bess*, 1935), and Cole Porter (*Anything Goes*, 1934; *Red, Hot and Blue*, 1936; *Kiss Me Kate*, 1948). The most famous early director of Broadway musicals was George Abbott, and the screen director who best exemplifies the pre-unified film aesthetic is Busby Berkeley, with such films as *Gold Diggers of 1933* and *1935, Babes in Arms* (1939), and *For Me and My Gal* (1942). Popular performers on stage and screen included Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, Shirley Temple, Bill Robinson, and the Marx Brothers.

Musical Theatre Part 2
The Golden Age of American Musical Comedy

The production of *Oklahoma!* in 1943 ushers in what is commonly considered the "golden age" of the Broadway musical. The experiments toward greater unity that began with *Show Boat* by 1943 are normally true of musicals. The specific contribution of *Oklahoma!* is the incorporation of dance in new ways integral to plot and character, the origin of the term choreographer and the choreographer's essential role on the production team, and the beginnings of the style of dance that is different from earlier jazz dance and specific to the American musical theatre. This new dance form is a hybrid of the dance styles of ballet, jazz, and modern. Until the mid 1960's the music from musical comedies was a part of mainstream American culture; "show tunes" were played on top 40's stations. Broadway stars had national reputations, and many crossed over to recording careers or movie careers. Broadway was truly part of American popular culture to a much greater extent than it is today.

*Oklahoma!* was composed by Richard Rodgers with lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein II. It tells the story of a young farm girl, Laurie, who is too coquettish to admit her love for Curly. These two characters are the romantic leads, and their vocal parts are, respectively, soprano and tenor. The majority of the "legitimate" singing in the musical is done by these two characters, and they therefore have the majority of the show's ballads. For example, Curly enters singing "Oh, What a Beautiful Morning", and Laurie sings "Out of My Dreams". The major character parts are Ado Annie, Will, Ali Hakim, and Judd. Character parts generally sing patter songs, are featured dancers, sing or songs in an unusual style appropriate to their characters. Ado Annie's best known patter song is "I Can't Say No", while Will has the featured dance number "Kansas City", and Ali Hakim does not sing. Judd is the heavy, or antagonist, in the musical. The chorus is made up of people who live in the town, both farmers and ranchers. Their presence is justified dramatically through conventions like the town's "box social" - a luncheon to raise money, in which the men bid over box lunches made my different women - or the return of a local boy, Will, from the big city. The large cast musical numbers take place during these scenes. The dances are justified as well: Will demonstrates the latest dance steps learned in Kansas City, and Laurie's indecision over loving Curly enters her dreams and is presented theatrically in the "Dream Ballet". The dream ballet, which choreographer Agnes DeMille originated in this musical, became a standard convention for presenting a character's inner thoughts and turmoil in non-verbal, dance form. The dance style, while based in ballet, heavily draws on popular dance steps of the time the play was set and on American folk dance generally; this fidelity of the dances to the story's time and place was novel. DeMille successfully applied the ideal of unity to musical theatre dance, bringing it to a new level of integration with plot, characters, and music. Like all comedies, the play ends happily with the projected marriage of Laurie and Curly and Ado Annie and Will. However, like *Show Boat*, it also has serious themes, such as the prejudice and mutual suspicion in the small Oklahoma community between farmers and ranchers, and it presents Judd as a serious threat to Laurie. All of these elements of plot, character types, music, and dance are typical of musicals of the golden age.

In 1957, the musical *West Side Story*, conceived, directed and choreographed by Jerome Robbins, with music by Leonard Bernstein and lyrics by Steven Sondheim brought the
integration of song, dance, and drama to even greater levels. It also challenged the appropriateness of calling the show a "musical comedy", as it is a dramatization of Shakespeare's tragic love story, *Romeo and Juliet*. Like Shakespeare's antecedent, the musical is a tragedy; this show began the slow shift to calling the genre "musical theatre" or simply "musicals". *West Side Story* updated Shakespeare's story of warring Renaissance Italian families to New York City's upper west side, and it demonstrated the racial hatred and gang violence of 1950's New York City with a degree of realism and ultimate despair that had yet to be seen on the musical stage. Bernstein used Latin rhythms and melodies as the basis for most of the music sung by Puerto Rican characters, and the music for "The Dance at the Gym" was based on popular dance music of the late 50's. Robbins created dances that were just a step away from fight movements for his gang's musical numbers and rumble scene. Music underscores much of the dialogue before songs are introduced, lessening the rupture of style between more illusionistic scenes and frankly theatrical songs. The chorus are simple the street gangs and their girlfriends, almost all of whom are named characters who engage in action that directly furthers the plot. The musical has a continuing appeal in its honest portrayal of racial tensions in an American city and the power of the love story between Tony and Maria, two people from different cultures. The characters, although more three dimensional than many characters in earlier musicals, generally remain true to the types outlined above. Tony and Maria are the soprano and tenor romantic leads. The character part of the soubrette, like Ado Annie, is Anita; she is usually cast as a dancer, as is Bernardo, in order to take primary focus in "The Dance at the Gym" and to lead the dance sections in "America". Riff, the leader of the American gang, has the patter song "Cool". Like *Oklahoma!*, *West Side Story* was translated to a popular film; unlike its predecessor, a great deal of the show had to be changed to fit the stricter ethical codes against swearing and sexual innuendo in Hollywood.

Other Rodgers and Hammerstein musicals of the golden age include *Carousel* (1945), *South Pacific* (1949), and *The King and I* (1951), many of which have had recent, successful Broadway revivals, testifying to the continuing popularity of golden age style musical. Other popular composers of this era are Lerner and Lowe, who collaborated on *Brigadoon* (1947), *My Fair Lady* (1956), and *Camelot* (1960); and Frank Loesser, who wrote *Where's Charley* (1948), *Guys and Dolls* (1950), *Most Happy Fella* (1956), and *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* (1961). Many of these Broadway musicals were taken up by Hollywood within a few years of their Broadway debut, often with many of the Broadway actors and much of the staging and choreography retained for the film versions. By now, Hollywood musicals fully adopted the integrated style of the Broadway musical, and musicals were some of the most successful films, by both critical and popular standards, that Hollywood produced. Dance became a more integrated part of the Hollywood musical as well: in 1944 Jack Cole was hired to train and rehearse a permanent dance ensemble for Columbia Pictures. Both Broadway and Hollywood remained segregated, for all practical purposes. Broadway musicals and Hollywood musicals with all-black production teams and casts did get produced, but they tended to receive lower budgets. Some of the most successful, that originated in New York and then were filmed are *Cabin in the Sky* (1940), starring Ethel Waters and Lena Horne, *Stormy Weather* (1943), and *Green Mansions* (1959). George Abbott continued as the most successful Broadway director during the golden age, but the young director Hal Prince emerged in these years; Prince remains the most successful Broadway director today. Choreographers include
DeMille, Jack Cole, Jerome Robbins, and Hanya Holm. The stars of these musicals became household names; some of the most famous were Ethel Merman, Mary Martin, Frank Sinatra, Gene Kelly, Shirley Jones, Anne Miller, Rita Moreno, and Lena Horne.

Musical Theatre Part 3

Trends in Musical Theatre since the mid 1960's

1. The first trend if the advent of the **rock musical**. Since the late 1950's, rock and roll had slowly been taking over the top-40 stations and becoming America's new popular music. Dance styles and character types shifted to fit the new musical milieu. Dances done to rock music started with "The Twist" and "Frug", through "disco" and "break dancing", to the more recent "hip hop". Rock musicals tend to focus on young characters and counter-culture movements. Since the musical theatre had always been dominated by composers writing in a popular vein, this switch is not surprising. Perhaps more surprising is that rock musicals remain the distinct minority of Broadway fare. The first rock musical to hit Broadway was **Hair!** in 1968, written by Jerome Ragni and James Rado, with music by Galt McDermott. It featured a hippie tribe who sang, danced, protested war in Viet Nam, questioned traditional stereotypes of race and gender, and smoked marijuana on stage. The production broke the "fourth wall" by bringing actors through the house and even swinging on a trapeze above the audience. Although the performers were all actors, many audience members mistook elements of the play for real life because it broke so many conventions of character and plot and audience interaction that had been typical of Broadway musicals. This was the first musical to devalue the **plot**, rejecting the standard of earlier musicals that tested the value of a song or a dance based on how it fit the plot. The loose plot that exists in the musical surrounds the drafting of one character in the tribe, Claude, and his personal conflict between serving his country and standing up for his belief that the war was wrong. Later rock musicals include Stephen Schwartz's **Godspell** and **Pippin**, Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice's **Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat**, and **Jesus Christ, Superstar**, The Who's **Tommy**, and Jonathan Larson's **Rent**.

2. The term **concept musical** was coined to fit the new structure used by Stephen Sondheim in his 1970 **Company**. Much like **Hair!**, Company rejected the notion of the plot as the organizing principle of the musical; but, unlike **Hair!** which seemed to have no structure whatsoever, the concept musical organizes songs, scenes, and dances around the exploration of an idea. **Company** explores the character Bobby's search for a relationship: first he must decide if he wants a serious relationship in his life, then he must decide what kind of woman and what kind of relationship he wants. The characters include 5 sets of married couples, all of whom are friends of Bobby but none of whom present a relationship exactly right for him, and 3 women who Bobby dates. Sondheim remains the major exemplar of the form of concept musical: his **Follies** explored how two middle-aged couples face their lost youth when they return to a reunion of a follies show, in which both women performed in their youth; his **Pacific Overtures**(1979) explores the history of Japan from the period of its isolation to its opening to the west; his **Sunday in the Park with**
George (1984) explores artistic creation, its effect on the artist, and its effect on the people close to him; his Into the Woods presents intertwined fairy tales in Act I then projects beyond "happily ever after" for its characters in Act 2; his Assassins looks at what a person hopes for in assassinating a president; and his Passion explores the nature of obsessive love. Other musicals not by Sondheim that fit the definition of a concept musical include A Chorus Line (1975) and Cats (1982). All of these are radically different from one another in their plot structure, character types, and musical form. Some involve no dance whatsoever, and others use dance only when and where appropriate to a character. Each element of the musical is selected for how well it displays the central idea; in effect, unity has not been abandoned as an ideal, but the plot has been overthrown as the primary, unifying element.

3. Poor theatre was the term given to a theatrical style by the Polish visionary Jerzy Grotowski in the early 1960's. It refers to a style of theatre centered on actors and their imagination and "poor" in spectacle. In "poor theatre", actors transform themselves in front of an audience from one character to another and frequently into the necessary scenery, like trees or furniture, and make the necessary sound effects, like wind or explosions, with their own voices. The audience then, must also use their imaginations. Virtuosity in "poor theatre" lies in the creativity and resourcefulness of the actors themselves and in the audience's recognition of the performers' versatility. The techniques of poor theatre were incorporated into musical theatre very quickly. In 1965, Man of La Mancha, an adaptation of Cervantes' Don Quixote, opened on Broadway. In it, Quixote as an old man is thrown into prison, where, with the help of the other inmates, he tells his story. The prisoners take on the other roles in the story as necessary, and they use the objects around them in the prison to tell Quixote's story. The frame of the play is that the cynical, jaded prisoners are having their own mock trial of Quixote. He succeeds in moving them with his story, in which they all take part; and, as the show ends and Quixote ascends from the dungeon to his real trial, the other prisoners reprise his famous "Impossible Dream" to wish him luck. Other musicals that incorporate elements of poor theatre are The Fantasticks (1964, now the longest running off-Broadway musical), Godspell, The Apple Tree, and Les Miserables.

4. Darker, more cynical stories and styles of music and dance have dominated the musical stage since the late 1960's. As in all areas of American life, the essential optimism of pre-1960's American culture has all but been erased in the wake of such turbulent social events as the assassinations of John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, Robert Kennedy and Malcolm X; America's failure in Viet Nam; the Civil Rights Movement, then Women's Rights and now Gay Rights movements that have made us aware how deeply embedded racism, sexism and homophobia are in our country; and finally the Watergate scandal that made us deeply suspicious of our government, democracy though it may be. The happy ending of Oklahoma! seems quaint and trite to us today; it is no longer a realistic solution to prejudices of any kind. An example of style reflecting the darker content is the dance style of Bob Fosse. Fosse, who died in 1987 of AIDS, was the director and choreographer of such hits as Cabaret (1965), Sweet Charity (1966), Pippin (1972), Chicago (1975), Big Deal (1986) and the semi-autobiographical film All That Jazz (1979) in which he projects his own death. Fosse evolved a style of dance that involved a reversal of all our normal associations of dance with grace and beauty. In order to express the seamy, ugly, or negatively sexual sides of life, he employed turned-in positions (as opposed to ballet's normal position of turn-out of the legs from the hips), sharp and angular motions, poses and
turns wildly off-balance, and a kind of comically cynical tone to most of his production numbers. In *Cabaret*, he uses a motley assortment of entertainers, including an MC of ambiguous gender, a topless band, and a female chorus - introduced as "each and every one a virgin" while they are usually played as near prostitutes, to get across the decadence and self-absorption of 1930's cabaret culture in Berlin. In spite of the atrocities committed against Jewish friends, this group of entertainers will only make light of Hitler and his rise to power, refusing to take any political or ideological stand against him, or even to leave Berlin before it's too late. The main characters of the play are now mismatched: Sally Bowles is an American living in Berlin and performing at the cabaret; she is a soubrette type and sings in a lower register. The idealist, singing in a higher register, is the visiting American writer Cliff. Cliff, who is much like the romantic leads of earlier musicals, falls in love with Sally but cannot get her to take her own life or the impending political crisis seriously. The character roles include the MC, a broadly theatrical type with no apparent life outside the theatre, and an older Jewish couple who are menaced by the Nazis. Ironically, the most beautiful ballad in the show is sung by a young Nazi in praise of the fatherland; "Tomorrow Belongs to Me" is particularly effective because of the beauty of the melody and lyric contrasted against his Nazi values. Fosse's staging often makes references to earlier theatrical or dance styles, but turns them around to give them a new, contemporary meaning, such as the burlesque sections of *Chicago*, in which women who have murdered their husbands execute steps and wear costumes typical of the early 20th century burlesque shows. In this case, the titillating style of burlesque is robbed of its usual, sexual meaning by the characters being murderesses.

5. Although the musical theatre is a quintessentially American form, evolving out of the social, racial, and cultural mix of nineteenth century America, the most successful producer and composer of the last twenty years is a Brit, Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber. His extraordinarily large and popularly successful oeuvre includes *Jesus Christ, Superstar* (1973), *Evita* (1980), *Cats* (1982) (the longest running show on Broadway), *Starlight Express* (1986), and *Sunset Boulevard* (1994). As a producer, his Really Useful Theatre Company, based in London, have brought Les Miserables and Miss Saigon to London's West End then to Broadway. *Les Miserables* (1987) and *Miss Saigon* (1990) are the products of a French composer-lyricist team. The most recent Broadway hit from another country is *Ragtime* (1998), which was produced by Toronto's Livent. It is interesting to note the number of these foreign successes that take American stories as their subjects, and all use American music and dance forms in presenting their subjects.

6. In the last half of the 1990's, a new trend seems to be emerging on Broadway; this trend is toward more optimistic, lighter content in musicals along with lavish spectacle. Perhaps due to our cultural emphasis on "family values" or Mayor Guliani's efforts to clean up New York City that has resulted in "The new 42nd Street" -- a project which demolished old buildings in the area of Broadway most heavily poulated with theatres in an effort to clean up the "adult" shops and movie theatres -- some of the most successful recent productions have been either revivals of the older, optimistic golden age musicals like *Carousel, Show Boat*, and *Guys and Dolls*, or new live theatre settings for Disney classics, like *The Lion King* (1997). In fact, it is Disney's theatre that dominates "The new 42nd Street", and Disney is renovating theatres in many large cities across the nation in order to bring its own productions on tour. Disney's *The Lion King* is family entertainment; it is
directed by and contains extraordinary puppets by Julie Taymor with dances by Garth Fagan (whose dance company is centered at SUNY Brockport). Since the story is well known to families, due to Disney's large volume of videotape sales, audiences are going to see the show for its element of live, theatrical spectacle.

Which one or more of these trends will dominate American musical theatre in the 21st century? It is impossible to project. It is impossible to know if New York will survive as a center for musical theatre in a century in which it is increasingly easy to download clips of anything (movies, music, why not musicals?) from anywhere on the globe (New York, after all, has not only clogged highways but clogged Internet access) from a home or office PC.