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above -- that area of the stage farthest away from the audience. A written stage direction might call for an actor to "cross above table." Also called upstage. Term originated from original raked stage which was angled to give audience member a better view of entire stage.

abstract stage -- one in which the bare minimum of setting is used such as free-standing doors, free-hung windows, limited furnishings; stylistic rather than realistic.

acetone -- strong solvent used to remove spirit gum or other adhesives used in makeup.

acoustics -- the total effect of sound in a theatre, affected by size and shape of a space as well as its furnishings and floor coverings.

act -- 1. the major division of a play; 2. to perform by representing a character in a play.

act change -- a change of setting, props, lights, and/or costumes between acts.

act curtain -- the front of main curtain on a proscenium stage directly behind the grand drapery.

act drop -- the painted curtain closing the proscenium between the acts of a play, so-called ruing the latter part of the eighteenth century.

acting -- creating an illusion with behavior attributed to a particular character, project by voice and movement to an audience.

acting area -- a small area of the stage that has its own set of lights. Lighting designers often divide the stage into acting areas in order to create balanced lighting.

acting edition -- softbound copy of the script which often contains the stage directions, sound and light, cues, prop lists and costume descriptions from the prompt script of the world premier production. It is important to note that this added information was not provided by the playwright.

acting play -- one having a wide variety of dramatics as opposed to a literary play which depends on the effective delivery of lines for success.

action -- the incidents of a play as expressed through the dialogue and movement of the characters.

actor proof -- a term meaning the script is so good that any actor, regardless of his ability, could succeed in using it.

actors -- individuals who, within the performance contract, enact characters or situations other than their own, using as the materials of the art, their own body and voice. The term □actor□ applies to both women and men.

Actor's Equity Association -- 165 West 46 Street, New York, New York 10036. Founded in 1912, this organization serves as a labor union for professional actors.

Actor's Studio -- a well-known American training school devoted to teaching the Stanislavski system of acting.

actor trap -- a slang term assigned to any technical situation that will trip up an inattentive actor ,e.g., an uneven step on a staircase.

actress -- a female actor.

ad lib -- to improvise words and actions

adaptation -- a play taken from a novel, a movie or other literary material; dates of earlier plays; musical adaptations of straight plays.

adjustment -- specific, well-chosen phrases in the script that enable an actor to correctly accomplish his actions.

advance -- refers to tickets sold before the production begins

advance man -- someone who travels ahead of any traveling production arranging for the theatre, publicity, housing, etc.

aesthetic distance -- a detachment that allows a viewer's attention to be held, and his emotions appealed to while the viewer is aware that he is a spectator in the theatre.

agent -- a professional representative who take care of bookings and negotiate performance contracts.

alarms and excursions -- a stage direction meaning the sounds and actions of battle: trumpets, drums, and skirmishes on stage.

al fresco -- open air theatre.

alliteration -- the repetition of initial consonant sounds or blends.

allegory -- a drama in which a character becomes a symbol for a concept or idea.

amateur -- an actor who is not a member of one of the acting unions.

amber -- the yellow-red light filter varying from light straw to dark flame.

American Educational Theatre Association (AETA) -- organization in support of educational theatre found in universities, high schools, and community theatres.

amphitheatre -- an oval or round structure having levels of seats rising outward from an open space or arena.

angel -- someone who provides financial support to a company or production.

antagonist -- the character of force opposing the main character in a play.

anti-climax -- a high point in the action of a play which occurs after the main climax and is of lesser importance.

antithesis -- the opposition of words or phrases against each other in balances contrast.

anti-type casting -- places the actor in parts at the extreme limits of his range.

apostrophe -- addressing a person, personified object, abstract quality, or idea as if it was actually present.

apron -- (forestage) stage area in front of the main curtain.

arbor -- in a flying system, the cage where the operators put the counterweight to balance the weight of the scenery.

architectural set -- a permanent structure that can be altered to suggest different locations by adding scenic pieces, draperies, and properties

arena stage/theatre-in-the-round -- theater space where the audience sits on all four sides of the auditorium and watches the action in an area set in the middle of the room

aria -- operatic solo.

articulation -- the clear, distinct and accurate formation and execution of speech sounds.

aside -- unspoken thoughts of a character delivered directly to the audience with the other characters on stage but unable to hear what is being said

assistant stage manager -- the all-purpose technical assistant; the backstage entry-lever position

assonance -- the repetition of vowel sounds.

atmosphere -- the mood of the play conveyed through stage business, lights, props, costumes, makeup, sound.

at rise -- often the beginning of a play script describing who is onstage, what they are doing, and where they are placed.

auditions -- competitive tryout for a performer seeking a role in a theatre production. The process may include interviews, cold readings from the script, the presentation of a prepared piece, improvisations, or any combination of these.

avant garde -- a dramatic work expressing innovations in style or content.