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tab -- a vertical drape just inside the proscenium that masks performers in the wings; also a term meaning to pull a drape aside

tab curtain -- a front curtain that is permanently secured at the top edge which is gathered by diagonal ropes when lifted

tableau -- moment in which a living picture is created on stage and held by actors without motion or speech

tag line -- final line of a scene or act, or the exit line of a major character. When it is the final line of an act it is also called a curtain line.

take a call -- to acknowledge the applause of the audience at the end of a performance by bowing or showing some other form of appreciation

take five -- slang term used to indicate that you are going to take a break from working for five minutes. Quite often the break is ten, rather than five, minutes.

tape the stage -- the process of depicting the outlines of the set on the rehearsal room floor, using colored tape; generally done by the stage manager before the first rehearsal

take stage -- director's request that an actor move into a more prominent position on stage; also that the actor needs to expend more energy in the scene

teaser -- a horizontal drape across the stage, designed to hide the first electric

technical director (TD) -- the person who figures out how the set will be built and then oversees construction; sometimes in charge of lighting as well

technical rehearsal -- a rehearsal for perfecting the technical elements of a show, such as the scene and property shifts, lighting, sound, and special effects

telegraph -- a play in which the audience is able to deduce what the outcome will be

template -- (pattern, gobo) a metal pattern that, when placed inside an ellipsoidal spotlight, throws a shadow pattern on the stage

tempo -- general rate of playing a scene. Tempo depends on cue pickup, the rate lines are read, and the overall energy level of the performance: the intensity.

tetrameter -- the rhythm of a verse line with four stresses.

text -- words of the dialogue and lyrics

theatre in the round -- an arena style production in which the audience surrounds the acting stage, and the actors use the various aisles for exits and entrances

theatre of cruelty -- 1930 movement designed to disrupt the logic of the audience and free their subconscious minds so that they might experience the mysterious forces of existence characterized by magic and myth

theatre of the absurd -- reveals man's inability to understand and control the world about him

theme -- central ideas or thoughts of a play that synthesize the audience's experiences

thesis play -- serious treatment of social, moral, or philosophical ideas. These plays make a one-sided presentation and employ a character who sums up the lesson of the play and serves as the author's voice. Example: Our Town by Thornton Wilder

thespian -- actor; after Thespis, the first Greek dramatist

three-quarter left -- performer turns to a position halfway between left profile and full back

three-quarter right -- performer is in a position halfway between full back and right profile

throw away -- underplay a moment in a scene; de-emphasize a line reading or a piece of business

throw distance -- the distance from the lighting instrument to the person or thing it is lighting

thrust stage/open stage/apron stage -- wraparound theater space where the stage extends out into the audience and the spectators view the action from three sides. The main advantage to this setup is that more of the audience can be closer to the actors. Scenically, it can be less expensive to mount a theater piece on a thrust stage than on a proscenium stage.

tie lines -- small cotton lines used to attach drapes and drops to battens

tie-off -- to fasten a set of lines to a pin rail or other stationary object

timing -- selecting the right moment to say a line or do an action for maximum effectiveness

toenail -- to nail obliquely through the end of one board into a second board

toggle bar -- horizontal pieces of wood used in constructing a flat to make it rigid

top -- pick up the energy, the pace, and the volume of a scene: one actor tops the other thereby building tension and emotional impact

top billing -- the star of the show whose name is most prominent on the marquee and at the top of the playbill

top hats -- round metal objects that are placed in the color frame holder of lighting instruments to cut down on stray light

tormentor -- flats or drapes at the sides of the proscenium arch that may be used to alter the width of the stage opening

tormentor lights -- spotlights mounted on a vertical pipe batten on either side of the stage just behind the tormentors and used as side lighting

touring show -- a play performed by a company at numerous locations

tracking a platform -- building a track into the stage that helps to guide a platform to its proper place

tracks -- slots in a stage floor created for guiding portable scenery, wagons, and properties

tragedian -- an actor who plays tragic roles

tragedy -- play that treats, at the most uncompromising level, human suffering. Modern tragedy involves ordinary people, rather than the nobility of classical tragedy, and is written generally in prose rather than verse. The common men or women probe the same depths and ask the same questions as their predecessors. Why do men and women suffer? Why are cruelty and injustice in the world? And perhaps most fundamental of all: What is the meaning of our lives? Examples:

Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello, and King Lear, by William Shakespeare; Long Day's Journey Into Night and Death of a Salesman by Arthur Miller

tragicomedy -- a play which is a blend of tragic and comedic elements

trampoline -- a framework of net, webbed or rubberized material used to cushion the fall of an actor from a height

trap -- opening in the stage floor, normally covered, which can be used for special effects, such as having scenery or performers rise from below, or which permits the construction of a staircase which ostensibly leads to a lower floor or cellar

traveler -- a horizontally drawn curtain

travesty -- a parody of a more serious work

treadmill -- moving belts on a stage floor on which scenery or actors may give the illusion of moving in full view of the audience

trestle -- the framework used to support a platform

trim chain -- short pieces of chain used to fasten a batten to a scenic piece used to keep the piece in trim

trim clamp -- a metal clamp used to hold several lines to a counterweight system so that scenery can be held in trim

trims -- the heights of flying scenery and masking

trip -- to lift the bottom of a drop or flown scenery with another set of lines in theatres where there isn't enough fly space to lift the unit vertically to its entire length

tripping -- folding a piece of flying scenery as it goes out; generally done to save space

tritagonist -- an actor who played the third part in Greek tragedy following the protagonist and the deuteragonist

trombone -- the lever on a follow spot that allows the operator to make the beam larger or smaller

trough -- a long metal container in which lamps are set

troupe -- a theatrical company

truck -- a dolly for moving heavy equipment

truss -- a horizontal gridwork structure that is suspended from the ceiling or held up by towers on either end; designed to hold lighting instruments; standard equipment for larger industrial shows or rock-and roll concerts

turn in -- actor is to face upstage, away from the audience

turn out -- actor is to face downstage, toward the audience

twist-lock -- one of two common types of plugs on stage lighting instruments, it has three curved blades that lock when inserted and twisted

typecasting -- selection of actors based upon their physical similarity to a certain dramatic type or upon their reputation for specializing in that kind of role

