

C

caesura -- a pause or break in a line of verse.

call -- 1) announcement to performers or crews that they are needed for a rehearsal or performance; 2) warning to performers to get ready for an entrance

callboard -- place backstage in a theatre where company rules, announcements, notes, and messages are posted

calling a show -- the process of calling out the lighting, sound, and scene-change cues during a performance; usually done by the stage manager over a headset

cameo -- important, but small, character role

caster -- wheels attached to the bottom scenery to shift it; these casters can be either straight or swivel type

casting -- difficult task of matching the actors who auditioned for the production with the roles in the play or musical

castors -- the wheels on a platform

catwalk -- narrow platform suspended above the stage to permit ready access to the ropes, the lights, and the scenery hung from the grid

C-clamp -- the metal clamp that holds a lighting instrument to the bar it's hanging on; so named because of its C-like shape

center line -- an imaginary line down the center of the stage, from upstage to downstage

chain pocket -- (a fabric pouch running the length of a drape along the bottom. It is designed to hold a chain that weighs down the bottom of the drape

changing booth -- a small temporary booth in the wings where an actor can make a costume change without going to the dressing room

channel -- (in computer lighting control boards, a way of controlling a group of dimmers

characterization -- representation of a character's qualities or peculiarities through dialogue, gesture, movement, costume and makeup

charge artist -- scenic painter

chase effects -- special effects, produced by a lighting control board, that cause a series of lights to turn on and off in sequence. Used for marquee lights and fire effects, among other things.

cheat -- move that does not attract attention to itself while managing to keep the actor in view of the audience. Director may say, "Cheat right" or "cheat open".

chiasmus -- a mirror image of antithesis where one phrase is the reverse of the other: "Love's fire heats water, water cools not love."

Chorus -- a narrator who introduces or comments on the play.

circuit plot -- a list of all available circuits in a particular theatre

claque -- persons who are hired by performers (or their representatives) for the express purpose of starting and sustaining applause for them. Clagues may be instructed to start applause on the entrance or exit of a performer, or to cheer, whistle, or otherwise seem to show enthusiasm for the performance, in the hope that other audience members will believe the performance to be better than it is. Thoroughly discredited as a practice in live theatre (except on opening nights), clagues are still employed in grand opera.

cleat -- attached to flats at intervals so that lines can be lashed from one flat to another to put them together to firmly anchor them

clew -- metal plate used to tie off several lines then controlling them all by a single line

climax -- highest point of dramatic tension in a script. Usually the crux of the play, when the major conflict can proceed no further without beginning the process of resolution.

clinch plate -- steel plate placed against a flat which bends clout nails as they come through the wood for a strong hold

clipping -- when an actor begins to speak his lines before another actor finishes his cue phrase

closed turn -- a turn made away and with the actor's back to the audience, usually considered a poor movement. The opposite, an open turn, is most often preferred.

closing -- the last night of a show

clout nail -- special, soft nail used in flat construction

clown white -- white foundation makeup often used by clowns

code -- refers to a municipal code that governs the wiring of a building

coffin locks -- metal brackets embedded in platforms that help lock separate platforms together; so named because they were developed to hold down coffin lids

collodian -- liquid used by makeup artists to build up the face and for making scars

color balance -- the overall color of the light onstage

color filter -- a piece of colored plastic used to change the color of light

color frame -- the metal frame that holds a color filter

color scroller -- color frames that hold a roll of color. Used to change color filters in the middle of a performance

comedy -- a play with a mixture of humor and pathos, that celebrates the eternal ironies and struggles of human existence, and ends happily

comic relief -- inclusion of a comic line or scene in an otherwise serious play to provide relief from tension

commercial theatre -- theatre produced with the primary goal of making money for investors

community theatre -- amateur, non-profit theatre that provides an opportunity for the non-professional to take an active part in all phases of theatre from acting to design

company -- group of actors and technicians working on a show

company manager -- the person who arranges food, lodging, and other details for the cast and crew

composition -- arrangement of people in a stage group through the use of balance and emphasis to achieve an aesthetic picture to promote mood

conceit -- an elaborate image that sets up a startling or unusual comparison between two very dissimilar things.

concept meeting -- one of the first meetings of the production period, where general concepts are hammered out

concept musical -- a musical in which the emphasis is on expressing an idea with episodes serving to illustrate the concept

contact sheet -- the list of addresses and phone numbers used to keep track of everybody's whereabouts during the production period

continental seating -- an arrangement of audience seating without a center aisle

control board -- also called the dimmer board; the panel that controls the lighting instruments

control booth -- (light booth/projection booth) small, glass-enclosed room at the back of the auditorium; used to house light and sound equipment. The stage manager often runs the show from the control booth

convention -- a familiar practice made common by frequent usage.

copyright -- way by which an author can register the ownership of literary or musical property

corner block -- triangular piece of wood used to join the stiles and rails of a flat

costume designer -- the person who researches the costumes, decides which styles and fabrics to use, and then draws or paints the costumes in renderings

costume fitting -- the meeting where costume personnel measure actors and test-fit their costumes

costume parade -- an event held in the theatre where each actor walks onstage wearing his or her costumes, one at a time. Designed to show the costumes to the director

costume plot -- list of the cast in a show indicating what costumes they will wear in each scene

costume shop manager -- the person who decides how to construct the costumes and gives individual workers their assignments

counter -- as one actor moves, another actor shifts his/her position to balance the composition of a scene

counterweight system -- device for balancing the weight of scenery, allowing it to be easily lowered or raised above the stage by means of ropes or wires and pulleys

counterweights -- also called bricks; the slabs of iron that are loaded into a counter weight system to offset the weight of the scenery

cove -- a lighting position out in the auditorium where lighting instruments are concealed from view

cover -- to stand in front of someone, an object, or a movement so that the audience cannot see it

craftspeople -- people working in properties shops who are proficient in carving, fabrics, and/or any number of other construction skills

crepe hair -- artificial braided hair used for beards and moustaches coming in different colors

crisis -- turning point of a play, a time of decision forcing the climax of the play to occur

critic -- someone whose verbalized responses to the play or script are thought to enrich the experience for others. The response can take the form of newspaper articles, television reviews, or public talks.

cross -- movement of an actor from one position on the stage to another

cross above -- to move upstage/behind a person or prop

cross below -- to move downstage/in front of a person or prop

cross-fade -- the lights go down in one area of the stage while they come up in another area

cross-fader -- the lever on a lighting control board that simultaneously fades all of the channels from one cue to the next

crossover -- a passageway that leads from one side of the stage to the other, out of view of the audience

cross section -- side view of the set.

cue -- signal (line, piece of business) to an actor or stage technician that the next line or stage function is to occur

cue sheet -- chart indicating when lights, scenery, props, and sounds need to be changed

curtain call -- bowing and receiving the audience's applause at the end of the show, or, sometimes in opera, at the end of an act

curtain line -- imaginary line at which the act curtain meets the floor

cutout -- scenery cut out of board or fabric representing profiles of trees, buildings, etc.

cutters -- costume shop workers who cut the fabric for the costumes, using patterns and/or intuition

cyclorama -- white or blue tautly stretched canvas drop or plaster dome across the back wall of the stage which when lit simulates the sky