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CLASS OF _____

RUTH ASAWA SAN FRANCISCO SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

THEATRE DEPARTMENT

Syllabus &

Course Descriptions

2017-2018

for
STUDENTS—PARENTS—ARTIST/TEACHERS

Keep for future reference

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San Francisco Unified School District
RUTH ASAWA SAN FRANCISCO SCHOOL OF THE ARTS
555 Portola Drive (@ O'Shaughnessy Boulevard), San Francisco, CA 94131
(Parking lot entrance through O'Shaughnessy Boulevard gate)
415-695-5700 (Phone), 415-695-5326 (Fax)
www.sfsota.org

Principal: Barnaby Payne
Director of the Theatre Program: Phillip Rayher

"San Francisco's premier public high school devoted to the arts"
— San Francisco Chronicle, November 11. 2001

"San Francisco's renowned Ruth Asawa School of the Arts."
— San Francisco Chronicle, May 21, 2015

"It's an amazing resource for kids who are interested in and are considering art as a career.""
— Rachel Norton, school board member, San Francisco Chronicle, May 21, 2015

"... students and parents say the arts school has been a saving grace for artistic children ... offering a place that not only nurtures their talent, but also provides a safe haven where they feel at home."
— San Francisco Chronicle, May 21, 2015

You will notice that we use the terms "Theatre Department" and "Acting Program" interchangeably. This is because the Theatre Department is a conservatory-type program. It is not a series of independent classes, and as such it requires a serious commitment beyond regular class hours. A student's daily involvement does not end when the last school bell rings.

"Love the art in you, not you in the art."

— Constantin Stanislavski (1863-1938)

THEATRE DEPARTMENT GOALS & OBJECTIVES

— A MISSION STATEMENT & OVERVIEW —

Asawa SOTA Theatre Department offers a program of study geared to the serious high school student of theatre in a pre-professional environment that focuses on a rigorous prescribed 4 years of training, studio work, and classroom study and experience in all aspects of the theatre process, in movement, voice, characterization and other aspects of theatre such as (but not limited to) playwriting, Shakespeare studies, monologue preparation, directing, movement and ethnic dance, voice and speech, periods and styles, improvisation, clowning and circus skills, script analysis, theatrical literature and history.

Asawa SOTA theatre students grow and flourish in a rigorous, supportive environment that requires dedication, commitment and a strong sense of responsibility. Asawa SOTA theatre students will showcase their training in a series of public performances, Brown Bags, and showcases, with further opportunities to participate in school-wide events such as the school musical, video productions and informal performances. IT AFFORDS THE STUDENT THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXPERIENCE DISCIPLINED TRAINING AS EXEMPLIFIED IN CONSERVATORY THEATRE TRAINING PROGRAMS NORMALLY FOUND AT THE COLLEGE LEVEL.

Drama/Theatre as taught in high schools is intended to fulfill four basic purposes:

- **Theatre as therapy**, to enhance students' personal growth and development, and self discovery — developing self-confidence, teaching group work, problem solving, etc.
- **Theatre as life enrichment**, to produce aesthetically responsive citizens with life-long interest in the arts.
- **Theatre as social and recreational activity**, giving the student a break from academic activities, fulfilling the same needs of a sports activity.
- **Theatre as training**, as preparation for continued and future studies in the field.

Drama curriculum is usually built around one of these purposes. Asawa SOTA fulfills all four, but its mission statement is focused primarily on the fourth goal.

Our objective is to prepare each student to continue her or his career or educational goals in the theatre, be it in college, university, conservatory, acting school, or an apprenticeship program. However, by creating good work habits, study skills, problem solving, and cooperative learning experiences, the student is better prepared to establish a career in any field of endeavor. Students acquire poise, self-confidence, and skills in self-expression and speaking that will be useful in any career or vocation. Theatre is particularly important for the development of the whole person — to produce aesthetically responsive citizens with life-long interest or involvement in the arts.

Our focus is on the actor's art and on the story. Our "product" stems from "process." The mounting of any theatre production is completely interrelated and integrated into our curriculum, based on the training needs of the students. We are a training program first, a production company second.

The acting program involves the student in <u>*doing*</u> the art. *The students learn by doing*. Students get *on their feet* as much as possible. They get the words in their mouths as soon as possible. We follow the traditional teaching practices of surgery doctors, what is known as the art of "SODOTO," or See One, Do One, Teach One. But, we do more than "one."

WHAT IS STUDIED?

— THE CURRICULUM —

The program emphasizes studies that create professional work habits; vocal development; movement; script and character analysis — emphasizing the interpretation of dramatic literature; and various acting techniques— including Stanislavski, Meisner, and Spolin, plus others.

The entire curriculum is prescribed and requires a serious commitment. The student-actors do not decide which areas of theatre they wish to study. We teach the student what they NEED to know to <u>*succeed*</u> — not only in theatre, but in life — not just what they want to know to <u>*perform*</u>.

We also teach students — to paraphrase Stanislavski — to love the ART in themselves, not THEMSELVES in the art. We teach acting not "play acting," honesty not "performing," and to enjoy the <u>process</u> not only the product.

All arts classes meet 10 to 15 hours a week, in daily 1 to 3 hour blocks. The theatre class content varies from week to week. Our teaching units are offered both in continuous blocks— such as a movement workshop which might be offered one hour per week for an entire semester, or specialized limited class blocks — such as a one week masters class, or longer units such as playwriting (which has as its goals for students to be able to write, direct, and act in new plays, and understand new play development, and, through working on plays in this way, to gain an understanding of the mechanics and requirements of all dramatic literature), Shakespeare, Asian theatre, clowning, improvisation, or mask characterization. Lunch time Brown Bags performances provide the theatre teachers and AIRs the opportunity to show student work developed in class over the year and student progression in different units to small audiences in an informal setting.

The staff— with student input— develops, evaluates, revises, updates, and improves curriculum on an ongoing basis. Yearly department "postmortems" are held as part of the students' final examination.

Detailed current course & unit descriptions (Syllabus) are located in PART FIVE.

THEATRE CLASSES OFFERED

THEATER I (0071) *(name replaces BASIC THEATRE 1 & 2) (Taken usually in the freshman or sophomore year)* 10 credits

Includes THEATER FITNESS 1 unit

THEATRE II (0072) *(name replaces INTERMEDIATE THEATRE 1 & 2) (Taken usually in the sophomore or junior year)* 10 credits

FITNESS PERFORMANCE (FTNS 150) *(name replaces THEATRE FITNESS 3 & 4)* (fulfills second year of State P.E. requirement) 5 credits

(Taken concurrently with THEATRE 2)

THEATER III (0074) *(name replaces INTERMEDIATE THEATRE 2) (Taken usually in the junior or senior year)* 10 credits

SOTA THEATRE ADVANCED (0076) *(An advanced acting workshop ensemble offered by invitation only. Taken usually in the junior and/or senior years.)* 10 credits

THEATRE PRODUCTION MANAGEMENT UNIT

For a small select number of new and continuing theatre students we offer the involvement in our department's Production Management unit. If a student is interested in taking part in this unit he/she must discuss with the Theatre staff his/her desire to participate. The students in this unit meet the equivalent of 20 to 30 hours a week involving the hands-on training in the smooth operation and support of the intimate theatre space, including all

elements of theatre production services, stage management, theatre business management, publicity and promotion, house and facility operation, back stage and front-of-house operation and activities.

See Part V the current course & unit descriptions (Syllabus) for details.

"Product from Process"

The SOTA Theatre Department has a rigorous public performance schedule which enhances classroom studies. Over the past few years we have presented our yearly performances of Playwriting: staged readings of student written and student directed one-act plays (on the Intermediate 2 and Advanced levels, and "Snippets" on the Intermediate One level); our annual Elizabethan evening featuring the Theatre Department Shakespeare monologue and sonnet competition; a fully-mounted Spring or Fall production featuring members of the Intermediate 2 and Advanced classes; and various evenings of scenes, monologues, and one-act plays (including BoB "*Best of Bootcamp"*); lecture/demonstrations of voice and movement activities; lunch-time Brown Bag performances; yearly production tours for Middle Schools; Intermediate 1, and Basic Theatre class showcases; and acting styles projects. Also, performing at various regional high school theatre festivals, including in the past, the Hayward State University Shakespeare Festival, the Ohlone College High School Festival, the University of San Francisco High School Festival, the Lenaea Festival (formally at Sacramento State University), and the California Educational Theatre Association NorCal High School Theatre Festival.

For a complete list of our past projects go to our website under ABOUT THE THEATRE DEPT. and click on THEATRE DEPARTMENT HISTORY.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

Classes are scheduled Monday through Friday between the hours of 1:10 p.m. and 4:30 p.m., but afternoon rehearsals can go longer. In addition there are some rehearsals and performances scheduled during the weekends and school holidays. Each academic year is 36 weeks long.

"Wipe your emotional feet at the door."

In the theatre class

CREATING A CLIMATE FOR LEARNING

CLASS & REHEARSAL BEHAVIOR, PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE

An acting student must arrive to class and rehearsal on time, prepared with assignments, and ready to work. Classes and rehearsals start promptly at the time listed. The acting student must be healthy and well-rested, physically, mentally and emotionally present and ready to work. If a student falls asleep in class they will be sent home. If the student is too tired to be in class, to do the work, he/she needs to go home and sleep, not be in class. The process is: sending the student to the office where a phone call home gets permission for the student to leave school.

Students do not lie down in class, students do not sitting on other student's laps in class, students bring logbooks to every class, students wear proper "fits" to every class, students wear proper footwear to every class.

The Asawa SOTA theatre students are responsible for knowing all of the information on the two lists, **WHAT A STUDENT-ACTOR NEEDS TO SUCCEED** and **RULES FOR ACTORS IN REHEARSAL AND CLASS** in the book *Acting is Action,* which is issued to each student at the beginning of their first year.

SITTING OUT & INJURIES

"Sitting out" is not acceptable behavior in the theatre. Any restrictions which will not allow you to participate fully in the day's activities, including exhaustion or sleepiness, should be explained in a note from the parent/guardian, doctor, or the school office.

If a student attends a class and does not participate and does not have the above note of explanation, he/she will receive an "F" for that class session. This "F" will remain until a parent/guardian note is brought. The student's participation for the "sick day" might include taking complete notes of the day's activities in his/her logbook, which will be turned-in at the end of the day and graded.

If lack of participation is due to medical reasons or injury, a doctor's note is necessary and should: (1) state the problem, (2) state what the student can or cannot do, and (3) state for how long they will be incapacitated. This is necessary so that teachers may assist them in regaining their progress.

PROPER DRESS & FOOTWEAR FOR CLASS & REHEARSAL— *Department "Fits"*

An acting student during exercises, movement classes, rehearsals, or class performances cannot have focus on, or be worried about, his or her clothing or appearance. Therefore, proper clothing is required for participation in all the theatre classes. Proper clothing is the THEATRE DEPARTMENT EXERCISE OUTFIT, what the students call their "fits." Not dressing in their "fits" will result in a lowered grade for that activity. Again, any combination of 5 unexcused tardies or absences or non-dresses in a six-week grading period will result in the lowering of a student's grade by 1/2 a letter grade.

PARENTS: The proper necessary "fit" is purchased by all incoming students in their first week of class.[1]

The outfit includes:

- Black sweat pants with "SOTA Theatre" logo (above)— not to be altered, changed, or decorated in any way.
- Black sweat shirt with "SOTA Theatre" logo.
- Black T-shirt with "SOTA Theatre" logo.
- Lightweight tennis shoes (not "designer" tennis shoes), or deck shoes, or dance shoes.

"Proper participation attire" also means NONE of the following: tongue, lip, or nose-piercing, untied shoe laces, shoes with slippery soles, sunglasses or dark glasses, excessive jewelry or hanging chains, coats, hats or hoods worn in class, sleeves covering hands, and loose hair in face. Hair must be pulled back off the face and secured for both women and men. The face must be seen. The following should never be worn in class, heavy boots or shoes (combat boots or Doc Martens, etc.), high heel shoes, platform shoes, sandals, clogs, floppies, low riding or baggy pants, short (minis) or tight skirts.

No cellular phones, computer games, skate boards, bikes, gum chewing, food, or beverages (other than water) are allowed in class or rehearsal.

We highly recommend that students have bottled water with them at all times.

We also recommend that students have underarm deodorant with them at all times. The Theatre Department is very demanding physically.

SOTA ACTOR'S LOGBOOK INSTRUCTIONS

"There is a consistent correlation between an actor who writes effectively and one who performs effectively."

RECORD YOUR ENTRIES EVERYDAY! Keep the logbook active, writing notes and reflections after every class. Logbook entries (other than reflections) are not solitary work; you may discuss the information with fellow students. RECORD EACH DAY ON ONE PAGE. (Use the front for one day, the back for the next. Don't skip pages!)

DAILY ENTRIES MUST INCLUDE In outline form:

- Day / Date / Period of class / Teacher / Class or subject.
- Class material covered. Example: Acting Exercises— including exercise title, instructions, the purpose of the exercise— such as: the who, what, or where, sense memory, voice, movement.
- **Reflections**: Write a minimum of one paragraph of reflection on your class work (not in outline form). This is the MOST IMPORTANT element of your daily entry: What did I learn, discover, observe, or think? How did the class go? Relate it to your training and the arts as a creative process.

SAMPLE DAILY ENTRY

Monday, 11/1/09, 6° & 7° / Rayher: Acting

Material Covered:

1. Warm-up games: Bunny, Do you love your neighbor?, group stop

2. Discovering a character's objective (intention wants) through script analysis.

- Objectives always involve the second character. What do I want from him/her.

- Look at the end of the monologue first to find out the character's objective.

[1] If this requirement creates a financial burden on the family we will find a way for the student to meet this requirement.

3. Reflection: Without an objective a character has nothing to do in a scene. He has no reason to be there. Always keep your objective in mind!

Personalize it. Glue stick or scotch tape handouts, instruction sheets, reviews, programs, and any pictures, drawings or quotes you might cut out, even things you might write when you are not near your logbook. The bottom line is that it is your record of what you learned. For more information on theatrical logbooks see your text *ACTING IS ACTION* (4th ed.), page 298.

If a "**WEEKLY QUOTE**" is posted on the Theatre Dept. CALLBOARD, write it in your logbook and HIGHLIGHT it. Write a paragraph or two of your thoughts on the quote. What it means to you.

LOGBOOK GRADING CRITERIA: All entries must be written legibly. Neatness, completeness, organization, clarity, and no days missing are a must and will be graded. Turn it in for grading when called upon and at the end of each grading period. You will be responsible for replacing and rewriting all materials in a LOST LOGBOOK. Replacement Logbooks are $2.00.

BRING YOUR LOGBOOK TO EVERY CLASS — TAKE NOTES! DO NOT DOODLE IN YOUR LOGBOOK. Keep ONLY Theatre Department notes in this logbook.

SOTA ACTOR'S THEATRE GAME FILE INSTRUCTIONS

Keep a list of all the theatre games and exercises played in class in the section of your logbook. Entries (other than reflections) are not solitary work; you may discuss the information with fellow students.

EACH GAME ENTRY MUST INCLUDE— In outline form:

- GAME TITLE (and alternative names).
- Teacher or Class where you learned it.
- SOURCE OF THE GAME— if known (examples: Viola Spolin, Chekhov).
- GAME DIRECTIONS— so that you could lead the playing of this game using these notes if called on. Use diagrams and drawings if helpful.
- THE PURPOSE OF GAME OR EXERCISE—such as: concentration, imagination, relaxation, sense memory, voice, movement, etc.
- **REFLECTIONS**— Minimum of a paragraph of reflection (NOT in outline form). This is an IMPORTANT element of your entry. What did I learn, observe, discover, or think.

GAME FILE GRADING PROCEDURE: All information must be written legibly. Neatness, completeness, organization, clarity, are a must and will be graded. You will turn it in for grading when called upon and at the end of each grading period.

You will be responsible for replacing and rewriting all materials in a LOST LOGBOOK/GAME FILE.

GRADES & GRADING POLICY

All units in the curriculum are required courses and must be passed each semester. There are no electives at this time.

Our department grading policy focuses heavily on (1) participation, (2) the student's ability to "focus" on the task at hand, (3) the student's willingness to TRY and experiment, (4) the student's ability to establish and use good work habits, (5) completing assignments, and (6) the adequate preparation, practice, and rehearsal of assignments inside and outside of class. Since each student "volunteered" to attend Asawa SOTA and be in the theatre program, rather than at another school, we expect the student, with the instructor's guidance, to succeed. Any student selected into the program should be capable of a passing grade ("C" or better) in his/her theatre classes.

Q: Is an "A" an automatic or average grade in the theatre courses?
A: NO. An "A" is not an automatic or average grade in the theatre department.

Q: How do I get a good grade in theatre?
A: If you focus consistently on doing the "best" work you can in ALL of the units of the program you will receive a "good" grade. If you focus more on "the grade" than what you are "learning," you have your focus in the wrong place.

Q: What if I find that I don't like one of the units offered in my curriculum, such as playwriting or a dance class, can I still pass the entire course.
A: Yes. But you cannot receive an "A" in the entire course without functioning adequately in ALL of the units offered. Students must demonstrate a proficiency in all units of the program, be it voice, acting, or playwriting.

Q: How do you average together the grades of all the different units and artists-in-residence (AIRs) that I will be working with?

A: As the actual final contact hours with each AIR may vary from the number of hours scheduled at the beginning of the semester, we can only present here the formula used in calculating the grade. The foundation for the formula is:

(1) There are approximately 180 days in a school year, this means you will be attending between 360 hours to 540 hours in the theatre program. Therefore, each class period (hour) of the semester equals about 0.75% of the semester grade. But required attendance at all Theatre Department performances, completing written assignments (book reports, critique sheets, Logbooks, etc.) also contribute.

(2) A weekly calendar might be figured something like this: movement - 2 hours a week (or 20% of grade), playwriting - 2 hours a week (or 20% of grade), Afro-Haitian dance - 1 hour a week (or 10% of grade), acting - 5 hours a week (or 50% of your grade). Or, at the end of the six week grading period, if you were in class 18 hours with your movement teacher (or 22.5%), 14 hours with your playwriting teacher (or 17.5%), 8 hours with your Afro-Haitian dance teacher (or 10%), 40 hours with your acting teacher (or 50%), for a total of 80 hours (100%).

Q: If I earned a "C" in my first six week grading period, is getting an "A" for the semester grade out of the question?
A: No. The various class activities are graded on a system with progress and improvement on each activity taken into consideration.

Q: How do I get an "A" in theatre?
A: To receive an "A" you must:

- Receive nothing below a "B" from all of your AIRs and teachers.
- Willingly attend or participate in ALL Theatre Department productions and the post-mortem reviews/evaluations.
- Willingly attend ALL department field trips.
- Complete ALL department reading assignments and accompanying required reports.
- Not have more than 15 combined unexcused absences and tardies.

Please note that attendance, effort, and commitment are the major considerations in the determination of grades. It's a simple equation: quantity of time = quality of product, or to quote an old theatre saying: *"Acting is 10% inspiration and 90% perspiration."*

REPORT CARDS

On your report card is recorded:

Scholarship: A, B, C, D, and F (all can have "+" or "-," except semester grades)
Citizenship: E = Excellent, S = Satisfactory, W = Warning, U = Unsatisfactory
Absences and Tardies: correct number
Comments: Students and parents please WATCH for codes marked under comments on your report cards. It details your progress and what you need to improve.

The Grading System used for establishing averages is:

A+	=	12 pts.	B+	=	9	C+	=	6	D+	=	3
A	=	11	B	=	8	C	=	5	D	=	2
A-	=	10	B-	=	7	C-	=	4	D-	=	1
									F	=	0

The following is the grading scale— % of points necessary to receive each grade. This is calculated by a computer software program.

A+	for %> = 100	C+	for %> = 50
A	for %> = 90	C	for %> = 40
A-	for %> = 82	C-	for %> = 32
B+	for %> = 75	D+	for %> = 25
B	for %> = 65	D	for %> = 16
B-	for %> = 57	F	for %> = 0

STUDENT PROGRESS, PLACEMENT AND ADVANCEMENT

Each semester, a student's work is reviewed by the Department Director and AIR/faculty to evaluate the student's progress. When needed a faculty/student conference occurs which allows students to review progress and to set goals.

Placement in a theatre class is by demonstration of levels of proficiency in the prerequisite theatre class or classes, or equivalent past theatre experience.

Since the theatre experience is based on personal growth, evaluation is a natural result of the process. Also, since acting is a cumulative experience, the student is evaluated continually throughout their course of work. Written and verbal evaluation by the student himself, his class, and the teachers is, therefore, more relevant to the student and his progress than a letter grade.

There is no automatic advancement in the theatre program. At the end of each semester, and in particular at the end of the course year, each student is evaluated for placement. Advancement is determined by the student's demonstration of his/her ability to put into practice the material covered in the class, including good work habits— especially self-direction, ability to focus on task at hand, and keeping to task— and, when the need arises, by passing a placement audition given each year— which is often part of the final examination— or permission of the instructor. Everyday is an audition.

You must receive a semester grade of "A" to guarantee an advancement to the next class. Depending on the number of "A" students in each class, there is the possibility that a student with a "B" could advance to the next class. A student will probably not advance with a grade of "C," and will absolutely not advanced with a "D" or "F."

Current course & unit descriptions (Syllabus)

COURSE OVERVIEW

In the theatre we must train the following three elements as one unit: the mind (intelligence), the body (activity), and the heart (soul). In the teenager they are often considered three different things and developed individually. A student usually considers an activity either physical or mental. I am in an academic class and must use my mind. I am in a P.E. class and I use my body, and in my day to day activities with my fellow students I am ruled by my feelings. But in the theater these three elements must be considered as one entity, they must be dealt with as one entity or you create what I call the mind body dichotomy, my body does one thing while my mind does another. Our training makes these three elements a whole. Grounding is reinforced in Asian Theatre, gesture is reinforced and expanded in Afro-Haitian dance, the lyric of language is reinforced in Singing for the Actor, working in an ensemble and listening is improved in Clowning and contact improvisation in Dance. To know precisely the value of the spoken word, the power of the operative word and the architect of a written speech are brought into focus in Playwriting, Voice and Shakespeare.

Here is a check list which helps explain what you will learn in your first year in the Asawa SOTA Theatre Department and in all future years. We strive:

- ☑ Not to "play act"
- ☑ Not to "play for results"
- ☑ Not to "indicate"
- ☑ To focus and "listen"
- ☑ To be grounded
- ☑ To use their entire being to present a complete character.
- ☑ To use appropriate movement & gesture for the character. Not to be frightened of the authentic gesture.
    - ☑ To avoid "happy feet"
    - ☑ To avoid "wandering and unspecific movement and gesture"
    - ☑ To move on the "emotion" of the line (variation)
    - ☑ To gesture appropriately and fully.
        - ☑ Not to gesture from the elbows
        - ☑ Not to "windmill"
        - ☑ Not to be a "hem grabber"
- ☑ To find the Arc
- ☑ To have a reason & a point
- ☑ To have an objective
    - ☑ To have emotional variation (expressed in vocal, emotional, and movement variation)
    - ☑ Not to make everything equal
- ☑ To have a vivid and seeable second character
- ☑ To have a seeable "where"
- ☑ To love the art in them, not them in the art
- ☑ To work outside of your comfort zone
- ☑ To know precisely the value of the spoken word, the power of the operative word and the architect of a written speech.

THEATER I

THEATER I (0071) (name replaces BASIC THEATRE 1 and 2): 10 credits per semester. One-year course starting in Fall. 10 hours includes THEATRE FITNESS unit. Prerequisites: audition and acceptance into program. The class explores the basic principles of the acting process (especially Stanislavski and Meisner) through theatre games, acting exercises, vocal development, Shakespeare, movement, and contemporary audition monologue and scene preparation, practice, and performance. The course emphasizes studies that create professional work habits, script and character analysis— emphasizing the interpretation of contemporary dramatic literature, and various acting techniques. Usually taken in the freshman or sophomore year. *This class is foundation for all future study.*

Course includes work on:

1. E**stablishing good work habits** (rules for actors).
2. **Basic Acting Techniques and Exercises**, including exercises and theatre games exploring concentration, memory, observation, imagination, listening, sensory perception, emotional and sense memory recall— including touch, sight, hearing, and smell.
3. **Voice**, to expand the freedom and flexibility of the voice, includes vocal support, articulation, projection, and establishing a warm-up voice routine. Focus is on breath as the foundation. Introduces Cicely Barry's work as well as Patsy Rodenburg, Kristen Linklater and Alexander Technique students build a voice that is relaxed and free while supported and strong. Adding articulation and vocal variation creates a full and flexible vocal instrument. This class is an ongoing development throughout the 4 years.
4. **Audition Monologue Preparation and Performance,** which focuses on contemporary authors, and includes a Resume Preparation Unit and Future Training and Career Preparedness Unit, culminating CSSSA application and monologue presentation and in the end of year Basic Showcase.
5. **Creating WHO'S, WHAT'S, and WHERE'S**, Work on characters (WHO'S), including age, occupation, etc.; character and script analysis (WHAT'S), including objective/obstacle, triggers, scoring the role; and establishing locales (WHERE'S), which leads to scene preparation.
6. **Stage Vocabulary and Acting Terms**, including blocking and other script notation.
7. **Theatre Games**.
8. **Acting Shakespeare**, in this unit we introduce and explore the rhythm and meter of Shakespeare's work through monologues and sonnets. We look at verse, scansion exercises, paraphrasing, Shakespeare games, upward inflection, sustaining breath through end of idea, word specificity, and the elements of poetry to activate the language, building skill and confidence with classical theater, culminating in participation in the department Monologue & Sonnet Contest. Students work periodically with a specialist from a regional Shakespeare company.
9. **Singing for the Actor**, Voice study is an integral part to the success of contemporary actors and vocal artists. *Singing for the Actor* is a sequence of courses designed to teach students how to use vocal technique to expand range and expression. The first year is tailored to ensemble instruction, include fundamentals of singing including breathing, awareness of body, and allowing vowels to support the natural sound of the voice. Students will also be introduced to basic music theory and ear training, culminating in the end of year Basic Showcase. This section is designed for students with little or no previous voice training.
10. **Evaluation and Criticism**, including self-evaluation, peer evaluation (with use of evaluation forms and critique sheets), and evaluation as an audience member (critical standards and writing reviews).
11. **Playwriting**, the basic elements are introduced, building a foundation in dramatic storytelling and dramatic literature, culminating in *Snippets*: a staged reading of very short works in progress in *The Basic Year in Revue* performance.

THEATRE FITNESS I unit

THEATRE I, THEATRE FITNESS unit (0071): 5 to 10 hours per week, taken concurrently with THEATER I. Prerequisites: entrance into program. Usually taken in the freshman or sophomore year.

Course covers basic theatre movement exercises & games dealing with the actor's primary tool— the body— including:

1. **Body awareness**, including analysis, posture, alignment, body mechanics
2. **Relaxation and energizing**, including aerobics
3. **Movement**, including gesture and stage pictures
4. **Physical Theatre and the physical approach to characterization**. Physical theatre exercises geared toward using our bodies to communicate and how to find characters physically. Also, space work. Students are introduced to the basics of the technique with a set of regimented kinesthetic body awareness exercises using breath work(use of diaphragm), isolations, core strengthening, grounding and repetition. At the end of the Basics school year, students should be able to demonstrate a memorized series of warm- up techniques and be proficient in their progressions across the floor.
5. **Afro-Haitian dance and movement**, is an introduction with the objective to develop the connection of mind and body using movement techniques, music and choreography. Skills will be developed using discipline, movement notation and performance goals to enhance the actors understanding of working with the ensemble. The learning outcomes are based on two core principles of Dunham Technique: center-floor and progressions. They will be clear about stage terminology, be able to take and understand directions; this is demonstrated at Brown bag performances and the Basic Showcase.
6. **Circus skills and clowning**, first year of a progressive two year program developing clowning and circus skills, including slap stick, comic timing, juggling, tumbling, acrobatics, human pyramids, etc., culminating in the end of year Basic Showcase. (Not offered every year.)
7. **Contemporary dance and movement**, including a warm up regimentation, contact improvisation, strength training and conditioning of the body, placement, dance techniques and improvisational skills (flocking, mirroring..etc.), culminating in the end of year Theatre I Showcase.
8. **Laban and Contact Improvisation:** Students will learn four of the eight Laban Effort Shapes; learn the different planes in space; learn two types of rhythms; perform dance exercises and choreography that focuses on coordination, increasing their range of motion; understand the basic foot and arm positions in dance. (Not offered every year.)
9. **Ethnic dance and music techniques and styles**, experimenting with various ethnic dance and music techniques and styles. (Not offered every year.)
10. **Fencing** (Not offered every year.)
11. **Unarmed combat**, including proper technique for punching, kicking, gouging, head bashing, falls and rolls. (Not offered every year.)
12. **Asian Theatre** (the art of grounding and stillness). (Not offered every year.)

THEATER II

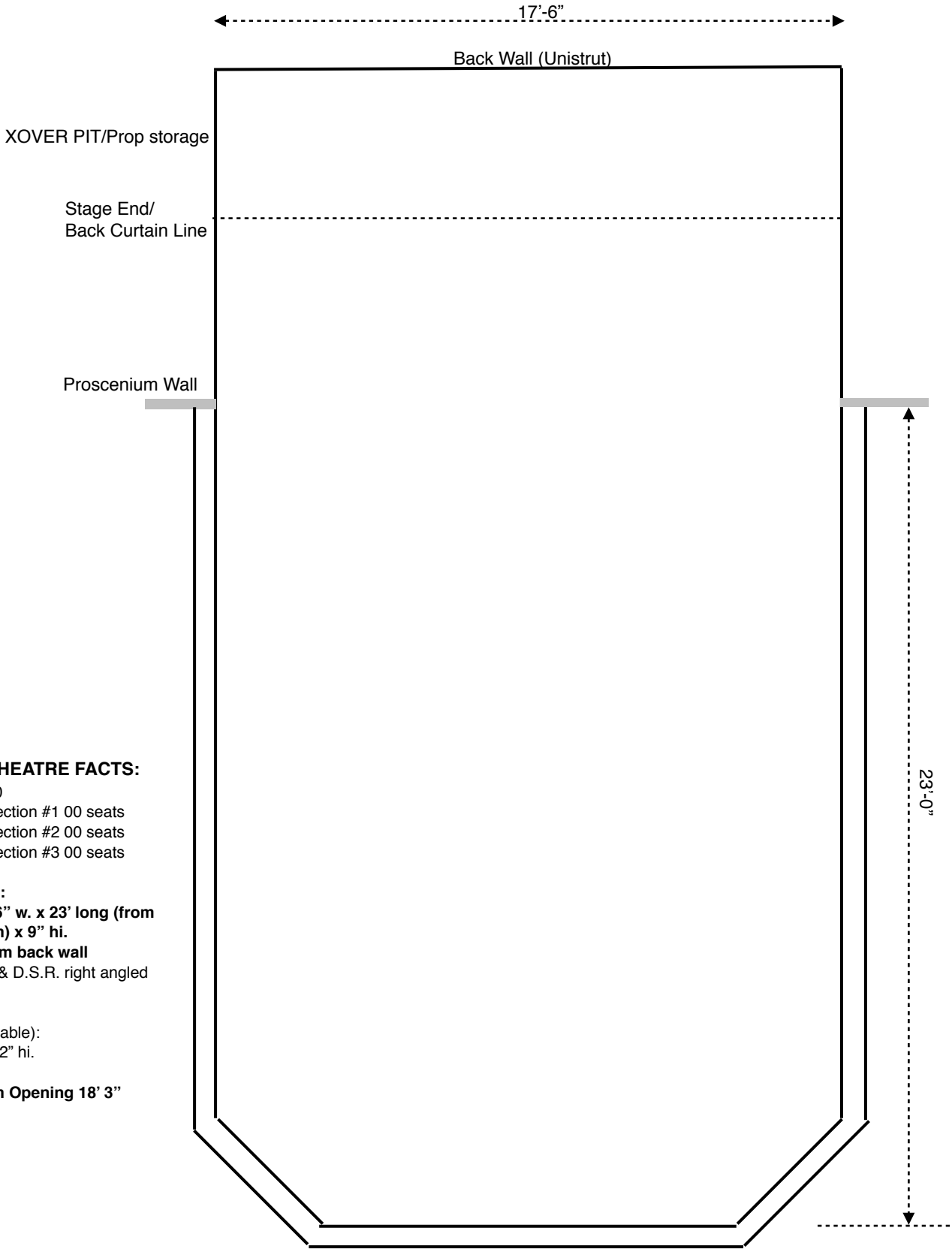
THEATER II (0072) (name replaces INTERMEDIATE THEATRE I): 5 credits per semester. One-year course starting in Fall. 5 to 10 hours per week, taken concurrently with FITNESS PERFORMANCE. Prerequisites: THEATER I, or equivalent experience. Advancement is by passing a placement audition given at the end of the previous year or permission of the instructor. Usually taken in the sophomore year.

Course includes continued work on:

1. **Good work habits** (rules for actors).
2. **Acting Techniques and Exercises**, including exercises and theatre games. Emphasis is placed on creating detailed and believable characters, by continued work on: WHO'S (characters), WHAT'S (script analysis, especially objectives, scoring the role), and WHERE'S (establishing locales), which lead to a Ten-minute play and scene preparation.
3. **Voice**, continues work from previous year to expand the freedom and flexibility of the voice, adding Linklater, vocal variation, proper vowel placement and introducing standard American speech (Skinner). This class is an ongoing development throughout the 4 years.
4. **Audition Monologue Preparation and Performance**, and includes a Resume Preparation Unit and Future Training and Career Preparedness Unit.
5. **Ten-minute One-Act Play Preparation**, including presenting polished two to four-person scene, which includes a possible middle school tour production.
6. **Playwriting**, the basic elements are continued, advancing the foundation of dramatic storytelling and dramatic literature, culminating in *Snippets*: a staged reading of works in progress.
7. **Acting Shakespeare**, see description under THEATRE I. Continues work from the previous year while expanding scansion technique, status, physical life and character work. Using the text as the guide to deep character work, the student learns the clues to deciphering and realizing the psychology of each character. This unit culminates in the participation in the department Monologue & Sonnet Contest.
8. **Singing for the Actor**, culminating in the end of year Intermediate I Showcase. Voice study is an integral part to the success of contemporary actors and vocal artists. *Singing for the Actor* is a sequence of courses designed to teach students how to use vocal technique to expand range and expression. This year is tailored for small ensemble instruction. The course explores how to sing simple harmonies with one to four other people in popular music and standard theatre music repertoire. Students will continue to explore vocal technique through awareness of breath and body movement as well as a higher level of music theory and ear training.
9. **Evaluation and Criticism**, see description under THEATRE I.
10. Preparation of summer scenes and summer reading assignments.

Production Management unit

For a small select number of new and continuing theatre students (starting in the Sophomore year) we offer the involvement in our department's **Production Management & Services unit**. If an auditioning student is interested in taking part in this unit he/she must complete the regular theatre audition, and discuss with the Theatre staff his/her desires to further his audition for the Theatre Departments Theatre Production Management & Services Unit. This audition section will be arranged individually. If a current student is interested in being part of this unit he/she must discuss with the Theatre staff his/her desire to participate. The students in this unit meet the equivalent of 20 to 30 hours a week involving the hands-on training in the smooth operation and support of the intimate theatre space, including all elements of theatre production services, stage management, theatre business management, publicity and promotion, box office, front of house and facility operation, back stage operation and activities.



STUDIO THEATRE FACTS:
Seating: 100
Audience Section #1 00 seats
Audience Section #2 00 seats
Audience Section #3 00 seats

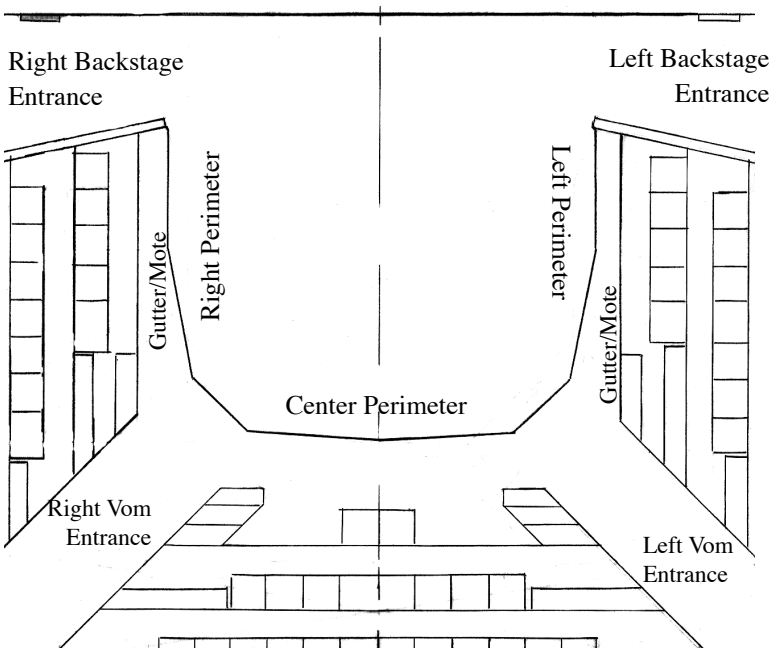
Dimentions:
Stage: 17'-6" w. x 23' long (from Proscenium) x 9" hi.
32' long from back wall
4' w. D.S.L. & D.S.R. right angled corners

Step (removable):
10" w. x 4 1/2" hi.

Proscenium Opening 18' 3"

Asawa SOTA STUDIO THEATRE Thrust Stage Floor Plan
Scale: 1/4" = 1'-0"

GLOSSARY OF STAGE TERMS UNIQUE TO THE THRUST



Cut two 3/16" black on black foam board bases to sizes as shown in floor plan, using 1/2" scale (1/2" = 1'-0")

STAGE: 17'-6" wide (board in inches: 8 3/4") x 32'-0" (board in inches: 16")

Cut a 4'-0" right angel diagonal off the two down stage corners (2" off board).

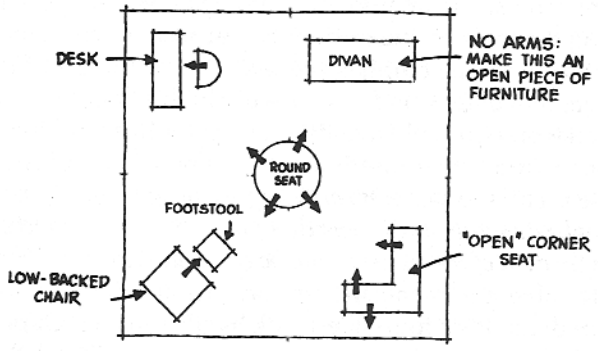
STEPS: 19'-2" wide (board in inches: 9 & 9/16") x 32'-10" (board in inches: 16 & 3/8")

Match the right angel diagonal cut of the two down stage corners for a 10" wide step. (board in inches: 7/16" wide)

Glue together using clear glue stick.

SCENERY DESIGN FOR THE THRUST STAGE

The thrust stage demands creative set and prop design, such as set pieces called *tumpties*, these are box-like pieces that serve double duty as both props and storage. On the thrust stage the scale is smaller, units must be more detailed and most items must be stage worth and visible from all sides. The designer must have no more thoughts of the "box set" with three walls and with doors and windows. You must rethink audience sight lines and pay continues close attention to them. The designer must think of the parameter and the diagonal. There is not a "front" of the stage.



A ground plan can readily be designed that will fan out from the center (see the drawing above). The use of a center object approachable from all sides will avoid the deadlines of a cleared space and will provide the obstacle course so necessary in a dynamic ground plan. Note that the drawing has four major stage areas. By using the areas

in combinations with only occasional use of one area, a dynamic interlocking of the stage will result, and all three audiences will see the play equally well.[2]

A ground plan could rake the objects onstage along diagonal lines (again think diagonally), helping the majority of the house to see most of the action. You can also see that compositionally, using a triangle made by three figures is very effective on the thrust stage, not only for the person at the apex of the triangle.

Placing covered scenery on this stage would certainly obscure audience vision, but when skeletal frames are introduced you have both good vision and the suggestion of Baroque scenery. Looking through such frames is no problem at all for audiences, for we actually see much in real life through interrupted views. You must learn to exploit this stage in every possible way, for the communal theatre has great potential for our times because it is quite different from motion pictures or television.

Details or scenic elements, such as railings, columns, half walls and wainscoting, cutaway walls, fragmentary walls, door frames, etc., benches, window seats, props and set dressing, sofas, settees, love seats and couches with low or with out backs and are viable on all there sided.

POWER POINT:

The GROUND PLAN is the key to a successful production on a thrust stage. It must be thoroughly thought out and examined for sight line obstacles.

POWER POINT:

Consider items that extend up from the floor and/or down from the ceiling (hanging from the grid), such as ceiling beams and rib structures, plate rails, moldings, perimeter edges above that designated and defined the area below.[3]

POWER POINT:

Consider the use of levels that might define and delineate the various acting areas on stage.[4]

POWER POINT:

DON'T FORGET THE FLOOR ITSELF. Various sizes and shapes of rugs, various types and styles of wood flooring, tile, grass, weeds, and even dirt.[5]

The various types of **"SELECTIVE" SETTINGS** illustrated below work well on the thrust stage and should be considered by the director and designer when preparing their production: (1) the Selective Setting, (2) the Cut-Down Setting, (3) the Fragmentary Setting, (4) the Profile Setting, and (5) the Minimum Setting.

What is a Selective Set? In the Selective Set certain elements of a setting are carefully 'selected,' while others are not chosen.

Selective items, set pieces, or units that define or delineate entrances— door frames, arches, columns, pillars, planters, gates, etc.— are especially desirable at the "vom" entrances. What type of space are we entering, or is it an entrance to another part of the "non-visable" setting?

Remember:

Four entrances to the space

Think on the diagonal! (interior doors, exterior doors)

Consider the parameter!

Think low (Exteriors: garden gates, low stone walls. Interiors: cut-away walls, wainscoting walls, couches with no backs) and above (hanging lights [chandeliers, etc], plate rails)

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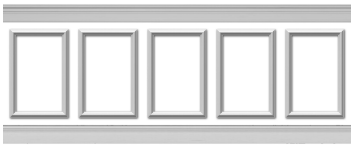
[2] Play Directing, Analysis, Communication, and Style by Francis Hodge, Second edition, Prentice Hall, 1982

[3] Illustrations of these various elements appear in the next two sections of this supplement.

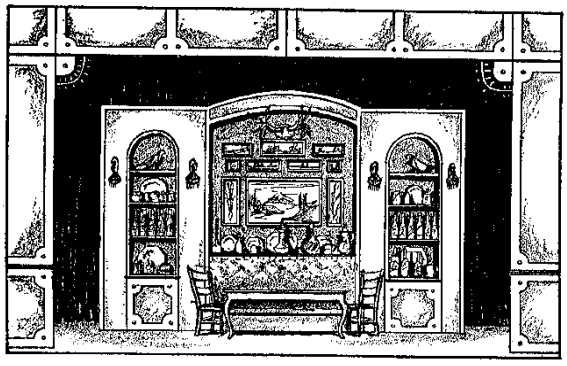
[4] For examples see the photographs in the section: EXAMPLES AND TYPES OF DESIGNS FOR THE THRUST STAGE.

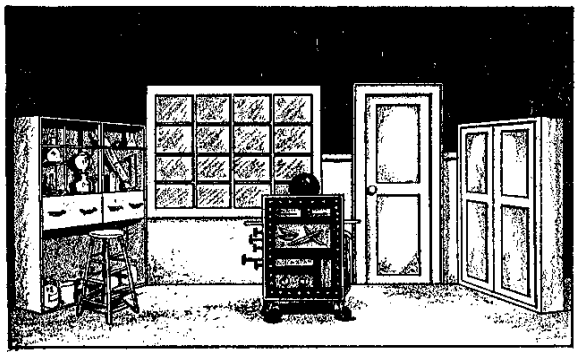
[5] For examples see the photographs in the section: EXAMPLES AND TYPES OF DESIGNS FOR THE THRUST STAGE.

Example of wainscoting walls [wageschot, Dutch]

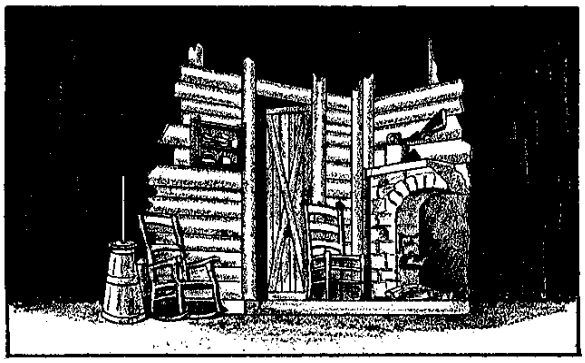


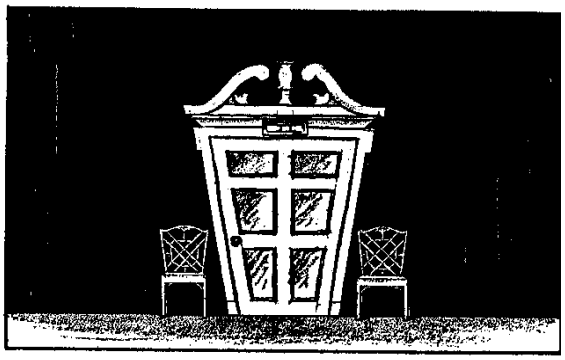
Example of a plate rail



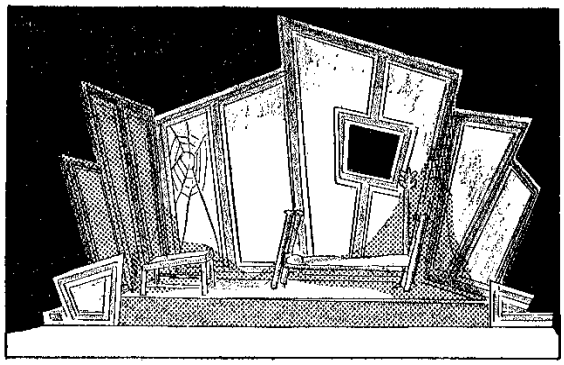


Left, a **SELECTIVE Setting** for the play *Uncle Harry*, particular attention must be paid to the treatment of the units right and left edges and top of the unit. Right, a **CUT-DOWN Setting** for the laboratory set in Maxwell Anderson's *The Star Wagon*. The walls are cut down in direct relation to the architecture of the room.





Left, a form of Selective Setting, the **FRAGMENTARY Setting** for a cabin in the play *Dark of the Moon*. Right, a **PROFILE Setting** for a hallway scene in the musical *Anything Goes*.



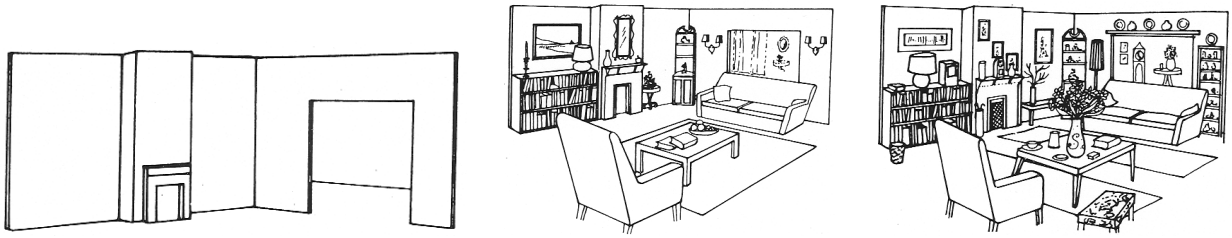
A **Minimum Setting** on a wagon. An expressionistic interpretation for the play *The Inspector General*.[6]

Using selected elements—

[6] These five illustrations are from: Philippi, Herbert. *Stagecraft and Scene Design*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 1953. Out of Print.

By using just a few carefully chosen features it is often possible to build up a convincing locale out of very little. It is fascinating to see how little is needed at times to create a convincing atmosphere. Seeing the door of a house, we assume that the rest of the building exists. A ticket-office represents the entire foyer of a theatre. Show someone holding a fishing rod, backed by a light blue cyc, and we have conveyed the idea that he is fishing. Add the sound of a river, and the audience is convinced. How necessary is it to add the grassy river bank, trees, or water reflections?[7]

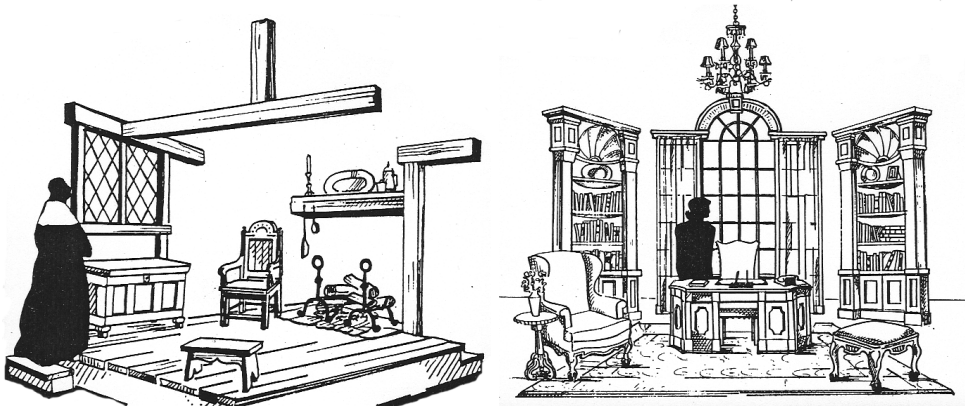
If it is carefully chosen *part* of the location will suggest the entire situation to our audience. But <u>these must be unambiguous, the audience must recognize and interpret the situation instantly</u>. The technique is to imply the whole by showing a complete but localized part.



The three illustrations above show a <u>raked wall</u> unit that would function on a thrust stage. The illustrations also show how well thought out set dressing changes the feeling of a set. Left, the bare skeleton of the set— architecturally appropriate for the play being presented. Center, a personalized decor is developed, suitable for the period, the characters, and the action of the play. Carefully selected properties enhance the scene and give it conviction. Right, excessive set dressing produces and overfussy effect and clogs the composition. The location becomes confused and cluttered, perhaps just the effect needed for the particular play.

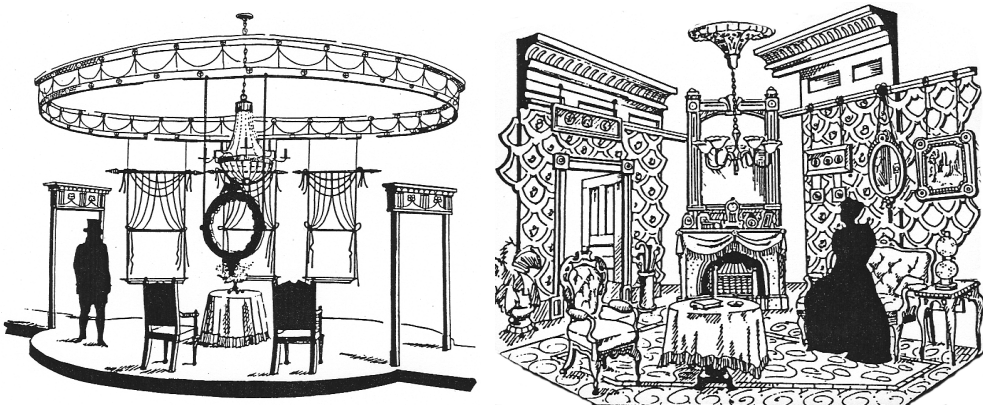
EXAMPLES AND TYPES OF DESIGNS FOR THE THRUST STAGE

The following section of illustrates and photographs are examples and samples of the many variations of settings for the thrust stage, also scenery styles and scenic elements that lend themselves to set designs of the trust stage. This section is intended to have the reader discover these elements by studying the drawings and pictures.

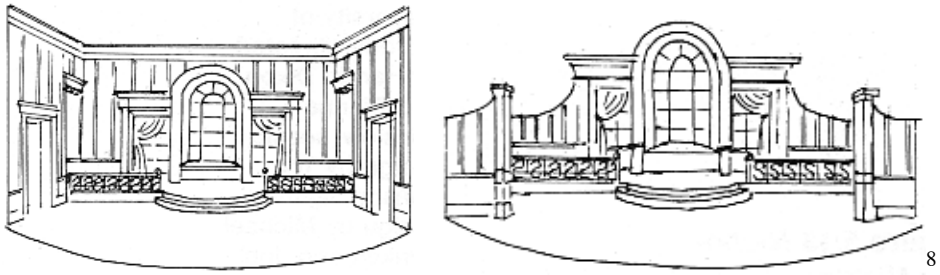


Left, a design for a play set in an Early American time period. (notice the unconventional raked angle of the set, the fragmentary and selective set design with ceiling beams that define the space, and the floor treatment.) Right, a design for a play set in an American Georgian design (notice the three separate free standing wall units that have defined capstones to the sides and tops, and the appropriate period chandelier.)

[7] Both of the last two items can be achieved easily on the thrust stage with gobos.

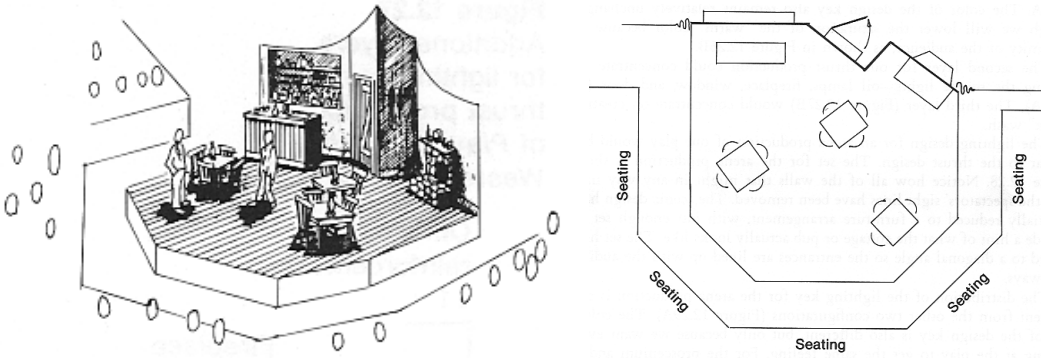


Left, a design for a play set in an Adam/Federal style. (notice the open ceiling unit that mirrors the shape of the stage foot print, the free standing profile doors and window units, and the appropriate period chandelier, all of which give the set an open, light, and airy feeling.) Right, a design for a play set in an Romantic Victorian design (notice, again, the unconventional raked angle of the set, the three separate free standing wall units of various sizes and shapes, that make this setting very busy, and the appropriate period chandelier.)

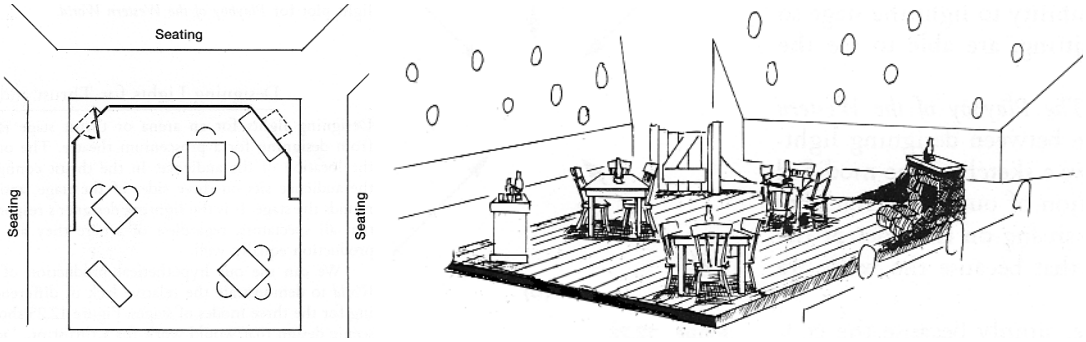


[8]

Illustration on the left demonstrates a scenic design using a standard box-set for a proscenium stage, the right illustration gives an idea of a variation on that design using an interesting silhouette of a cut-down setting that would function on a thrust stage.



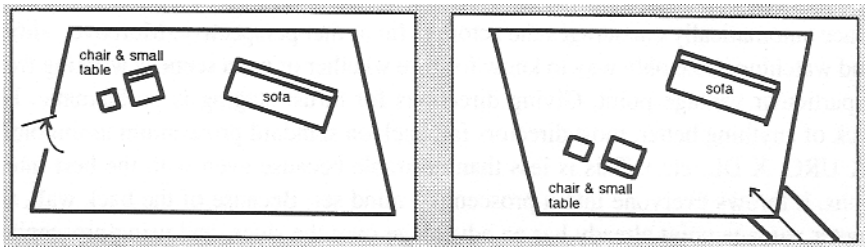
Left, a set design and right, the ground plan for a production of *Playboy of the Western World* on a thrust stage (notice the capstone treatment to the top of the upstage wall unit).[9]



[8] Gillette, Michael J. Theatrical Design and Production. Mayfield Publishing Company. 1987

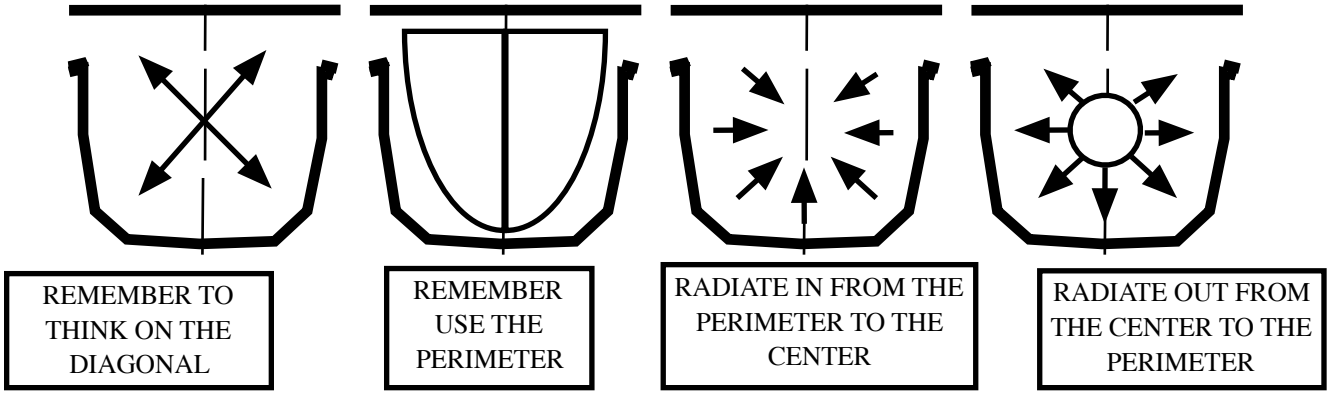
[9] Gillette, Michael J. *Theatrical Design and Production*. Mayfield Publishing Company. 1987

Left and right, a different variation on a scenic design for *Playboy of the Western World* (ground plan and elevation). On the elevation notice the scenic units of (1) the cut-down door and frame— up center on the drawing— and (2) the fireplace and mantle unit— on the right— which are placed across the "vom" entrances, which makes them visible to all three audience sections and keeps the sight lines acceptable).[10]



Left, Typical Proscenium Furniture Arrangement,. Right, Typical Thrust Furniture Arrangement

Final Power Points:



Many more photographs and illustrations to spark your imagination can be found in ACTING, DIRECTING & DESIGNING (Lighting & Scenery) for THE THRUST STAGE (a supplement to ACTING IS ACTION by Phillip Rayher (also on line)

[10] Gillette, Michael J. Theatrical Design and Production. Mayfield Publishing Company. 1987

FITNESS PERFORMANCE

FITNESS PERFORMANCE (FTNS 150) (name replaces P.E. I and THEATER FITNESS 3): 5 credits per semester. 5 to 10 hours per week, taken concurrently with THEATER II. Fulfills 1 year of State of California two year Physical Education requirement. Prerequisites: THEATRE FITNESS I unit or equivalent. Usually taken in the sophomore year.

Course covers continuation of basic theatre movement exercises & games including:

1. **Body awareness**, including analysis, posture, alignment, body mechanics
2. **Relaxation and energizing**, including aerobics
3. **Movement**, including gesture and stage pictures
4. **Physical Theatre and the physical approach to characterization**, continuation of physical character development and skills with emphasis on creating physical theatre ensemble work. (Not offered every year.)
5. **Afro-Haitian dance and movement**, is integrated into the second year of study for theatre students. In the course goals, we take two core principles of Dunham Technique introduced in the Theatre I year and deepen the development of breath work, isolation and core strengthening. There is an incorporation of rhythm and musicality, not only in the learning objectives for the center— floor and progression sequences, but in the specific Haitian dances that are a part of the performance goals and continued work with the ensemble, culminating in the end of year Intermediate 1 Showcase.
6. **Contemporary dance and movement**, including a warm up regimentation, strength and conditioning, placement, techniques, improvisation, musicality, rhythm, beginning choreography composition, contact improvisation, culminating in the end of year Intermediate I Showcase.
7. **Mask Characterization** (Not offered every year.)
8. **Circus arts and clowning,** second year of a progressive two year program developing a personal clown character and circus skills, including slap stick, comic timing, writing a clown skit, juggling, tumbling, acrobatics, human pyramids, etc., culminating in the end of year Intermediate 1 Showcase. (Not offered every year)
9. **Asian Theatre** (the art of grounding and stillness). (Not offered every year.)
10. **Laban and Contact Improvisation**, Continue to understand the second group of four of the eight Laban Effort Shapes; begin to develop a sense for choreographing movements; begin to apply the Laban Effort Shapes in expressing the body in dancing and acting. (Not offered every year.)
11. Fencing (Not offered every year.)
12. **Unarmed combat**, See description under THEATRE FITNESS 1. (Not offered every year.)
13. **Ethnic dance and music techniques and styles**, experimenting with various ethnic dance and music techniques and styles (Not offered every year.)
14. Specific techniques such as Viewpoints, Alexander technique, and Suzuki. (Not offered every year.)

THEATER III

THEATER III (0074) (name replaces INTERMEDIATE THEATRE 2))**:** 10 credits per semester. One-year course starting in Fall. 10 to 15 hours per week. Prerequisites: THEATER I & THEATER II, or equivalent experience. Advancement is by passing a placement audition given at the end of the previous year or permission of the instructor. Usually taken in the junior year.

Course includes continued work on:

1. **Voice**, continues work from the previous year adding increasing vocal range, whole voice applications to various texts, introduce Chamber Theater, introduce International Phonetic Alphabet and individual work.
2. **Audition Monologue Preparation and Performance**, which focuses on an Acting Styles and Historical Periods Unit, including: Greek, Spanish or French Renaissance (Moliere), Restoration & 18th Century, Rise of Realism (Chekhov or Ibsen), and Absurdism, and includes a Resume Preparation Unit and Future Training and Career Preparedness Unit.
3. **Acting Shakespeare**, see the description under THEATRE I. Continues work from previous years while expanding scansion technique, developing specificity, and stretching archetypes across type, culminating in participation in the department Monologue & Sonnet Contest.
4. Evaluation and Criticism: See description under THEATER I.
5. **One-Act Play Preparation**, taking more creative responsibility by rehearsing and presenting of plays, which emphasizes the ensemble approach, which includes a possible middle school tour production. All students participate in an evening of short plays. (Not offered every year.)
6. **Improvisation for the Actor**, geared toward helping the actors character development and comfort level on stage, as well as exploring improvisation as performance and a material generating tool, culminating in the Intermediate 3 showcase. Building on their two years of Circus arts and clowning, students will deal with developing Improvisation skills, these include saying YES, learning the basics of— CROW, Character, Relationship, Objective, Where— with a focus on space work and learning to support each other in games and scenes. We will deal with character work and relationships with the goal of grounding their improvised scenes in reality. They will start exploring long form improvisation, creating more complex and interwoven pieces, with a focus on narrative and balancing the verbal with the physical. By the end of the year, they will be performing multi-scene pieces and able to both spontaneously find new characters in front of an audience and bring the recurring characters they've worked on developing into any situation. (Not offered every year.)
7. **Playwriting**, developing full plays with a beginning, middle, and end, identifying through-lines and actions, writing for an audience, format and submission procedures, culminating in the Intermediate II performance.
8. **Singing for the Actor**, culminating in the end of year Intermediate III Showcase. Voice study is an integral part to the success of contemporary actors and vocal artists. *Singing for the Actor* is a sequence of courses designed to teach students how to use vocal technique to expand range and expression. In the third year, students will begin to experience solo performance. As the course progresses, they will gain the skills to sing in various styles with greater facility and awareness. Effective warm-ups, practice routines, and understanding vocal health will teach them to sing with more freedom and expressivity. They will also work on a higher level of sight-singing and music notation.
9. **Afro-Haitian dance and movement**, the third year curriculum students continues to work with principles of Dunham Technique as the foundation of center— floor work. Students develop the correlations between technique, progressions and traditional Haitian dances. As a part of the core objectives and learning goals, students acquire skills in leadership and direction by beginning to lead their peers in progression sequences across the floor and participating in constructive feedback by peers and instructor. Students continue to work on their performance goals by being showcased in Brown Bag and end of year Intermediate III Showcase.
10. **Contemporary dance and movement**, including a warm up regimentation, contact improvisation, strength and conditioning, placement, technique, improvisation, musicality, complex rhythm,

higher complexity of choreographic, composition and structured improvisation, culminating in the end of year Intermediate 2 Showcase.

11. **Chamber Theatre** introduces the concept and method of adapting literary works to the stage using a maximal amount of the work's original text and often minimal and suggestive settings. In Chamber Theater, narration is included in the performed text and the narrator might be played by multiple actors. This work focuses using words and voice to create a new theatrical work that can evoke a place or time, and requires strong ensemble work. This unit culminates in a performance in the Theatre III Showcase.
12. **Meisner acting technique** (Not offered every year.)
13. **Mask Characterization** (Not offered every year.)
14. **Play reading and analysis**, which introduces students to the range of theatrical literature, focusing on structural similarities and differences among representational, absurdist, verse, presentational, and farce scripts.
15. **Directing**, basic elements and fundamentals of blocking and use of space, especially blocking, staging, and directing for the intimate thrust (open) stage.
16. **Preparation of summer scenes and summer reading assignments**.
17. **Laban and Contact Improvisation,** Begin to improvise and create movement using the Laban Effort Shapes and eight of the 16 choreographic tools found in *Intimate Act of Choreography* book; through movement exercises and intellectual study begin to learn how human anatomy, including the bones and muscles, can be applied to expression in dance and acting; create and perform a simple score; Apply Laban Effort Shape vocabulary in analyzing movement; begin learning about different somatic technique, i.e. Alexander, Feldenkrais, Body Mind Centering, etc, and how they might support their dancing and acting. (Not offered every year.)
18. **Asian Theatre** (the art of grounding and stillness). (Not offered every year.)
19. Possibility to audition for Fall or Spring Acting Project, a full-length or one-act plays. (Not offered every year.)

SOTA THEATRE ADVANCED

SOTA THEATRE ADVANCED (0076)**:** 10 credits per semester. One-year course starts in Fall. 10 to 15 hours per week. Prerequisites: THEATER I, THEATER II, THEATER III, or equivalent experience. Advancement to this class is by passing a placement audition given at the end of the previous year or permission of the instructor. This is an advanced acting ensemble usually taken in the junior or senior year. This is a master class for students with previous acting and performing experience.

Other requirements are: Ability to schedule time well, Academic GPA of 2.0 with no "F"s, recommendation of all AIRs, excellent attendance record, demonstration of ensemble team work, absolute reliability, excellent physical stamina, limited number of other extra curricular activities and job commitments, letter of approval from student and the parent/guardian with whom they are living. (if needed)

Course includes continued work on:

1. **Voice**, continues work from previous year adding work on English RP and Southern dialects.
2. **Audition Monologue Preparation and Performance**, which covers contemporary and classic authors, serious and comic works in preparation for senior year national college auditions held locally in February, and includes a Resume Preparation Unit and Future Training and Career Preparedness Unit and preparation for a Senior Brown Bag performance or Senior Recital, or Senior Finale, or Senior Showcase (a graduation requirement for all theatre students).
3. **Acting Shakespeare**, see the description under THEATER I. Continue work from previous years while working on student's individual goals, including college audition monologues and introduction short scene work, culminating in participation in the department Monologue & Sonnet Contest.
4. **Evaluation and Criticism**, see description under THEATER I.
5. **Improvisation**, more focus on using the skills built over the previous years to create original performance pieces, and improvisation both as an actor's tool and as a performance technique, culminating in the Advance showcase. Students will work both towards using their year of improvisation to rehearse and inform their scripted work, and towards learning how to build completely improvised performances with structures of their own creation. Continuing to investigate long form improv, they will focus on developing truthful characters and relationships and look at creating their own way of performing. Students will work on "side-coaching" each other's scenes in order to improve their own skills by identifying what scenes need to make them go forward. They will learn some common long form structures like the Harold and work on making their own long form pieces have depth, truth and character-driven humor. By the end of this, their second year of improv, they will be able to structure and direct a performance in a style of their choosing, showcasing the strengths of their particular ensemble. They will also have the tools to use improv games and exercises to inform their acting, playwriting and directing work. (Not offered every year.)
6. **Singing for the Actor,** culminating in the end of year Advanced Showcase. Voice study is an integral part to the success of contemporary actors and vocal artists. *Singing for the Actor* is a sequence of courses designed to teach students how to use vocal technique to expand range and expression. By the end of the fourth year, students will develop coordinated breath support, body alignment, and diction; establish beneficial practice habits to help growth and development; and sing more dramatically and confidently. This year will explore the many aspects of vocal performance, using the principles of interpretation, language, and performance practice. Students will begin to explore audition repertoire and etiquette. These more experienced singers will also receive scene assignments, allowing them to dive more deeply into the dramatic aspect of vocal performance.
7. **Afro-Haitian dance and movement**, culminating in the end of year Advanced Showcase. In this fourth year the course goals are geared toward developing students as fully realized artists, who understand the expectations and responsibilities of an artist in the professional and collegiate fields. There is a continued deepening of the principles of Dunham Technique; core strengthening, breath work and isolations. In the progressions series, there is an incorporation of

rhythm, musicality and voice while stressing the importance of individual growth, leadership and ensemble cohesiveness.

8. **Contemporary dance and movement**, including a warm up regimentation, continuing the activities of the first three years plus the addition of a more complex end of the year dance including elements of improv and choreographic direction which culminates in the end of year Advanced Showcase.
9. **Playwriting**, focus on rewriting and editing, dramatic writing styles, themes, working with directors, culminating in the Advanced Playwriting performance.
10. **Chamber Theatre**, continues work from the previous year in the methods of adapting literary works to the stage using a maximal amount of the work's original text and often minimal and suggestive settings, while devising a student lead work. This Unit culminates in a performance for Graduation Ceremony.
11. **Asian Theatre** (the art of grounding and stillness). (Not offered every year.)
12. **Laban and Contact Improvisation**, apply Laban Effort Shapes in dancing; choreograph group dances using the Laban Effort Shapes and eight more of the 16 choreographic tools found in "Intimate Act of Choreography" book; Perform their group dances; through movement exercises and intellectual study continue to learn how human anatomy, i.e. the bones and muscles, support their dancing and acting; continue learning about different somatic technique, i.e. Alexander, Feldenkrais, Body Mind Centering, etc, and how they might support their dancing and acting. (Not offered every year.)
13. **One-Act and full length Play Preparation and Presentation**, which emphasizes the ensemble approach.
14. **Meisner acting technique** (Not offered every year.)
15. **Mask characterization.** (Not offered every year.)
16. Possibility to audition for Fall or Spring Acting Project, a full-length or one-act plays. (Not offered every year.)

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Advanced Class Assignments page 26-61

2017-2018 Asawa SOTA Theatre Department Directing for the Thrust Stage Assignment

Students keep a Director's Notebook (your PRODUCTION BIBLE), which has these required elements:

- Short essay on Reason for Choosing the play (if applicable)
- Pulled quotes or moments that reflect theme/vision
- Author biography (includes other works by the author, major productions)
- Past production Photo Morgue file with any other research done as part of preparation.
- A Play Analysis worksheet (Plot & Given Circumstances)
- Production Paperwork
    - Props list
    - cast list
    - contact sheet
    - rehearsal schedule
    - lighting cues
    - set sketch/list of furniture needs
    - sound plot
    - rehearsal reports
    - rehearsal notes
    - any other research done as part of rehearsal
- Daily reflection journal
- Blocking Analysis (a close analysis of one scene and why they blocked it that way)
- Final Reflection essay

- PRE-READING:
    - Below chapter from **Handbook for Theatrical Apprentices** *A Practical Guide* in *All Phases of Theatre*
    - **DIRECTING & STAGING for THE THRUST STAGE** by Phillip Rayher (28 pages). Find on website: sfsotatheatre.org under CLASS ASSIGNMENTS. **Play close attention to the rules of acting and directing for the Trust Stage.**

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Except from **Handbook for Theatrical Apprentices** *A Practical Guide* in *All Phases of Theatre*

ByDorothy Lee Tompkins, Samuel French, Inc.1962

CHAPTER 12

The Director

ALL IS SPECIFIC

The director is the person responsible for transforming the authors written words into a live production.

In other words, the director must co-ordinate the four basic ingredients of any production-the choice of the play, the physical production, the cast, and the action or interpretation of the play. Each will be discussed separately.

CHOICE OF THE PLAY. The director must:

I Select the play or agree to the producers selection. He must consider:

A-The area in which the play is to be produced.

B-The physical plant in which the play will be produced.

C-The number and kind of sets, costumes, lighting effects, etc., the budget will allow.

D-The number of actors the budget will allow.
E-The star available for the play (in star companies).
F-The other plays on the schedule.
G-The box office value of the plays title.
H-Whether or not he is capable of handling the play.
I-The artistic value of the play. Alas and alack, this last can only be given strong consideration if the theatre is already an established financial success or privately endowed.
2 After the play is selected he must study it thoroughly in order to carry on with the other aspects of production.
THE PHYSICAL PRODUCTION
The director must schedule conferences with his technical staff so that he can: 1 Approve the set.
A-Decide with the scene designer on the style of the settings, taking both practicality and final effectiveness into consideration.
B-Demand and check floor plans and color sketches far enough in advance to give scene designer time for making necessary and/or desirable changes before construction begins.
C--Check furniture prop list with scene designer before it is turned over to prop man. D-Insist that all workable parts of the set be ready for tech rehearsal.
E-Make it absolutely clear that a complete set is expected for dress rehearsal.
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A-Give basic prop list to prop man on first day of rehearsal.
B State what kind of prop is needed. For example: If a frying pan is on the prop list, whether it should be an old-fashioned iron skillet, a bright aluminum pan, or glass pan.
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C-Listen to the music and choose the section he wants used.
D-Set readings (sound levels) for music.
E-Set cues for music coming in or out.
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G-Co-ordinate music and other sound effects with action no later than tech rehearsal. (Sooner will be appreciated by actors, especially if music is to back long portions of dialogue or pantomime.)
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A-Check the costume plot with the costumier to see that they both have similar ideas on costuming the play- by the first rehearsal.
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B-Give light cues to stage manager as they come up in rehearsal.
C-Whenever possible set the readings, colors, etc., with light man before tech rehearsal.
D-Set light cues during tech rehearsal.
E--Be ready, willing and able to conduct a light rehearsal after dress rehearsal if the lighting has not worked properly. The director need not be a lighting expert, but he must know what he wants, and be able to ask for

it in understandable terms. If this is so, he has a right to expect lighting to be nearly right for dress rehearsal.
6 Let the stage manager in on everything.
7 Take notes on all aspects of the physical production at tech and dress rehearsals, and give them to each department head.
NOTE: The director must make it clear to each department head that he expects to be able to do this *at dress rehearsal aid not opening night!*
A-The director, scene designer, costumier, prop man, and lighting designer need at least one chance to see whether small changes would improve the final production. For example: If the book case isn't painted by dress rehearsal, it is impossible to tell whether blue or yellow flowers would look better on the coffee table. If all the men don't wear .their suits under reasonably correct lighting, it is impossible to tell whether they will look too much alike or not, etc.,
B--If big jobs are left until the last minute, there will be no time to add the little touches that make the difference between an adequate physics production and an excellent one-even if director and staff agree that they are needed.
C-Actors need at least one chance to get the feeling of the set, props, sound effects, costumes and lighting and the pace of the show withal.
THE CAST
Casting a play is probably the most difficult job any director will ever have to face, but he must:
1 Decide upon a cast. He must try to make sure that each person in the company has:
A--Audience appeal. Defining this quality is as impossible as getting along without it. It turns up in all shapes and sizes. Every performer in any phase of show business needs it in one form or another. A good director knows how to spot it, but so far as I know, there are no special rules to guide him. He must rely on his own experience and intuition.
B--Ability to get along with others. People must work together for long hours. Sometimes they eat, live, and play together. When many vital people work in such close contact, personality clashes are bound to occur occasionally. Careful casting can keep them to a minimum. Bad tempers, petulance, and childish bickering are contagious. They grow and multiply like mosquitoes. They cannot be written off as mere examples of artistic temperament. They are pests. Pests detract from the efficiency of other sensitive members of the company. Fortunately (and contrary to popular opinion), they are seldom accompanied by real acting ability. Even if they are, they are hardly worth it. Avoid them at all costs.
C-Self-discipline. An actor must know his own capabilities. He must be willing to put aside his personal pleasures and problems to concentrate the time and energy necessary (for him) to work at top capacity.
D -Versatility. A cast is almost the only frontier left where versatility is an essential asset. In one show an actor may play a fuss-budget French father, in the next a stalwart Irish lover, and next, a clean-cut American egghead-and so on throughout the season. He will play drama, comedy, and farce. He will perform in classics and junk. He will play bits and leads. Even the most accomplished actor will be more effective in some parts than others, but he must be able to adapt his physical characteristics and his techniques to many roles without seeming ludicrous. E-Experience. There is no substitute. Beauty, talent, clever direction, able supporting casts, personality, vitality, diligence or youth (ah, especially youth) may cover for it- often does, as a matter of fact; but never for a whole cast. Inexperience simply requires more time and attention than there is to give.
F-Knowledge of theatre policy. The director should explain as much and as truthfully as he can about the area, theatre plant, living conditions, rehearsal schedules, etc., before signing a professional actor, He may lose an actor who seems desirable, but the odds are that he will avoid much unpleasantness later.
G-Honesty. No human being, including directors, is infallible. Acting jobs being at such a premium, actors do put their best foot forward at interviews. They do say they have backgrounds which they do not have, or that they were excellent in parts in which they were barely adequate. The wisest policy is to check with several other people with whom the actor has worked. If the director checks with only one unknown person,

he may discover too late that that person is a pest and he has lost a very fine actor because of it.
H-Wardrobe. I apologize for bringing this one up. It seems so mercenary, but the fact remains. An actor who owns a reasonably decent wardrobe will save endless hours for himself and the costumier- on errands, alterations, and fittings, not to mention the money saved for renting, special purchases, etc. And audiences just do like to see well dressed people on the stage. I may add, however (and it is not just to soothe my conscience), that an excellent wardrobe cannot replace any one of the other seven requirements. It is just nice if it can accompany them.

ACTION OR INTERPRETATION

There is an argument extant that if the play is good, the physical production, beautiful, and the cast well chosen, the director is a useless and unnecessary appendage. Not quite. No actor can see his own work, or indeed the work of other players while he is busy playing his own role; therefore, he cannot possibly judge his own work in relationship to that of the other players. True, each actor will, or should, have his own interpretation of the play. Each interpretation may be a valid one. Each actor may feel his own movements. These movements may also be valid, for his character. Without a director to integrate these actions and interpretations, rehearsals could turn into a bedlam of discussions (not to mention fights). The performance, no matter how brilliant, could turn the final production into hodge-lodge. For an exaggerated example: A sensitive and subtle character actor feels that the best way to show that he finally understands his older son is to reach out silently and put his hand on his sons head. He may feel that up stage center is the best place for this action to take place. Meanwhile downstage center left, an exuberant and appealing juvenile feels that he can best show his indifference by turning back flips while eating a banana. Obviously a director is essential to the unity of the had production, whether he serves as a dictator, guide, or selector. He must:

l Continue to study the play in relationship to his cast and physical production.

2 Make the necessary cuts in the play-before the first rehearsal if at all feasible. Of course, additional cuts may be necessary because of set or cast problems.

3 Suggest rewrites to the author if it is a new play.

4 Post (or have the stage manager post) a rehearsal schedule.

5 Give out sides or play books at the first rehearsal. (Sooner, if they are available and he is sure of his casting.)

6 Explain the set to his entire cast and show them a model, floor plan, or drawing of the set.

7 Explain briefly his method of working. Directors work in many different ways. Some prefer to have the actors read through the entire play first, then discuss the various aspects of the script-plot, characters, theatrical effects, etc.; then put the actors on the stage to more or less feel their way about, making necessary changes and adjustments as they go along. Others start by basically blocking the show, i.e., enter center, cross down right area, cross down center area, cross up left area, etc.; then work out motivations, bits of business, and interpretation later.

Still others block rather meticulously from the beginning- working out the basic blocking, small business, characterization, interpretation, motivation and timing, scene by scene, or more precisely, segment by segment.

These thumb-nail descriptions are over simplified, of course. Most directors use some personally devised combination of the three, and interchange them to suit the play, the players, and the rehearsal period.

Any method can work provided the director can communicate his ideas to each member of the cast, using each actors creative ability as well as his own. Somehow he must impart to the actor faith in himself, confidence in his director, understanding of his role, and just plain old-fashioned enthusiasm. 9 Block the action. (Unfortunately many so-called directors believe their job begins and ends here.) 10 Not waste rehearsal time.

A-Be on time for rehearsals.

B-Insist on punctuality from his cast and crew.

C-Not “freeze” his actors by being too over-bearing, particularly at early rehearsals.

D-Neither instigate nor allow an *overabundance* of unrelated banter to dissipate rehearsal time. E--Discourage (in fact, forbid) childish bickering on the set.
11 Let the stage manager in on everything.
12 Set the curtain calls.
13 Take notes during final run-throughs, tech and dress rehearsals.
14 Give constructive notes to cast and technical staff following final run-throughs and rehearsals. (May be given during intermissions if director prefers.)
15 Give best wishes to cast and crew at half hour on opening night. (Not necessary, but nice.)
16 Turn the entire production over to the stage manager at half hour on opening night.
A-For better or worse, the stage manager must have complete authority back stage during performance. Naturally, if some drastic thing happens which the stage manager cannot possibly see, but which can be corrected, the director should let him know about it. For example: If an actor becomes so carried away with his own inner feelings that he cannot be heard (this happens all too frequently with inexperienced players) the director may ask the stage manager to tell him to speak up.
B-During performance each actors part must belong to him alone. After the final curtain call, the directors notes, criticisms, and suggestions are not only appreciated but sought by serous actors. During the show he is, or should be, the forgotten man. He is about as useful back stage as "mother" is in a bridal suite.

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GRADING CRITERIA

Meets Standard: Collaborate to create original works of art
Basic: Does not contribute to performance or detracts from group dynamic
Critical attributes:
Argumentative when other participants explore alternate interpretations
Does not contribute to group design
Efforts do not support group success (e.g., fails to memorize lines or care for costume and properties.)
Approaching: Marginal contribution to performance and group dynamic
Critical attributes:
Unresponsive to changes made by other artists during creative exploration
Contributes to group design only when requested
Efforts focused solely on personal contributions
Meeting: Demonstrates commitment to group success
Critical attributes:
Explores various interpretations and artistic presentations of personal contributions during rehearsal Adjusts personal performance elements to support a unified design
Supports artistic contributions of group members
Exceeding: Facilitates artistic expression from entire group
Critical attributes:
Initiates exploration of alternate presentations with group members
Actively elicits design elements and artistic choices from other group members
Provides constructive feedback to group members on contributions
Integrates artistic contributions of group members

Directing Rubric *printed as list*
Student Name _____ _____ Title of Piece_____
Rehearsals
4: Rehearsals were planned and communicated to cast and Director spent the entire allotted time rehearsing with the cast
3: Rehearsals were planned, but director was not always clear with communication with cast and was not focused 100% of the time.

2: Rehearsals were not planned and communication was somewhat unclear, but director was pretty much focused during rehearsals
1: Rehearsals were not planned, communication was unclear and director was rarely focused on the rehearsal. **Direction of actors**
4: Director used techniques and direction to help actors discover objectives, tactics and relationships
3: Director attempted use of techniques and direction to help actors, but mostly continued to run rehearsals without much input for actors.
2: Director gave direction to actors at times, but did not the majority of the time.
1: Director did not give actors direction on their objectives, tactics and relationships within the play
Staging
4: Director staged the piece using the principles of blocking. Stage picture was interesting to watch
3: Director staged the piece with some thought but the stage picture was sometimes muddled
2: Director staged the piece without much thought to character objectives, tactics or stage picture
1: Director did not stage the piece, but actors created the staging during rehearsals or performance
Preparedness
4: Director was fully prepared and present for all rehearsals and performances
3: Director was somewhat prepared but may have had some absences did not always have materials
2: Director was partially prepared for rehearsals and several absences
1: Director was not prepared for rehearsals and had excessive absences
Notes:

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2017-2018 Asawa SOTA Theatre Department
Directing for the Thrust Stage

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7 Explain briefly his method of working. Directors work in many different ways. Some prefer to have the actors read through the entire play first, then discuss the various aspects of the script-plot, characters, theatrical effects, etc.; then put the actors on the stage to more or less feel their way about, making necessary changes and adjustments as they go along. Others start by basically blocking the show, i.e., enter center, cross down right area, cross down center area, cross up left area, etc.; then work out motivations, bits of business, and interpretation later.
Still others block rather meticulously from the beginning- working out the basic blocking, small business, characterization, interpretation, motivation and timing, scene by scene, or more precisely, segment by segment.
These thumb-nail descriptions are over simplified, of course. Most directors use some personally devised combination of the three, and interchange them to suit the play, the players, and the rehearsal period.
Any method can work provided the director can communicate his ideas to each member of the cast, using each actors creative ability as well as his own. Somehow he must impart to the actor faith in himself, confidence in his director, understanding of his role, and just plain old-fashioned enthusiasm.
9 Block the action. (Unfortunately many so-called directors believe their job begins and ends here.)
10 Not waste rehearsal time.

A-Be on time for rehearsals.
B-Insist on punctuality from his cast and crew.
C-Not "freeze" his actors by being too over-bearing, particularly at early rehearsals.
D-Neither instigate nor allow an *overabundance* of unrelated banter to dissipate rehearsal time.
E--Discourage (in fact, forbid) childish bickering on the set.

11 Let the stage manager in on everything.
12 Set the curtain calls.
13 Take notes during final run-throughs, tech and dress rehearsals.
14 Give constructive notes to cast and technical staff following final run-throughs and rehearsals. (May be given during intermissions if director prefers.)
15 Give best wishes to cast and crew at half hour on opening night. (Not necessary, but nice.)
16 Turn the entire production over to the stage manager at half hour on opening night.

A-For better or worse, the stage manager must have complete authority back stage during performance. Naturally, if some drastic thing happens which the stage manager cannot possibly see, but which can be corrected, the director should let him know about it. For example: If an actor becomes so carried away with his own inner feelings that he cannot be heard (this happens all too frequently with inexperienced players) the director may ask the stage manager to tell him to speak up.
B-During performance each actors part must belong to him alone. After the final curtain call, the directors notes, criticisms, and suggestions are not only appreciated but sought by serous actors. During the show he is, or should be, the forgotten man. He is about as useful back stage as "mother" is in a bridal suite.

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GRADING CRITERIA

Meets Standard: Collaborate to create original works of art
Basic: Does not contribute to performance or detracts from group dynamic
Critical attributes:

Argumentative when other participants explore alternate interpretations
Does not contribute to group design
Efforts do not support group success (e.g., fails to memorize lines or care for costume and properties.)
Approaching: Marginal contribution to performance and group dynamic
Critical attributes:
Unresponsive to changes made by other artists during creative exploration
Contributes to group design only when requested
Efforts focused solely on personal contributions
Meeting: Demonstrates commitment to group success
Critical attributes:
Explores various interpretations and artistic presentations of personal contributions during rehearsal
Adjusts personal performance elements to support a unified design
Supports artistic contributions of group members
Exceeding: Facilitates artistic expression from entire group
Critical attributes:
Initiates exploration of alternate presentations with group members
Actively elicits design elements and artistic choices from other group members
Provides constructive feedback to group members on contributions
Integrates artistic contributions of group members

Directing Rubric

Student Name _____ _____ Title of Piece_____

	4	3	2	1
Rehearsals	Rehearsals were planned and communicated to cast and Director spent the entire allotted time rehearsing with the cast	Rehearsals were planned, but director was not always clear with communication with cast and was not focused 100% of the time.	Rehearsals were not planned and communication was somewhat unclear, but director was pretty much focused during rehearsals	Rehearsals were not planned, communication was unclear and director was rarely focused on the rehearsal.
Direction of actors	Director used techniques and direction to help actors discover objectives, tactics and relationships	Director attempted use of techniques and direction to help actors, but mostly continued to run rehearsals without much input for actors.	Director gave direction to actors at times, but did not the majority of the time.	Director did not give actors direction on their objectives, tactics and relationships within the play
Staging	Director staged the piece using the principles of blocking. Stage picture was interesting to watch	Director staged the piece with some thought but the stage picture was sometimes muddled	Director staged the piece without much thought to character objectives, tactics or stage picture	Director did not stage the piece, but actors created the staging during rehearsals or performance
Preparedness	Director was fully prepared and present for all rehearsals and performances	Director was somewhat prepared but may have had some absences did not always have materials	Director was partially prepared for rehearsals and several absences	Director was not prepared for rehearsals and had excessive absences

Notes:

Directing Rubric

Student Name _____ _____ Title of Piece_____

Rehearsals

4: Rehearsals were planned and communicated to cast and Director spent the entire allotted time rehearsing with the cast
3: Rehearsals were planned, but director was not always clear with communication with cast and was not focused 100% of the time.
2: Rehearsals were not planned and communication was somewhat unclear, but director was pretty much focused during rehearsals
1: Rehearsals were not planned, communication was unclear and director was rarely focused on the rehearsal.

Direction of actors

4: Director used techniques and direction to help actors discover objectives, tactics and relationships
3: Director attempted use of techniques and direction to help actors, but mostly continued to run rehearsals without much input for actors.
2: Director gave direction to actors at times, but did not the majority of the time.
1: Director did not give actors direction on their objectives, tactics and relationships within the play

Staging

4: Director staged the piece using the principles of blocking. Stage picture was interesting to watch
3: Director staged the piece with some thought but the stage picture was sometimes muddled
2: Director staged the piece without much thought to character objectives, tactics or stage picture
1: Director did not stage the piece, but actors created the staging during rehearsals or performance

Preparedness

4: Director was fully prepared and present for all rehearsals and performances
3: Director was somewhat prepared but may have had some absences did not always have materials
2: Director was partially prepared for rehearsals and several absences
1: Director was not prepared for rehearsals and had excessive absences

Notes:

Blocking	**10** **Student almost always follows the established blocking.**	**8** **Student sometimes follows the established blocking.**	**6** **Student rarely follows the established blocking.**	**4** **Student does not do any established blocking.**
Eye Contact	**10** **Student almost always maintains eye contact throughout the scene.**	**8** **Student sometimes maintains eye contact throughout the scene.**	**6** **Student rarely maintains eye contact throughout the scene.**	**4** **Student does not maintain eye contact throughout the scene.**
Reactions	**10** **Student almost always reacts to their partner.**	**8** **Student sometimes reacts to their partner.**	**6** **Student rarely reacts to their partner.**	**4** **Student does not react to their partner.**
Acting in the Moment	**10** **Student almost always acts in the moment. (3 times)**	**8** **Student sometimes acts in the moment. (2 times)**	**6** **Student rarely acts in the moment. (1 time)**	**4** **Student does not show in acting in the moment. (0 times)**
Memorization of Lines	**10** **Student has lines memorized with no hesitations.**	**8** **Student has most of the lines memorized with a few hesitations.**	**6** **Student has some of the lines memorized with several hesitations.**	**4** **Student forgets many of the lines that there is no character created.**
Team Member Work Ethic	**10** **Student works effectively to support the scene.**	**8** **Student sometimes works effectively to support the**	**6** **Student rarely works effectively to support the scene.**	**4** **Student does not effectively support the scene.**

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From **Handbook for Theatrical Apprentices** *A Practical Guide* in *All Phases of Theatre* By Dorothy Lee Tompkins, Samuel French, Inc.1962

CHAPTER 12

The Director
ALL IS SPECIFIC

The director is the person responsible for transforming the authors written words into a live production.

In other words, the director must co-ordinate the four basic ingredients of any production-the choice of the play, the physical production, the cast, and the action or interpretation of the play. Each will be discussed separately.

CHOICE OF THE PLAY. The director must:

I Select the play or agree to the producers selection. He must consider:

A-The area in which the play is to be produced.

B-The physical plant in which the play will be produced.

C-The number and kind of sets, costumes, lighting effects, etc., the budget will allow.

D-The number of actors the budget will allow.

E-The star available for the play (in star companies).

F-The other plays on the schedule.

G-The box office value of the plays title.

H-Whether or not he is capable of handling the play.

I-The artistic value of the play. Alas and alack, this last can only be given strong consideration if the theatre is already an established financial success or privately endowed.

2 After the play is selected he must study it thoroughly in order to carry on with the other aspects of production.

THE PHYSICAL PRODUCTION

The director must schedule conferences with his technical staff so that he can:

1 Approve the set.

A-Decide with the scene designer on the style of the settings, taking both practicality and final effectiveness into consideration.

B-Demand and check floor plans and color sketches far enough in advance to give scene designer time for making necessary and/or desirable changes before construction begins.

C--Check furniture prop list with scene designer before it is turned over to prop man.

D-Insist that all workable parts of the set be ready for tech rehearsal.

E-Make it absolutely clear that a complete set is expected for dress rehearsal.

2 Approve the props. (May be done through stage manager.)

A-Give basic prop list to prop man on first day of rehearsal.

B State what kind of prop is needed. For example: If a frying pan is on the prop list, whether it should be an old-fashioned iron skillet, a bright aluminum pan, or glass pan.

C-State definitely when he wants actual props to be used.

D-State definitely when he wants a reasonable facsimile of props, i.e., something in the actors hands.

3 Approve the sound effects.

A-Explain to sound technician what kind of sound effects he wants.

B-State when he wants to listen to sound.

C-Listen to the music and choose the section he wants used.

D-Set readings (sound levels) for music.

E-Set cues for music coming in or out.

F-State whether music should come in suddenly or fade up slowly, etc.

G-Co-ordinate music and other sound effects with action no later than tech rehearsal. (Sooner will be appreciated by actors, especially if music is to back long portions of dialogue or pantomime.)

4 Approve the costumes.

A-Check the costume plot with the costumier to see that they both have similar ideas on costuming the play-by the first rehearsal.

B--Tell the costumier when and if any actor has special business involving a costume- as soon as he knows it. For example: If the husband has special business of zipping up his wives dress in the bedroom scene, it is most helpful for the costumier to know this before he carefully prepares a costume that buttons up the front.

5 Approve the lighting.

A-Go over basic lighting plan with lighting designer early in the rehearsal week to see that they have similar ideas on lighting the show. (Third day should be soon enough unless special equipment is needed for the particular show.)

B-Give light cues to stage manager as they come up in rehearsal.

C-Whenever possible set the readings, colors, etc., with light man before tech rehearsal.

D-Set light cues during tech rehearsal.

E--Be ready, willing and able to conduct a light rehearsal after dress rehearsal if the lighting has not worked properly. The director need not be a lighting expert, but he must know what he

wants, and be able to ask for it in understandable terms. If this is so, he has a right to expect lighting to be nearly right for dress rehearsal.

6 Let the stage manager in on everything.

7 Take notes on all aspects of the physical production at tech and dress rehearsals, and give them to each department head.

NOTE: The director must make it clear to each department head that he expects to be able to do this *at dress rehearsal aid not opening night!*

A-The director, scene designer, costumier, prop man, and lighting designer need at least one chance to see whether small changes would improve the final production. For example: If the book case isn't painted by dress rehearsal, it is impossible to tell whether blue or yellow flowers would look better on the coffee table. If all the men don't wear .their suits under reasonably correct lighting, it is impossible to tell whether they will look too much alike or not, etc.,

B--If big jobs are left until the last minute, there will be no time to add the little touches that make the difference between an adequate physics production and an excellent one-even if director and staff agree that they are needed.

C-Actors need at least one chance to get the feeling of the set, props, sound effects, costumes and lighting and the pace of the show withal.

THE CAST

Casting a play is probably the most difficult job any director will ever have to face, but he must:

1 Decide upon a cast. He must try to make sure that each person in the company has:

A--Audience appeal. Defining this quality is as impossible as getting along without it. It turns up in all shapes and sizes. Every performer in any phase of show business needs it in one form or another. A good director knows how to spot it, but so far as I know, there are no special rules to guide him. He must rely on his own experience and intuition.

B--Ability to get along with others. People must work together for long hours. Sometimes they eat, live, and play together. When many vital people work in such close contact, personality clashes are bound to occur occasionally. Careful casting can keep them to a minimum. Bad tempers, petulance, and childish bickering are contagious. They grow and multiply like mosquitoes. They cannot be written off as mere examples of artistic temperament. They are pests. Pests detract from the efficiency of other sensitive members of the company. Fortunately (and contrary to popular opinion), they are seldom accompanied by real acting ability. Even if they are, they are hardly worth it. Avoid them at all costs.

C-Self-discipline. An actor must know his own capabilities. He must be willing to put aside his personal pleasures and problems to concentrate the time and energy necessary (for him) to work at top capacity.

D -Versatility. A cast is almost the only frontier left where versatility is an essential asset. In one show an actor may play a fuss-budget French father, in the next a stalwart Irish lover, and next, a clean-cut American egghead-and so on throughout the season. He will play drama, comedy, and farce. He will perform in classics and junk. He will play bits and leads. Even the most accomplished actor will be more effective in some parts than others, but he must be able to adapt his physical characteristics and his techniques to many roles without seeming ludicrous.

E-Experience. There is no substitute. Beauty, talent, clever direction, able supporting casts, personality, vitality, diligence or youth (ah, especially youth) may cover for it- often does, as a matter of fact; but never for a whole cast. Inexperience simply requires more time and attention than there is to give.

F-Knowledge of theatre policy. The director should explain as much and as truthfully as he can about the area, theatre plant, living conditions, rehearsal schedules, etc., before signing a professional actor, He may lose an actor who seems desirable, but the odds are that he will avoid much unpleasantness later.

G-Honesty. No human being, including directors, is infallible. Acting jobs being at such a premium, actors do put their best foot forward at interviews. They do say they have backgrounds which they do not have, or that they were excellent in parts in which they were barely adequate. The wisest policy is to check with several other people with whom the actor has worked. If the director checks with only one unknown person, he may discover too late that that person is a pest and he has lost a very fine actor because of it.

H-Wardrobe. I apologize for bringing this one up. It seems so mercenary, but the fact remains. An actor who owns a reasonably decent wardrobe will save endless hours for himself and the costumier- on errands, alterations, and fittings, not to mention the money saved for renting, special purchases, etc. And audiences just do like to see well dressed people on the stage. I may add, however (and it is not just to soothe my conscience), that an excellent wardrobe cannot replace any one of the other seven requirements. It is just nice if it can accompany them.

ACTION OR INTERPRETATION

There is an argument extant that if the play is good, the physical production, beautiful, and the cast well chosen, the director is a useless and unnecessary appendage. Not quite. No actor can see his own work, or indeed the work of other players while he is busy playing his own role; therefore, he cannot possibly judge his own work in relationship to that of the other players. True, each actor will, or should, have his own interpretation of the play. Each interpretation may be a valid one. Each actor may feel his own movements. These movements may also be valid, for his character. Without a director to integrate these actions and interpretations, rehearsals could turn into a bedlam of discussions (not to mention fights). The performance, no matter how brilliant, could turn the final production into hodge-lodge. For an exaggerated example: A sensitive and subtle character actor feels that the best way to show that he finally understands his older son is to reach out silently and put his hand on his sons head. He may feel that up stage center is the best place for this action to take place. Meanwhile downstage center left, an exuberant and appealing juvenile feels that he can best show his indifference by turning back flips while eating a banana. Obviously a director is essential to the unity of the had production, whether he serves as a dictator, guide, or selector. He must:

l Continue to study the play in relationship to his cast and physical production.

2 Make the necessary cuts in the play-before the first rehearsal if at all feasible. Of course, additional cuts may be necessary because of set or cast problems.

3 Suggest rewrites to the author if it is a new play.

4 Post (or have the stage manager post) a rehearsal schedule.

5 Give out sides or play books at the first rehearsal. (Sooner, if they are available and he is sure of his casting.)

6 Explain the set to his entire cast and show them a model, floor plan, or drawing of the set.

7 Explain briefly his method of working. Directors work in many different ways. Some prefer to have the actors read through the entire play first, then discuss the various aspects of the script-plot, characters, theatrical effects, etc.; then put the actors on the stage to more or less feel their way about, making necessary changes and adjustments as they go along. Others start by basically blocking the show, i.e., enter center, cross down right area, cross down center area, cross up left area, etc.; then work out motivations, bits of business, and interpretation later.

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ACTING & DIRECTING

for

THE THRUST STAGE

SUPPLEMENT
CHAPTER
TO

ACTING IS ACTION

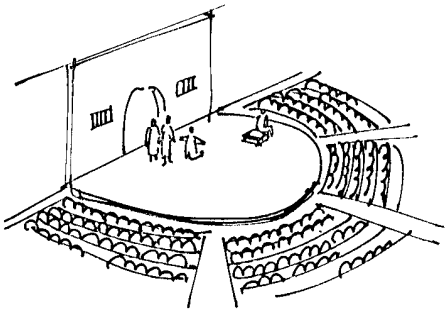
by

Phillip Rayher

TABLE OF CONTENTS

"On the thrust stage, a play may be likened not to a painting but to a constantly moving sculpture."

— THE GREATEST ACTING SPACE IN THE WORLD, Stratford Festival of Canada, 2002, p. 8



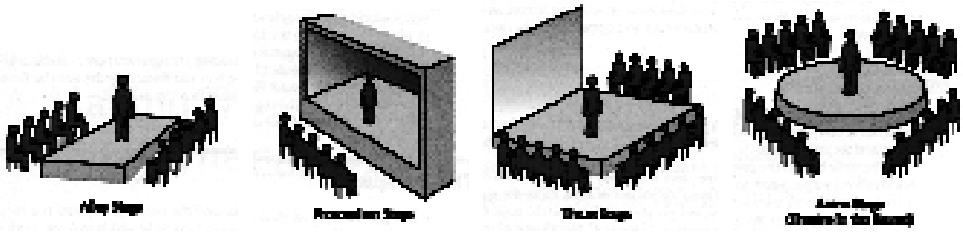
WHAT IS A THRUST STAGE

The *Thrust Stage* or *Thrust Theatre* (also called the *Open stage*, *Platform Stage*, or t*hree-sided arena stage)* is a theatrical stage without a proscenium, in which a raised platform— usually a square, round, or trapezoidal— juts into the auditorium— the stage seems to *thrust* out into the audience— allowing the audience to surround the stage on three sides. The audience is usually rising up from the stage and sitting in a highly raked (angled) area— in a manner resembling the seating at a football stadium. The stage is usually backed by occasional scenery pieces or a permanent architectural structure. The thrust stage ordinarily has no hanging scenery, and what scenery it does have must be limited by the audiences sight lines. The stage is large enough to accommodate the full staging of a performance and performers can enter a Thrust Stage from all sides.

WHY THIS SUPPLEMENT?

I was very surprise when I started to gather sources for our student actors, directors, and designers to read so that they could better understand the requirements of working in our school's new 100 seat thrust stage at the magnet arts high school, School of the Arts in San Francisco that other than a few slim chapters in one or two directing and stage craft books I could not find the materials needed to create a common vocabulary and detail methods necessary to direct, design, and act on our stage. Why hadn't someone written a guide to the "starting points" needed to develop as an actor, director or designer for the thrust stage— which is a space that is not that unique in high schools and universities, not to mention community and commercial theatre? I'm still surprise that someone hadn't taken on this task. So, out of necessity, here is what I have gathered from the sources I located and in person (either directly or indirectly) from directors, actors, and designers who have made a major part of the career work on the thrust stage.

THE FOUR BASIC THEATRE SPACES.



Above is illustrated the actor-audience relationships in four basic theatre configurations: ally (audience on two sides of the actor); proscenium (audience on one side); thrust (audience on three sides); and arena (audience surrounding actor).[11]

MODERN THRUST STAGES

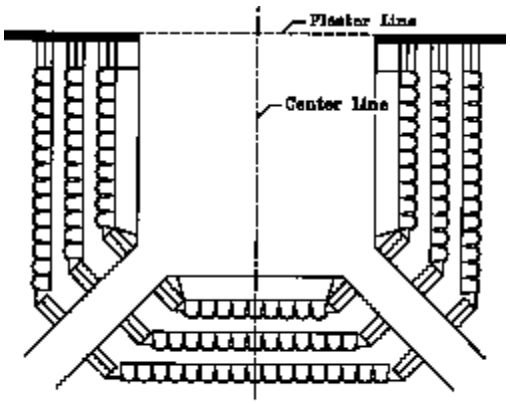


Illustration: A ground plan of a Thrust Stage Theatre

Thrust stages have come into use again in modern productions that stress actor-audience contact rather than illusionistic effects. The thrust stage was common in many countries until the 16th Century, but did not achieve popularity again until the latter half of the 20th century. The thrust stage was rediscovered by directors who wanted to move the action of the play out of what they felt were the artificial and limited confines of the proscenium stage.

In the early years of the 20th century, the English actor-manager William Poel suggested that Shakespeare should be staged so as to relate the performers and the audience as they had been on the Elizabethan stage. His ideas slowly gained in influence, and in 1953 just such a "thrust" stage, with no curtain and with the audience sitting on three sides of it, was built for the Stratford Shakespearean Festival in Ontario, Canada. The renown director, Tyrone Guthrie asked Tanya Moiseiwitsch to design a stage for the Stratford Festival in 1953, the year he accepted the directorship. He wanted one that would break away from the convention of the proscenium arch and return to the thrust style of stage on which Shakespeare's own company played. The design was revolutionary because it was the first thrust stage built in the Western theatre since Shakespeare's time (according to the festival). Her design for the Festival stage, first housed in the a tent and now covered by the permanent building, has since been widely imitated.

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[11] Cameron, Kenneth M,. and Patti P. Gillespie. *The Enjoyment of Theatre*. Sixth Edition.Pearsoneducation, 2004

Later, she designed variations on the Stratford stage for the Guthrie Theatre in Minneapolis and the Crucible Theatre in England.[12] A considerable success, it had a strong influence on subsequent theatre design.

In the early days of the rebirth of the thrust stage, critics thought that the types of plays suitable for thrust staging were severely limited, proving suitable only for Elizabethan plays. For example, it was thought that because the playing space is small, large-cast shows and plays with multiple sets should be avoided. But the vast *Inherit the Wind* has been successfully staged on a tiny thrust stage, as well as shows with multiple sets such as *Summer and Smoke*. The author of ***Directing for the Stage***, Lloyd Anton Frerer and this author have participated in thrust stage productions of *Oedipus Rex* on stages no more than fifteen by twenty feet. Obviously, directors and designers of thrust stage productions are limited only by their own imaginations.[13]

The thrust stage is not only suitable for Elizabethan plays, but also for a wide repertoire. Probably it will never completely replace the proscenium, which remains more suitable for the countless plays that were written with such a stage in mind, such as the comedies of Molière or the highly artificial comedies of Richard Brinsley Sheridan and Oscar Wilde. On the other hand, the more realistic plays of Ibsen, Shaw, and Chekhov, all written for the proscenium theatre, lend themselves well to the thrust stage.

There are four solid reasons for preferring the thrust stage. First, more people can be accommodated in an audience given cubic space if arranged around the stage instead of just in front of it. This is important not merely for the economic advantage of a larger capacity but also for artistic reasons— the closely packed audience generates more concentration and excitement. A second reason for preferring the thrust stage is that the actors are nearer to more of their audience and can therefore be better heard and seen. This point is contested by adherents of the proscenium stage, who claim that the actor at any given moment must have his back turned to a large part of the house and, as a result, must be more difficult to see and hear. If the thrust stage is used efficiently, however, the actor's back will never be turned to anyone for more than a few seconds at a time. The third reason is that members of an audience seated all around the stage are far more aware of the presence of the others than is the case in an opera house. The performance thereby is appreciated more as an event jointly shared and created by the audience and the actors. The fourth reason deals with the use of the thrust stage in actor training, prepare the actor for a versatile career in the arts — the intimacy needed for TV and Film and the realism of the majority of small theatre available today.

Since the arguments for the thrust stage were first made, theatres such as the Arena Stage in Washington, D.C., have been designed "in the round" so that the audience completely surrounds the stage. Other theatres have followed the example of Grotowski's Polish Laboratory Theatre by taking as the starting point an "empty space," in which a different environment may be constructed for each production, radically altering the relationship between actors and audience for each play.

When more narrative forms of action appeared in drama the thrust stage quickly developed its versatility. Intimate and ritualistic qualities in the drama could be combined with a new focus on the players as individual characters. While thrust-stage performance discouraged scenic elaboration, it stressed the actor and his role, his playing to and away from the spectators, with the consequent subtleties of empathy and alienation. It permitted high style in speech and behavior, yet it could also accommodate moments of the colloquial and the realistic. It encouraged a drama of range and versatility, with rapid changes of mood and great flexibility of tone. It is not surprising that in the 20th century the West saw a return to the thrust stage and that recent plays of Brechtian theatre and the theatre of the absurd seem composed for thrust staging.

So, a thrust has the advantage of greater intimacy between audience and performer than a proscenium stage.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A **THRUST STAGE** AND A **BLACK BOX** OR THEATRE-IN-THE-ROUND?

I included the following sections on the Black-Box Theatre and Arena Stage as they have many traits and staging requirements in common with the thrust stage.

A **Black-Box theater** is a relatively recent innovation, usually a large square room consisting of a simple, somewhat unadorned flexible performance space that allows for a variety of seating arrangements. Usually this kind of space has a flat floor and accommodates anywhere from 50 to 200 people, and is used in experimental theater productions. The name is derived from the common practice of painting the walls black.

Such spaces are easily built and maintained, and are usually home to plays or other performances with very basic technical arrangements— limited sets, simple lighting effects, and an intimate focus on the story, writing, and

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[12] "open stage" Encyclopædia Britannica. 2006. http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9057183.

[13] Chapter 18, *Directing for the Stage* by Lloyd Anton Frerer, NTC, 1996

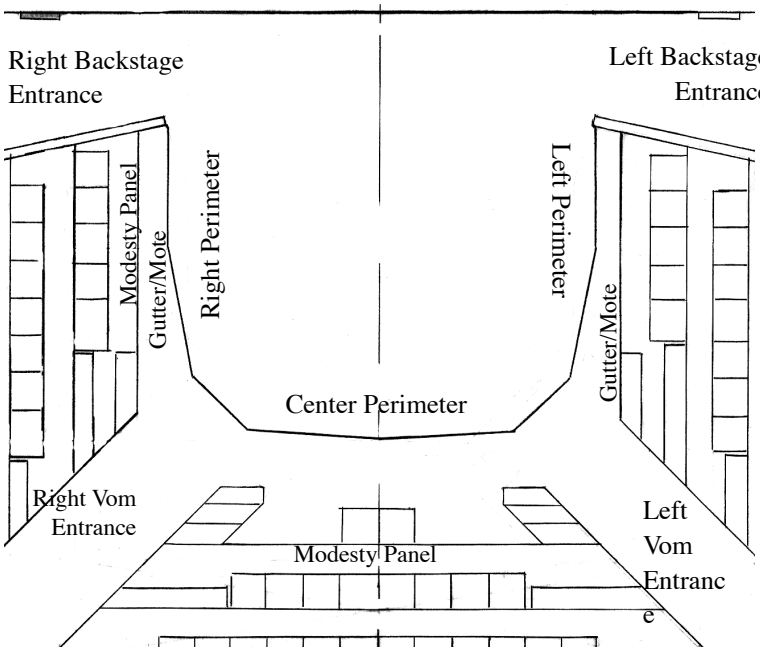
performances rather than technical elements. The seating is typically loose chairs on platforms, which can be easily moved or removed to allow the entire space to be adapted to the artistic elements of a production.

The black-box theatre is especially favored by colleges and other theatre training programs because the space is versatile and easy to change. Many theatre training programs will have both a large proscenium theatre, as well as a black-box theatre. Not only does this allow for two productions to be mounted simultaneously, but they can also have a large extravagant production in the mainstage— mainstage theatre is that which falls between studio theatre and large-scale events— while having a small experimental show in the black box.

Most older black boxes were built more like a television studio. A television studio is an installation in which television or video productions take place, with a low pipe grid overhead. Newer black boxes typically feature a catwalk, tension grids, or a bridge— a narrow pathway high in the air (as above a stage). The latter providing the flexibility of the pipe grid with the accessibility of a catwalk.

Black-box theatres became popular and wide spread particularly in the 1960s and 1970s during which low cost experimental theatre was being actively practiced as never before. Since almost any warehouse or open space in any building can be transformed into a black-box— including abandoned cafes and stores— the appeal for nonprofit and low income artists is high. The black-box is also considered by many to be a place where more "pure" theatre can be explored, with the most human and least technical elements being in focus. A fine example of this space is the Tanghalang Batute (formerly the Gantimpala Experimental Theater) in the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

GLOSSARY OF STAGE TERMS UNIQUE TO THE THRUST



Arena Stage: see Theater-in-the-Round

Central Staging: see Theater-in-the-Round

Gutter: The area surrounding and separating the stage foot print and the audience seating sections. This small trough creates an aesthetic gulf between the actor and the audience members.

Modesty Panel: A low wall or railing positioned in front of the first row of each of the audience sections. Used in thrust and arena (theatre-in-the-round) theatres. In certain theatres these are the only items separating the audience and the acting area. Sometimes these are used as scenic elements and designed for a specific production. The origin of this phrase "modesty" panel comes from the need to protect the female audience members who wear skirts sitting in the front rows from the eyes of those in the audience section opposite them. This phase is also used for the front panels on desks and tables.

Moat, another word for the "gutter" defined above.

Open Stage: An alternate name for a thrust stage, used predominately in England.

Perimeter: The outer edges of stage area which can have its name designated by the audience section to which it is in proximity, ie., right perimeter, left perimeter, center perimeter (depending on the number of sides of the stage foot

print)— these areas are still designated, as usual, from the actors view point, not the audiences. Called the apron or downstage in a proscenium theatre.

Platform Stage: An alternate name for a thrust stage, used predominately in England.

Stage foot print: the actual size and shape of the thrust stage. They very from a square or rectangle or having as many as eight sides or angles. Shapes of thrust stages vary considerably, with three of the most popular variations shown here.

Theater-in-the-Round (also called Central Staging or Arena) is a type of open performance space which allows the audience to completely surround the action on all sides.

Thrust Stage or Thrust Theatre, also called Open stage or Platform Stage: One of the five major theatre structure forms used today, along with the **proscenium stage**, the **proscenium stage with a thrust addition** (sometimes also called a modified thrust), the **theatre-in-the-round** (also called an arena stage), and the **flexible stage** (sometimes called a "**black box**" theatre) with multi-configurations of the seating sections/platforms— including L-shaped (the stage in the corner), end stage (proscenium type), U-shaped (with the audience on three sides), tunnel-shaped (the audience on opposite sides of the acting area which has setting areas on the right and the left and acting area connecting these down the center), and the audience split in sections to produce a number of acting areas.

tumpties: in thrust stage prop design tumpties are boxes that serve double duty as both props— such as short pillars, columns, or benches— and storage units. This word for this item was developed at The Stratford Festival of Canada. Regarding this word I could only find the following quote from *Fanny Goes To War* by Pat Beauchamp: "Packing cases were made into seats and piles of extra blankets were covered and made into "tumpties," while round the stove stood the interminable clothes ..."

Vomitory (also called a Vomitorium or **Vom**, for short.) from vomitoria— vah-mih-TAW-ree-a (Latin pl.; sing. vomitorium. English sing.: vomitory): Thrust stage entrances or exits for audience (and actors), originally vaulted passageways leading to or from the cavea; entrances piercing the banks of seats of theatres or amphitheatres. While there was something called a vomitorium (from the Latin *vomitus,* past participle of *vomere,* to vomit), it wasn't a room set aside to vomit in. Rather a vomitorium was a passageway in an amphitheater or theater that opened into a tier of seats from below or behind. The vomitoria of the Colosseum in Rome were so well designed that it's said the immense venue, which seated at least 50,000, could fill in 15 minutes. There were 80 entrances at ground level, 76 for ordinary spectators and 4 for the imperial family. The vomitoria deposited mobs of people into their seats and afterward disgorged them with equal abruptness into the streets— whence, presumably, the name.

INTRODUCTION TO DIRECTING & SCENERY ON THE THRUST STAGE

What makes directing for the Thrust Stage different from directing for any other type of stage, a proscenium or a theatre-in-the-round?

Thrust staging has many advantages. This playing area makes possible— indeed demands— fluid, three-dimensional staging and a design approach that relies on superbly constructed costumes and props, with only the most judicious use of set elements, to create the world of the play.

On the trust stage, the world of the play cannot be created by bulky and static sets: rather, it must be defined by things in fluid motion, things that are worn and handled, and that can stand scrutiny from every angle, like a sculpture, making space and movement a vital part of the theatrical design.

Because the audience can view the performance from a variety of perspectives, it is usual for the blocking, props and scenery to receive thorough consideration to ensure that no perspective is blocked from view. A high backed chair, for instance, when placed stage right, could create a blind spot in the stage left action.

On a thrust stage with audience on three sides, the fourth side is often occupied by scenery. By virtue of having a back wall the thrust stage also retains some of the illusionistic possibilities of the proscenium stage, especially because the members of the audience are all able to see a projection or a set located there. The one wall of scenery can provide doors or an archway for entrances and exits, even a stairway and balcony could be located there.[14] When the actors are close to that upstage end of the stage, they can be blocked as if they were on a proscenium stage.

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[14] See the collection of photographs later in this supplement to examine examples of these techniques.

And, of course, that end of the stage provides a place where actors can stand without interfering with the view of some of the audience.

A not inconsiderable feature of the thrust stage is that since less scenery is required or expected, productions can ordinarily be mounted at lower cost. Although this is a trade off, it might cost less than a larger set, but it will require much more detail and attention.

Moreover, the fact that an audience sits on three sides is no reason to limit set design to furniture alone. You should think of this stage as having all the potentials of a circus arena, with vertical exploitation one of its important new possibilities. Thus, this stage becomes a cube which can be occupied dramatically and theatrically not only by actors but also by look-through scenery. Anything goes as long as it stays within the logic of its aesthetic. Placing covered scenery (flats or walls) on this stage would certainly obscure audience vision, but when skeletal frames are introduced you have both good vision and the suggestion of Baroque scenery. Looking through such frames is no problem at all for audiences, for we actually see much in real life through interrupted views. You must learn to exploit this stage in every possible way.

Lloyd Anton Frerer's experience with a production of *The Rainmaker* provides an example of thrust staging. The Curry farmhouse consisted of a sofa in front of the fourth wall, which contained an exit to the remainder of the house. In the center of the stage was a circular dining table and chairs. An aisle through the audience opposite the fourth wall served as the front entrance to the home. The only neutral areas where an actor could stand for any length of time were near the sofa or in the front doorway. As usual, the key to the blocking was to create a profusion of movement.[15]

But another convention operates in thrust staging that tends to break down its illusory elements: members of an audience can fully see and watch many other members of an audience. This 'panavision' creates the paradox of an audience watching lifelikeness of a very subtle sort take place in front of them at the same time it is participating in an obvious communal experience. When an audience surrounds a play, it is performing one of the oldest rituals of mankind: the tribe standing or sitting in a circle around its ritual dancers, it medicine man, its heroes who move around the fire in the center.

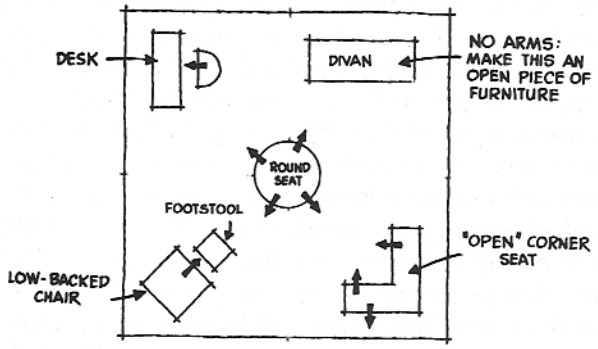
Thus, the intimacy of thrust staging is its prime convention, for the audience can sense the actor in a very personal way: his breathing, his perspiration, his body sounds, even the shower of his spittle when he speaks vigorously. It is a kind of motion picture in live stage form.

POWER POINTS:

Think details not grand scale.
Its not a canvas, but a sculpture.
Think not of a big picture, but an intimate canvas.

SCENERY DESIGN FOR THE THRUST STAGE

The thrust stage demands creative set and prop design, such as set pieces called *tumpties*, these are box-like pieces that serve double duty as both props and storage. On the thrust stage the scale is smaller, units must be more detailed and most items must be stage worth and visible from all sides. The designer must have no more thoughts of the "box set" with three walls and with doors and windows. You must rethink audience sight lines and pay continues close attention to them. The designer must think of the parameter and the diagonal. There is not a "front" of the stage.



A ground plan can readily be designed that will fan out from the center (see the drawing above). The use of a center object approachable from all sides will avoid the deadlines of a cleared space and will provide the obstacle

[15] More on blocking and movement for the thrust stage later.

course so necessary in a dynamic ground plan. Note that the drawing has four major stage areas. By using the areas in combinations with only occasional use of one area, a dynamic interlocking of the stage will result, and all three audiences will see the play equally well.[16]

A ground plan could rake the objects onstage along diagonal lines (again think diagonally), helping the majority of the house to see most of the action. You can also see that compositionally, using a triangle made by three figures is very effective on the thrust stage, not only for the person at the apex of the triangle.

Placing covered scenery on this stage would certainly obscure audience vision, but when skeletal frames are introduced you have both good vision and the suggestion of Baroque scenery. Looking through such frames is no problem at all for audiences, for we actually see much in real life through interrupted views. You must learn to exploit this stage in every possible way, for the communal theatre has great potential for our times because it is quite different from motion pictures or television.

Details or scenic elements, such as railings, columns, half walls and wainscoting, cutaway walls, fragmentary walls, door frames, etc., benches, window seats, props and set dressing, sofas, settees, love seats and couches with low or with out backs and are viable on all there sided.

POWER POINT:

The GROUND PLAN is the key to a successful production on a thrust stage. It must be thoroughly thought out and examined for sight line obstacles.

POWER POINT:

Consider items that extend up from the floor and/or down from the ceiling (hanging from the grid), such as ceiling beams and rib structures, plate rails, moldings, perimeter edges above that designated and defined the area below.[17]

POWER POINT:

Consider the use of levels that might define and delineate the various acting areas on stage.[18]

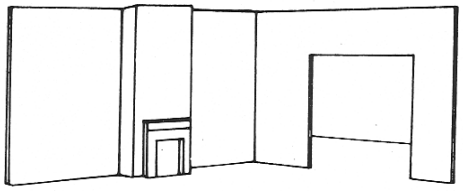
POWER POINT:

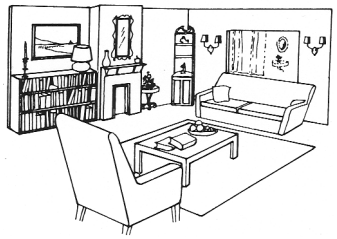
DON'T FORGET THE FLOOR ITSELF. Various sizes and shapes of rugs, various types and styles of wood flooring, tile, grass, weeds, and even dirt.[19]

Using selected elements—

By using just a few carefully chosen features it is often possible to build up a convincing locale out of very little. It is fascinating to see how little is needed at times to create a convincing atmosphere. Seeing the door of a house, we assume that the rest of the building exists. A ticket-office represents the entire foyer of a theatre. Show someone holding a fishing rod, backed by a light blue cyc, and we have conveyed the idea that he is fishing. Add the sound of a river, and the audience is convinced. How necessary is it to add the grassy river bank, trees, or water reflections?[20]

If it is carefully chosen *part* of the location will suggest the entire situation to our audience. But <u>these must be unambiguous, the audience must recognize and interpret the situation instantly</u>. The technique is to imply the whole by showing a complete but localized part.





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[16] Play Directing, Analysis, Communication, and Style by Francis Hodge, Second edition, Prentice Hall, 1982

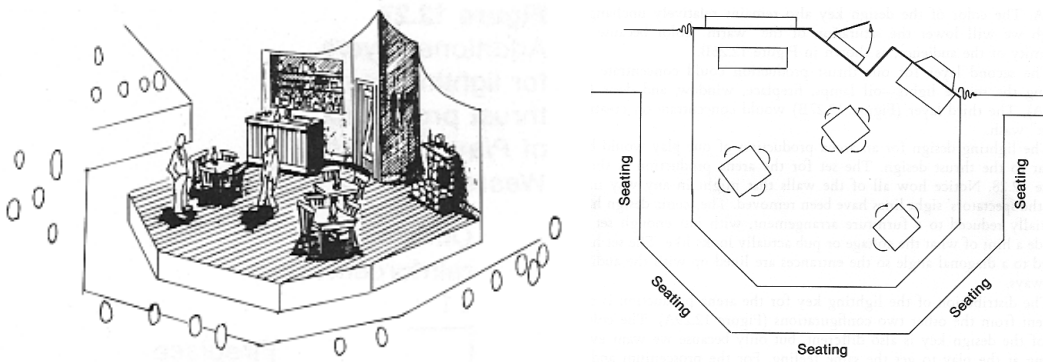
[17] Illustrations of these various elements appear in the next two sections of this supplement.

[18] For examples see the photographs in the section: EXAMPLES AND TYPES OF DESIGNS FOR THE THRUST STAGE.

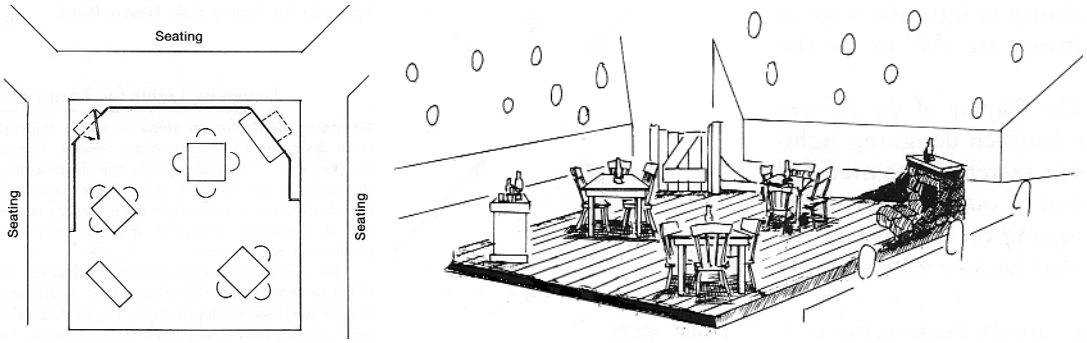
[19] For examples see the photographs in the section: EXAMPLES AND TYPES OF DESIGNS FOR THE THRUST STAGE.

[20] Both of the last two items can be achieved easily on the thrust stage with gobos.

The three illustrations above show a raked wall unit that would function on a thrust stage. The illustrations also show how well thought out set dressing changes the feeling of a set. Left, the bare skeleton of the set— architecturally appropriate for the play being presented. Center, a personalized decor is developed, suitable for the period, the characters, and the action of the play. Carefully selected properties enhance the scene and give it conviction. Right, excessive set dressing produces and overfussy effect and clogs the composition. The location becomes confused and cluttered, perhaps just the effect needed for the particular play.



Left, a set design and right, the ground plan for a production of *Playboy of the Western World* on a thrust stage (notice the capstone treatment to the top of the upstage wall unit).[21]



Left and right, a different variation on a scenic design for *Playboy of the Western World* (ground plan and elevation). On the elevation notice the scenic units of (1) the cut-down door and frame— up center on the drawing— and (2) the fireplace and mantle unit— on the right— which are placed across the "vom" entrances, which makes them visible to all three audience sections and keeps the sight lines acceptable).[22]

Another design for the play *Playboy of the Western World*. at Furman University (notice that the lighting instruments are placed at less than 45°— almost all are directly over the acting area).
Left, Play: *The Imaginary Invalid* Theatre: Furman University (notice the benches on the perimeter defining the stage space, the circular bed in the center, the up center scenic unit, and the greenery on its right and left— used to soften the units end angles)
Right, Play: *Doll's House*. Theatre: Furman University (again notice the up center scenic unit with jogs in the wall to soften the line, roof treatment, and furniture on the perimeter).

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[21] Gillette, Michael J. *Theatrical Design and Production*. Mayfield Publishing Company. 1987

[22] Gillette, Michael J. Theatrical Design and Production. Mayfield Publishing Company. 1987

ACTING & DIRECTING FOR THE THRUST STAGE

"On the picture frame the actors must play to the audience and only pretend to play to each other, while on the open stage their bond of relationship is direct, true and complete, and serves to pull the audience deeply into the experience of the play."

— Michael Langham, THE UNWORTHY SCAFFOLD: THE STORY OF THE FESTIVAL STAGE.

In this section we will discuss staging for the trust stage. This new relationship between the actors and the audience will present practical problems in both the blocking of the action and the technical aspects of the production — which we have already discussed.[23]

In thrust staging, the relationship between actors and audience is very intimate. No audience member is more than five or six rows away from the actors and is usually closer. Some theatres have as few as three rows of seats. The acting in such a performance must be extremely natural and believable, much like the style of acting required by motion pictures.[24] Everything must be more subtle: makeup, costumes, projection, gestures, and the like. The thrust stage allows an intimacy between actor and audience, in which the slightest gesture can be observed and the full range of a voice can be heard. It challenges every actor: when Laurence Olivier visited the Stratford Festival stage, he stood on the Festival stage and remarked, "But there's no place to hide!"

It is stated that Michael Langham, the renowned former artistic director of the Stratford Festival of Canada, said that it took him eight years to get every nuance of moving actors on the thrust stage.[25]

The three-sided location of the audience is the first convention of the thrust stage, to be sure, *but the second is surely the level of the stage*. The director must be aware of the changing aesthetics when he manipulates the playing area.

But also remember, as stated earlier, the other convention that operates in thrust staging that breaks down its illusory elements: members of an audience can fully see and watch many other members of an audience. Thus, as we said, the intimacy of thrust and arena staging is its prime convention. Yet the experience actually goes beyond that of the movie because it has no such barrier as the lifeless projection screen and can exhibit the flesh-and-blood actor in close-up to the voyeurism of an audience.[26]

Some people worry that shows in thrust staging might be too intense for the audience. The proximity of performers to audience might diminish aesthetic distance and frighten people. Aesthetic distance has little to do with the actual physical distance between the actors and audience, unless the actors are shouting in their faces or sitting in their laps— literally making physical contact with them. Aesthetic distance is a psychological attitude that the audience can maintain as long as they feel safe and anonymous— as long as the actors do not threaten them, or in the case of realistic plays, look them directly in the eyes.

One of the techniques in thrust and arena-style is for the actors to begin playing at a low level— as close to reality as possible— in order to draw the audience into the illusion, and then to raise the level gradually in size and proportion until the acting resembles what is seen on the proscenium stage. *Thrust and Theatre-in-the-round is not for the inexperienced amateur but for the capable and trained actor.*

Even though the audience views the action from three sides, the basic principle of blocking remains in force: If you understand the organic blocking concept (instead of the pictorial), you will have little difficulty in arranging on the thrust stage everything from the ground plan to composition and movement. Actors move toward or away from one another, creating movements which illustrate the emotional relationship between the characters. Now, however, all of the principles of movement that relate to the audience viewpoint and make it easier for the audience to see the actors' faces no longer have any meaning. Gesturing with the upstage hand, crossing downstage of another actor, standing with the body one-quarter turn toward the audience, and other rules of this type are meaningless when the audience surrounds the actors. Obviously, there can be no rule about not turning one's back on the audience when almost every position on stage has the actor facing one section of the audience and turning his or her back on another section. In the proscenium theatre, the director tries to control the attention of the audience and make it easy for them

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[23] CHAPTER 18— Directing for the Stage by Lloyd Anton Frerer, NTC, 1996

[24] This is another reason that I recommend for students to experience working on the thrust stage, it develops their skills and training in techniques that are usable in film and television work.

[25] THE GREATEST ACTING SPACE IN THE WORLD, Stratford Festival of Canada, 2002

[26] *Play Directing, Analysis, Communication, and Style* by Francis Hodge, Second edition, Prentice Hall, 1982

to see all of the action. The director continues to control the focus of attention when staging on the thrust; however, making it easier for the audience to see the action is a whole new ball game.[27]

No stage position taken by the actor looks good from all sides; every position creates an awkward situation from the point of view of some audience members.

An actor's back facing one part of the audience is an accepted convention of this stage; but this rather extreme body position can be kept at a minimum by frequent shiftings to other body positions. When back positions must be used as the best illustration of a dramatic action, the *neutral corners* (the vom entrances to the stage where no audience is seated) can be employed effectively.

The problem of quick entrances and exits on the thrust stage is sometimes difficult because of the distance through the voms that must be traversed, but this problem can often be solved by occasional use of entrance voms as acting areas: an actor starts speaking on the way in, or stops halfway out to give an exit line. If you are working in a thrust stage with *vomitories*— that are entranceways underneath audience seating— actors can enter the acting area directly without being seen.[28]

Entrances and exits onto a thrust are most readily made from backstage and the isles, although some theatres provide for performers to enter through the audience using **vomitory** entrances— also called a vom or voms— actor entrances which cut through, or in some theatres beneath the audience seating areas— which in some theatres double as audience entrances. The word has its origins in the Roman word "vomitorium," the entrance of the gladiators, animals and performers in the Coliseum.

Starting Points to remember for Acting and Directing on the Thrust Stage.

(RULE ONE) **The key to staging-in-the-thrust is that much more movement is required.** Therefore, directors must not allow their actors to stand in one particular position longer than is absolutely necessary. In thrust staging, the actors must change positions more often than in proscenium staging, moving and turning around as much as possible. A principles of all good composition should be kept in mind, play a cat-and-mouse game in composition, now one character pursues and the other retreats, and vice versa. Actors will frequently turn outward toward one section or another of an audience as the most natural thing to do in getting away.

(RULE TWO) Actors trained in the techniques of the proscenium theatre must now learn to sense the audience all around them, to give themselves as often as possible to all of the different sections of the audience. Ken Ruta, who was an original member of the Guthrie Theatre Company in Minneapolis— the first major thrust stage in the United States— reminds us that the actor who is so trained to "turning in," must become comfortable with "turning out," and make it a natural part of his acting tools. This goes the same for the actor who automatically shares the stage with his fellow actor by "opening," as they would on a proscenium stage. Actors new to the trust stage will also favor one of the audience sections— usually the one they imagine is the "main or center" section, and play to them exclusively— as if they are on a proscenium stage.

(RULE THREE) **Few places on the thrust stage are neutral locations where a character who has no lines can stand and observe the other characters who have both the lines and the movement.** Actors who have no excuse for movement usually have two choices: They can stand in front of an aisle so they are not blocking audience view, or they can seat themselves on the furnishings of the set. The performer who is the focus of attention should be standing up so that he or she can move often, and the audience will be able to see that actor over the heads of the characters who are seated. Actors soon learn instinctively to find the aisles because they provide a good place to stand.

POWER POINT

> The more intimate the scene the farther away you should be from your partner. (paraphrase of comment by Tyrone Guthrie, from Ken Ruta, original company member of The Guthrie Theatre)

The following section is edited from Terry John Converse's *Directing For The Stage: A Workshop Guide of 42 Creative Training Exercises and Projects*, Directions: Project A— Thrust Staging (Experimenting With Nonproscenium Staging— Part 1)[29] The <u>underlines</u> are mine.

Just as we can throttle our imagination, we can likewise accelerate it. As in any other art, individual creativity can be implemented by certain 'techniques.'

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[27] CHAPTER 18— Directing for the Stage by Lloyd Anton Frerer, NTC, 1996

[28] *Play Directing, Analysis, Communication, and Style* by Francis Hodge, Second edition, Prentice Hall, 1982

[29] Meriwether Publishing, Ltd., 1995.

— Alex F. Osborn

OVERVIEW

Directors in training had better be prepared to travel well beyond the bounds of the traditional picture frame stage. Successful regional theatres such as the Guthrie in Minneapolis have been widely influential, and the increasing popularity of thrust theatres means that, more than ever, today's director needs to have staging skills in nonproscenium spaces. The intent of this project is to provide the principles for staging in thrust theatres.

Focusing on this form by no means implies that there are not other interesting nonproscenium staging possibilities; in fact the currently very popular "black box", space with its moveable seating banks is dedicated to the idea that there are numerous audience-actor spatial relationships worth exploring. Studying the thrust is the perfect training because proficiency in this space easily carries over into virtually any other form. Training for thrust space is the best possible preparation for virtually any type of nonproscenium playing space the intent of this project is to break away from the confines of the picture frame theatre. The departures from the proscenium are still heavily dependent upon proscenium principles, and without this kind of a firm foundation, the new terrain of the thrust will present one pitfall after another.

Working with thrust configurations requires a flexible playing space. The ideal working space for this project is any large open space will work, provided there is enough space, a single row of chairs can define the size and shape of the playing space. Staging a short scene for thrust is of value in itself, but an excellent way to master the nuances of proscenium and non-proscenium spaces is to *stage the same scene for two different performance spaces*.

STARTING FIRST WITH THRUST STAGING

The actors are thrust into the midst of the audience, which puts an emphasis on them instead of the scenery, but no matter how far they are thrust forward, they are still "backed" by at least some scenic reinforcement. This back wall of the thrust theatre is what allows this very new space to retain at least a hint of the older proscenium form, and this is a significant issue as far as training is concerned because making a departure into new territory is always a little easier if at least a glimmer of the old territory is still in view. The new thrust space is a big leap forward, but still in view is the familiar old back wall— a focal point of the thrust space that provides at least some of the illusionistic potential of the proscenium stage.

This is not a recommended staging approach, but imagine taking a well-staged proscenium play, scooting it away from its picture frame housing so as to transform it into a thrust configuration; chances are there would be some problems, but a surprising amount of the play would probably be stage worthy from the sides. The reason for this is that good proscenium staging is by definition three dimensional, as is thrust staging. This is why thrust tends to be the easier, and less threatening of the two. As a first stepping stone from the picture frame stage, a thrust configuration is the best choice.

GROUND PLAN CONCERNS

To think of successfully transporting a well-staged proscenium play onto thrust space is, of course, a gross oversimplification because it completely ignores the major conceptual differences between thrust and proscenium ground plans. A conventional box set for a proscenium space, for instance, certainly wouldn't work very well on a thrust stage without considerable modification because the side walls would completely obstruct the right and left seating sections.

Three Invisible Walls: Instead of a single invisible "fourth wall" on the curtain line, the thrust space assumes three invisible walls, with a closed-off fourth side (the back wall). Architectural details such as window seats and cabinets can be used along the invisible walls as long as they are low enough not to obstruct sight lines. Compared to proscenium, the three invisible walls create a much more three-dimensional effect; despite the fact that the actors in a proscenium space are typically surrounded by three-dimension scenery, the net effect is an illusory two-dimensional quality very similar to painting, whereas thrust is three-dimensional and very similar to sculpture.

Entrances: Besides walls, another major difference between proscenium and thrust spaces has to do with entrances. Proscenium entrances for the most part stay within the picture frame. In thrust theatres

there are typically tunnels or vomitoria[30] at the downstage left and right comers that allow the actors to enter and exit from ramps or steps beneath the audience. Vomitoria solve the problem of quick entrances and exits where many actors can be "vomited" onto or off the stage. In some cases the auditorium aisles are used as voms, or sometimes both aisles and voms become integrated into the staging.

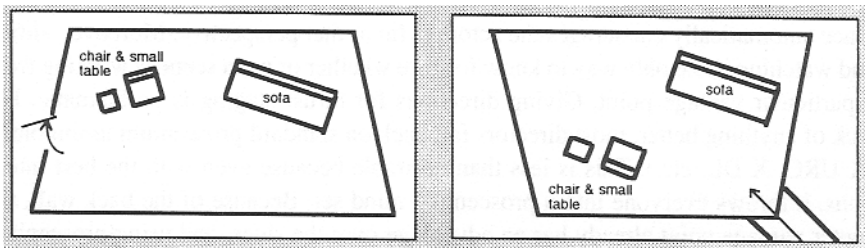
Entrances, of course, can also by from the back wall area. The back wall area allows for architectural detail such as staircases and levels, which can be tremendously helpful in defining a sense of place. An important design consideration is whether or not to use one or both of the voms. If used, they create very dynamic axes that have to be carefully integrated into the ground plan. An entrance or exit from a vom is much more dynamic than the equivalent proscenium entrance or exit because the pathway is directly to or away from the world of the audience. In some case, the audience can literally fed the whoosh of air as a group of actors rush onto the stage. Sometimes, it is effective not to use any voms at all, and rely only on the rear stage entrances.

BEWARE OF THE BACK WALL

Picture a thrust theatre with three separate, equally sized seating sections. Even when there is a completely democratic distribution of seats in each section, it becomes immediately obvious that all seats in a thrust theatre are not created equal; even before a single actor steps on stage, those seats in the center section, directly facing the back wall will be felt by most audience members to be the favored vantage point. Years of experiencing theatre through a picture frame have conditioned audiences into feeling that closer to the center means better seating. Directors and designers of thrust need to be aware of this built-in bias, and do everything possible to reinforce the feeling that seating from all sides is equally interesting.

As previously discussed, the back wall is the common denominator between thrust and proscenium spaces, and this can help in making the novice director a little more at home in a very unfamiliar place. True enough, but the familiar back wall can also become a booby trap, lulling the unsuspecting novice director into thinking that staging for thrust is virtually the same as staging for proscenium. Thinking proscenium in a thrust space is the cardinal sin to commit in staging because it will inevitably lead to favoring the center section; instead of reducing, it reinforces the bias that most audience members bring with them to the thrust theatre. To treat a thrust theatre as a proscenium space is to disregard completely the sculptural potential of this unique type of stage. Favoring the center section in a thrust theatre is artistically fatal because it alienates at least two-thirds of the audience. Preventing an overemphasis on the center section often begins with the ground plan. The ground plans below demonstrates the differences between thrust and proscenium in a typical living room setting. By turning the arm chair to face the sofa, a position far more typical than the side-by-side arrangement, there is visual interest created for all three vantage points.

Had the proscenium ground plan on the left been used on a thrust stage, the message loud and clear from just the setting would be that the only good seats in the house were front and center. Using such a plan would make it extremely difficult to stage equitably among the three seating sections.



Left, Typical Proscenium Furniture Arrangement,. Right, Typical Thrust Furniture Arrangement

THREE VANTAGE POINTS

Think of a thrust stage as three separate, but obviously interrelated proscenium stages. In essence; in a typical thrust theatre, each of the three vantage points (the three audience seating sections) *becomes the equivalent of a proscenium theatre*. The director's ultimate staging challenge is to make the play visually engaging from all three perspectives. There will be times when a particular vantage point is truly favored over the others, but in the course of the entire performance, no single vantage point should be any better than the others overall. All this starts, as has already been mentioned, by designing a ground plan that is

[30] The singular of vomitoria is vomitorium, although most of the time this terminology is reduced to simply "yom" and "voms".

equitable to all three vantage points— it cannot be emphasized enough that successful thrust staging begins with a well thought out ground plan.

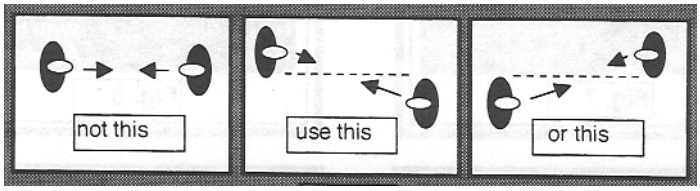
In rehearsals, avoid directing from the same vantage point. Sitting in the same place automatically encourages the actors to favor that perspective. Moreover, sitting and watching is the only way to know for sure whether or not a scene is working from a particular vantage point. Giving directions for thrust staging is problematic. For lack of anything better, most directors fall back on standard proscenium terminology (X URC, X DL, etc.). This is less than desirable because even with the best intentions, it throws everyone into a proscenium mind set. Because of the back wall, the center vantage point already has an advantage over the sides, and using proscenium terminology simply reinforces this bias. To counteract this problem, whenever possible the director is well advised to give directions by referring to the actual set pieces (X to the sofa, arm chair, table, etc.) instead of sticking to conventional terminology. (The director of arena is already forced to do this because there is no such thing as right and left, and up and downstage in such a space.).

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

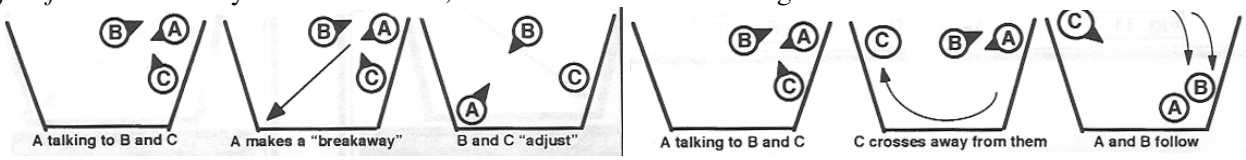
House left and right function as mirror images of each other, and here the terms "with the flow" and "against the flow" become meaningful. "Flow" refers to conditioned eye movement.[31]

STAGING TECHNIQUES

Two actors facing each other straight on can remain relatively open in proscenium staging, but not so in thrust staging. Whenever possible, use the *shoulder-to-shoulder* technique diagramed below for basic conversations. Compared to the straight-on approach, shoulder-to-shoulder creates very little difference in the emotional effect, but it makes a very big difference in keeping the actors more open.



Actors staying in the same place and body position for very long on a thrust stage can create a problem in that they are apt to be closed off from a portion of the audience for too long. In thrust audience members will tolerate not being able to have a clear view of an actor a little longer than they would in proscenium because the intimacy of the space often allows them to see the reactions of other audience members who at the time are watching from a better vantage point. But even with this audience watching audience factor, it is important to shift perspectives fairly often. Two ways to accomplish this are to use *justified* "breakaways" and "rotations," as demonstrated in the diagrams below:



Left, A Sample Breakaway. Right, A Sample Rotation

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[31] Before creating your ground plan and staging your scene, consider the following specifics about the differences between the right and the left (although there are no rights and lefts on the trust stage), or going "with" or "against the flow. Alexander Dean, in his legendary *Fundamentals of Directing* text (1974), argues that in general **stage right is stronger than stage left** (all things being equal). The obvious reason is that we are naturally inclined to look from left to right in reading (in traditional European texts, that is) and that we carry this inclination to all phases of observation (looking at pictures, looking at groups of people, etc.). Dean supported this by his observation of Chinese theatre, Asians read from right to left and in their theatre the more important position is stage left. Regarding "flow" psychologist H. C. Van der Meer noticed that **spontaneous movements of the head are executed more quickly from the left to the right than in the opposite direction**.

The section that follows from Mel Shapiro's *The Director's Companion*, Chapter Ten: STAGING ON OPEN STAGES, is an edited version, but is worth including almost in its entirety. The underlines are mine.[32]

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: What is an open stage?
A: An open stage has no proscenium— that archway between the audience and the stage that held the action inside a picture frame is gone. The audience usually is seated wrapped around a stage that is in the shape of a semicircle such as the Greek theatre or that thrusts farther into the audience like the Elizabethan theatre. This configuration is sometimes referred to as "three-quarter thrust." There is also full arena, which can be a square or a circle of an oblong and is similar to a sports arena. The audience in both three-quarter and full arena is usually banked in tiers, high above the players in order to get the fullest view of every part of the action.

Q: What's the advantage of this arrangement of the stage and the audience?
A: Having worked at both Arena Stage in Washington, D.C., for many years and at the Guthrie Theatre in its early days, I'd say the advantages are the following:
1. The picture framing of the proscenium is viewed from only one side— where everyone is seated. The arena allows events to play on stage in a much freer form. I used to like to quote Zelda Fichandler, the founder of Arena Stage, who would say, "Life is in the round." I believe what she meant by that is that experience is open to more than one perspective. Experience also happens all around us. Staging in the arena, to quote Mrs. Fichandler again, "provides infinite variability in terms of plasticity and movement."
2. The Guthrie Theatre was modeled and refined on its predecessor in Stratford, Ontario. The stage thrusts into the house and is platformed around a moat.

Writing about building the theatre in Minneapolis, Guthrie says:
. . . more people can be got into the same amount of cubic space if they are seated around an open stage, rather than facing a proscenium. When folded around an open stage none of them need sit farther away than the fourteenth row, approximately fifty feet from the middle of the stage. If you are going to offer the sort of program that demands the serious concentration of the audience, then it is essential that actor and audience be brought into the closest possible mutual contract. But to my mind even more important is the fact that the proscenium stage is deliberately designed to encourage the audience to believe that events on stage are "really" taking place, to accept a palpable fiction for fact; whereas the open stage discourages "illusion" and emphasizes that a play is a ritual in which the audience is invited to participate. Finally, apart from these technical or philosophical considerations, we believed it would be a good idea to have an open stage simply because it was not the obvious conventional kind. It would stress, we felt, the experimental and pioneering character of the whole venture; it would be more of a talking point; and, by providing a more three-dimensional entertainment, would emphasize the contrast between the live theatre and movies or TV. This contrast is less marked when a play is framed by a rectangular proscenium, like the rectangular movie or TV screen.

Q: Wasn't Guthrie's interest primarily the classical theatre?
A: Yes, I believe that the philosophy that Guthrie and his designer, Tanya Moiseiwitsch had concerning their stage had a great deal to do with their feelings about classical theatre. They worked in a highly lyrical and romantic style. There were lots of armies, drums, banners, trumpets, cannons belching smoke, and great language that filled the theatre with poetry. You always felt that these spectacles were tumbling from the stage onto your lap. More important, you felt something heroic and meaningful about the grandeur of the human spirit.
Q: And scenery? How does that differ on open stages?
A: Originally, both Stratford and the Guthrie were Elizabethan models with an inner above and inner below. The great wooden floor of the stage was its most important scenic element because everyone was sitting above it, and that's what people saw. If there was any scenery, it was emblematic. A chandelier of a

[32] Wadsworth Publishing, 1997. Mel Shapiro is a director, playwright, and a professor at the University of California, Los Angeles. His directing credits include Broadway production of *Two Gentleman of Verona* (winner of a Tony and NY Drama Critics Award for Best Musical) original off-Broadway production of The House of Blue Leaves (winner of the NY Drama Critics Award for Best American Play), and Vaclav Havel's *The Increased Difficulty of Concentration* for Lincoln Center Repertory (winner of an Obie for Best Foreign Play). His recent work includes direction of John Guare's *Marco Polo Sings a Solo* at the Signature Theater and *Taming of the Shrew* for the New York Shakespeare Festival.

certain period, a table, a chair told you what world you were in. The productions were dominated by costumes. These costumes set against the dark floor were the palette that the play worked on. There was no need for literal scenery. Hence, there was no need for stage mechanics and massive set changes from Scene to Scene. The audience could imagine where it was with one or two suggestions. Arena Stage started from the same spirit, but scenery became very elaborate after it moved into its large theatre, where the stage is completely mechanized and used to spectacular effect.

Later, the use of scenery at the Guthrie changed as well because although only a wooden floor, an inner above, an inner below, and a few pieces were fine for classical plays, they did not work for contemporary plays. And as the repertoire expanded the concepts of scenery, reality, and artistic needs changed with it. *Illusion*, a word that Guthrie said he hated, was warmly greeted by him after he saw the versatility of the stage that he helped create.

Q: Are some plays better than others on the open stage?

A: That's a matter of great debate. Some directors believe that certain kinds of comedies cannot be played on an open stage because the jokes and humor need a frontal assault, so to speak. Other directors can't see how you can do a musical in the arena form:

Where do you put the orchestra?

How does the conductor cue the singers?

How many sides can you sing to at one time, given the fact that you have only one head?

Q: My own opinion is that there is no limit to the repertoire that can be successfully put onto an open stage. And as for musicals, many cities have summer musical tents in the arena form.

Q: Are there some *dos* and *don'ts* about the open stage?

A: First avoid the traps:

1. Actors bellowing the lines. Often you will see a lot of spewing of saliva from the actor's mouth as he overaspirates in an attempt to be heard. Listening to the performance gets to be like listening to instruments that can play only loud. Sound is never modulated for variation and color. The actors seem to feel that because people are sitting behind them, they have to shout, hoping that their voices carry over their shoulders. In the early days of the Guthrie, actors used to talk about "diaphragmatic pressure": how much air they needed to take in to get the sound out. It's not necessary to produce this much sound unless the acoustics of the house are faulty.

2. "Making the rounds." This is when the actor ceaselessly roams the stage from one side to the other in order for all sides to take him in. This, of course, never happened in a Tyrone Guthrie show, but it was the house style of the Shakespeare Festival in Central Park and of many other theatres at one time. (It was also ironic that the festival miked its actors anyway, so all this staging that had the actor going from side to the other was unnecessary to begin with.)

"Making the rounds" was a solution to a problem that created a worse problem. Let's say that you are sitting in a tier facing the actor. The actor is speaking in your direction. You hear her. But then she leaves your direction and moves to the next tier. You hear her a little less. She moves farther away, facing another tier of seats, and you've lost her completely. Then she comes back in your direction. It's like a short-wave radio signal that is coming in and out with a lot of interference.

3. Playing to the critics. The director knows where members of the press will be seated opening night and aims the show in their direction. The critics do not sit just anywhere. They want the "best seats," and management wants to put them there. This knowledge tempts the director to stage the show like it's on a proscenium. You will often see productions where the audience on either side of the stage or to the extreme sides is fully cheated. I, myself, have been seated behind chairs, behind vases on tables and behind actors a good deal of the evening. Backstage I didn't recognize one of the actresses because I hadn't seen her face all evening. The press had its center seats for one night, while someone sat in my seat every night for thirty performances.

The director and the actors need to be aware of:

1. The stage in every scene has to be "shared." UsualIy the actors play across each other's shoulders diagonally, in very much the same way that a two-shot in a film is photographed. If you are in full arena, almost each tier gets a good view of either actor. This is very different than proscenium staging, where, if an actor moves onto another plane above you, you are upstaged. There is no way you can be upstaged in

arena, unless you end up playing with your head facing one of the vomitoriums, which are the tunnels that give access to and from the stage.

In general, playing on the diagonal is one of the secrets of the Open stage.

2. In the proscenium, center stage is a favored position. It's regarded as very strong in terms of the sight lines of the house and is a natural point of visual focus for the audience. You'll notice that concerts, recitals, major songs in musicals often are played there. On a three-quarter stage, you have to find alternatives to playing major events center stage. Center often means cutting off a large segment of the house at either side.

3. The tendency to go farther upstage so that more of the house can see the actor has the effect of distancing the audience from the actor.

Q: Should the director move around a lot, checking how the show is looking from each side?

A: Yes. If you don't have in your head the spatial sense of how it's looking from each tier, which is very difficult at first, you owe it to your audience and your actors to get out of your chair and see what the show looks like from all points of view. Especially when you're doing run-throughs, sit in one section and see how the show is playing from that perspective.

Q: People say the problem with the open stage is that, depending on where your seat is, you are going to see a different show than the person on the other side of the stage will see. Is this true?

A: Let me answer this way. I find watching plays on the open stage very exciting because it's inherently a more dynamic and energetic form.

Q: What do you mean by that?

A: The open stage gives the audience a sense of watching a play in three dimensions. It is very much like watching a sports event where the ball is continually in play, and the players can go all over the court or the rink as they play the game. The open stage, especially arena, frees the action from the demand of playing to one side. I think there's just one rule about the open stage, which is to share the play with as much of the house as possible and not to exclude any section, at least not for any period of time. This doesn't mean "doing the rounds." Instead, it means fInding creative ways of moving and shaping the stage action almost like a choreographer. You have to think as if you're sculpting in space with the actors.

However, you can get a different show with staging that's still rooted in a proscenium mode. Talking about three-quarter staging that she has seen, Zelda Fichandler has said, "I have noticed that plays in this form have been designed, sculpted, directed, and acted more or less from the 'front,' the aesthetic weight of the rear wall finally prevailing. When I have sat on the 'sides' I have not merely seen the play differently, I have seen the sides of the play. That is, the experience of the play— intellectually and sensually— has been weakened. I think this is a correct observation and surely it is borne out by the pricing policy of these theatres: The most expensive seats splay out from the tongue of the stage; the cheaper seats edge around the stage toward the architectural wall at the back of it."

Q: You mean that more movement is usually the norm on an open stage?

A: I think so. Of course, the movement has to be justified, it has to be in the style or reality that you've selected to work in. But first get the scene right. Find what's going on within it and what the best way is to stage the action. After that, you will find certain adjustments that will open it up to more of the audience. You don't have to go into rehearsal hysterically thinking; "My god, I've got four sides to play to and only two actors in this scene, which is fairly static to begin with!" But after you've gotten the scene to work, it's important that you let the whole house share it. I've sat in the north tier at Arena Stage and have had a wonderful show presented to me, knowing that no one in the south tier was able to see what I was seeing because the director had left that tier out. I've also seen shows in three-quarter that were staged just like proscenium plays and left out several hundred people who were watching the show on the sides.

The glory of working the open stage is that you can open up a scene in ways that you couldn't possibly do on a proscenium, with moves, with pieces of business, with reactions that don't have to play in one direction. After I've done something on an open stage it would seem like putting it into a box if it had to transfer to proscenium. (As a matter of fact, I've experienced this.)

Q: But back to my question. Every tier is getting a different show, isn't it? In your example of the south tier at Arena, the show that those viewers got was the backs of the actors and not much of the dialogue, most likely.

A: Even in the best stagings, the show is, I have to admit, slightly different, yes. The question is "different worse" or "different better"? I've sat on the extreme sides of some of my own productions and liked them much better. Was it a different play than what another section was getting? I don't know. On the

proscenium we are getting the master shot. On the open stage we can get close-ups, different angles, long shots, depending on where we are sitting and how the staging is laid out before us.

For example, two characters in a comedy scene. One of the characters has a line that is a joke. A big laugh is expected. Let's say that you've staged it so that upon telling the joke, the actor "walks out of the laugh." This is when an actor says a joke and moves away. This heightens the laugh because it's so outrageously funny for the audience to watch the actor deliver this unexpected, outrageous line and to see him walk away like nothing has happened. On a proscenium this would get a laugh. In arena, it can also get the same laugh because there is a whole tier of people watching him come their way after he has delivered the joke, behaving as though he has said nothing out of the ordinary. There is another tier watching the "take" or the reaction of the other actor who has received this joke. And if you've staged it diagonally, each actor will be getting a good shot of at least two tiers fully seeing him.

Q: Doesn't the lighting appear to be different from each side?

A: Yes, that's a disappointment. From the center it might seem like night, and from another angle, if you're sitting near the hot spots, it can look like day.

Q: What about counterpoint? Isn't it easier to control on a proscenium?

A: Because Guthrie was practically its inventor, you can be sure that counterpoint works very successfully in three-quarter. The background or the far wall is a backdrop that becomes a canvas for the director to paint against. There is also the use of the stairs around the stage and the moat for all kinds of incidental and parallel action. In the arena form, counterpoint is possible but more of a challenge. It can be like a three-ring circus that has to be focused. Aside from staging, focus can be helped by:

1. ***Lighting and use of levels.***

One of the principles of the open stage before these theatres became so scenery happy was the minimal use of sets with a maximum of artistic economy. Lighting, in that case, served many functions, especially picking out areas where scenes were being played. The action could jump from place to place by lighting. There was no need to bring on tons of scenery to tell the story. Actors could be on a bare stage doing a scene, there could be a blackout, and the lights would come up on another part of the stage, implying another scene, another place, and another time.

Depending on sight lines, levels can be used, which denote different playing spaces for different geographic locations in the story. These levels also help with focusing action if you have a multiplicity of events taking place at the same time.

2. ***Action around the perimeter of where central action is occurring***.

I like to think of this as a kind of visual *obbligato* or accompaniment. And just as in music, this accompanies the main action as either complementary or contrasting, as ~~discussed in the section on counterpoint.~~ You'll often hear an actor say, "Is she going to do that while I'm doing my speech?" This means that the actor has just noticed that another character is moving or doing a piece of business while he's doing his speech. In the old school of acting, no one was supposed to breathe, let alone move, while the star or leading players were "acting." They didn't want to be upstaged by upstarts, which means someone else getting the focus. There are many famous stories of how actors have tripped up and foiled one another onstage. However, the director wants to keep the stage alive. She can't have a stage full of actors frozen every time the lead opens his mouth. If you are trying to counterpoint an important speech by using another action to throw down focus to it, the actor doing that speech has to know that the movement and action are there to help him, not to thwart him. But actors will be actors, and you have to make sure that that little scene used to counterpoint the main one doesn't assume epic proportions by the third performance, especially on an open stage, where it will be close to an audience of its own.

5. ***Sound is a very powerful instrument in arena, especially if the setting is minimal or not literal.***

Sound will anchor the audience in a reality. You don't need to see rain, just hear it, to feel what the weather is like. Also, sound can travel around an arena house more effectively than it can in a proscenium house because geography isn't always that literal, either. In the proscenium a door can represent the outside of a house. I n the arena there are rarely doors because they impede sight lines. Outside the house can be all around the audience. If a lion has escaped from the zoo, he is prowling around in the round, not just prowling very specifically behind a door. Again, because it's less literal, the open stage offers a wider range for the director as well as for the audience to experience events very imaginatively.

Q: How do I get to experience working on the open stage?
A: Reconfigure your classroom or workshop so that the audience is not seated conventionally. Start with a few scenes. Make sure that when the scenes are presented you have people sitting in each section. As part of the critique ask what each section missed, if anything.

Try a one-act play in either three-quarter trust or arena. Work out the groundplan, that is, where you are going to place the set pieces. Check to see that the sight ones are clear from all sides as much as possible. Stage the play.

Q: Do I have to run around the room, from side to side, as I'm blocking to make sure that everything is being seen properly?
A: Not until you've run through. Stay in one place, concentrate on the play and your work with the actors, but be aware of where your audience is going to be seated.
Q: Maybe I shouldn't be aware of the audience at all, just try to forget about it. What do you think?
A: I know directors who forget the audience, and it's not a good idea. They become the audience and see the show only from where they're sitting in rehearsal. I don't think a director has to concern himself with what the audience is going to think or feel or how it will react to the show. To that extent you don't have to think of the audience at all. But you have to be aware of where audience members are sitting and of how much of what's going onstage they can see.

CHECKLIST

Focus
Q: Where do you want the audience to look?
How long do you want the focus to be in one place?
When do you want the focus to change to another character or another place?

Counterpoint
Q: In your working counterpoint have you:

Overemphasized the secondary scene, or is the primary scene still in focus?

Maneuvered the stage action so that the audience is visually following the shifts from one scene to the other?

Made sure that the contrasts between scenes and characters are dynamic enough, or does everything seem to be blending into the same textures?

Been able to look at films, observing the technique?

Tone
Q: Have you worked the first fifteen minutes of the show so that the tone you want to set is there? In other words, will the audience know what kind of show it's watching?

Are you at the place in rehearsal where it's a comedy but nothing is funny anymore? Will inventing fresh business help?

Mood
Q: Is your staging reflecting any mood at all, or are you waiting for the scenery and lighting designer to do the job?

How important is mood to your piece?

Is your use of music and sound adequate or too much? Do they enhance the work or get in the way of it by being too obvious?

Atmosphere
Q: Are you and the actors playing the physical realities and circumstances?

How necessary is atmosphere for what you're trying to achieve?

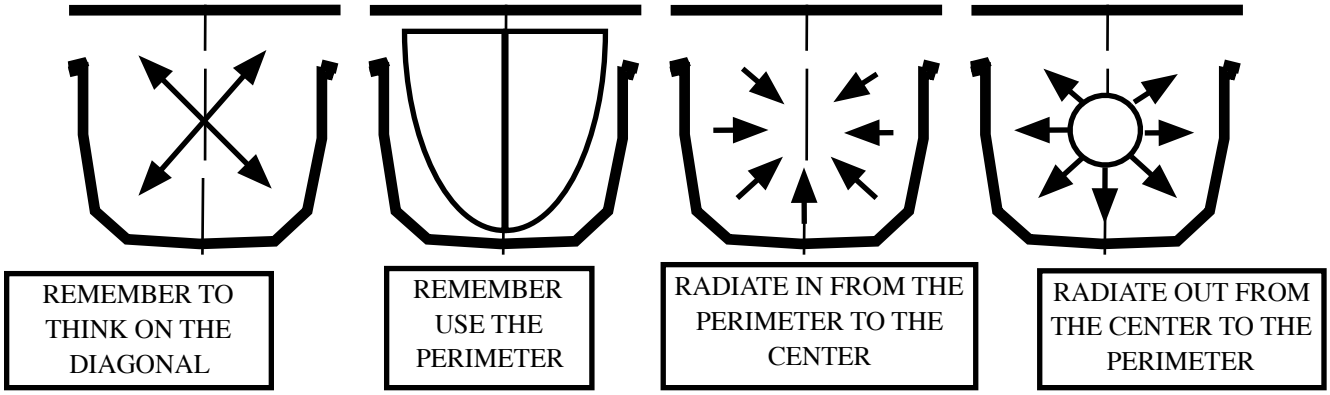
Would eliminating it completely make things cleaner and simpler?

Open Stages
Q: Have you avoided bellowing actors and "making the rounds"?

How much is each side being cheated? Can you correct it?

Is there a tendency for the actors to still play on the same plane, or <u>are they working diagonally and across the shoulders</u> in order to open them up? Have you cured yourself of "prosceniumitis," which means that your staging is partially for the round and partially for the proscenium? Can you break the ties that bind you and free yourself from that picture frame?

Final Power Points:



The playing areas are best set up on a diagonal axis.
The two people should play over each other's shoulder to open each player to at least two tiers.
There is no "center stage." There is no "playing to the audience," as the audience is on three sides, and all sides deserve equal attention.

EXERCISES
Create an illustrated "FURNITURE MORGUE" of types of furniture and properties (most types of furniture have descriptive names, use them) that would lend themselves to inclusion on a thrust stage set. Remember the criteria needed. Look at furniture store ads, Google web sites, Ebay, scan items.

Create a "SET DESIGN MORGUE" of illustrations of scenery designs of productions created for a thrust stage and define the _____ they followed (used)

Research designs of thrust stages currently being used in the world and create a morgue. Search the web for photos.

Examine all of the photographs in this text and detail FIVE recurring "elements" or "techniques" used by the set designers or directors that are specific to the thrust stage. State the page number and position on the page of the photograph, the play title and describe the "element"

Grades Nine Through Twelve-Proficient

Note: The proficient level of achievement for students in grades nine through twelve can be attained at the end of one year of high school study within the discipline of Theatre after the student has attained the level of achievement in Theatre required of all students in grade eight.

1.0 ARTISTIC PERCEPTION

Processing, Analyzing, and Responding to Sensory Information Through the Language and Skills Unique to Theatre
Students observe their environment and respond, using the elements of theatre. They also observe formal and informal works of theatre, film/video, and electronic media and respond, using the vocabulary of theatre.

Development of the Vocabulary of Theatre

1.1 Use the vocabulary of theatre, such as acting values, style, genre, design, and theme, to describe theatrical experiences.

Comprehension and Analysis of the Elements of Theatre

1.2 Document observations and perceptions of production elements, noting mood, pacing, and use of space through class discussion and reflective writing.

2.0 CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Creating, Performing, and Participating in Theatre
Students apply processes and skills in acting, directing, designing, and script writing to create formal and informal theatre, film/videos, and electronic media productions and to perform in them.

Development of Theatrical Skills

2.1 Make acting choices, using script analysis, character research, reflection, and revision through the rehearsal process.

Creation/Invention in Theatre

2.2 Write dialogues and scenes, applying basic dramatic structure: exposition, complication, conflict, crises, climax, and resolution.

2.3 Design, produce, or perform scenes or plays from a variety of theatrical periods and styles, including Shakespearean and contemporary realism.

3.0 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Understanding the Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of Theatre
Students analyze the role and development of theatre, film/video, and electronic media in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting diversity as it relates to theatre.

Role and Cultural Significance of Theatre

3.1 Identify and compare how film, theatre, television, and electronic media productions influence values and behaviors.

3.2 Describe the ways in which playwrights reflect and influence their culture in such works as *Raisin in the Sun, Antigone*, and the *Mahabarata*.

History of Theatre

3.3 Identify key figures, works, and trends in world theatrical history from various cultures and time periods.

4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING

Responding to, Analyzing, and Critiquing Theatrical Experiences
Students critique and derive meaning from works of theatre, film/video, electronic media, and theatrical artists on the basis of aesthetic qualities.

Critical Assessment of Theatre

4.1 Compare a traditional interpretation of a play with a nontraditional interpretation and defend the merits of the different interpretations.

Derivation of Meaning from Works of Theatre

4.2 Report on how a specific actor used drama to convey meaning in his or her performances.

5.0 CONNECTIONS, RELATIONSHIPS, APPLICATIONS

Connecting and Applying What Is Learned in Theatre, Film/Video, and Electronic Media to Other Art Forms and Subject Areas and to Careers
Students apply what they learn in theatre, film/video, and electronic media across subject areas. They develop competencies and creative skills in problem solving, communication, and time management that contribute to lifelong learning and career skills. They also learn about careers in and related to theatre.

Connections and Applications

5.1 Describe how skills acquired in theatre may be applied to other content areas and careers.

Careers and Career-Related Skills

5.2 Manage time, prioritize responsibilities, and meet completion deadlines for a production as specified by group leaders, team members, or directors.

5.3 Demonstrate an understanding of the professional standards of the actor, director, scriptwriter, and technical artist, such as the requirements for union membership.

1.0 ARTISTIC PERCEPTION

Processing, Analyzing, and Responding to Sensory Information Through the Language and Skills Unique to Theatre
Students observe their environment and respond, using the elements of theatre. They also observe formal and informal works of theatre, film/video, and electronic media and respond, using the vocabulary of theatre.

Development of the Vocabulary of Theatre

1.1 Use the vocabulary of theatre, such as genre, style, acting values, theme, and design, to describe theatrical experiences.

Comprehension and Analysis of the Elements of Theatre

1.2 Research, analyze, or serve as the dramaturg for a play in collaboration with the director, designer, or playwright.
1.3 Identify the use of metaphor, subtext, and symbolic elements in scripts and theatrical productions.

2.0 CREATIVE EXPRESSION

Creating, Performing, and Participating in Theatre
Students apply processes and skills in acting, directing, designing, and script writing to create formal and informal theatre, film/videos, and electronic media productions and to perform in them.

Development of Theatrical Skills

2.1 Make acting choices, using script analysis, character research, reflection, and revision to create characters from classical, contemporary, realistic, and nonrealistic dramatic texts.

Creation/Invention in Theatre

2.2 Improvise or write dialogues and scenes, applying basic dramatic structure (exposition, complication, crises, climax, and resolution) and including complex characters with unique dialogue that motivates the action.
2.3 Work collaboratively as designer, producer, or actor to meet directorial goals in scenes and plays from a variety of contemporary and classical playwrights.

3.0 HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT

Understanding the Historical Contributions and Cultural Dimensions of Theatre
Students analyze the role and development of theatre, film/video, and electronic media in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting diversity as it relates to theatre.

Role and Cultural Significance of Theatre

3.1 Research and perform monologues in various historical and cultural contexts, using accurate and consistent physical mannerisms and dialect.

History of Theatre

3.2 Analyze the impact of traditional and nontraditional theatre, film, television, and electronic media on society.
3.3 Perform, design, or direct theatre pieces in specific theatrical styles, including classics by such playwrights as Sophocles, Shakespeare, Lope de Vega, Aphra Behn, Moliere, and Chekhov.
3.4 Compare and contrast specific styles and forms of world theatre. For example, differentiate between Elizabethan comedy and Restoration farce.

4.0 AESTHETIC VALUING

Responding to, Analyzing, and Critiquing Theatrical Experiences
Students critique and derive meaning from works of theatre, film/video, electronic media, and theatrical artists on the basis of aesthetic qualities.

Critical Assessment of Theatre

4.1 Use complex evaluation criteria and terminology to compare and contrast a variety of genres of dramatic literature.
4.2 Draw conclusions about the effectiveness of informal and formal productions, films/videos, or electronic media on the basis of intent, structure, and quality of the work.

Derivation of Meaning from Works of Theatre

4.2 Report on how a specific actor used drama to convey meaning in his or her performances.

Derivation of Meaning from Works of Theatre

4.3 Develop a thesis based on research as to why people create theatre.

5.0 CONNECTIONS, RELATIONSHIPS, APPLICATIONS

Connecting and Applying What Is Learned in Theatre, Film/Video, and Electronic Media to Other Art Forms and Subject Areas and to Careers
Students apply what they learn in theatre, film/video, and electronic media across subject areas. They develop competencies and creative skills in problem solving, communication, and time management that contribute to lifelong learning and career skills. They also learn about careers in and related to theatre.

Connections and Applications

5.1 Create projects in other school courses or places of employment, using tools, techniques, and processes from the study and practice of theatre, film/ video, and electronic media.

Careers and Career-Related Skills

5.2 Demonstrate the ability to create rehearsal schedules, set deadlines, organize priorities, and identify needs and resources when participating in the production of a play or scene.
5.3 Communicate creative, design, and directorial choices to ensemble members, using leadership skills, aesthetic judgment, or problem-solving skills.
5.4 Develop advanced or entry-level competencies for a career in an artistic or technical field in the theatrical arts.

SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs)

School of the Arts students will graduate as .....

I **Communicators who:**

- (a) express -ideas effectively and appropriately when speaking and writing
- (b) receive and interpret the messages of others without distortion

II **Thinkers who:**

- (a) utilize critical thinking skills in solving problems and applying knowledge in real- world contexts
- (b) distinguish between facts, opinions and assumptions when forming conclusions
- (c) use arts and ideas to represent significant concepts
- 9d) analyze current issues from a variety of perspectives

III **Developing Artists who:**

- (a) create and produce mew work reflecting originality and high standards
- (b) demonstrate the ability to critically evaluate artistic products
- (c) have knowledge of the historical/cultural context of the arts
- (d) use the language of the arts for expressing aesthetic concepts
- (e) understand the interrelationships of the arts to each other and to academic subjects

IV **Community Contributors who:**

- (a) demonstrate and exercise productive citizenship
- (b) make positive contributions to the community both at school and in a larger context
- (c) demonstrate knowledge and appreciation for the global environment and its resources

V **Collaborative Workers who:**

- (a) demonstrate effective leadership skills in various settings
- (b) show respect for diverse opinions, feelings and beliefs
- (c) interact effectively -in intercultural/interpersonal relationships

VI **Learners who:**

- (a) develop and use effective learning and planning strategies such as time management, self-evaluation and goal-setting
- (b) use technology to access information, analyze and solve problems and communicate ideas
- (c) communicate effectively, at a survival level,, in a second language
- (d) demonstrate the achievement of academic and artistic standards through a variety of performance tasks

RUTH ASAWA SAN FRANCISCO SCHOOL OF THE ARTS
THEATRE DEPARTMENT

ALL students are required to:

- **BRING YOUR LOGBOOK** (and a Pencil) **TO EVERY CLASS** & RECORD DAILY NOTES FOR EVERY CLASS.
- ATTEND ALL SOTA THEATRE DEPARTMENT PRODUCTIONS and contribute to the in-class post-mortem discussion.
- ATTEND TWO SOTA PERFORMANCES/EXHIBITS/CONCERTS OF OTHER DISCIPLINES PER SEMESTER (art exhibits, creative writing readings, vocal, instrumental, media, or dance department performances). Submit the two **event programs** (signed by a teacher or administrator who is in attendance) **to the Department when you turn in your logbook at the end of each semester**. One written "concert/performance/exhibit" report will be required each semester, following the school-wide rubric and writing standards.
- PARTAKE IN ALL DEPARTMENT FIELD TRIPS OFFERED.
- COMPLETE WINTER & SPRING BREAK AND SUMMER READINGS AND BOOK REPORTS, using the Asawa SOTA WRITING CONVENTION CHECKLIST in the Department Handbook page 35. Tab: Syllabus & Standards (on sfsotatheatre.org)
- COMPLETE ASSIGNED SUMMER SCENE OR MONOLOGUES.
- PARTICIPATE IN ALL REQUIRED "USHER AND TECH CALLS" AND STRIKES (if required, approximately 20 hours per year).
- WEAR YOUR DEPARTMENT "FIT" TO **ALL** THEATRE CLASSES, unless told otherwise by the AIR/teacher.

GRADING AND ADVANCEMENT POLICIES:

- You may not pass onto the next class level or receive an "A" without fulfilling all of the above requirements.
- PARTICIPATION & DRESSING: Any 5 combined absences, tardies, or non-dress days per grading period reduces your grade by 1/2 a letter grade.
- You must receive an "A" from every artist/teacher with whom you have contact to be able to receive an "A" in your theatre classes.
- You cannot pass onto the next class level if you do not receive a satisfactory recommendation/evaluation from every artist/teacher with whom you have contact.

ASAWA SOTA WRITING CONVENTION CHECKLIST

NAME:_____

The below are basic writing skills that every high school student must know.

Your writing assignment:

___ 1. uses the MLA template as per the handout.

___ 2. is in third person (no "I" or "you") unless otherwise specified.

___ 3. uses the appropriate tense consistently.

___ 4. remains on topic and **supports all assertions with evidence.**

___ 5. HAS NO EXTRA SPACES BETWEEN PARAGRAPHS (if your computer automatically creates extra spaces between paragraphs, go to "settings" and make the necessary changes).

___ 6. **avoids deadwood (DW)**: "brilliant masterpiece," "language is something beautiful," etc. Deadwood is any statement that is vague, unnecessary, overly broad, or irrelevant to your argument. Most sweeping generalizations about mankind are deadwood. Try to focus on the specifics of your text.

___ 7. Every sentence must have a distinct purpose. **Read your sentences out loud.**

Avoids inappropriate diction (word choice): EXAMPLES:

___ 8. a) **Overly casual** writing, such as "nice," "cool," "a lot," etc. Writer does not refer to the artist by his/her first name.

___ 9. b) **Hyperbole** (exaggeration): adverbs such as "extremely," "obviously," "really," or "very"; adjectives such as "incredible," "amazing," "super," etc.

___ 10. c) **Placeholder words** that have no precise meaning, such as "basically," "essentially," etc.

___ 11.d.) **Clichés** (trite, overused expressions that are lifeless and reveal a lack of imagination and/or lazy thinking on the part of the writer).

___ 12. has no errors of capitalization, punctuation, or spelling.

___ 13. correctly uses colons, semi-colons, and apostrophes (hint: **only** it is = it's)

___/TOTAL

NOTE: You are to use this rubric as a TOOL. After you finish your draft, proofread your work for each item, one at a time. After you have marked your draft for errors in any of the above, revise your draft, **score yourself** on the rubric, and staple it to your assignment before turning in. I will be assessing **your** self-assessment; you will be marked down for any of the above items that you did not fully address. *Your report will not be accepted without this completed rubric attached.*

You WILL be judged by your writing. It is often the first time an employer, funder, or arts organization will learn about you. Your writing will set you apart—one way or another.

ASAWA SOTA ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

From SFUSD Handbook:
"Academic Honesty:
All students are expected to complete their own academic assignments and examinations. Any type of academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarism, submitting work done by another as your own, or using unauthorized technology are not valid. A student violating the academic honesty policy is subject to disciplinary action."

Process—How we make sure students are aware of what cheating and plagiarism entail:

- At the beginning of the year, during grade-level assemblies students will hear about the academic integrity policy.
- During the first week of school, in English classes, students receive and review this academic integrity policy.
- Also during the first week of English class students will receive and discuss the *examples of plagiarism* document. Reviewing it annually will keep it real and fresh in students' minds.
- In <u>each</u> class, during the first week of school each teacher will clarify what plagiarizing/cheating looks like in that class.

Prohibited Activities:

- Copying homework or class work—from another student, by hand or electronically. This includes work done by students in that course in previous years.
- Downloading reading notes, research or essays—turning in anything acquired online as one's own work
- Looking at a phone or notes during an exam—unless specifically told otherwise.
- Copying from another student during an exam.
- Giving your work to another student to copy by hand or electronically.
- Sending or receiving answers, notes, outlines or any other work that you are supposed to complete individually via an online study group.
- Pressuring another student to share work—this may also be treated as bullying.
- If you are not certain about the expectations and rules in relating to a specific assignment, ask your teacher. If a deadline is imminent and you are not sure of the policy, do your work independently. Never assume that you have permission to do an assignment, problem set or lab report collaboratively.*
- Understand the guidelines for informal modes of electronic communication in the course. For example, the course may have an online discussion group to which students are expected to contribute. Make sure you are using these resources correctly.*

* From http://www.princeton.edu/pr/pub/integrity

Actions:
1st offense

- Notification on Schoolloop of student, parent, counselor and that student's other teachers—it is vital that other teachers know so they can help make sure the student realizes he/she must do her/his own work—this is a professional courtesy not stigmatization.
- Zero for the assignment—assignment not returned to student. The teacher will also hold the assignment the work was copied from.

2nd offense

- Parent/teacher/counselor meeting—notification of other teachers
- "F" for the marking period
- May lead to a discussion of the suitability of placement in AP or honors.
- Dismissal from student government.
- Teachers generally are not willing to compromise their own integrity by writing letters of recommendation for students who have plagiarized more than once.

We require that all parents/guardians and students review this policy document together.