

# GLOSSARY: THEATRE TERMS

Created by Betsy Anne Huggins, Director of Education and Community Engagement

Theatre/Theater: these words are interchangeable for many, but in the business, most practitioners spell theatre with an “re” when referring to the art form or a business that creates live performing arts. Theater with an “er” refers to the physical space where we perform the art.

## **Before the Show: Once a director or producer decides to perform a show, the work begins!**

Casting: the process of selecting actors to play specific roles in a performance.

Breakdown: a list of the roles that need to be filled by actors. It may also contain information about gender, age, race, and any behavioral characteristics that need to be taken into account when casting.

Side: a short selection of the script that can be used to cast a play. Actors can try out various roles and are often coached on their performance by the director or casting agent.

Callback: a smaller audition when actors are invited back to further audition for a play.



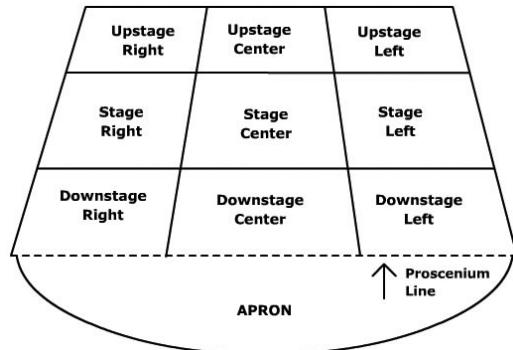
Rehearsal Hall with Rick Dildine

## **Rehearsal Process: Actors join the director in a rehearsal space to begin crafting the performance.**

Blocking: the method of choreographing the movement of actors, sets, and props onstage. During the rehearsal process, the stage manager tracks this information using blocking notation. Most stage managers work from a standard blocking diagram:

Cross: blocking where an actor moves across the stage; it's typically marked as an “X” in a stage manager’s script.

Off Book: when actors are expected to have learned their lines and blocking so that they can perform without a script in hand.



Blocking Diagram

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## **Putting it on the Stage:** As the actors become comfortable with the performance, it's time to put it all together on the stage.

Load In: the process by which sets and props are moved onto the stage. A "load out" is when the set is removed from the stage.

Tech Rehearsal: a rehearsal on the stage that integrates the technical elements of lights, sound, and projections with the play. The stage crew also practices moving the set. Actors are in normal dress.

Cue to Cue: a rehearsal for the technical staff in which performers move from one cue to another cue to practice entrances and exits, as well as light, sound, and other technical effects.

Dress Rehearsal: a rehearsal that integrates costumes into the production. The wardrobe crew can practice dressing actors and putting on make-up and wigs in addition to rehearsing quick-changes of costumes backstage.

## **Performing the Show:** A show is fully realized when an audience is invited to enjoy the production.

Call: a notification of when work will begin and end for the day, as well as breaks and other important information.

Cue: a signal that announces that another action should follow. For example, when an actor enters, it cues the lights to turn on.

Green Room: a space for performers to relax before, during, and after the show.

Preset: any props or set pieces that are placed onstage before the performance begins.

**After the Show:** Curtain Call: the procession of cast members taking their bows at the end of a performance.

Dark: days or times when play is not being performed at a theatre. It can refer to a single day (for example, "most theatres are dark on Monday") or an extended period without performances.



Tech Rehearsal for ASF's *Saint Joan*



Curtain Call for ASF's *Four Little Girls*